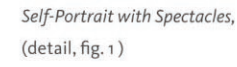
STEPHEN MAY



Charles Willson Peale,
Self-Portrait with Spectacles,
(detail, fig. 1)

An Enduring Legacy: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1805-2005

The story of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the oldest art museum and art school in America, is one of vision, ambition, persistence, and adherence to high standards. Founded not long after the establishment of the American Republic, during Thomas Jefferson's second term as president, and while memories of the American Revolution still lingered, the fledgling Academy drew on the example of Britain's Royal Academy and European precedents in forging its own pioneering and enduring American identity.

THE EARLY YEARS, 1805 TO 1869

Fortuitously located in Philadelphia, the nation's capital from 1790 to 1800, the Academy benefited from the city's standing as a cultural and intellectual center and its reputation for supporting the arts. Nevertheless, without the tireless efforts of the irrepressible Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827), the Pennsylvania Academy would never have been established—or survived. Museum pioneer, artist, and patriarch of a large family of important artists, Peale was a man of wide ambitions, far-seeing vision, and energetic purpose (fig. 1). Determined to expand the new nation's cultural horizons and to establish distinctive American artistic traditions, he forged the birth and growth of the Academy. Already well into his sixties, Peale was the driving force behind shaping the new Academy into both a teaching and collecting institution that promptly assumed a role of national importance.

As early as 1771, the precocious Peale was receiving encouragement for his arts advocacy from an exalted source. Writing from London, Benjamin Franklin applauded the thirty-year-old entrepreneur's efforts in Philadelphia, adding: "The Arts have always travelled westward, and there is no doubt of their flourishing hereafter on our side of the Atlantic, as the Number of wealthy Inhabitants shall increase, who may be able and willing suitably to reward them, since from several Instances it appears that our People are not deficient in Genius."[1]

In 1794, Peale had started an art organization, the Columbianum, in Philadelphia, but it failed after a year. His pioneering Peale's Museum, established in 1786, was moved to the second floor of Independence Hall in 1802. It featured portraits of famous Americans as well as habitat groupings of native animals and birds and the skeleton of a prehistoric mastodon. Each facet is recorded visually in Peale's *The Artist in His Museum*, an icon of American art and a special treasure in the Academy's collection (plate 27).

One day after Christmas in 1805, Peale and a group of Philadelphia's leaders met in the signers' chamber in Independence Hall to ratify the articles of association for the Pennsylvania Academy. The seventy-one founders, predominately local businessmen and lawyers, modeled their project on the New York Academy of the Fine Arts, launched in 1802, as well as the venerable Royal Academy in London. Among the founders, only Peale, his gifted son Rembrandt Peale, and William Rush, the country's first sculptor, were artists. The founders chose as the first president George Clymer (1739–1813), a Philadelphia banker who had signed the Declaration of Independence twenty-nine years earlier (fig. 2). Clymer served until his death in 1813. Joseph Hopkinson (1770–1842), a judge of the U.S. District Court and author of *Hail Columbia!*, succeeded Clymer and served as president until 1842.

The lofty purposes and unabashedly nationalistic goals of the founders were reflected in their statement of purpose:

The object of this association is to promote the cultivation of the Fine Arts, in the United States of America, by introducing correct and elegant Copies, from works of the first Masters, in Sculpture and Painting, and, by thus facilitating the access to such Standards, and also by occasionally conferring moderate but honorable premiums, and otherwise assisting the Studies and exciting the efforts of the artists, gradually to unfold, enlighten and invigorate the talents of our Countrymen. The name of this Association shall be "The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts."[2]

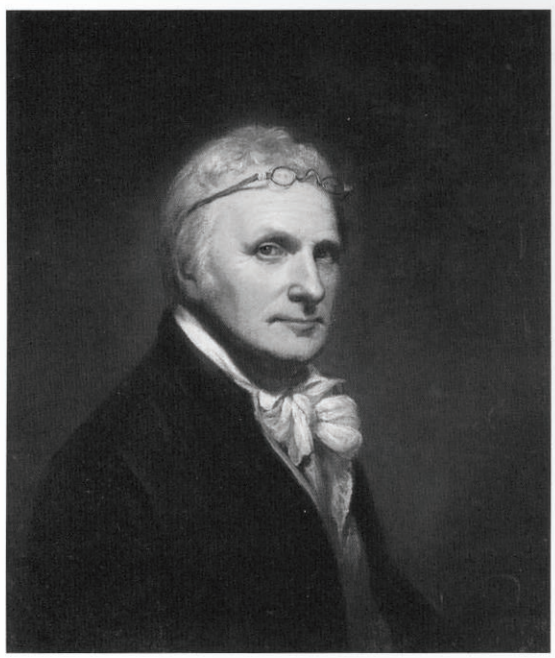


Fig. 1
Charles Willson Peale, *Self-Portrait with Spectacles*, ca. 1804. Oil on canvas, mounted on wood, 26 3/16 x 22 3/16 inches (66.5 x 56.7 cm). Henry D. Gilpin Fund, 1939.18.

The founders deliberately called the institution an academy, reflecting their vision of a place for educating artists, as well as collecting and exhibiting art for the general public. In the two hundred years since, there have been innumerable changes in styles of art and the role of museums, but the Academy, while changing with the times, has remained true to its original standards and purposes.

Peale's correspondence with leading figures of the day, such as his friends President Thomas Jefferson, architect Benjamin Latrobe, expatriate painter Benjamin West, and French sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon, documents his indefatigable efforts on behalf of the Academy and his high hopes for its future. In June 1805, he wrote to Jefferson: "Some Gentlemen have meet [*sic*] a few times at my House and planed [*sic*] a design of an Academy for the incouragement [*sic*] of the fine arts in this City. . . . We hope soon to begin a building for the reception of Casts of Statues, also for a display of Paintings, by the exhibition of which revenue may be had to defray the expence [*sic*] of a keeper who shall be capable to give instruction to the Pupels [*sic*]."[3]

In one letter from Latrobe, written in July 1805, the architect expressed support for "a most useful institution," noting with surprise that among the founders were "Names . . . of a Number of Men whom I did not suspect of any taste for, or knowledge for any Arts but that of

bookkeeping or cookery. I am glad however that they have come forward with that most essential support of all Art, Money."[4]

In April 1806, Peale appealed to Jefferson for a donation to help get the Academy off the ground. "As one of the Directors," he wrote, "I think it my duty to mention to you our want of funds to finish this Building, that your aid will be very acceptable in a small sum."[5] In June, Jefferson responded: "I shall cheerfully contribute my mite to your Academy of fine arts by inclosing you 50.D. at my next pay day."[6] Successful fundraising allowed the new directors to construct the Academy's first home, a small classical rotunda on Chestnut Street (see fig. 28).

