



THE NEW  
SPIRIT

The  
Organizers  
of the  
Armory Show

# The Organizers of the Armory Show

March 1 through April 15, 1964

MUSEUM OF ART  
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS



## FOREWORD

The fifty years that separate us from the events of the Armory Show have tended to dim the extraordinary creative aspect involved in the organization of the exhibition. The creative genius necessary in both the conception of the idea and its successful execution were products of men of farsighted vision and great resourcefulness. The process of planning, selection of objects and final installation of the show were as much involved with the clash of personalities as with artistic taste and judgment.

Although many men are mentioned in connection with the Armory Show, two names stand out as the true organizers of the exhibition. Both were painters and yet as different in background and style as any two men could be. They shared a common dream, and although motivated by opposing desires, they were able to convert that dream into the reality of the first major exhibition of *avant-garde* European painters in the United States.

The Museum of Art's exhibition of *The Organizers of the Armory Show* focuses on the work of these two men, Arthur B. Davies and Walt Kuhn. It attempts to show them beyond their role as administrators, relating their own painting to the examples of modern art they collected for the memorable exhibition of 1913.

Included in this show are examples of both the American and European contributors, ranging from the Ashcan painter John Sloan to the French Cubist Jacques Villon. In order to give the full range of Davies' and Kuhn's prophetic selections, representative examples as such movements as Romanticism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism, *Fauvism* and the *Nabis* have been included.

Although the Armory Show represented the main currents of modern art, certain important styles were absent. For example the Italian Futurists were excluded and only a weak section of German Expressionists could be seen. To represent this aspect of the show's organization we have included in our exhibition the work of the progressive Kansas artist, John Noble. Noble had gone to Paris at the turn of the century and was painting exciting mystical abstractions, but for some reason his canvases were not represented in the 1913 show. His inclusion in this exhibition will give the viewer the opportunity to see his work in relation to his contemporaries.

The Museum of Art wishes to thank the following institutions and private individuals for the loan of key works to the exhibition.

The Nelson Gallery of Art and Atkins Museum,  
Kansas City, Missouri

The Wichita Art Association, Wichita, Kansas

The Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery,  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska

The Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas

The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bunting, Jr.,  
Kansas City, Missouri

Mr. William Ittmann, Cincinnati, Ohio

Mr. John H. Nally, Excelsior Springs, Missouri

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Stone, Beverley Hills,  
California



## WHEN A PINE TREE GREW IN AN ARMORY

The following dramatic presentation represents an imaginary conversation between the two "organizers," on the afternoon preceding the opening of the Armory Show. Although the dialogue is invented, it is based on the historic facts of the event and is supported in the documents and papers concerning the exhibition.

Time: February 17, 1913.

Place: The office of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors on Twenty-sixth Street in Manhattan.

### Characters

*Arthur B. Davies:* A tall, thin man in his early forties, with a stiff and haughty presence. He is a man of extreme urbanity and culture who studied painting at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York. As a painter Davies concentrates on romantic subjects with dream-like settings and fantastic landscapes. Although his paintings are more mystical in nature than the realist painting of the Ashcan School, Davies has exhibited with them and is considered one of "The Eight." Davies had been elected president of the American Association of Painters and Sculptors in 1912, at a time when the organization seemed about to disband. He replaced J. Alden Weir as leader of the artist group whose main function was the formation of an exhibition of contemporary Independent painting. With Davies' connections in New York society it was felt he could accomplish the difficult task of raising the much needed money. He controlled the organization with almost dictatorial power and was described by his associates as being "severe, arrogant and implacable."

Yet his excellent financial connections, his reputation as a fund-raiser and his "vast influence with the wealthiest women," have enabled him to find the necessary funds for carrying out the plans of the exhibition. But Davies' involvement is more than financial. His deep personal interest in the progressive trends of European painting, especially the bold colors of Matisse and the radical simplification of the Cubists has given a new direction to the exhibition. With the introduction of these new men the show has grown beyond the scope of the Independent Americans. As the opening draws closer, Davies is faced with the heated antagonism of many of his fellow American artists.

