

Alfred Bader Fine Arts.

Obituaries - Paintings

[1974-2002]

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Wolfgang was my best art historical friend (he wrote the introduction of my collections catalog) - and I miss him terribly.

## a tribute to Wolfgang Stechow

Wolfgang (Ferdinand Ernst Günther) Stechow was born in Kiel, Germany, on the 5th day of June, 1896. His early education was in the humanistic gymnasium in Göttingen, where he studied Latin, Greek, French, English—a foundation for the talents which allowed him his delight in translanguag puns and word-play—and progressive mathematics. He gave his spare time to music—accompanying his singer mother and playing in various chamber groups.

Wolf's World War I stint in the cavalry ended with an opportunity to add Russian to his store of languages, during two and a half years in a Siberian prison camp. Happily, music and musical instruments, provided at the camp by the YMCA and Red Cross, enabled him, also, to further his mastery of the violin.

His university career, begun at Freiburg, but interrupted by the war, was resumed at Göttingen, where, after receiving a Ph.D. in the history of Northern Renaissance and Baroque art, he began teaching in 1926, rising by 1931 to the rank of Professor Extraordinarius. The musical side of Wolf's life continued, with collaboration in the first revival of a Händel opera, helping to found the Göttingen Händel Festival, and serving for twelve years as conductor of the Academic orchestra.

In 1936, Nazi pressures and a call to teach at the University of Wisconsin brought Wolf and his family to the United States. It was at Madison, as Mrs. Stechow has written, that "he... truly (found) and spread his teaching wings to full potential, and... became a teacher among 'contemporaries of all ages,' a guide who led his students with great care to their own knowledge, taught them to see—which is to search, to find, to think, to prove, and to go back, to do it all with joy."

He came to Oberlin in 1940. The gifted students he found here, the museum, the library, and the music helped him to resist many tempting offers from other institutions. For this we are forever grateful. Generations of Oberlin students have prized the experience of exploring Northern Renaissance and Baroque art and the history of prints with him. They have also enjoyed his extraordinary personal warmth, friendliness, integrity, and nobility.

Wolf retired in 1963, but he did not really retire. A series of visiting professorships at Michigan, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Vassar, Yale, Williams, U.C.L.A., and, finally, Princeton, followed. He also spent occasional semesters here. During 1967-68 he served as Acting Director of the Allen Art Museum, and three years ago was Oberlin's Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Scholarship was a way of life for Wolf. His bibliography contains over 200 items, with articles in all of the major art journals in the United States and Europe. His four principal books, among them his *magnum opus*, *Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century*, are looked upon with

respect and enthusiastic approval by other scholars in the field. He served as Editor of the *Art Bulletin*, and for the past seven years he edited the *Bulletin* of the Allen Art Museum. The first complete catalogue of Oberlin's collection of European and American Painting and Sculpture, published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Museum, was compiled under his direction, and he recently completed a companion catalogue of the Museum's drawings. He held both the Martin and Baldwin Lectureships.

Honorary degrees, conferred by the University of Michigan, Oberlin, and Baldwin-Wallace Colleges, were among the many honors that came to Wolf over the years. On his 75th birthday, he was surprised and delighted to learn that over 160 of his ex-students, colleagues, museum directors, dealers, and scholars from all over the world had made contributions to fund the Wolfgang Stechow Print Study Room for the new addition to the museum. In 1972, he was named Kress Professor in Residence at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and last year he was appointed Honorary Curator of the Oberlin Museum, whose acknowledged excellence owes so much to his care and connoisseurship.

But what Wolf considered to be his greatest honor came in 1972, when he was invited by the German government to deliver the inaugural lecture for the major Albrecht Dürer exhibition in Nuremberg, celebrating the artist's 500th birthday. The audience included the President of the German Republic, the Head of the Government of Bavaria, and the Lord Mayor of Nuremberg. Wolf, who 50 years earlier had written his dissertation on Dürer, worked very hard on that lecture and, not surprisingly, it was received with enthusiasm.

Our great fortune, at Oberlin, in being able to claim Wolf as one of our own is confirmed in the following comments, delivered in connection with a memorial lecture at Princeton by Professor Rensselaer Lee:

Wolf Stechow was... one of the three or four finest examples of successful transplantation from his motherland to America, which, beginning in the 1930's so greatly enriched the study of history of art in this country. But he was, I think, unique among these scholars in the human breadth and range of his influence, for he devoted a great deal more time to teaching undergraduates than graduate students... Not only during his long tenure at Oberlin, but at other centers of learning where he held visiting professorships, his rare qualities as a vigorous scholar and perceptive humanist of impeccable standards of integrity, his love for art so warmly and easily conveyed, his gentle and discerning humor, in fact the extraordinary purity and selflessness of his nature made their deep impression on hundreds of young Americans, winning him loyal disciples... and many affectionate friends.

—Paul B. Arnold  
Chairman, Art Department  
Oberlin College

The above represents a slightly edited version of a memorial tribute delivered on November 26, 1974 to the faculty of Oberlin College.



# A Notable Editor

Benedict Nicolson, who died suddenly at the age of sixty-three on 22 May, was one of the most distinguished English art historians of his generation. He was born into the purple. His father, Harold Nicolson, was a diplomat, man of letters and politician, and his mother, Vita Sackville West, was an author and creator of a great garden at Sissinghurst. In Ben, Sackville West was mixed with that of the gypsy Pepita and in later years he began to resemble a figure from an El Greco. Although he never liked to admit it, he was a typical English aristocrat, but without a degree of eccentricity; he could have been a milord in settecento Rome.

As a young man he had thought of becoming a painter and had studied under John Friesz—a typical Bloomsbury choice. He soon realized that his bent was art history, on a rare subject in England. He travelled to the United States and worked under Berenson and Tatti and on the eve of the War he became Deputy-Surveyor of the King's Pictures.

After the War, in which he saw active service in the Middle East and Italy, he returned to his old job, but in 1947 he accepted the post of Editor of the *Burlington Magazine*. He was the right man in the right place and during the forty years he ran the magazine he saw it grow in strength to strength.

He was a notable Editor. He was a stern holder of impartial scholarship and independent principles. He was immensely hardworking. He wrote editorials, laid out the paper, titivated manuscripts and read proofs with a sharp eye. He also did many translations from the Italian. He loved to encourage the young. Many historians all over the world were indebted to him for his patience and understanding. He never played the 'Herr Professor' and if he wished to make a suggestion he did so with a diplomatic skill that would have pleased his paternal grandparent, Lord Rockingham. He was always generous with his knowledge and, typical of his generation, he would answer letters by return of post.

He had a wide-ranging curiosity. He had started his career by writing about Seurat and rare quattrocento painting, but then turned to the seventeenth century. He was lucky in his generation, for he matured during a period when Caravaggesque painting was seriously studied; he was 'in the movement', his old friend Clive Bell would have said. He was able to buy some important pictures for small sums.

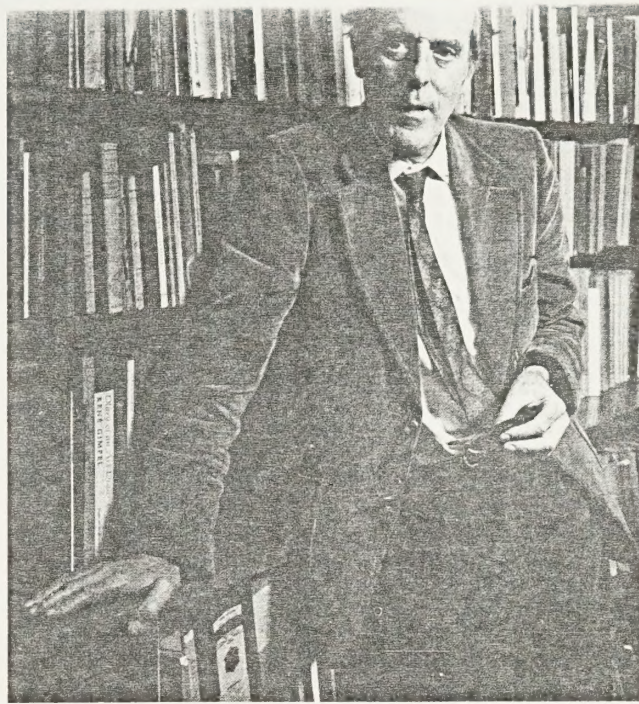
His contribution to the history of the art of his period was considerable. He published his major monograph on Terbrugghen in 1958 that virtually made this artist's reputation; it was followed by one on Georges de la Tour (1641-74) in collaboration with Christopher Wright and he published many fundamental articles in the *Burlington Magazine* and other periodicals. He also wrote a book on Wright of Derby and an exhibition catalogue of John Timmer's work.

He had a passion for candlelight painting and was one of the first to recognize the international character of the genre. His grasp of the affiliations of the Caravaggesque movement led him to compile a volume of a selection of paintings in this style, in the manner of those made by BB for early Italian painting. This volume, which has been accepted for publication by the Phaidon Press, will crown

1. *Benedict Nicolson (1914-78)*

2. *Detail from The Woman with a Flea by Georges de la Tour (1593-1652). Oil on canvas. Musée Historique Lorrain de Nancy*

3. *Singing Lute-player by Hendrick Terbrugghen (1588-1629), 1624. Oil on canvas, 100.3 x 78.7 cm. National Gallery, London*

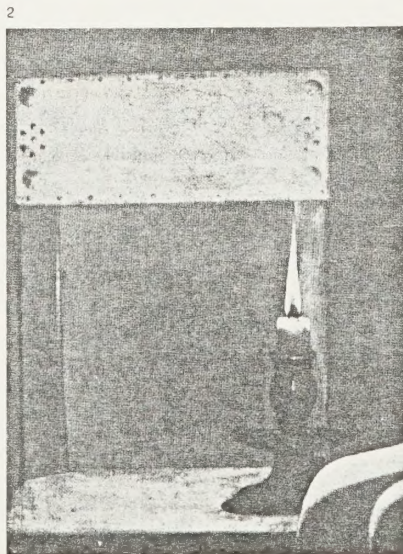


1

Photograph by Ben Schwartz

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Ben's role in the development of the history of art in England was a major one. He was a figure of international importance who had friends in many countries, and who had a particular love for Holland and Italy: his former wife the art historian, Luisa Vertova, is Italian.



2



3

Even if one did not always agree with his views and one was sometimes perplexed by his lack of worldliness, it was impossible to fall out with him. He was transparently genuine; all the same he was rather shrewder than he let on. Like Roger Fry, a previous Editor of *The Burlington*, he was a born Bohemian, who cared little for creature comforts. He had an endearing personality. He was a good companion who loved laughter and wine: he had a dry humour and was never malicious. He adored his daughter Vanessa; he loved his friends, and I treasure his memory not only as a lively and warm colleague, but as the patient instructor of three young boys in the entertaining art of playing Grandmother's footsteps. That was the essence of Ben's character. He was devoted to art history, but not to the exclusion of an interest in human beings.