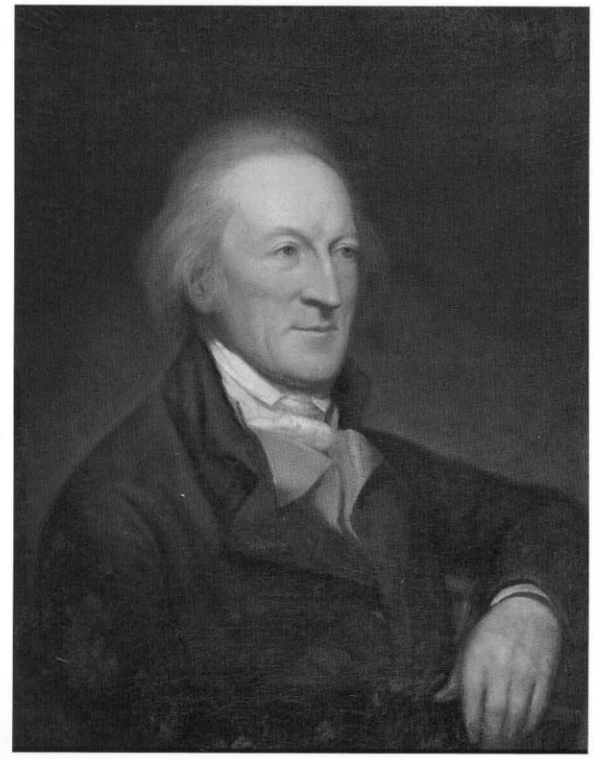


Fig. 2
Charles Willson Peale, *George Clymer*, 1807, Oil on canvas, 27 ⅛ x 22 ⅛ inches (68.9 x 56.2 cm), Gift of the artist, 1809.2.

The audacity and significance of the founding of the Academy are suggested by its status as not only the oldest art institution in the United States of America, but also one of the oldest in the world. The Louvre had opened in Paris in 1796, but the Academy is older than the National Gallery in London and the Prado in Madrid. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston were not established until 1870. New York's Art Students League was founded in 1875. The Philadelphia Museum of Art grew out of the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, and the Art Institute of Chicago opened its doors in 1879.

Two notable figures in the early history of the Academy are William Rush (1756–1833) and Thomas Sully (1783–1871). Rush was a native Philadelphian who turned woodcarving into a professional career (plates 13 and 26). He helped to organize the ill-fated Columbianum and, in addition to being an original founder of the Academy, served on its board of directors from 1805 through 1833. Active in civic affairs, he was a key figure in the creation of Fairmount Park. English-born Thomas Sully, master of the aesthetic portrait, served as a board member from 1816 through 1832 (plates 24–25). He was the beneficiary of the Sully Fund, established by the Academy to support him, from 1847 until his death in 1872. Forty-five Sully portraits grace the permanent collection.

At the outset, the founders sought to build the Academy's prestige by reaching out to England to make Benjamin West (1738–1820) its first honorary member. The American expatriate, born in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, had, by this time, become an international superstar, serving as Historical Painter to King George III and president of the Royal Academy in London. For a half century, West offered haven, advice, and encouragement to many young American painters including Sully, Washington Allston, Charles Willson Peale, and Gilbert Stuart. In keeping with his generous assistance to American painters, West enthusiastically accepted the Academy's invitation. "That the youth of America have talents for the fine arts (in particular painting) is acknowledged by all the civilized nations," he wrote in September 1805. "I will venture to predict," he added, "that the next great school of the fine arts after Greece, Italy, and Flanders, will be in the United States of America." The new Academy, West said, should make Philadelphia "the Athens of the Western World in all that can give polish to the human mind."[7]

As early as 1810, Joseph Hopkinson expressed the view that the Academy "may now be considered completely formed and established," with no chance of failure.[8] In spite of such confidence, the institution was always pressed for money. Fortunately, the directors, usually numbering eight, managed its funds wisely while raising money through admission fees, sales of stock in the Academy, and

substantial contributions of their own. Board members in this era were closely involved in the day-to-day operation of the Academy, and under their close guidance the institution steadily flourished.

One of the new board's first acts was to begin acquiring objects to enhance and fill its galleries. Plaster casts, then considered objects of virtue in their own right, were purchased to be on hand even before the new building opened in December of 1806. In its early years, the Academy directors, reflecting the prevailing taste of the period, favored history and religious paintings for both exhibitions and acquisitions. The two most notable purchases of these years are Washington Allston's *The Dead Man Restored to Life by Touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha* (plate 16), acquired in 1816, and West's *Death on the Pale Horse* (plate 6). Both purchases entailed mortgaging the building to defray costs, and both are today among the best-known and most important works of art in the collection.

In 1807, barely a year after opening its doors, the Academy mounted its first exhibition. It was unlike anything America had seen before. Combining plaster casts, selections from the collection of artist-inventor Robert Fulton, and strategic loans, the show featured paintings by West and the Peales, along with examples of contemporary British art. While topical or thematic exhibitions were mounted often, the institution's European models prompted the inauguration of an annual group exhibition in 1811. The board stated that "Paintings by American & living Artists shall always have a preference over those by European or Antient [*sic*] Artists."[9] Thus, from the outset, young American artists had the opportunity to display their work alongside that of counterparts from around the nation and across the Atlantic.

The first annual exhibition featured just over five hundred works, of which nearly half were by American artists. There were paintings by the Peales, Stuart, Sully, and Thomas Birch, the Academy's first keeper (curator), and sculpture by Rush. Highlights included Charles Willson Peale's likeness of Clymer and Stuart's famous "Lansdowne" portrait of Washington.

The annual, which lasted until 1969, soon became a major event in the American art world. Awards and prizes given out during the annuals carried great prestige and significantly encouraged the development of American painting and sculpture. Moreover, the Academy's collection was immeasurably enriched through purchase awards associated with the annuals. "The cumulative effect of these exhibitions on American arts, artists, and public taste was colossal," observed former Academy Curator and President Frank H. Goodyear, Jr.[10]

The year after the first annual exhibition, the young art institution made another mark on the art world by contributing to a precedent in international law during the War of 1812. A ship flying the American flag and carrying twenty-one paintings and fifty-two engravings by Italian artists bound for the Academy was captured by a British man-of-war and taken to the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Academy's directors appealed to officials in Nova Scotia for release of the art treasures, prompting Sir Alexander Croke of the admiralty court in Halifax to reply: "Heaven forbid that such an application to the generosity of Great Britain should ever be ineffectual. . . . With real sensations of pleasure. . . I decree the restitution of the property."[11] The works arrived at the Academy, and the principle of free trade for artwork in times of war was established.

During much of the Academy's first half century, the Pennsylvania Academicians, a group of painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects of recognized merit, played a key role in selecting professors and keepers of the institution, as well as in mounting the exhibitions. The original members, elected by the board of directors in 1812, included the cream of American artists. Among those artists who served at the outset were Washington Allston, Thomas Birch, John Wesley Jarvis, Charles Bird King, Charles Willson Peale, James Peale, Rembrandt Peale, William Rush, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, and John Vanderlyn. Off and on until about 1870, the Academicians provided vital leadership to the fledgling Academy. While the Academy occupied its Chestnut Street building, the board of