*Walt Kuhn:* A young energetic man of twenty-seven, with dark intense eyes. For the past three years he has been recognized as one of the most progressive young American painters. He exhibited in the 1910 Independent Show put on by New York photographer, Alfred Stieglitz, and was a founder, along with Jerome Myers and Elmer MacRae, of the American Association of Painters and Sculptors. Kuhn was one of the first to conceive of the idea of an International Exhibition, and as Secretary of the A.A.P.S., he shared with Davies the responsibility for the organization of the Armory Show. Kuhn was involved in such key decisions as the selection of the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory as the site of the show, and the choice of John Gregg as director of publicity. He was sent to Europe by Davies to find examples of the radical new trends in painting, but after a few months he wired Davies to join him in the quest. His opportunity to meet such important artists as the Symbolist, Redon, opened his eyes to the exciting "new spirit" in art. Through Walter Pach, an American expatriate painter in Paris, he was introduced to many progressive painters, including the Duchamp-Villon brothers. His exposure to these radical experimenters amounted to an "entire art education" for this young American.



His enthusiasm is boundless in the pursuit of publicity for the show. Working with John Quinn, the New York lawyer and collector, he has spent the last six months pleading and calling for space in newspapers and magazines. Kuhn's identification with the exhibition is almost total. In an effort to make it a success he has given up his own painting and is devoting his full time to the project.

### Setting

The two men sit in a sparsely furnished room. From the only window the dark, massive forms of the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory can be seen. Davies sits erect at the desk, dressed immaculately in a black suit and winged collar. Kuhn, wearing corduroy pants and flannel shirt, is slouched in a chair in the corner of the room, nervously leafing through sheaves of papers.

The two men have been working together on the Exhibition since March of 1912. What first began as simply another show of Independent painting had grown in conception, expanded in scope and intensified in interest to include many of the most radical contemporary European trends.

The relationship of the two men had grown richer with the miles traveled together through the art capitals of Europe. Kuhn's deep respect for Davies' knowledge and connoisseurship is matched by the older man's confidence and trust in his able lieutenant.

The walls of the room in which they sit are bare, except for a single poster, which has been hastily tacked up. Its emblem: the pine tree flag of the American Revolution with the words "The New Spirit" printed below it.

*Davies:* Haven't the catalogues arrived yet?

*Kuhn:* We had a call from the press about an hour ago—they'll be in by four—but the new entries won't be listed. The total's over 1,600 now—and they're still moving things in at the Armory.

*Davies:* Have you been there yet today? How does it look?

*Kuhn:* Like a barn—or worse yet, like the military drill hall it is . . . George Bellows was over this morning raising hell about it. . . . He has gone to see Mrs. Whitney about some money for decorations. He said he'd call in.

*Davies:* I hope he's able to convince her—there isn't a dollar left in our account—and we still haven't paid for the last batch of publicity posters.

*(Kuhn picks up a newspaper on the desk)*

*Kuhn:* Have you seen this morning's paper? Gregg's really been beating the drums! I hope we get some good space in the evening edition.

*Davies:* It's not this evening I'm worried about—it's tomorrow morning. Up till now we've been calling the shots—but once those newspaper boys see the show—especially the Cubist things—our heads are on the block.

*Kuhn:* With all that mumbling about the show having sold out to the Europeans—I hope they don't start waving the flag.

*Davies:* Sold out! My God, what do they want—there are three times as many Americans represented as Europeans. Glackens and his American selection committee are up to their necks.

*Kuhn:* But a bunch are screaming about the "foreign invasion."

*Davies:* The provincial fools! Don't they realize we've got more to do than pamper their wounded sensibilities? Do they want to stay in their tight little shells forever? This show must be more than a call in the darkness. . . . It must be a blast of trumpets loud enough to wake the imagination of a nation—and so piercing it kills the blasted Academy forever!

*Kuhn:* Don't let it bother you Mr. Davies, you can't satisfy. . . .

*(Davies gets to his feet and begins to pace quickly)*

*Davies:* This thing had to go beyond national boundaries. . . . To understand what's really been going on these last few years, you have to go back. That's



why we have those Delacroix and Corots. You have to see the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist to know where it all fits. We must get it across. By the way, when does Pach's boat dock? I was hoping he'd be able to give some of the more influential people a tour through the show this evening. He can add the personal touch.

*Kuhn:* It should be in already—but don't worry, if it were going to be late Walter would swim the last hundred miles. He's not going to miss this.

*Davies:* If only we had more time—more money—we could have staged the kind of exhibition that would really set the critics back on their heels. The thing has grown so big, so fast. Even our catalogue can't keep up with it. We need more exposure!!!

*Kuhn:* A month is an awfully short time. . . . But with Chicago taking it after New York at least we'd be spreading the word another thousand miles.