DENYS SUTTON

*Gradually I am losing many of my good friends.*



# Benedict Nicolson A Notable Editor

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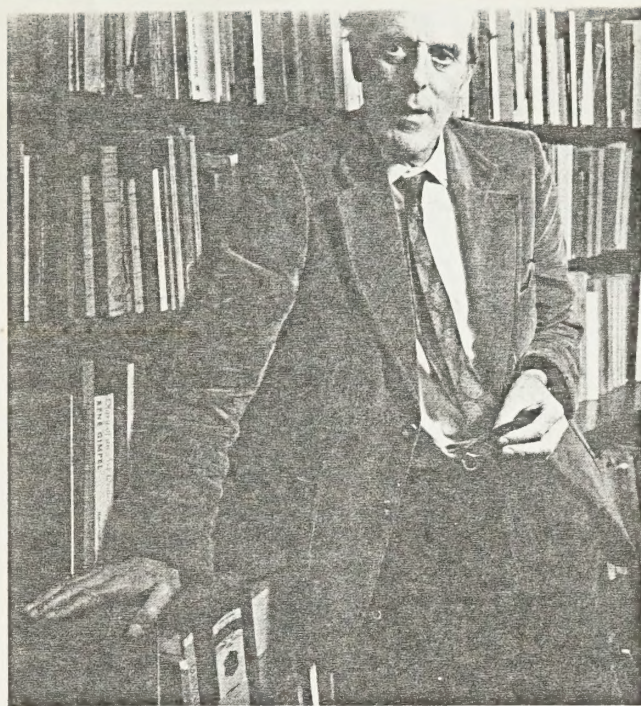
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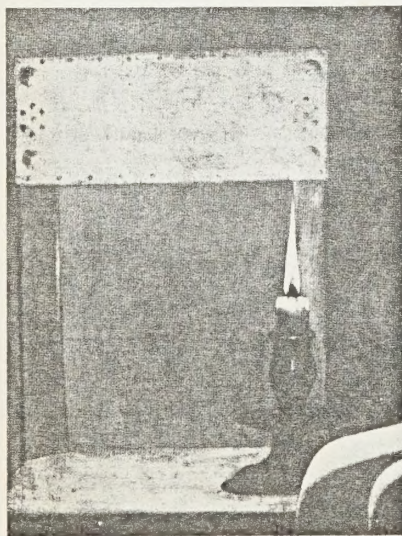
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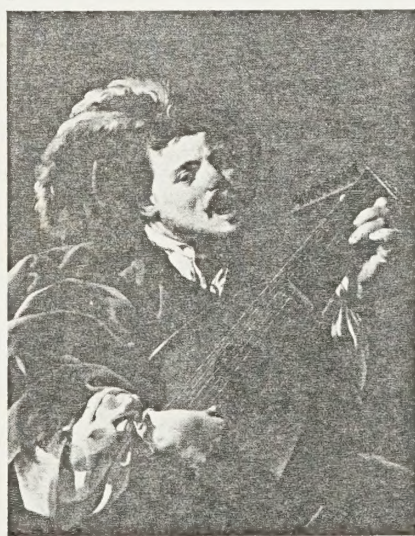
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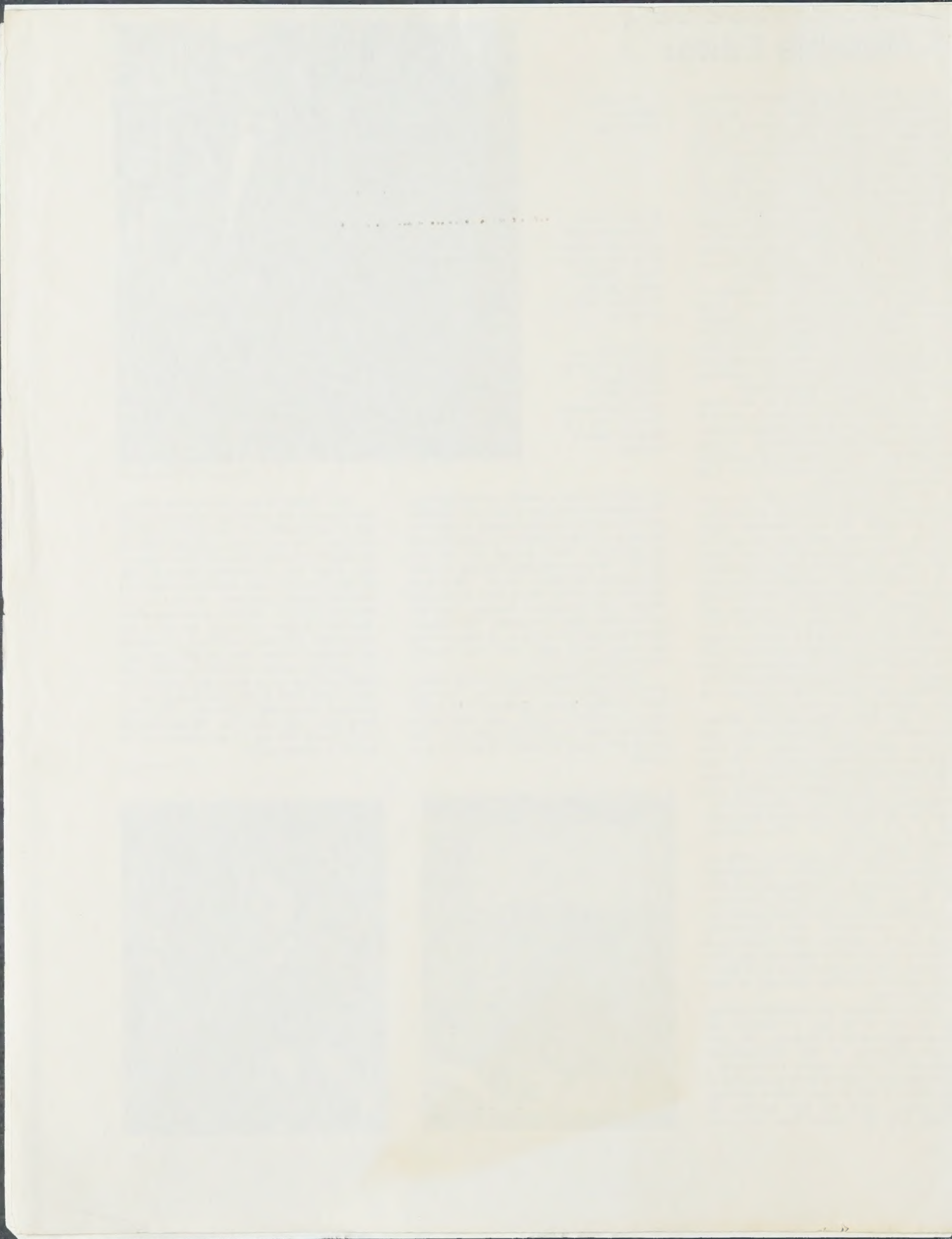


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DENYS SUTTON





# £20m art collection waits for a new home

By Stanley Baldwin

An art collection valued at more than £20m may go to the Courtauld Institute of Art under the terms of the will of a lifetime bachelor collector who died in London last Thursday.

The owner of the collection, Count Antoine Seilern, had for long made known his intention to leave the paintings and drawings, which include three Michaelangelos and 23 Rubens, to the Courtauld Institute.

But the Government's intention to set up a wealth tax made him have second thoughts. Until the will is given probate the destination of the masterpieces remains a mystery.

A relative said last night: "The testament has not yet been opened. Until it is we cannot know what will happen to the pictures".

Count Seilern, who was 77, started to acquire paintings as a young man and was adding to his collection almost up to his death.

Although far from a recluse, he was not generally known to the public. He was not in *Who's Who* and his name does not appear in the art books. But he and his collection are well known to London art experts.

A leading figure of the commercial art world said that at the most conservative estimate the collection must be valued at more than £20m. The sale of the von Hirsch collection in London last month realized £18,468,000.

The Seilern collection includes 23 works by Rubens, three by Michaelangelo, two by Breughel the Elder, and others by Tiepolo and Cezanne. One Rubens, "Moonlight Landscape", was once owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Mr Michael Levey, Director of the National Gallery, rates Count Seilern's collection as "one of the most important, if not the most important, private collection in England. It includes a marvellous series of oil sketches by Tiepolo for altarpieces in a Spanish church".

Count Seilern, a member of an old Austrian family, was born in England. His mother was American, and he never married.

His affection for the Courtauld Institute goes back a long way. He studied at Vienna University under the late Professor Johannes Wilde, who later came to England as a refugee and gave lectures at the Courtauld. Count Seilern was fond of referring to himself as a pupil and devotee of Wilde.

All the works, together with a number of illuminated manuscripts, were on display at Count Seilern's house in Princes Gate, near Hyde Park.

Mr Hugh Leggatt, the art dealer and secretary of Heritage in Danger, said last night: "We are all rather keeping our fingers crossed that this marvellous collection could be going to the Courtauld Institute. If it does so it will be the most important bequest that a public institution in this country has received since the war."

# public meeting by-election at

From John Chartres  
Manchester

No further attempts are to be made by the National Front to hold public meetings in the by-election at Manchester, Moss Side.

That was stated yesterday by Mr Michael Cowley, agent for Mr Herbert Andrew, the Front candidate, after the failure of a second attempt through the courts to reverse Manchester City Council's refusal to allow the party the use of school premises before polling day on Thursday.

Violence broke out last Saturday when the Front attempted to hold an open-air meeting. Mr Cowley said yesterday: "It was quite frightening and there will be no question of us attempting another meeting of this kind." The party's solicitors were considering the possibility of trying to have the by-election declared null and void.

Mr Martin Webster, the Front's national organizer, said its main efforts would be devoted towards the legal challenge against Manchester corporation, which is already the subject of a parallel action in the Queen's Bench Divisional Court. An appeal would also be lodged against a decision at Manchester County Court yesterday.

Mr Webster said he thought that action to have the election declared null and void might depend on the results. "I am not a lawyer, however", he said. "It will be up to our solicitors to consider that course of action."

## Labour ban on hunting nearer

By George Clark  
Political Correspondent

Mr James Callaghan's advice to the Labour Party that it should not become committed to banning fox hunting and beagling was rejected last night by the party's home policy committee, of which Mr Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for Energy, is chairman.

By eight votes to three the committee decided to send back to the national executive for possible inclusion in the next election manifesto a proposal that those forms of hunting should be included in the ban, with hare coursing and stag hunting.

A statement by Mrs Barbara Castle, MP for Blackburn, excluding fox hunting and beagling, was rejected, and the manifesto commitment on banning field sports will come before Mr Callaghan and the national executive for decision on July 26.

Mr Callaghan has been warned that many votes will be lost if Labour promises to make illegal fox hunting, beagling, hare coursing and stag hunting with dogs. Against that view is the opinion that votes could be won by commitment to a wide-ranging animal protection reform, including provisions about the transport of animals for export.

He has made clear that even if the national executive recom-

# PROFILE

## Ulrich Middeldorf

It is appropriate that one of the foremost authorities on Casanova should reside in a street in Florence with the name of via de' Serragli. There, in a calm and exquisitely furnished ground-floor of a house with historical associations live Ulrich Middeldorf and his wife. They are surrounded by treasures they have picked up over the years, and which include a sketch by Barocci, a Han bronze, a superb Louis XIV bracket clock and enchanting textiles. There is also a marvellous library, rich in unique items.