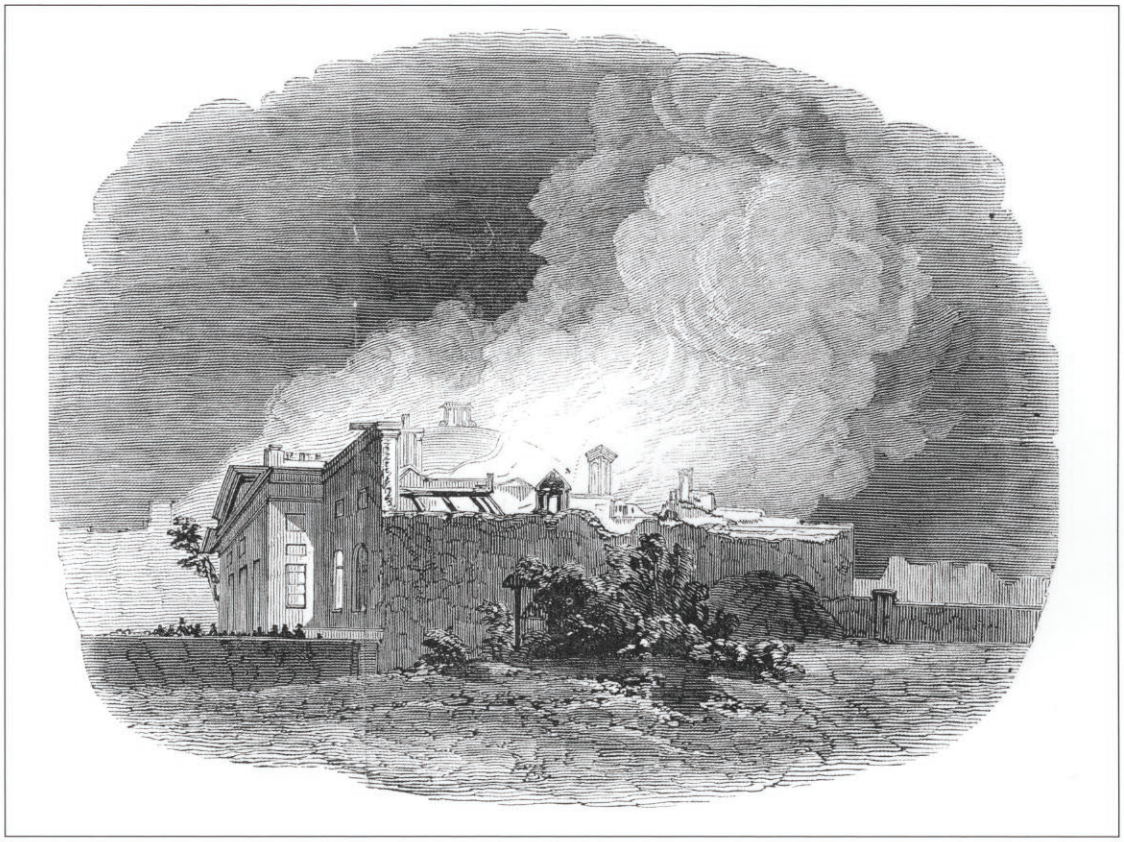


Fig. 3
"Destruction of the Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia," The Illustrated London News, July 19, 1845.

directors ran the Academy, assisted by the Academicians, without the services of a paid administrator. More artists served on the board in this era than at any other time.

In 1845, a disastrous fire ignited by a deranged nephew of the janitress devastated the Academy building on Chestnut Street (fig. 3). Flames engulfed the east and north wings, destroying most of the cast collection and many valuable paintings. Volunteer firefighters heroically rescued West's huge canvas *Death on the Pale Horse* by cutting it from its signed frame, rolling it up, and dragging it out to the street. *The Illustrated London News* reported in detail on the objects lost in the conflagration, adding that Stuart's portrait of Washington was saved with its "canvas being torn and frayed." When it was carried out to the street, "a gladsome shout from the crowd around the burning building, rent the air. It showed, indeed, that he was first in the hearts of his countrymen."[12]

Supporters rallied around the wounded institution, raising substantial funds for its resurrection. The largest sum came from the Ladies Bazaar and Ball, through which the generous sum of ten thousand dollars was raised. A new structure with capacious galleries and a new facade was constructed, opening in 1847. New casts were acquired from Europe, and school facilities were improved.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Academy was a focal point of Philadelphia's cultural life and a major force on the American art scene, mounting important exhibitions and quality annual shows, with increased attendance, and a thriving school. The Academy consistently embraced contemporary art, exhibiting works by almost every significant American artist of the time, either in temporary exhibitions or in special displays. Among the exhibitions shown in the newly reconstructed building were Thomas Cole's famous allegorical series *The Voyage of Life* (1844) and *The Course of Empire* (1852); Hiram Powers's controversial *Greek Slave* (1848); English Pre-Raphaelite art (1858); Frederic E. Church's celebrated *Heart of the Andes* (1860); and Albert Bierstadt's *Domes of the Yosemite* (1867). Asher B. Durand and Daniel Huntington were elected Honorary Professional Members around mid-century. Church, Cole, Jasper F. Cropsey, and John F. Kensett were honored by the Academy well before they had gained national acclaim.

Fig. 4
Thomas Eakins, *Harrison S. Morris*, 1896. Oil on canvas, 54 ½ x 36 inches (138.4 x 91.4 cm). Partial gift of Harrison Morris Wright; partial purchase with funds provided by the Henry S. McNeil Fund, the Estate of John W. Merriam, the Samuel M. V. Hamilton Memorial Fund, the Women's Committee of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Donald R. Caldwell, Jonathan L. Cohen, Dr. and Mrs. John A. Herring, William T. Justice and Mary Anne Dutt Justice, Charles E. Mather III and Mary MacGregor Mather, Robert W. Quinn, Herbert S. Riband, Jr. and Leah R. Riband, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua C. Thompson, and 36 anonymous subscribers, 2000.10.

After 1850, the Academy, like the entire nation, faced a changing society, particularly following the Civil War. The pervading sense of prudery that defined moral standards in America was apparent in Philadelphia. The problematic issue of male nude statuary, in particular, was especially controversial. At the opening of the first building in 1807, one day a week was set aside for women's classes only. In 1844, recognizing the growing interest of women in studying at the museum, the Academy decided that the sculpture gallery would be open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings to women artists who wanted to copy antique casts. These special hours were abolished in 1856, when the Academy board, continuing to fret about "nude statuary," decreed "a close fitting, but inconspicuous fig-leaf be attached to the Apollo Belvedere, Laocoon, Fighting Gladiator, and other figures as are similarly in need of it."[13] Such puritanical attitudes prevailed late into the nineteenth century, as Thomas Eakins learned, to his dismay, in 1886.

Like much of American society, the Academy has wrestled with issues of race and equality throughout its history. In 1857, for example, the Reverend William H. Furness wrote the board on behalf of an African-American man whom he described as dignified, neat in appearance, and respectful, who "informed me that he had been refused tickets of admission [to an exhibition] unless he had an express order of the Board of Directors." According to his letter and board minutes, the minister asked the board to admit to Academy shows "decent and respectable colored persons upon the same terms with decent and respectable white persons." The board, after considering the matter, resolved to inform Reverend Furness that "it has always been the Custom of the Academy to admit decent and respectable colored persons making application therefore, and who may desire either to view the works of art or study them at times deemed suitable by the Committee in attendance or by the members of the Board, and that such still continues to be the practice."[14]

The fiftieth anniversary of the Academy was celebrated quietly at the stockholders' meeting on June 2, 1856. Rembrandt Peale, one of six surviving signers of the 1805 charter, chaired the meeting. Several addresses were presented, informing the stockholders that twelve thousand visitors had been counted in the previous year, sixty-four students were enrolled in the school, the library housed one hundred fifty books, no serious financial encumbrance was suffered, and there was a pressing need to enlarge the building for more space. Toward the end of the 1860s, the growing permanent collection, the temporary and annual exhibitions, and the desire to accommodate more students led to the recognition that the building was simply too small. In 1869, the decision was made to replace the Chestnut Street building with a new structure at a different location.