*Davies:* Walt, you're as idealistic as those college kids who volunteered to take tickets down there.

*Kuhn:* Look who's calling who an idealist!

*(The phone on the desk rings—and Kuhn quickly picks it up.)*

Hello—Yes, George—She what? How'd you do it!—Don't answer that—just get back here as fast as you can—and we'll start making arrangements—

*(He hangs up the phone and lets out a long sigh—)*

Hurray for Bellows—Mrs. Whitney has given a thousand dollars to buy ever-green decorations. The place is even going to smell like the "new spirit."

*(A thin smile crosses Davies' face.)*

*Davies:* One step closer—one step at a time—Now all we need are some people to come and see the show.

GERALD S. BERNSTEIN

**ARTHUR B. DAVIES**  
(1862-1928)

*Figure drawing*

Pencil and white chalk on paper  
13 x 17 3/4 inches  
Wichita Art Association

*Landscape with Figures*

Oil, 11 1/16 x 16 1/16 inches  
Nelson Gallery of Art  
Gift of Dupuy G. Warrick

*Italian Hills*

Water color, 9 x 12 inches  
Nelson Gallery of Art  
Bequest of Mrs. Frances Logan

*Poet and Singer, ca. 1910*

Oil, 10 x 13 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska Collection

*Three Figures, ca. 1912*

Chalk, charcoal and wash, 6 x 12 3/4 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska Collection

*Standing Figure of an Archer, ca. 1917*

Chalk, 12 3/8 x 8 1/8 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska Collection

*Pollacia, ca. 1927*

Water color, 10 x 14 3/16 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska Collection

*Figure Study*

Charcoal, 13 5/8 x 10 inches  
Wichita Art Museum Collection  
Gift of S. O. and Marion L. Beren Foundation

**WALT KUHN**  
(1880-1949)

*Red and Dutch, Budweiser Hall*

Water color, 8 7/8 x 19 inches  
Nelson Gallery of Art

*Juggler*

Oil, 30 1/4 x 25 1/2 inches  
Nelson Gallery of Art  
Gift of the Friends of Art

*The Guide, 1931*

Oil, 24 1/8 x 20 1/8 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska  
Frank M. Hall Collection

*Falls in the Catskills, 1935*

Ink and wash on paper, 19 x 24 inches  
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
University of Nebraska Collection



## NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN ARTISTS

Bonnard, Pierre. French (1867-1947)  
*Place le Soir*, 1899  
Colored lithograph, 7 x 17 inches  
Collection of Mrs. George H. Bunting, Jr.

Cézanne, Paul. French (1839-1906)  
*Les Grands Baigneurs*, ca. 1898  
Colored lithograph, 16 1/2 x 20 inches  
The Nelson Gallery of Art

Corot, Jean B. C. French (1796-1875)  
*Une Famille a Terracine*  
Lithograph 11 1/2 x 17 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

Daumier, Honoré. French (1808-1879)  
*Monsieur Coqueler*  
Colored lithograph, 9 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

Degas, Edgar. French (1834-1917)  
*Classical Figures*  
Pencil drawing, 11 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Hugo Emmerich

Gauguin, Paul. French (1848-1903)  
*Interieur de Case*, ca. 1896  
Woodcut, 4 x 8 inches  
Collection of Mr. Wm. Ittmann, Jr.

Goya, Francisco. Spanish (1746-1828)  
*Disparate de Tontos*, 1810 or 1819  
Aquatint, 8 1/4 x 12 3/4 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

Pissarro, Camille. French (1830-1903)  
*La Charrue*, ca. 1880  
Color lithograph, 9 x 6 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of the Endowment Association

Puvis de Chavannes, Pierre. French  
(1824-1898)  
*Au Clair de la Lune*  
Oil, 17 1/2 x 14 3/4 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Anonymous Gift



Redon, Odilon. French  
(1840-1916)  
*The Shulamite*, 1897  
Colored lithograph,  
10 x 8 inches  
The Nelson Gallery of Art

Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri de.  
French (1864-1901)  
*Oscar Wilde et Romain Coous*,  
*Théâtre de l'Oeuvre*  
Lithograph, 12 1/2 x 9 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of the  
Endowment Association



CHILDE HASSAM: *Cottage Yard*



## NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN ARTISTS

Cassatt, Mary. American (1845-1926)  
*Mademoiselle F*, 1899  
Dry point, 17 x 10 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of the Endowment Association