Ulrich Middeldorf is not usually thought of as wearing a Casanova 'hat', but it is an indication of the variety of his knowledge that he should be able to do so; he is one of the Editors of *Casanova Gleanings*. Middeldorf is more generally known, especially to the readers of *APOLLO* and other art reviews, as an authority on Italian art of the Renaissance, particularly its sculpture and medals.

The Middelfords are a German family with Dutch ancestry which had strong links with Brunswick, which was also the city of Wilhelm von Bode. Middeldorf's father was a mining engineer who worked in Saxony. Ulrich was born there in 1901 and passed his youth in a comfortable patrician home where he grew to love the countryside.

Middeldorf soon became interested in the history of art and in 1920-21 attended the University of Munich, studying under Wölfflin and A. L. Mayer. Mayer taught him to look at pictures carefully and always to be armed with a magnifying glass. Middeldorf then proceeded to Berlin, where his professor was Adolph Goldschmidt, an authority on medieval art, particularly ivories. In those days students of the history of art were relatively few; one formidable hurdle to be faced was an examination in Greek. Middeldorf set to and learnt the language.

Goldschmidt took kindly to Middeldorf, who remembers a splendid painting by J. de Momper that hung in his house; the Professor would arrange for his young pupil to visit private collections, including that of Arnhold, which was rich in Impressionists. Life was hard in Berlin of the 1920s; Middeldorf recalls that the daughter of Hugo von Hofmannstahl would run a canteen for students. He also remembers going with his father to hear one of the last lectures by the famous classical scholar, Wilamitz-Moellendorf, an event which had the appeal of a performance by a musical virtuoso. He also came into the circle of Bode; he admired him and was influenced by his eclectic taste, but he was conscious of his toughness.

Sculpture already intrigued Middeldorf. In 1924 he passed his doctorate with a thesis on 'Thuringian-Sassonian sculpture 1250-1350', which remains unpublished. It was while spending his Sunday mornings in the Kaiser

Friedrich Museum that he became fascinated by the bronze plaquettes of Moderno.

Middeldorf was born under a lucky star. He was given a fellowship at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence in the same year, and when this came to an end in 1926 he became Keeper of the photograph library at the Institute and sometimes even acted as its Director. These were happy years; Florence was full of an interesting cosmopolitan crowd of writers, artists, historians and dilettanti. He met such people as Norman Douglas and Reggie Turner and formed one of the circle that would gather on Sunday afternoons at the hospitable house of Georg Gronau. Another friend was Baron Detlev von Hadeln, a leading expert on Venetian art.



1. Ulrich Middeldorf. This refined connoisseur and exacting scholar was Director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence until his retirement in 1968

Middeldorf also travelled abroad; when in London he would stay in Sir Robert Witt's house in Portman Square, which was as notable for the good looks of the girls who worked in the library as for the extent of the collection of photographs. Middeldorf encountered such distinguished connoisseurs as Sir George Hill. Work and social life did not prevent his indulging in one of his intense pleasures—reading. He was an assiduous visitor to the old Vieusseux Library in Florence.

During the 1930s he acted as an adviser to American students who came to Florence from various universities such as Harvard and Princeton. He was a firm opponent of the Nazis, and his family wisely told him not to return home. In 1935, on Berenson's recommendation he was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Chicago, where he remained until 1953, eventually becoming a Professor and Chairman of the Department. He was also, from 1941 to 1954, Honorary Keeper of Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Middeldorf, who became an American citizen in 1942, took an active part in American life: he was on the editorial boards of the *Art Bulletin*, *Art in America* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Always ready to help others, he served on many committees connected with refugees from Germany and war relief; he played a considerable part in the affairs of the

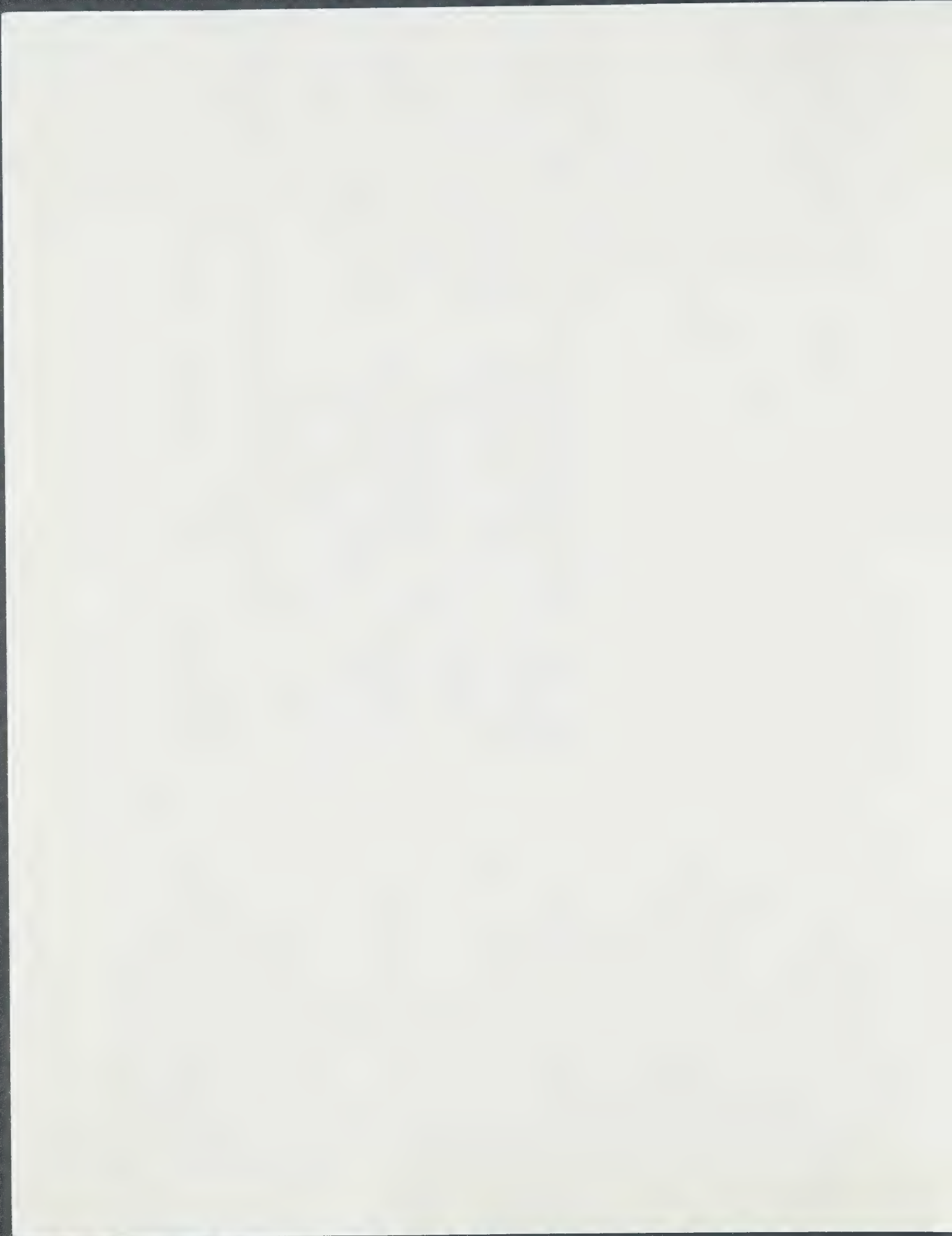
Episcopal Church at Chicago. He and his wife, who did her studies in Oriental art, kept open house for refugees. One of his many acts of kindness was to assist Langton Douglas over the preparation of his book on Leonardo da Vinci.

A change occurred in Middeldorf's life in 1953, when it was put to him that it was his duty to take over the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. He turned it into a magnificent centre for research and expanded the library to such an extent that when he retired in 1968 there were four times as many books there as when he arrived. He still goes to the Institute every day, though, to the alarm of his many friends, he insists on reading while walking.

Middeldorf is a refined connoisseur and an exacting scholar, who never cares to pronounce on any item unless he has seen it. He has written a book on Raphael's drawings and catalogues of the Morgenroth plaquettes and the Kress collection of sculpture. Much of his valuable research is to be found in his many articles; his pieces on the work of Francesco da Sangallo, Rosellino and Guglielmo della Porta are notable. One interesting recent article was on dilettante sculptors; this will provide material for fellow workers for many years.

Middeldorf is celebrated for his generosity in handing over material to colleagues. His immense curiosity about many different subjects is endearing. He has formed a collection of novels in which artists appear; some 1,200 are on his shelves; he is a devotee of George Moore, John Buchan and Saki. It is typical of Middeldorf that when recuperating from an illness he should have spent time studying the etymology of the names in Saki's books. It is no less characteristic of him that his papers are always tidy.

To listen to him talking about old friends or ideas—he is illuminating on the topic of Renaissance art in centres such as Ferrara—and watching him savouring a cup of tea (of which he is a connoisseur) is to be taken back to another world. He should have been born in the eighteenth century; he would have been a virtuoso at a grand-ducal court.



**Subject:** FW: Maida Abrams  
**From:** "Otto Naumann" <otto@dutchpaintings.com>  
**Date:** Wed, 15 May 2002 16:17:47 -0400  
**To:** <otto@dutchpaintings.com>

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Julia Alekman [mailto:Julia.Alekman@haledorr.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2002 3:17 PM  
**To:** Otto Naumann; mroyaltonkisch@thebritishmuseum.a.c.u.k  
**Subject:** Maida Abrams

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Alekman, Julia  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2002 1:30 PM  
**To:** 'george.abrams@haledorr.com'  
**Subject:** E-mail Maida 3

Sadly, for all of us, Maida died on May 9, 2002 after a 10 1/2 month struggle with cancer. She died peacefully although there were some difficult times for her and for all of us during those months. For those who loved her, we thought we would share her obituary in the Boston Globe of May 10 and also George and Rebecca's comments about Maida at her funeral of May 12, 2002.









## **MAIDA ABRAMS, ART COLLECTOR, ADVOCATE TO DISABLED**

**Author(s): Christine Temin, Globe Staff Date: May 10, 2002 Page: B9 Section: Obituary**

Maida S. Abrams, a major Boston-area art collector, benefactor of arts institutions, and founder of Very Special Arts of Massachusetts, died yesterday of cancer at Massachusetts General Hospital. She was 63. Together with her husband, Boston lawyer George S. Abrams, Mrs. Abrams formed the world's greatest collection of Old Master Dutch drawings in private hands. "Maida and George stand in the tradition of the greatest Boston collectors," Museum of Fine Arts director Malcolm Rogers said yesterday. Mrs. Abrams was equally devoted to making art accessible. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, a longtime friend, said yesterday that "Maida was a wonderful friend and relentless advocate for individuals with disabilities. She inspired all of us with her trail-blazing efforts to develop model programs for cultural institutions to include persons with disabilities in all aspects of the arts. Because of her, the world is a far more civilized and compassionate place. I will miss her lovely spirit and loyal friendship."

Mrs. Abrams was something of an artist herself. Her grandfather had a clothing manufacturing business in New York, where, as a child, Mrs. Abrams started sewing and designing clothes. She later knitted, made pottery, and even built furniture.