The board was divided over the choice of a new site. Joseph Harrison, Jr., advocated a Fairmount Park location, while board president Caleb Cope felt that such a site was too remote, and he favored a center city site. After intense debate, the board purchased property at the corner of Broad and Cherry Streets. Harrison, who had served on the board for fifteen years, resigned in protest, certain that any lot north of City Hall was doomed to become a backwater. Later, however, Harrison's widow gave the Academy part of his fine collection of American paintings.

THE MIDDLE YEARS, 1876 TO 1905

The gala opening of the new building, designed by the architects Frank Furness and George W. Hewitt, highlighted the city's celebration of the nation's centennial in 1876. Among the speakers at the dedication ceremony, presided over by Cope's successor, James L. Claghorn, was Reverend Furness, the father of the architect. He saluted "the Rejuvenance of our venerable Academy" and hailed "the new day that now dawns upon the Beautiful Arts, that help so powerfully to gladden and refine and elevate the life of man."[15]

Fig. 5
Frederick Gutekunst, *Thomas Eakins at about age thirty-five*, 1879. Silver print, 5½ x 3 3/16 inches (14 x 9.7 cm). Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection. Purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust, 1985.68.2.19.

Inspired by the magnificent new building (see fig. 30), appreciation for the Academy's historic importance was renewed, and an ambitious board launched a forty-year period of unparalleled achievements for the institution. Among the most influential directors were Claghorn, Edward H. Coates, Henry C. Gibson, Edward T. Stotesbury, and Joseph E. Temple. The permanent collection grew by leaps and bounds, highlighted by the donation of four important art collections—from Philadelphians Joseph Harrison, Jr., Henry C. Gibson, Edward L. Carey, and John S. Phillips—that vastly expanded the Academy's trove of American and European works. The Academy board hired its first administrator to assist in the running of the institution. The first so-called secretary of the Academy was George Corliss. With the appointment in 1892 of Harrison S. Morris (1856–1948), the nation's first professional arts administrator (fig. 4), the title of the position was changed to secretary and managing director, and duties were expanded beyond secretarial tasks. Since 1983, a president has served as chief executive officer of the institution.

In spite of all its successes, when Morris assumed his duties as managing director in 1892, he found the place "a heavy tomb. . . a deep and chilling recess, a prematurely old ruin."[16] He set out to reinvigorate the venerable institution, launching a period of enlightened collecting and exhibitions. This former magazine editor was, fortuitously, a knowledgeable connoisseur, especially of modern American art. Morris cultivated friendships with contemporary American artists to attract outstanding works to the annuals. "The annual exhibitions began to respond, after a while, by taking on a national appeal," he recalled in his somewhat bitter memoir. "The notices by critics became numerous and friendly. They spread farther through the country."[17] Just before Morris's arrival, the Academy was the recipient of the Joseph E. Temple Fund, the first endowed fund for acquisitions, which enabled Morris to engineer some of the greatest acquisitions in its history. The Temple Fund also provided for a series of gold medals to be awarded for the annual exhibitions.[18]

At the same time that the annuals were attracting sizeable crowds, the special exhibitions also appealed to a large national audience. Temporary loan shows ran the gamut from architectural drawings, art posters, and photography to historical and contemporary art. Shows included American colonial portraits (1887–88); the Thomas B. Clarke Collection of American painting (1891); English Pre-Raphaelite art (1892); and a selection of American works headed for the World's Columbian Exposition (1893). The poster exhibition of 1896, with an announcement designed by Academy alumnus Maxfield Parrish, showcased works by such American artists as Edwin Austin Abbey, Will

Bradley, Edward Penfield, and John Sloan, and by Europeans such as Aubrey Beardsley, Pierre Bonnard, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The success of these exhibitions and the Academy's flourishing reputation helped the Academy's finances to prosper. An endowment fund was begun in the mid-1880s, and the City of Philadelphia appropriated funds annually in return for school scholarships and free days in the museum.

About 1880, the Academy school underwent an important change, converting its curriculum from the European-inspired atelier system to a more modern studio-oriented model. Instrumental in this change was Thomas Eakins (1844–1916). With the backing of influential board member Fairman Rogers, Eakins (fig. 5) introduced more progressive ideas about teaching art. Eakins's forceful, blunt personality, his insistence upon using nude models, and his unwillingness to respond to the board's demands for less innovative teaching methods eventually put him at odds with his overseers. Things came to a head in 1886 when, contrary to warnings from the board, he removed the loincloth from a male model in a women's life class. For this indiscretion, he was forced to resign, amidst considerable anger and resentment on both sides. In hindsight, it is the view of Kathleen A. Foster, a former Academy curator and an Eakins scholar, that the artist-instructor was "insubordinate" in flouting the board's instructions. She sees Eakins as a fascinating combination of an intentional "provocateur" who was "looking for a fight" and a naif who did not recognize how offensive his methods were in the context of Victorian propriety.[19] In his memoir, Morris described Eakins as "innocent of sexual wickedness. It would never occur to him that the human body had any other purpose than that of plastic beauty."[20]

Eakins went on to paint deeply insightful, realistic portraits (plates 76–77) that were scorned by some and admired by others. Although something of a pariah to segments of Philadelphia society and some at the Academy, he continued to exhibit in the annuals. In spite of his earlier estrangement from the Academy, in 1904 the jury for the 73rd annual awarded Eakins the Temple Gold Medal for outstanding work. After riding his bicycle to the Academy to accept the honor, he told board president Coates: "I think you've got a heap of impudence to give me a medal." Eakins then rode to the United States Mint, handed over the medal and pocketed seventy-three dollars in return.[21]

In 1985, the Academy purchased an invaluable cache of Eakins material from the widow of Eakins student and acolyte Charles Bregler. In his modest Philadelphia home, Bregler had hoarded a huge trove of drawings, oil sketches, photographs, and manuscript items. With the acquisition of these Eakins treasures, the Academy became a major center for study of this titan of American art. Since then, numerous exhibitions and publications have underscored the Academy's prominent role in all things Eakins.