Hassam, Childe. American (1859-1935)  
*Cottage Yard*, 1902  
Pastel, 10 x 11 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of Mr. Morris Sprayregen in honor of  
Dr. A. M. Ginsberg

Rimmer, William. American (1816-1879)  
*Genius of Victory Leading the Union Army*  
Oil, 25 x 21 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

Robinson, Theodore. American (1852-1896)  
*Mancherin*, 1885  
Oil, 10 x 16 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
W. B. Thayer Memorial Collection

Ryder, Albert Pinkham. American (1847-1917)  
*White Horse Grazing*  
Oil, 15 x 9 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of Arthur Egner Estate

Whistler, James Abbott McNeill. American  
(1834-1903)  
*Mother and Child*, ca. 1880  
Lithograph, 10 x 6 inches  
Gift of Sen. August W. Lauterbach

## TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN ARTISTS

Henri, Robert. American (1865-1929)

*Laughing Girl*

Oil, 24 x 20 1/2 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

W. B. Thayer Memorial Collection

Hopper, Edward. American (1882- )

*American Landscape, ca. 1920*

Etching, 8 x 13 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Lachaise, Gaston. French-American  
(1882-1935)

*Head of a Woman*

Pencil, 12 x 10 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Lie, Jonas. American (1880-1940)

*After the Concert*

Oil, 9 1/2 x 12 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

W. B. Thayer Memorial Collection

Marin, John. American (1870-1953)

*Sail Boats, 1932*

Etching, 7 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Pach, Walter. American (1883-1958)

*Meleager, 1922*

Etching, 6 x 5 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of Miss Cassandra Ritter

Sloan, John. American (1871-1951)

*Da Poleetica Boss, 1912*

Crayon and ink, 14 x 18 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of Elizabeth M. Watkins Fund

Walkowitz, Abraham. American (1880- )

*Head of a Girl, 1904*

Pencil, 6 x 5 5/8 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of Harold Kaye



## TWENTIETH CENTURY EUROPEAN ARTISTS

Braque, Georges. French (1882-1963)

*La Mandoline*, ca. 1945

Color lithograph, 14 1/2 x 10 3/4 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of the Endowment Association

Denis, Maurice. French (1870-1943)

*Les Attitudes sont faciles et chastes*, 1899

Color lithograph, 15 1/8 x 11 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of the Endowment Association

Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. German (1880-1938)

*Three Peasants Mowing Grass*

Chalk drawing, 14 1/2 x 20 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of Elizabeth M. Watkins

Maillol, Aristide. French (1861-1944)

*Girl Tending Cows*, ca. 1890

Oil, 18 7/8 x 25 1/4 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of Dr. Harold Gershinowitz

Matisse, Henri. French (1869-1954)

*Ballerina*

Lithograph, 18 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Picasso, Pablo. Spanish (1881- )

*Artists and Models*, 1933

Etching, 17 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of the Endowment Association

Rouault, Georges. French (1871-1958)

*Clowness and Child*, 1935

Color aquatint, 17 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of the Endowment Association

Villon, Jacques. French (1875- )

*Abstract*

Color lithograph, 19 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches

Museum of Art

University of Kansas

Gift of the Endowment Association

Vlaminck, Maurice de. French (1876-1958)  
*Le Pont de Chatou, ca. 1945-50*  
Color lithograph, 10 x 14 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas  
Gift of the Endowment Association

Vuillard, Edouard. French (1868-1940)  
*Au Gallerie du Gymnase, 1900*  
Color lithograph, 9 x 7 inches  
Collection of Mr. John H. Nally



**JOHN NOBLE**  
(1874-1934)

*Morning*

Oil, 13 x 17 inches  
Museum of Art  
University of Kansas

*Toilers of the Sea*

Oil, 36 x 43 inches  
Wichita Art Association

*On the Brittany Coast*

Oil, 31 1/2 x 38 3/8 inches  
The Brooklyn Museum

*The Red Sail*

Oil, 25 x 30 inches  
Wichita Art Association

*The Phantom Ship*

Oil, 20 x 27 1/2 inches  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Irving Stone

**JOHN NOBLE PAINTINGS IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS**

The Wichita Art Association

The Walter Chrysler Museum

The Brooklyn Museum

Anna Sosenko

The Salmagundi Club

The University of Kansas

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Stone

John Noble, Jr.

The State of Oklahoma—Capitol Building



THE NEW  
SPIRIT