In high school she began to realize that people with disabilities were largely excluded from the arts. The Cambridge School of Weston, where she completed her high school studies in 1956, presented her with an award for service to the disabled. As an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence College in New York, she expanded her work with special-needs groups. Following her graduation in 1960, she earned a degree from the Boston-Tufts School of Occupational Therapy, and then a master's degree in arts therapy at Lesley College. Maida and George Abrams married in 1960, the year they also acquired their first Dutch drawing, from Boston art dealer Hyman Swetstoff. Mrs. Abrams was as ahead of her time in collecting as she was in her service to the disabled. In the '60s, most American collectors of drawings were focusing on Italian and French works. The market for Dutch drawings was limited, and a fine specimen could be had for \$1,000. The Abramses acquired hundreds of fine specimens over the decades, and they did so on their own, not relying on a scholarly surrogate to choose for them. The thousands of art books and catalogs that crowd their Newton home attest to their expertise.

Dutch drawings are down-to-earth and unostentatious, adjectives that also applied to Mrs. Abrams. She sewed her own clothes and those of her daughters. She drove cars until they wouldn't go anymore. She never owned a fur coat. She didn't live in a grand house. She did, however, live with an art collection that became priceless. In 1999, the Abramses gave a core group of 110 drawings to Harvard's Fogg Art Museum, instantly making the Fogg preeminent among American museums collecting in the field. "Maida was an equal partner with her husband in making their collection available to generations of students and scholars for study," Harvard Art Museums director James Cuno said.

"There is no private collection to rival it, anywhere." One scholar who spent 25 years studying and writing about the collection was William Robinson, now the drawings curator at the Fogg.

In the late 1960s, Mrs. Abrams started working with the Newton public school system on integrating art into special-needs classes and helping to "mainstream" special-needs children through art programs in regular classes. In 1980, she founded Very Special Arts of Massachusetts. In the beginning, Mrs. Abrams funded the group primarily with her own money. The first-year budget of \$12,000 has grown to more than \$1 million. She battled bureaucracies to convince them of the value of her programs, and she initiated a statewide series of special-needs arts festivals to publicize her cause and its results. More than 20 years ago, she started the first special-needs programs at the Museum of Fine Arts. "She had an unerring sense of how to connect individuals and groups with the resources they needed," said Eleanor Rubin, the MFA's coordinator of accessibility, who worked with Mrs. Abrams for 24 years. "She was involved in everything to make the museum inclusive: working on making the entrances accessible and on systems for the hearing-impaired, for instance." Even after learning 10 months ago that she had cancer, Mrs. Abrams kept on traveling to promote special-needs arts programs.

She was instrumental in helping many individuals, including Boston jazz singer Lisa Thorson, who uses a wheelchair because of a serious accident. "I met Maida in 1980, a year after my accident, when she was developing VSA," Thorson said. "I was young and struggling. Maida offered support, encouragement, and assistance. I can't count the number of VSA events where I've sung. She also gave me the chance to be an advocate and consultant." With support from Mrs. Abrams, Thorson became an associate professor at Berklee College of Music, and has also performed in venues including The Kennedy Center. "Had my injury not taken place, I wouldn't have met Maida," said Thorson. "Out of bad things come good ones."

In 1991, the Fogg organized a show of the Abramses' drawings that traveled to three of the most prestigious venues in the world: the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; the Morgan Library in Manhattan; and the Albertina in Vienna. During their Amsterdam show, the couple appeared on Dutch TV and became celebrities recognized in the streets. After their \$20 million gift of art to the Fogg, the couple kept on collecting. Next month, an exhibition of their recent acquisitions in Dutch and Flemish drawings opens at the British Museum in London.



In addition to her husband, Mrs. Abrams leaves two daughters, Sarah and Rebecca, both of New York City; a brother, Michael Stocker of New York City; and a grandson. Funeral arrangements are private. A memorial service is being planned.

**May 12, 2002**  
**Maida, from George**

I am not supposed to be here today. Maida had a 15 year longer life expectancy than I did but life expectancies only involve averages and Maida was never average.

About eight weeks ago we began to realize that we were losing the battle. We had tried hard. Two major operations, three sets of chemotherapy, some radiation, lots of prayers from people all over the world - but to no avail.

Maida then talked with me and subsequently Rabbi Freedman about her funeral. She was very explicit - more so than I expected. She said, as all who know her well would have expected, that she wanted a simple funeral with not a series of speakers and eulogists. She wanted Rabbi Freedman because (she seldom used Jewish words) he was a "mench." She said she wanted me to speak and tell about our life and loves and she wanted me to explain in telling that story who and what was important to her. And she hoped one of the girls would also be able to say a few words. She told me she knew it would be hard for me but that people would understand if I broke down or cried or had to have long pauses.

I met Maida on the Saturday before she and my sister Susan were to graduate Sarah Lawrence College. I was picking up Susan's belongings and planning to drive them home to Boston the next day. Susan suggested I take her and two friends to lunch. Maida was one of those friends. I first saw Maida when she was carrying a large steel mobile to her car and I offered to help her. She gave me a big "Maida smile" and I was overwhelmed. I was stunned with how beautiful she was. I could hardly speak. Some of you would say that must have meant I was really stunned. Do you people all remember a "Maida smile"? There was nothing like it in the world. I got the full treatment.

She sat next to me at lunch and rather surprising to both of us, by the end of it, we were holding hands. Shortly after lunch, I broke a date I had that night and arranged to meet Maida in New York City instead. She had to take a train ride in and a train ride home, but in between we had already made two other dates and exchanged tentative promises that surprised both of us and would certainly have surprised most of the people who knew us. We were engaged two weeks later.

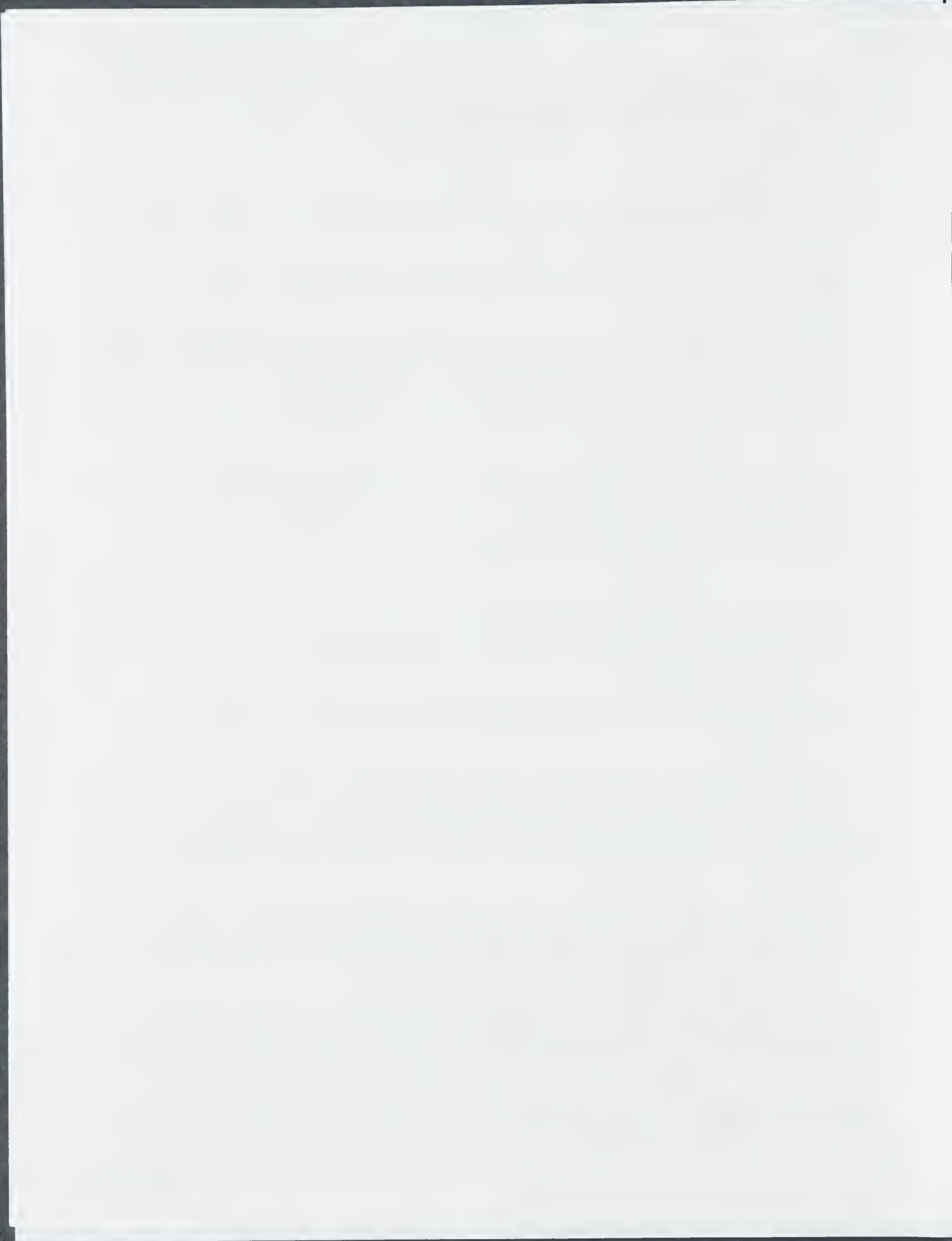
Maida's father, in typically Harvard-trained lawyerly fashion, asked us to wait a year before we got married. Maida thanked him and said we were thinking more in line with a month, two at the most. It turned out we kept the two month deadline.

My father and mother both loved Maida as I did from the time they first met her. Sadly, my father became sick in July of that summer and the two of us visited him often in the hospital. He told Maida that he and my mother wished to make her a wedding gift and that she could choose anything she wanted. He suggested a new car so that she could get to graduate school easily. Maida thought for a few moments and then said she knew what she most wanted: she wanted a new sewing machine. I remember exchanging a look with my father after Maida's request and forty-two years later I can still see in my mind the glow of happiness for me that he showed at that moment.

Maida and I lived our first two years in a wonderful brownstone on Commonwealth Avenue. We had the whole bottom floor and we filled it with art. Maida was in graduate school on a federal grant studying kineaseology, anatomy, and other medical aspects of occupational therapy and also Interning at Mass State Mental Hospital and Saint Elizabeth's, while I struggled myself to keep afloat in my law practice because of my father's sudden death during the summer we were married.

Our major outside activity involved art, which we both loved. I by some chance had acquired several artists as clients and then a number of dealers. We bought art almost from the first weeks of our marriage and the apartment was overflowing even at that early time. As many of you know, this condition has trailed us our whole life ever since.

I remember the first drawing we bought together, a Charles Francois Daubigny of 1872 of a farm in winter. It still hangs in our bedroom.



It was not long before we began to concentrate on just Dutch and Flemish drawings. The enchantment and love of collecting them was something special that we shared together. With each addition and interaction our collection grew and our love became more entwined.

In 1962 we traveled to Europe and visited the dealers of London, Paris, and Amsterdam. Dutch drawings were not in fashion; Italian and French were more cerebral and "challenging." We had a clear field. At one dealer's gallery we saw over one hundred Dutch drawings of very good quality and at prices that would astound people today. We made a list of twenty we liked particularly and bought four without hesitation. I remember each of them, particularly a small Van Goyen landscape we were able to hold in the palms of our hand and pass back and forth between us. We came home as happy as two people could be.