Perhaps the finest woman artist closely associated with the Academy, indeed one of America's greatest female artists, Philadelphia native Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942) also taught in the school. She is represented in the collection by eleven paintings, forty oil sketches, and significant manuscript materials (plates 66–67). Recalling the successes of Beaux's paintings, Managing Director Morris—not one given to hyperbole—gushed about "the sensation aroused by her successive portraits as they appeared in the annual shows." Reflecting the high esteem in which she was held around the Academy, Morris continued: "there is. . . a kind of halo about her and her work; she was liked so well, she was so rarely talented, so unaffected, so simple, so winning and, if I may say it, so beautiful, that everybody was eager to give her the praise which she so richly deserved."[22] In 1899, when her lush double portrait *Mother and Daughter* (fig. 6), now in the Academy's collection, was awarded a first-class Gold Medal at the Carnegie Art Institute's international exhibition, William Merritt Chase pronounced Beaux "the greatest woman painter of modern times."[23]

Chase and especially Beaux introduced Impressionist technique to the painting classes at the Academy. As early as 1892, the institution had begun to lead the way in showcasing the work of American Impressionists, just emerging as a popular and enduring style. The advertisement for that year's annual proclaimed "The Dawn of New American Art: Impressionism!" The acceptance of Impressionism in this country was further advanced by the Academy's embrace of the oeuvre of ex-student and expatriate painter Mary Cassatt (plates 54–55) and the faculty presence of Beaux, Chase, Daniel Garber (plates 126–27), and, briefly, Robert Vonnoh and Theodore Robinson. Garber joined with Edward Redfield, an Academy alumnus, and other Bucks County artists to put Pennsylvania Impressionism on the map. With the popularity of Impressionism, outdoor landscape painting was added to the instructional program. Between 1917 and 1952, a hugely popular summer school was conducted in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania.

In the mid-1890s, the father of American illustration, Howard Pyle (1853–1911), offered to teach his specialty at the Academy, but the board was not interested in instruction in practical art. By the time the school's curriculum was broadened to include mural painting and illustration in 1900, Pyle was firmly ensconced at Drexel Institute and turned down the offer of a position at the Academy. Among the famous illustrators who studied at the Academy were John Sloan, Violet Oakley, Parrish, and Jessie Willcox Smith. Illustration courses continued to be offered until 1958.

By the time of its centennial in 1905, the Academy was esteemed nationally and internationally, with talented teachers, students and alumni, and collections, exhibitions, and annuals that attracted wide attention. But the focus of art-making and the art market had begun to shift to New York, where Philadelphia-born artists such as Robert Henri and other members of The Eight had moved to pursue success. A festive one-hundredth anniversary banquet was held in the Academy building on February 23, 1905 (fig. 7). The theme of the evening was pride in the institution's history and confidence about its ability to maintain its preeminence in the American art world, but many had their doubts. Recalling the occasion in his memoir, Managing Director Morris lamented the relative lack of support for the Academy from wealthy Philadelphians: "The structure we had built of friendship and patronage," he recalled, "was not any too strong. . . . There was little money to go on."[24]

More than two hundred fifty guests dined on deep-sea oysters, Philadelphia-style terrapin, quail on toast, and Nesselrode pudding, accompanied by a Pol Roger '95 and Veuve Clicqot champagne. Morris recalled that the guests represented "the cream of American Art, the quintessence of our creative life." He observed that: "Everybody known in the United States for original work in the Fine Arts was there. The names at the tables duplicated those on the surrounding pictures. . . . No recollection of mine recalls any such inclusive gathering of American artists in the annals of our art."[25]

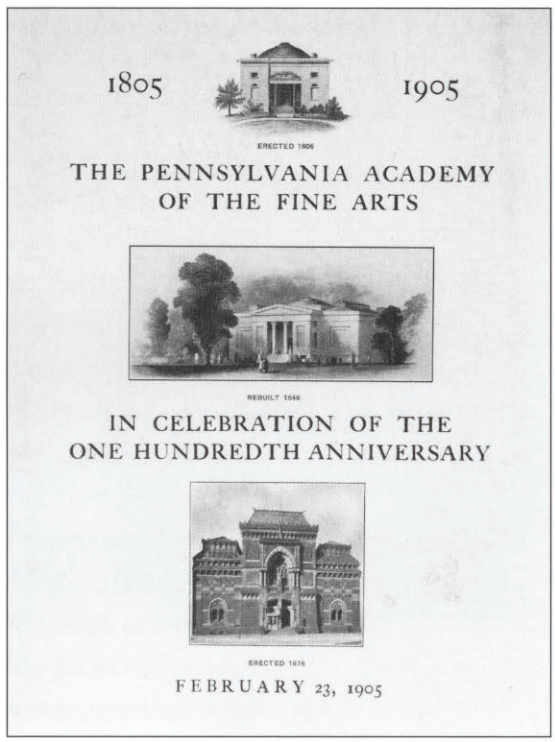


Fig. 7
Invitation to the Pennsylvania Academy's centennial banquet, 1905.

The celebratory tone was established by Academy President Edward Horner Coates (1846–1921). "It would seem," he said, "that the grandeur that was of Greece, and the glory that was of Rome, were in the souls of the men who in 1805 met in Independence Hall to found the first American Art Institution."[26] The Academy moved "steadily forward," Coates continued. "If there had been periods when the torch was slowly passed from hand to hand, the fire upon the sacred altar of art has never been extinguished, its votaries still believing that in this world we are only concerned with the superlative, and that only the excellent can continue to exist."[27] His remarks were followed

by those of Dr. Horace Howard Furness, brother of the building's architect and a noted Shakespearean scholar, who delivered a suitably lofty address. Witty remarks by lawyer Charles Biddle, descendant of two Academy founders, were followed by comments from Sir Caspar Purdon Clark, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Talcott Williams, editor of *The Philadelphia Press*. The Academy Gold Medal was awarded to seventy-two-year-old William Trost Richards, and a special centennial year Gold Medal was given to Violet Oakley.

A high point of the evening came when Coates introduced Chase as "a great painter of men, of women, and . . . of fishes . . . one who has done much for the cause of American artists."[28] Greeted with applause, cheers, and chants of "Chase! Chase!," the teacher-painter declared that the Academy "is the most important art institution in this country today." Chase went on to discuss the value of the Academy's instructional program, opportunities for students to travel and study abroad, and the difficulty of becoming a professional artist in America. "I seek to inspire my students . . . with the thought that they have entered a magnificently noble profession," he continued, to applause. After observing that "the artist, in every other part of the world that I know of, England, France, Germany, yes, even in Japan, is respected very highly," Chase bemoaned the lack of appreciation for artists in America and urged support for their efforts in this country.[29] It was an appropriate coda to an upbeat, optimistic commemoration of an institution that still regarded itself as the lynchpin of America's artistic expression.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1906 TO 2000

As the Academy moved into its second century, the venerable institution failed to respond to new art movements and, as a result, lost contact with the contemporary art world. The Academy's reputation for being a stodgy, conservative place was shaped largely by the profile of its annual and special exhibitions, the content of its permanent collection, and the traditional teaching methods of its school. There was serious outside competition from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which among others, attracted avant-garde artists who, in earlier eras, might have gravitated to the Academy.

In the years after 1905, the Academy's record of exhibitions was a mix of the daring and the conservative. In 1908, immediately after an exhibition by The Eight at the Macbeth Gallery stunned the New York art world with its gritty scenes of urban life, the same show opened at the Academy. Five of The Eight had studied at the Academy—Henri, Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and William Glackens. Bound together by styles and friendships developed in Philadelphia, they paved the way for modernism in America.

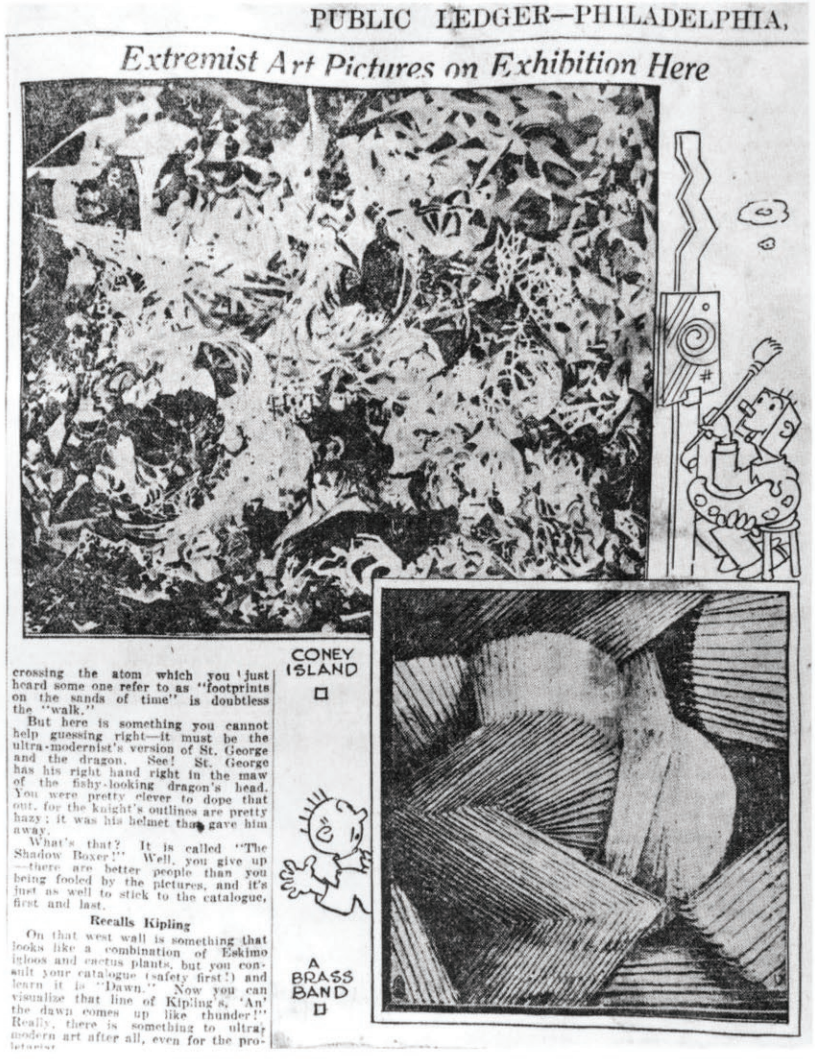
The 1913 Armory Show in New York introduced the country to works of the European avant-garde and to American modernists such as Arthur B. Carles, Stuart Davis, and Marsden Hartley. The Academy followed with forays into the new styles. While the Academy's commitment to modernism was more tentative and less pronounced than its interest in Impressionism, the presence on the faculty of avant-garde stalwarts such as Carles, Hugh Breckenridge, and Henry McCarter signaled interest in fresh styles. Carles (1882–1952), a gifted avant-garde painter and a brilliant colorist, was a particularly influential advocate for modernism during his tenure as an instructor from 1917 to 1925 (plates 120–21).

Although many students tended to work in representational styles attuned to the conservative leanings of Philadelphians, some real stars of early American modernism emerged from the Academy. As former Academy curator Sylvia Yount observed, artists such as Davis, Charles Demuth, John Marin, Morton Schamberg, and Charles Sheeler proved that "sometimes, in spite of itself, the Academy has cultivated the more progressive impulses of its student body."[30]

In the wake of World War I, the Academy hosted three modernist exhibitions that helped to promote popular appreciation for the new styles. In 1920, Academy instructors Breckenridge, McCarter, and Carles, assisted by local artist and collector Carroll S. Tyson, Jr., and Academy alumnus and modernist convert William H. Yarrow, organized the exhibition *Paintings and Drawings by Representative Modern Masters.* Most of its two hundred fifty-four works were by European artists, such as Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, and Manet, and early avant-gardists Braque, Derain, Matisse, and Picasso. The only Americans included in the exhibition, which drew forty-five thousand visitors, were Cassatt, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, and James McNeill Whistler.

The *Modern Masters* catalogue foreword was written by conductor Leopold Stokowski, who, once he had taken over the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1912, had successfully educated conservative Philadelphians about the merits of progressive composers such as Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, and Arnold Schoenberg. He urged viewers to accept with equal enthusiasm styles advanced by modern painters such as Cézanne, Degas, and Matisse.

A year later, in 1921, an even bolder exhibition of avant-garde art, *Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings Showing the Later Tendencies in Art,* opened at the Academy. A committee headed by Yarrow and including Thomas Hart Benton, Arthur B. Carles, Joseph Stella, and Alfred Stieglitz limited the exhibition to work by Americans, choosing two hundred eighty paintings and works on paper by eighty-eight artists. It featured diverse art ranging from figurative painters such as Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, and John Sloan to European-inspired modernists such as Carles, MacDonald-Wright, Stella, Alfred Maurer, Man Ray, and Max Weber. Distinctively American progressives on view included Benton (then a modernist), Carles, Hartley, Marin, Demuth, Arthur G. Dove, Georgia O'Keeffe, Schamberg, Sheeler, and Florine Stettheimer. *Later Tendencies in Art* "marked the first comprehensive display of American modernist works in an American museum."[31] The show drew large crowds and earned favorable reviews from such respected critics as Thomas Craven, who praised the "conservative" Academy for its "new vision" and said that it had performed an "immense service" to modernism by opening its hallowed galleries to such an array of talented American artists.[32] A few critics responded negatively to the show, attacking it as representing the work of radicals, even madmen (fig. 8). Nonetheless, the Academy's example advanced popular acceptance of an unfamiliar art and encouraged other museums to mount modernist exhibitions. The Academy followed this forward-thinking show with a third modern display, the 1923 exhibition of the collection of Albert C. Barnes. Critics vilified the works, especially those by Chaim Soutine, rehashing the uproar of 1921.


PUBLIC LEDGER—PHILADELPHIA,

Extremist Art Pictures on Exhibition Here

crossing the atom which you 'just heard some one refer to as "footprints on the sands of time" is doubtless the "walk."

But here is something you cannot help guessing right—it must be the ultra-modernist's version of St. George and the dragon. See! St. George has his right hand right in the maw of the fishy-looking dragon's head. You were pretty clever to dope that out, for the knight's outlines are pretty hazy; it was his helmet that gave him away.

What's that? It is called "The Shadow Boxer!" Well, you give up—there are better people than you being fooled by the pictures, and it's just as well to stick to the catalogue, first and last.

Recalls Kipling

On that west wall is something that looks like a combination of Eskimo igloos and cactus plants, but you consult your catalogue (safety first!) and learn it is "Dawn." Now you can visualize that line of Kipling's, 'An' the dawn comes up like thunder!" Really, there is something to ultra-modern art after all, even for the pro-

CONEY ISLAND

A BRASS BAND

Fig. 8
"Extremist Art Pictures on Exhibition Here," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, April 17, 1921.