This first trip was followed by many more over the next forty years. We visited and became friends with dealers, collectors, and scholars, and we haunted the print rooms of all of the major European museums. Maida and I had a wonderful passion we shared and we were continually learning and studying how to be better at our collecting. We bought and devoured books and catalogues and compared reactions and notes and information continuously. It was to be a life-long love involving us more deeply with each other. We shared our thoughts and love of these works and grew closer and more intimate because of our shared experience. Drawing by drawing we built our collection and our love.

Meanwhile Maida progressed in her studies and work and became intimately involved with art as a means of providing not only new therapies but opening new avenues of life for people with disabilities and handicaps. She was able to combine her extraordinary artistic and crafts skills with her medical and occupational therapy training and surprisingly she developed a new field of her own-a field that really did not exist when she started.

Maida became interested, driven in fact, with the idea of bringing art into the lives of a group of people who were, in most cases, at least in the 1950s and 60s being systematically excluded from such involvement-the handicapped and special needs population.

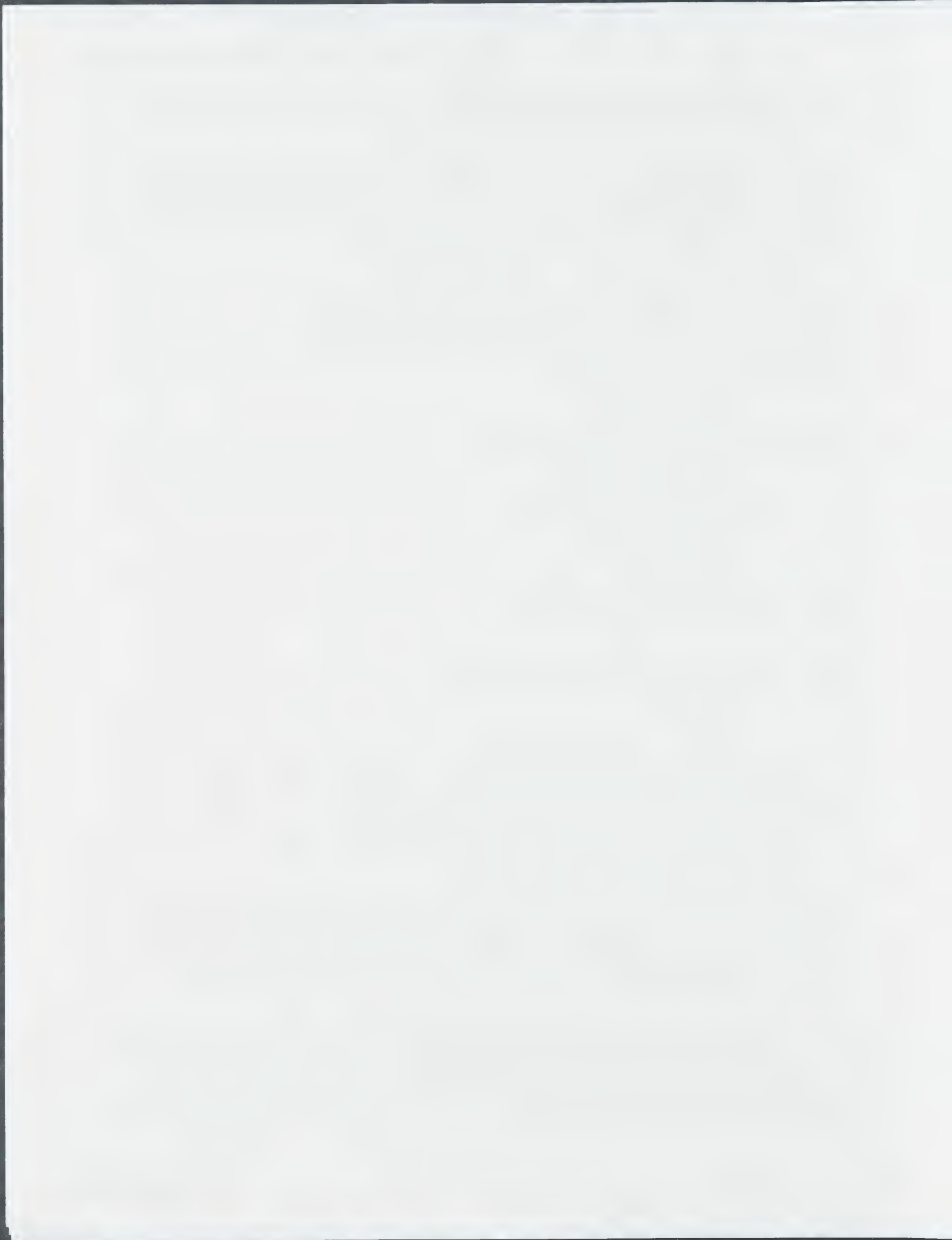
When Maida started her life's work in the 1950's, children with special needs-read retarded, wheelchair bound, Down syndrome, deaf, blind-remember how we called handicapped in the days gone by, names like "mutes," "deaf-and-dumb," even "idiots." Maida, as a young woman, saw those individuals and believed they were special people. She set out as a goal to help them.

When we moved to Newton, she saw her opportunity. She started first at the Newton Community Center teaching arts-and-crafts to children and adults, some with special needs and some without. She soon developed a devoted following and there she met many people who appreciated what she was doing and are still her friends to this very day.

In 1967 Maida was approached by the head of the art department of the Newton Public School System and was asked if she would come work with the city to develop programs for the special needs students who were at that time in segregated classrooms. Her idea of the use of arts with special needs students had caught hold and Maida quickly accepted the position. From 1967 to 1980 Maida traveled throughout the Newton School system, sometimes six and seven schools in a day teaching art. First in segregated classes and then helping to "mainstream" special needs children through art programs in regular classes. Newton's programs in this area became the best in the country and were widely emulated in this State and throughout America.

In 1980 Maida founded Very Special Arts Massachusetts. She worked with a group of dedicated teachers and volunteers and was convinced in the importance of her work. Over the years she built up a strong constituency of artists, teachers, parents, and community activists. The results I think most people here know. What's more important is that people and communities began to understand and accept the concept that the use of art could be an extraordinary vehicle in opening up worlds to children and adults with all kinds of handicaps and special needs. Today, the ideas that she first formed in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s are widely accepted everywhere, and no one is prouder of this than her family.

Maida was full of love for everyone, but she reserved a special love for me, and for Sarah, Rebecca, and newcomers Nathan and Augie. I've told you a little of our love, but let me tell you one or two stories about how she loved our daughters. Sarah cherished her grandparents' home on Fire Island, and Maida moved heaven and earth to help Sarah acquire that property. She glowed with happiness and pride when the house finally belonged to Sarah, continuing the generational ownership. Just seven weeks ago Maida helped Sarah find fabric for the house. She told me that night of her pleasure that they had found just what they wanted. She was excited for Sarah.



Maida always doted on children and longed for a grandchild. A year and a half ago, Rebecca was finally in labor with and Tobias August Abrams Benn, our beautiful little grandson. Maida, as usual, was full of empathy for Rebecca. When Augie arrived, Maida was so excited about being a grandmother that she placed blankets on the small hospital room floor and stayed the night by Augie and Rebecca's side. A happier grandmother never was.

I think I should bring this to a close. Perhaps the best way is to talk a little about how I and the family and many of you can remember Maida. There is a beautiful poem about remembering. I've made a few changes, but it goes something like this, "How shall we remember Maida?"

In the rising of the sun and its going down,  
We shall remember her  
In the opening pods and in the rebirth of spring,  
We shall remember her  
In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,  
We shall remember her  
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
We shall remember her  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
We shall remember her  
When we are weary and in need of strength,  
We shall remember her  
When we are lost and sick at heart,  
We shall remember her  
When we have joys we yearn to share,  
We shall remember her

We will remember Maida when we look down on the sidewalk and see a wheelchair curb;

We shall remember Maida when we see people with disabilities enjoying museums or theaters or at athletic events;

We shall remember Maida when we see that events of all kinds have people like Jodi Steiner conveying in sign language what is being said;

We shall remember Maida when we see a beautiful Dutch drawing or painting in an exhibition;

We shall remember Maida when we see the big "Maida smile" that her grandson Augie has inherited;

So long as I and the girls and many of you live, and others to come, Maida shall live. For she is now a part of us, as we remember her.

When my sisters and I were young, we used to have a game - some would say a competition. We would each pick out an apple from a bowl and would start to eat them at the same time. The question was who had the best apple. By the end of the game, my sisters would always agree and feel somehow I had gotten the best apple. That might not in fact have been really so but my personality was such that I believed it to be so and therefore it was.

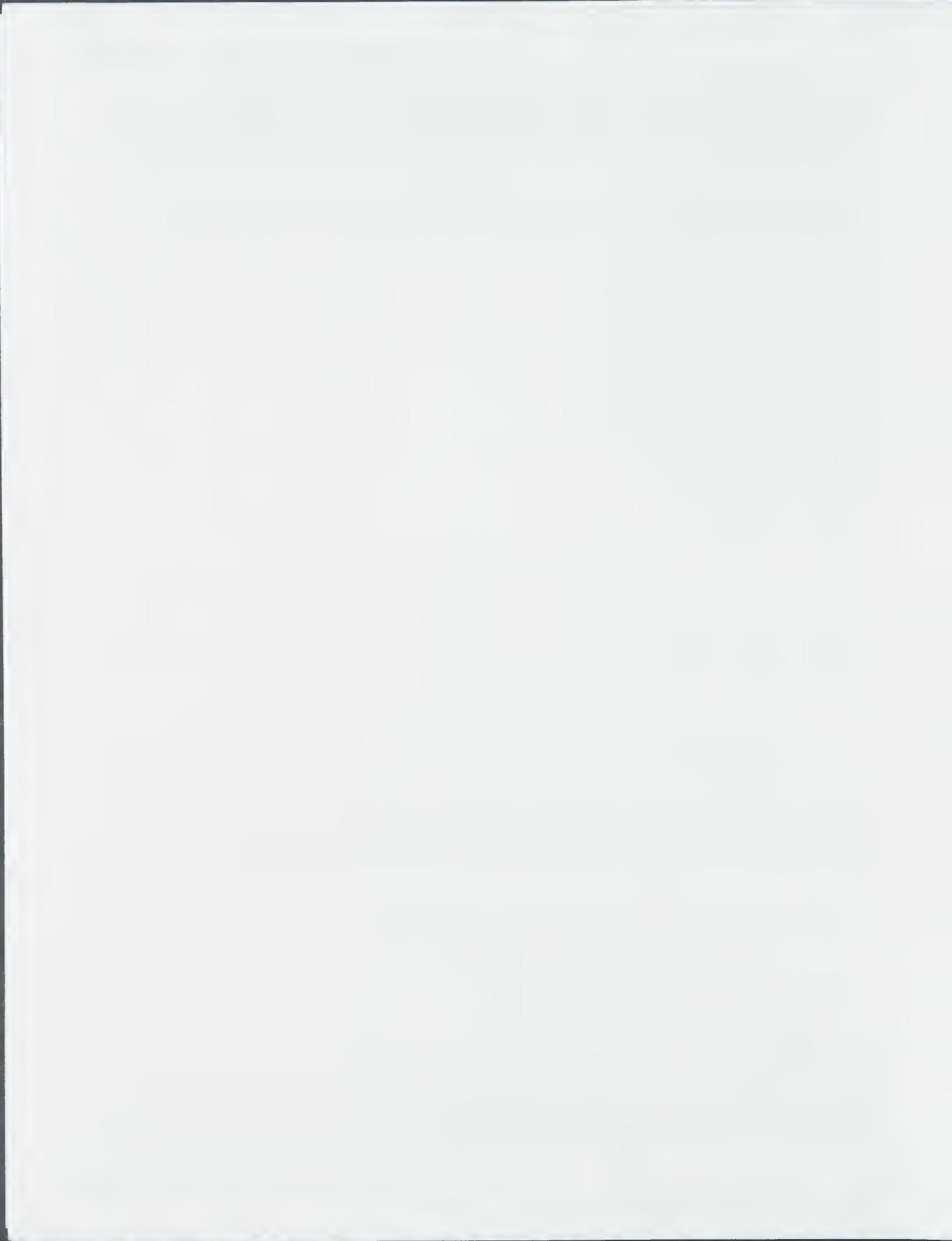
I believe Maida was the most wonderful wife in the world and because I believed that with all my heart, it was so.

Sarah and Rebecca believed Maida was the best mother in the world and because they believed that, it was so.

Goodbye, sweet Maida.

**May 12, 2002**  
**Maida, from Becca**

Sarah and I thank you for being with us on Mother's Day, as we pay tribute to our mother. A more appropriate day for this occasion could not exist. For Maida nurtured so many of us.





My mother loved people, collectively and individually. She cared about humanity on a grand scale, and she cared about people one-by-one in a deep and personal way. Each of us has chosen to be in this sanctuary today because my mother touched us--she accepted us for who we are, for our essence, and this made us feel good, understood, loved.

My mother was very sick these past few months and very sad about leaving this world, but still we had time to talk and share. One day about six weeks ago I said to my mother, "Isn't so and so weird?!" Which of course, to me, was evident. My mother responded, "Well...he may have a few peculiarities, but that's OK." And that, to me, is the essence of my mother. She accepted each of us, unconditionally, for the person we are--not for the person we wanted to be or convention wanted us to be, but for our very essence. Being with my mother meant that you felt good about yourself, because she felt good about you, just how you are.

My family asked me to read the following poem because it speaks to us of Mom. We hope you will close your eyes and envision Maida as I read these next words.

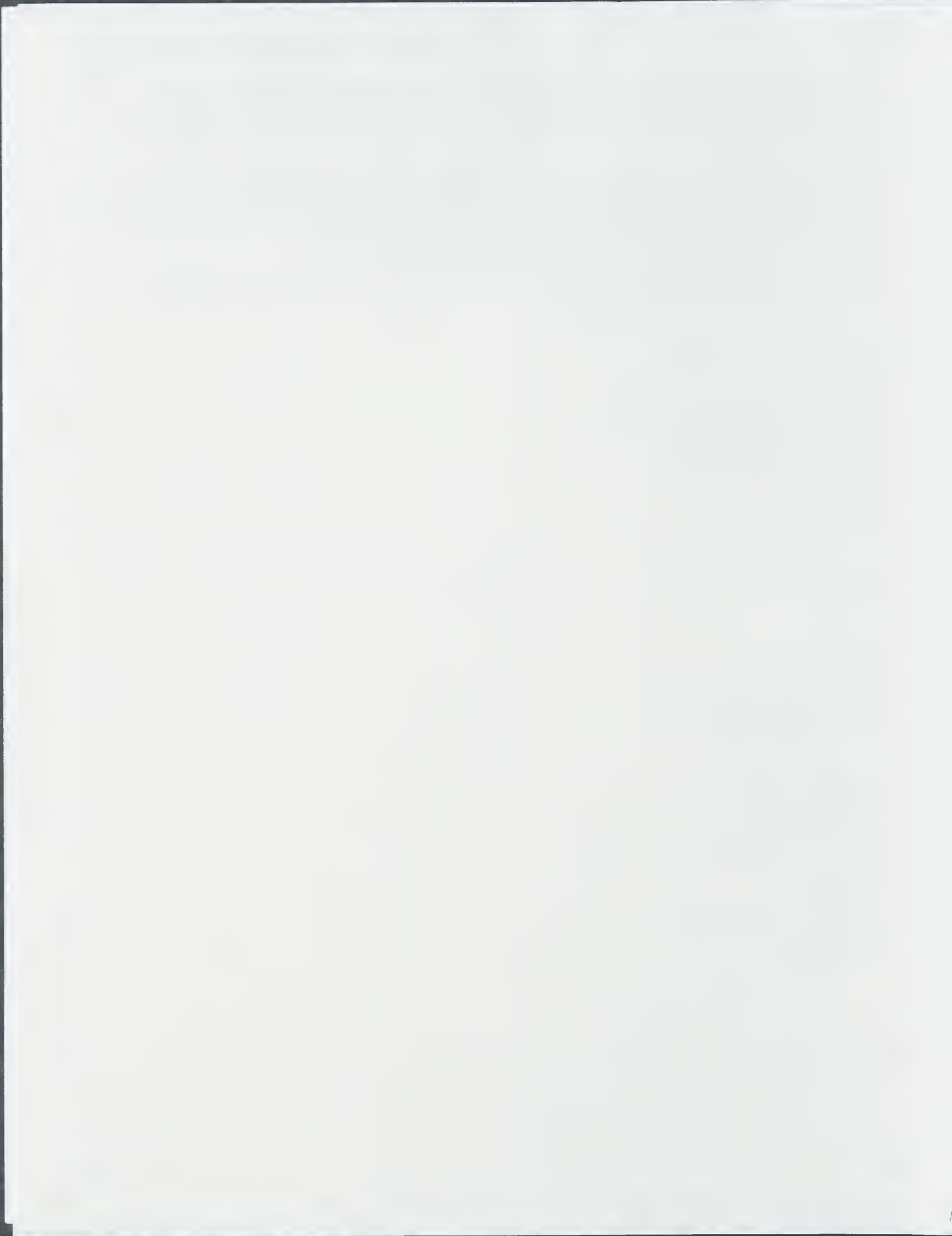
When I die  
Give what's left of me away.  
To children  
And those who wait to die.  
And if you need to cry,  
Cry for your brother and sister  
Walking the street beside you.  
And when you need me,  
Put your arms  
Around anyone  
And give them  
What you need to give me.

I want to leave you something,  
Something better  
Than words  
Or sounds.

Look for me  
In the people I've known  
Or loved,  
And if you cannot give me away,  
At least let me live in your eyes  
And not in your mind.

You can love me most  
By letting  
Hands touch bodies,  
And by letting go  
Of children  
Who need to be free.

Love doesn't die,  
People do.  
So, when all that's left of me  
Is love,  
Give me away.







# Obituaries:

## Anthony M. Clark

Anthony Morris Clark, one of the great Museum Directors of his generation, died in Rome on the 22 November, 1976, at the age of fifty-three. His first post was that of Secretary to the Museum and Director of Museum Publications at the Rhode Island School of Design and then its Curator of Painting and Sculpture. For ten years he served as Director of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; then Chairman of the Department of European Paintings at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and, finally, Clark Professor at Williams College, and Adjunct Professor at The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. During his busy administrative and academic career, he became the principal authority on eighteenth-century Roman painting. When he died he was at work on a full history of it, as well as on a monograph on his favourite Roman artist, Pompeo Girolamo Batoni. Though he had made his chosen field almost his private preserve, no one was more generous in sharing his vast learning and his knowledge of the basic bibliography, especially with the young. Much as he loved paintings, sculpture, and drawings, and no one ever sought them more eagerly—whether for his museums or, with greatest modesty and tiny funds, for what became the finest private collection of eighteenth-century Roman art, his own—one always felt teaching gave him greater pleasure than the expression of his talents as a keeper or a Director. His love of teaching made his scholarship precise and, simultaneously, revealing, for he always thought in terms of two centuries, his own and Batoni's.

His years in Providence gave him time for his first serious scholarship, into which he tumbled like a happy St. Bernard puppy. They also revealed the special talents of his remarkable eye to rediscover the long forgotten virtue of Roman neo-classical art, and though later he deprecated his first major essay, 'The age of Canova', written to commemorate the bicentenary of this artist, it broke new ground. One sometimes felt that Tony's self-deprecation was partly a result of his annoyed reaction to the remarkable rise in prices that his essay had brought his favourite draughtsman.

The Minneapolis years were brilliant and were marked by great purchases and equally important exhibitions. He trebled the attendance of the museum and more than doubled the size of all the depleted collections, to which he restored the primary emphasis on supreme quality alone. Not without misgivings, he laid the groundwork and oversaw the plans of the great extension which has been completed since his time.

He also insisted intensely and unfashionably upon moral issues about art. It was his Swiftian sense of moral outrage which led him to give up his important post at The Metropolitan Museum in patrician protest at 'the unprofessional and unworthy behaviour of the museum's administration', as he put it with Johnsonian candour. It is not that Tony Clark did not gladly suffer those he considered fools, but that he did not suffer them at all.

His preparatory school years anticipated a career as an ornithologist. It was always startling and a bit eerie to have him stop in the middle of upper Fifth Avenue and note the call of some rare bird which he then would indicate.

Tony was physically imposing and well over six feet tall. He was a man of beguiling charm and humour. The latter was always deadpan, and more than one stately dinner party was shattered by his solemn observation that bad birds are not appreciated enough, and that he proposed to organize school children into battalions to kill the good ones, 'and then you'll see what a sparrow is really about.' Professor Ellis Waterhouse and he joyously invented 'Cardinal Muccavaca, the greatest eighteenth-century Roman cardinal who never lived and who, as Tony pointed out, was descended on his mother's side from Domitian. Only a man truly in love with his chosen subject could so gently mock it and with that same love produce his venomously amusing parodies of drawings by celebrated Old Masters (on the right paper, too), panoplied with collectors' marks and scholars' angrily divergent opinions on the versos. A slightly surprising side of his gentle nature was his gift for dealing with small children, who unflinchingly adored him as much as his students did. For the latter he had that rarest gift of making them unresentfully try just that much harder for real distinction.

It is sad he died without finishing the two books which would have been touchstones, or that he did not live to enjoy the mellowed leisure to write even finer ones. But he died at a happy moment, in his favourite city, in his favourite park, instantly, and without pain; that we cannot regret, even as we must regret losing the loving, loyal and completely honest friend.

JOHN MAXON

## Daniel Catton Rich

Daniel Catton Rich, dean of American museum Directors, died last autumn. He was a friend and mentor to younger colleagues and quite a power in the land; in many cases he got them their jobs. A man of remarkably wide range, his love of art stemmed pretty much from France. His books were on Seurat, Rousseau and Degas, plus a couple on his old friend, Georgia O'Keefe: people said the best way to approach her was to ask Dan Rich.

A Middle-Westerner himself, he was a product of South Bend, Indiana, and the University of Chicago. He had a good long run as Director of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1945-58, after which he landed in Worcester, perhaps the most distinguished small museum in the country, just as Francis Taylor had done when he left the Metropolitan. He retired in 1970. He was a helpful and active trustee of the Guggenheim for many years, and a member of every board in sight. He was a kindly and unobtrusive man, who knew how to give a leg up when needed, up and over the wall.