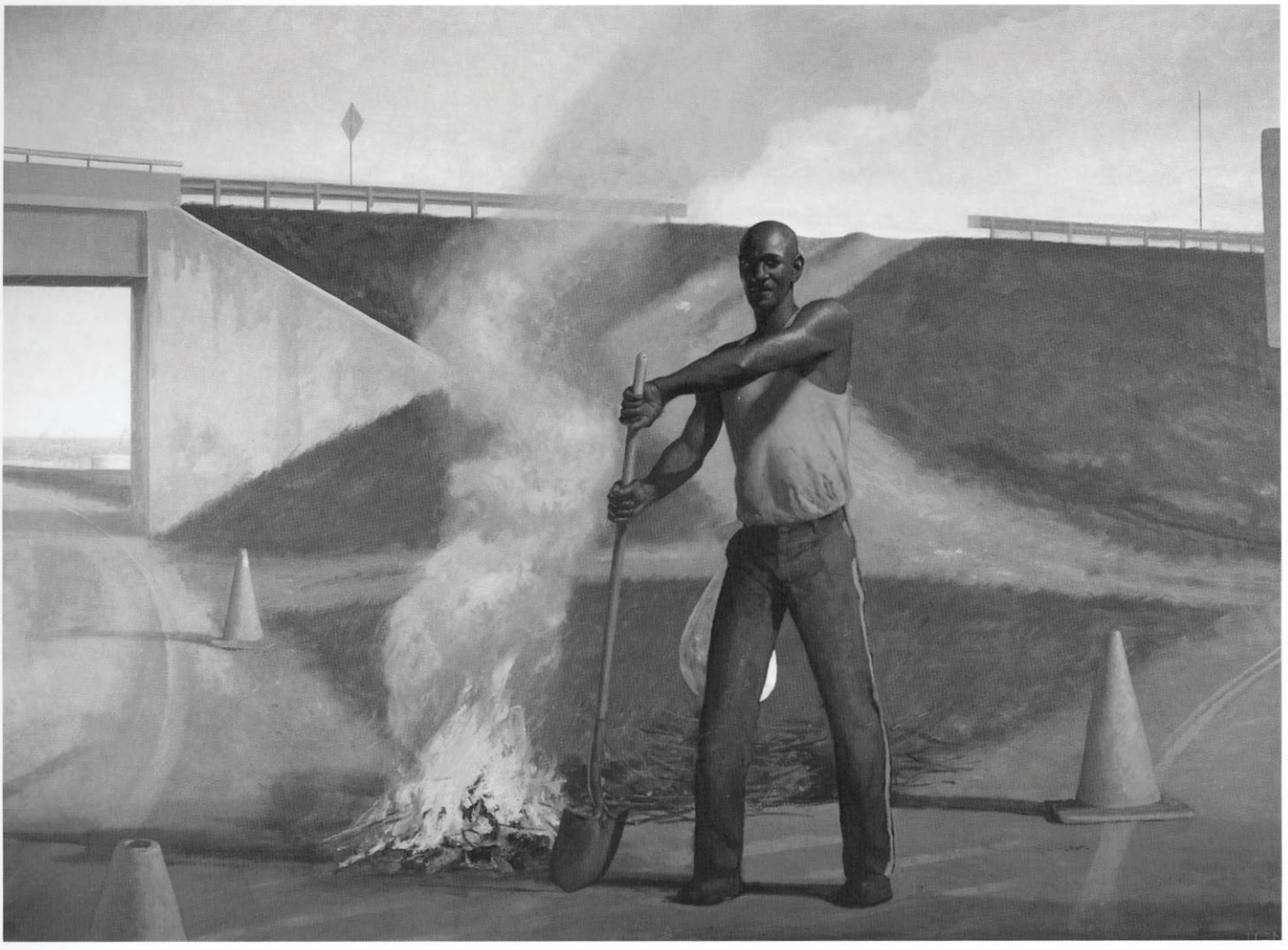


Fig. 9
Bo Bartlett, *Tender*, 1993. Oil on canvas, 61 ¾ x 83 ¾ inches (156.8 x 212.7 cm). Anonymous gift, 1993.4.

After the modernist shows, the Academy annuals, which continued in a fairly formulaic manner until 1969, became the main focus of the exhibition program. The rise of nationalist sentiment and the trauma of the Great Depression brought work by the then-progressive regionalist and social realist artists to the Academy. But even with these current trends reflected, the annuals became increasingly conventional. For years, little abstract or Expressionist art was shown, reflecting the sense of conservatism and insularity surrounding the Academy. After World War II, when New York had replaced Paris as the center of world art and Abstract Expressionism became the rage, it was represented in annuals, but rarely was added to the collection. Realism dominated the Academy's acquisitions. The school, anchored by such teachers as Hobson Pittman and Franklin Watkins, maintained its figurative tradition, offering a strong academic, studio-based curriculum, with emphasis on drawing from casts and live models.

The stolid and essentially old-fashioned profile of the Academy before and after the middle of the twentieth century was solidified under the conservative leadership of Joseph Fraser (1898–1989), who served as director from 1936 to 1969. Trained as an architect, he ran the Academy's summer school in Chester Springs before becoming head of the Academy. Fraser "provided continuity, but comparatively little growth," according to Frank H. Goodyear, Jr. "The Academy had become a 'slumbering giant,' a reference to the widely held recognition of its tremendous assets."[33]

The Academy's one hundred fiftieth anniversary in 1955 featured numerous events, the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp, and the *One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition*. The show comprised more than three hundred works by twenty-five artists, both histori-

cal and contemporary, with ties to the Academy. Hailed by critics as a comprehensive reflection of the American spirit, it drew large crowds on a tour of six European cities.

The influence of renowned art historian and board member Edgar P. Richardson in the late 1960s, and the brief tenure of Thomas B. Armstrong as director in the early 1970s, ignited a new era at the Academy. In addition, the first full-time professional curator, Frank H. Goodyear, Jr., joined the staff. Increasingly adventurous exhibitions of nontraditional artists, as well as shows devoted to historical American art were shown. After the annual exhibitions ended in 1969, the Academy encouraged trends in contemporary art through special exhibitions by alumni such as Raymond Saunders and by artists from outside the region such as Richard Diebenkorn (plate 186). Some examples of newer, more abstract art were added to the collection. "The Academy collection," Richardson observed in 1974, "is not a world-encompassing museum, like the Metropolitan or the Louvre, but it is, like the city in which it was created and established, symbolic of the traditions and heritage upon which the present and future will build."[34]

In 1978, at the behest of Goodyear, the Morris Gallery was established to exhibit contemporary work by artists with Philadelphia ties, including site-specific installations and performance art. In addition, more conventional exhibitions focusing on art associated with the Academy or its traditions helped spread knowledge of the institution's heritage and collections. Richard J. Boyle, a respected art historian, came from the Cincinnati Art Museum to serve as director of the Academy from 1973 to 1982. He and then board president Charles E. Mather III spearheaded the careful, historically accurate restoration of the century-old building, completed in 1976. The project confirmed, he stated, that the building is "itself a work of art." He regards it as "an extraordinary place. . . . One of the great places in the art world."[35]

Building the collection was emphasized following the restoration of the Academy. Initial acquisitions emphasized contemporary American realism, consistent with the institution's traditions. Works by realist painters William Bailey, Rackstraw Downes, Alex Katz, Philip Pearlstein, and Neil Welliver were acquired. As a new century approached, efforts to show and collect a variety of contemporary art accelerated. In recent years, the Academy has expanded the scope of its permanent trove by acquiring works by such diverse artists as Red Grooms, Jacob Lawrence, Robert Motherwell, Louis Nevelson, Frank Stella, David Smith, and Jack Tworkov. The museum has yet to represent the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as comprehensively as it does the nineteenth.