M.S.Y.

## LETTER to the EDITOR Victorian Paintings Sought

Sir,

I am compiling a subject index of the oil paintings exhibited at The Royal Academy in the nineteenth century. The first section will cover the period 1890 to 1899. I would be most grateful to receive information concerning paintings exhibited in this decade, especially about those which are unpublished or in private collections.

ELLEN SCHWARTZ  
1136 Menlo Drive  
Davis, California 95616



CORRESPONDENCE

indeed one of the most essential and prominent aspects of the style.<sup>12</sup> The Poldi-Pezzoli clock face admirably illustrates this involvement and appears to provide us with another example of Baciccio's activity decorating clock faces during the 1670's.

TIMOTHY CLIFFORD

<sup>12</sup> For a general discussion of this aspect see: ALVAR GONZALEZ-PALACIOS: 'Bernini as a Furniture Designer', THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE, No.812, Vol. CXII [November 1970], pp.719-22.

James Barry's 'The Baptism of the King of Cashel'

SIR, As a postscript to William Pressly's interesting article in your September issue on James Barry's *The Baptism of the King of Cashel*, I would like to add that this picture is painted on paper laid down on canvas (a fact which was noted when the picture was cleaned in January 1975), and that since March of that year it has been hanging in Dublin Castle.

ANDREW O'CONNOR

National Gallery of Ireland

One of my best friends.

Obituary

Wolfgang Stechow (1896-1974)

WOLFGANG STECHOW died on 12th October 1974, in Princeton where he was serving as Visiting Professor of Fine Arts after his retirement from Oberlin College. His death removed from the profession one of the most accomplished men of his generation, who set an example of tireless generosity to students and colleagues.

Stechow was born near Kiel on 5th June 1896, into the family of a well-to-do lawyer. His education began at the Göttingen gymnasium and continued briefly at Freiburg, but the first World War soon drew him into the cavalry and later into a Siberian prison camp. Although his health suffered he managed to learn Russian and to improve his skill at the violin during his two and a half years there; released, he entered the University at Göttingen to pursue the history of art under Oskar Hagen and the venerable Count Vitzthum. He presented his dissertation on Dürer's early woodcuts in 1921; but in that year he may have been equally proud of the first performance of Handel's *Rodelinde*, whose manuscript he and Hagen had found, transcribed into parts, and seen through rehearsals. Stechow continued to play the violin and the piano (he had taught himself the latter, and all his life he would warn listeners not to watch his hands), as well as to conduct the academic orchestra at Göttingen and to arrange a yearly Handel festival.

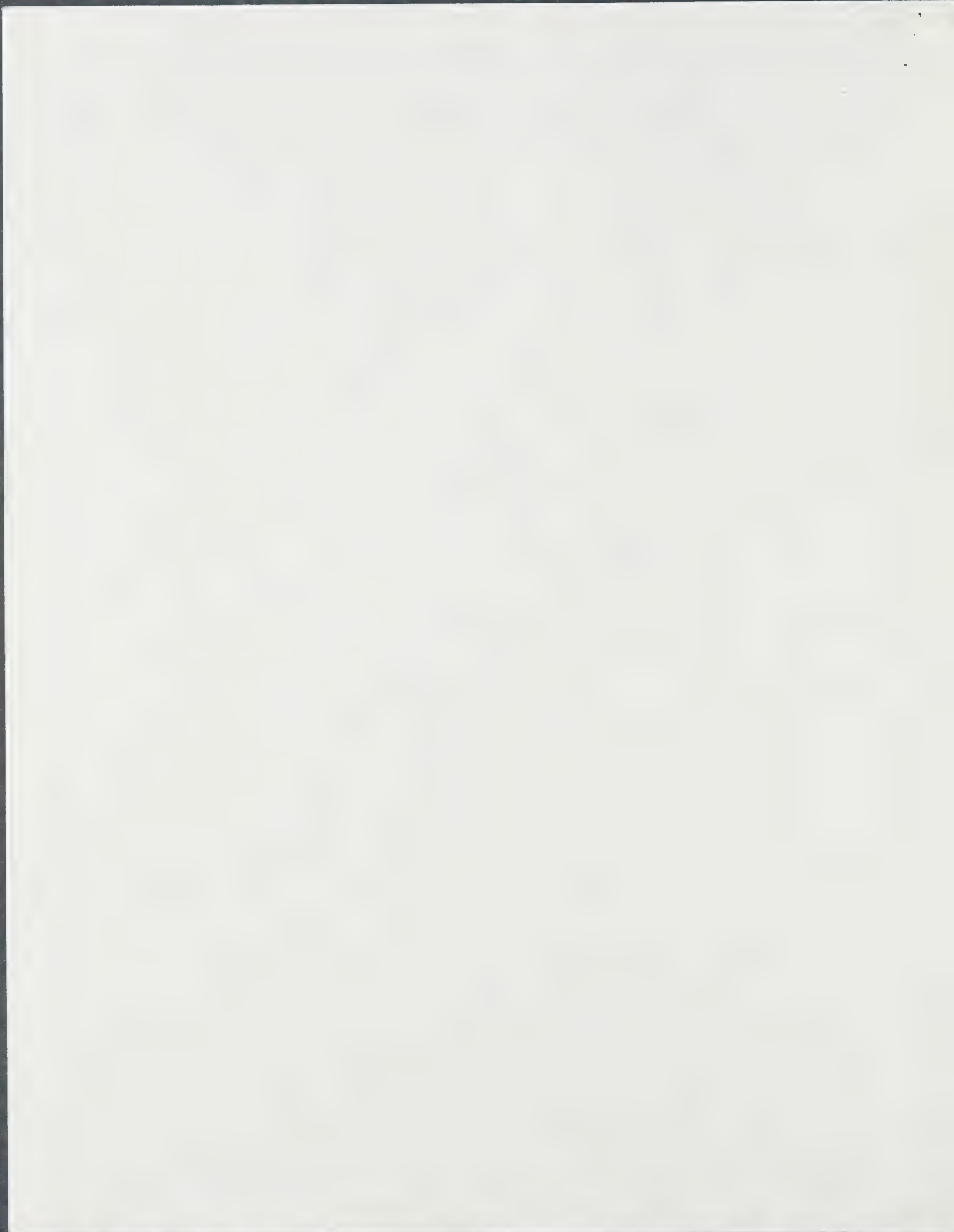
After his promotion Stechow spent a happy year under Wilhelm von Bode in Berlin, then as full of musicians as it was of collectors and dealers, and afterwards he joined Hofstede de Groot's team of German assistants to collaborate on volume 8 and 9 of the *Catalogue Raisonné*, devoted to Dutch landscapists, in particular the Italianate circle whose reputation Stechow would subsequently do so much to revive. Missing from the roster of Hofstede de Groot's landscape painters was Salomon van Ruys

dael; Stechow righted the injustice with a monograph and catalogue that occupied him through the 1930's. He contributed many notices to the Thieme-Becker *Lexikon* in these years, and wrote articles on a remarkably broad range of topics, including a number on Italian renaissance sculpture. In the meantime he had taught at Göttingen as *Privatdozent*, then *Extraordinarius*, in the company of his contemporary Nikolaus Pevsner; their pupils included among others Hans Gronau, Wolfgang Schöne, and Horst Gerson. Nazi pressures worsened, and in 1935 Stechow was relieved of his position in the university. Under Vitzthum's protection he remained in Göttingen a while longer, then emigrated to Madison, Wisconsin in the autumn of 1936. He was to live for the rest of his life in the American midwest. He never described this enormous dislocation in terms of trauma or loss, for he felt himself generously welcomed in America, and he soon came to value the openness and enthusiasm of his new students. These he contrasted during the war with his own fellow-students in Germany, in a remark that foreshadowed Hannah Arendt's observations years later: 'Gross extremeness is one of the parents of fascism and nazism, and fellow students of mine were apt to indulge in it. It was as though all their fear of mediocrity had combined to foster an evil which does not rank much above mediocrity.'

In 1940 Stechow moved to Oberlin College, a distinguished small institution in Ohio with the lure of a fine music school and a small museum that was still largely devoted to plaster casts. He became the main force in the museum's transformation into one of America's best college galleries, raising money, expanding space, and finding new works of art. Again and again there were remarkable purchases, made easier by Stechow's taste for the unappreciated, his sure sense of opportunity, and his cordial relations with dealers. Always looking for what he called 'Lugt pictures', he was nevertheless proudest of the Hobbema from the Severance Collection and the great Terbrugghen *St Sebastian Tended by Women*. The catalogue whose publication he directed in 1967 reveals how broadly and shrewdly the Allen Art Museum collected during Stechow's years there. Works that Oberlin could not afford, the Cleveland Museum often could; Stechow was an important adviser to Cleveland, especially in the last decade, as well as to a good many private collectors with whom he managed not only to communicate enthusiasm but to be usefully frank and wholly discreet.

Stechow's scholarship accelerated in his new country, and the necessity of writing in English caused him to forge a style whose lucidity belied the effort it cost him (for a long while his insecurity with the language – and his conscientiousness – drove him to write out every one of his college lectures). His long bibliography<sup>1</sup> has a remarkable proportion of substantial original material, with little that is ephemeral. It mirrors his versatility: there are articles on many aspects of the art of the Netherlands, especially mannerism (Cornelis van Haarlem, Ketel, Büsinck, many reviews, and an exhibition catalogue), on the next generations of Italianate painters (Breenbergh, Weenix, Both, and again, an exhibition), and on Rembrandt; more recently, books on Bruegel and Rubens; and a miscellany of articles and a fundamental book on the art with which his name will always be associated, landscape. His early experience with the Hofstede de Groot catalogues and the Thieme-Becker biographies gave him an enthusiasm for strengthening the factual and chronological substructure of art history that lasted most of his life. When *Dutch Landscape Painting*

<sup>1</sup> *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, XX [1965], pp.70-88, and XXXII [1971-75], pp.91-98; reprinted with a few additions in *Print Review*, V [1976], a collection of essays in tribute to Stechow, pp.171-81. *Wolfgang Stechow. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. by Seymour Slive (Munich, W. Fink Verlag), is so far to appear.





of the Seventeenth Century appeared in 1966, however, Stechow had provided not only a compendium of reliable data for hundreds of artists great and small, but had also described the work of so many so crisply, and with such lyrical empathy, that the book will long be read for pleasure as well as for instruction. Stechow also wrote a series of articles tracing the fortunes of various subjects in art through the centuries (Apollo and Daphne, Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph, Antiochus and Stratonice, The Finding of Erichonius), a device that allowed him to measure the genius of a few artists and to test familiar generalizations. Other iconographical studies anticipated by many years our present preoccupation with Dutch 'realism' and poetic licence, and the moral functions of pictures in the seventeenth century.