Over the last half century, the Academy school has broadened its curriculum, offering printmaking, new sculpture techniques, and experimental multimedia options. In 1988, the purchase and reconfiguration of the 1301 Cherry Street property provided the school with an up-to-date instructional facility. The reemergence of representational art—the New Realism—in the closing decades of the twentieth century found many adherents among the school's faculty and students. "The Academy has come back into fashion by remaining what it was all the time," says artist and veteran instructor Peter Paone.[36] Jeffrey Carr, Dean of Academic Affairs at the Academy, put it thus: "We're mainly a painting school. Painting's not dead. We're in terrific shape as representational painting has come back with a vengeance."[37] Among recent alumni who have made their mark in the art world are such varied talents as Bo Bartlett (fig. 9), Brett Bigbee, Moe Booker, Vincent Desiderio, Renée P. Foulks, Sarah McEneaney, Douglas E. Martenson, and Jody Pinto.

As its third century approached, the Academy expanded its facilities, opening the Samuel M. V. Hamilton building across the street on the northeast corner of Broad and Cherry Streets. It houses seven floors of school classrooms and studios and offers an outdoor painting terrace, library, student lounge, café, and galleries. An underground concourse will connect the Furness and Hamilton buildings, creating a single campus for the first time in forty years. In consolidating the museum and school,

the Academy enters a new era with increased exhibition space to accommodate major loan shows and state-of-the-art facilities for staff, faculty, students, and visitors. The 1876 structure, a National Historic Landmark, continues to provide a venue for the display of the permanent collection.

THE ACADEMY'S THIRD CENTURY, 2005 AND BEYOND

As the Academy celebrates its two-hundredth anniversary, Derek A. Gillman, who became the President and Edna S. Tuttleman Director in 2001, observed that "Museums and schools go through cycles, moving in and out of fashion, and need to be judged over long periods of time." The Academy, he says, "doesn't have to follow fashion, but must know what is going on in the world."[38] Gillman acknowledges significant gaps in the Academy's collection, leading to a selective "wish list" of desired acquisitions. But a de Kooning or a Pollock is simply too expensive for the Academy to purchase; it has to rely on donations. On the other hand, Gillman points out, we "try not to miss good works [by contemporary artists] now on the market."[39]

Seventy-five years ago, Harrison Morris observed that on its one-hundredth anniversary, the Academy was "at the topmost reach of its history." He went on to speculate about its "possibilities for the future, for culture in beauty and taste, for the education of rising talent; for gathering into knowledge of the best things the tragic masses of ignorance—all these uses [the Academy might serve] with growing power."[40] Morris's vision of the Academy's mission remains relevant to this day. A forum for diverse ideas, it looks toward a future in which a multiplicity of artists, styles, methodologies, and cultures engage in a lively dialogue with each other and the public.

Looking to the future, President Gillman says that he wants the "Academy to be seen as a place where intelligent art is made. It should be thought of again as a place where things are going on of importance to the nation and the world."[41] An enduring fusion of past, present, and future, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, on its two-hundredth anniversary, is poised to carry on its mission to develop American artists and to enhance appreciation for their work, and to continue its contributions to the national and international art worlds.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the primary sources cited below are in the archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

1. Benjamin Franklin to Charles Willson Peale, July 4, 1771, in *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, 4 vols., ed. Lillian B. Miller (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 99–100.

2. *Articles of Association, Dec. 26, 1805, of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.*

3. Charles Willson Peale to Thomas Jefferson, June 13, 1805, in Miller, ed., 1992, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 850–52.

4. Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Charles Willson Peale, July 17, 1805, *ibid.*, p. 866. In reference to this letter, the editors of the Peale papers note that "cookery meant the practice of falsifying."

5. Charles Willson Peale to Thomas Jefferson, *ibid.*, p. 953.

6. Thomas Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, *ibid.*, p. 970. There is no evidence in the Pennsylvania Academy Archives that Jefferson ever sent his contribution.

7. Benjamin West to the Pennsylvania Academy, September 18, 1805.

8. Joseph Hopkinson, *The First Annual Discourse*, 1810, p. 6.

9. Resolutions of [the] Committee of Arrangements and Inspection [for the Annual Exhibition], April 22, 1811. Reproduced in Miller, ed., 1992, vol. 3, pp. 89–90.

10. Frank H. Goodyear, Jr., "A History of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1805–1976," in *In This Academy: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1805–1976* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1976), p. 25.

11. John Merryman, "Case Notes: The Marquis de Somerueles," *International Journal of Cultural Property*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1996), pp. 319–21.

12. "Destruction of the Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia," *The Illustrated London News*, July 19, 1845, pp. 37–38.

13. See Christine Jones Huber, *The Pennsylvania Academy and Its Women, 1850–1920* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1974), p. 12.

14. The Reverend William H. Furness to the Pennsylvania Academy, May 4, 1857, and Academy board minutes of April 13, 1857.

15. Quoted in Goodyear, 1976, p. 33.

16. Harrison S. Morris, *Confessions in Art* (New York: Sears Publishing Company, 1930), p. 59.

17. *Ibid.*

18. For a list of recipients of the Temple Medal, see *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*, 3 vols., ed. Peter Hastings Falk (Madison, Connecticut: Sound View Press, 1989), vol. 1, p. 36, and vol. 2, p. 31.

19. Interview with author, February 11, 2004.

20. Morris, 1930, p. 31.

21. Lloyd Goodrich, *Thomas Eakins*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press for the National Gallery of Art, 1982), vol. 2, p. 201.

22. Morris, 1930, p. 196.

23. See Nancy Mowl Mathews, " 'The Greatest Woman Painter': Cecilia Beaux, Mary Cassatt, and Issues of Female Fame," in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (special issue), vol. 124, no. 3 (July 2000), p. 308.

24. Morris, 1930, p. 219.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

26. *Report of Addresses at the Banquet Given in Celebration of the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Academy of Fine Arts*, p. 2.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

30. Sylvia Yount, "The Academy Legacy," in *The Unbroken Line: A Suite of Exhibitions Celebrating the Centennial of the Fellowship of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1997), p. 19.

31. In 1996, the Academy recreated *Later Tendencies in Art* in the exhibition *To Be Modern: American Encounters with Cézanne and Company*, featuring more than fifty works shown in 1921, along with pertinent art from the Academy's collection. See Sylvia Yount and Elizabeth Johns, *To Be Modern: American Encounters with Cézanne and Company* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in association with the University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

32. Thomas Jewell Craven, "The Awakening of the Academy," *Dial*, vol. 70 (June 1921), pp. 673–78.

33. Goodyear, 1976, p. 46.

34. Edgar P. Richardson, "Introduction," *Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Appointment Calendar*, 1974, n.p.

35. Telephone interview with the author, February 23, 2004.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Interview with the author, February 10, 2004.

38. Telephone interview with the author, February 23, 2004.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Morris, 1930, p. 220.

41. Telephone interview with the author, February 23, 2004.