The technicality of retirement in 1963 seemed not to slow the pace of Stechow's life: he continued in visiting capacities at Oberlin, and practically every year served on the faculties at one or another of the leading institutions in America: Michigan, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Vassar, Yale, Williams, California at Los Angeles, Princeton, and the National Gallery of Art. In this last decade his contacts with students increased, obligations multiplied, and dealings with museums and collectors came oftener. Still, he would give advice to practically anyone whose interests touched his own. Many a student for whom Stechow technically had no responsibility would write to him for help, and be astonished at the response: thoughtful handwritten letters, full of unpublished information and warm encouragement – even requests for the student's opinion. Stechow would share instinctively and he would learn where he could, with no vanity about his position in the world. Nobody who had the luck to look at pictures with him is likely to forget how he moved about: very tall and still erect in his seventies, he appeared a distinctly cool figure until his attention was engaged. Then he would be irresistably animated, unselfconscious in the joy he got from a new work or from a detail, and would urge it on his companions; then quickly he would wonder aloud whether he was right or perhaps had gone too far, and try to give words to what had moved him. He was shrewdly critical of people as well as pictures, but his kindness and dignity prevented him from doing injury. Few men of his profession can have inspired so much respect and affection at once.

JOHN WALSH, JR.

## The Literature of Art

### Guardi Drawings

BY J. BYAM SHAW

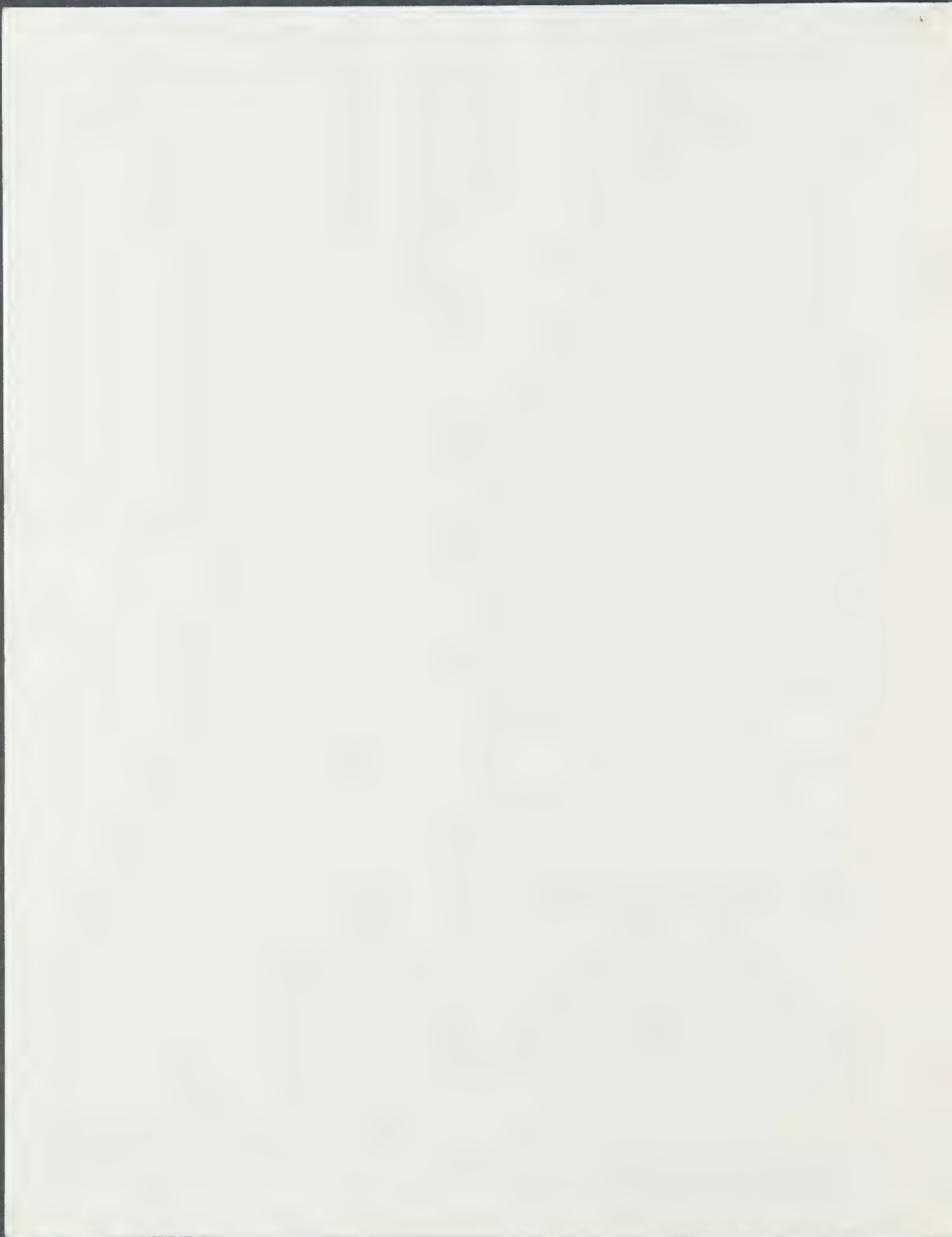
IT is a triumph for Antonio Morassi, in his eightieth year, to have completed his great work on the Guardi family with a corpus of the drawings.\* The whole was planned and begun, if I remember

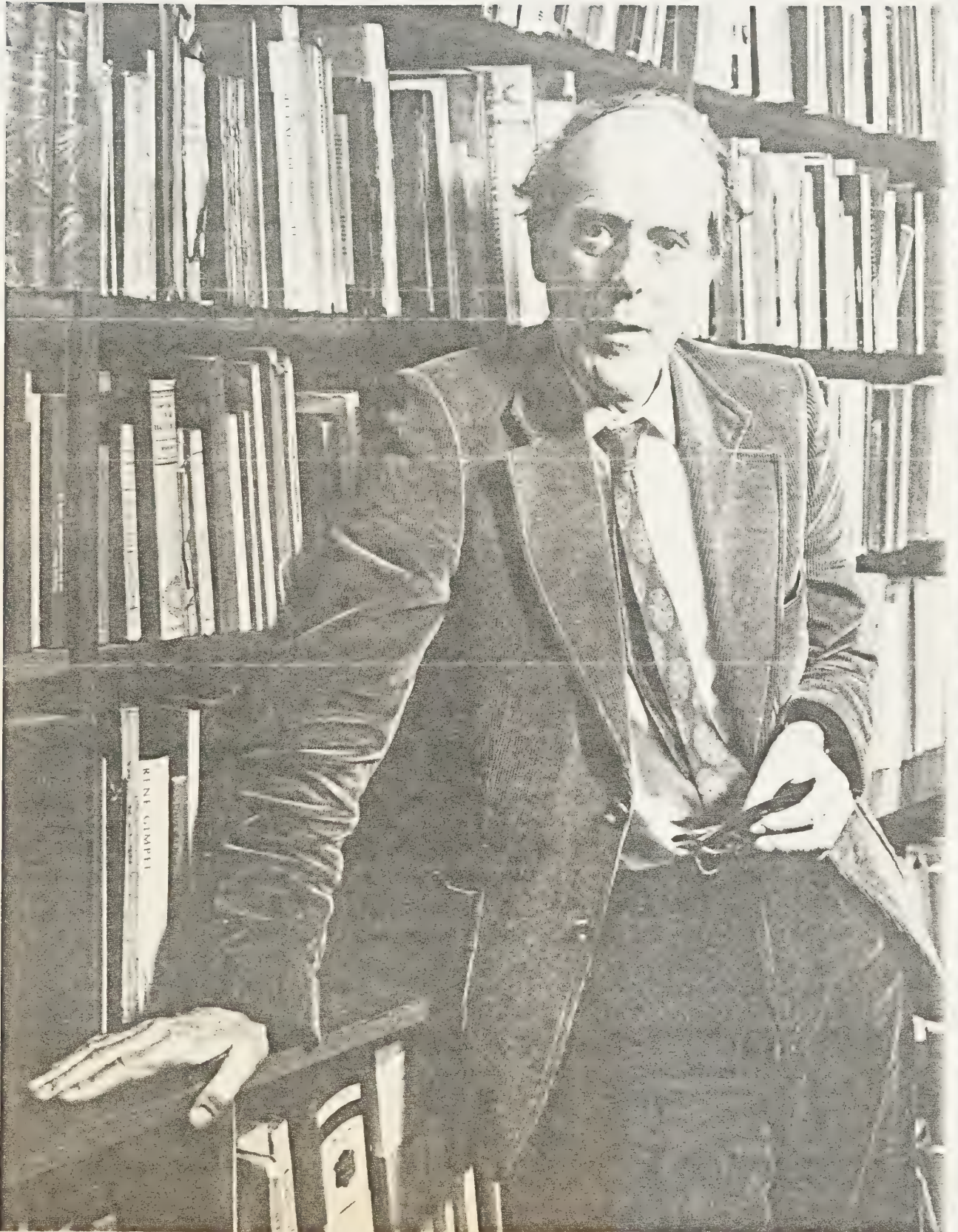
rightly, more than twenty-five years ago, certainly I ventured upon an essay on the drawings of Francesco published by Faber in 1951. Selective essays may present difficulty; but such ambitious projects as this, to include paintings and all the drawings of both the Guardi brothers of whom was extremely prolific, are not always finished in the lifetime of the prime authority. Morassi's two volumes of paintings, however, appeared in 1973, and now we have the volume of the drawings in the same format, and in the same arrangement, to complete the set. Both the author and the publisher are to be warmly congratulated.

The book could not have been better produced or more conveniently arranged. There are fourteen good plates in seven of Antonio Guardi and seven of Francesco. Of the black and white illustrations, nearly all good and clear. Figs. 1–121 represent Antonio, Figs. 122–628 Francesco; Figs. 629–649 are for Giacomo, Francesco's son, and Figs. 650–66 for imitations and forgeries, mostly modern. From this it will be evident that the two famous brothers the great majority of known drawings is included, in what may justifiably be called a corpus of graphic work, even though new discoveries will surely be made. That is not the case with the selection of drawings by Giacomo but it will be agreed that a complete representation of an indifferent draughtsman would be a very tedious affair, and both here and in the *Paintings* the author has discussed the most interesting part of his work – that is, the early part, in which he imitates his father most closely. As for the imitators and forgeries we have here enough to form some idea of that vast production which has caused sad disappointments to so many collectors, even to some museum officials, all over the world, in the last fifty years.

The introductory text is not long, for the connexion between drawings with the paintings is so close, and much of what is to be said about the art of the two brothers in general has already been said in volume I of the *Paintings*, and much further information is in the present catalogue entries; but there are many phrases in the descriptions of Francesco's style as a draughtsman as when the author writes (p.13) of his *linee rapide ed improvvise, interrotte, come toccate da scosse elettriche*; or of the *Macchiette*, sketches for the little figures to be introduced in the paintings *codesti personaggi siano completati dalla fantasia dello spetto* *assumano una funzione di 'movimento continuo' (direi quasi cinematografico)* (p.49). The arrangement, according to subject-matter, is surely the most convenient for the drawings, as was the case for the paintings in the publication of 1973, and makes them very easy to use. It involves of course certain difficult decisions, especially in the sections devoted to the various types of drawing so characteristic of Francesco: whether, for instance, a particular drawing is to be classified as a *capriccio* or a real view. For on the one hand, there is some element of arbitrary caprice in many of Francesco's Venetian views (except at the beginning of his activity in this field, when his topography, following Canaletto's example, is generally accurate): he would leave out the panile of S. Giorgio Maggiore (Cat. No.351, Fig.352, Fogliani Museum), or one of the domes of St Mark's (Cat. No.277, Fig.277, British Museum). And on the other hand, he would use the essential architecture of the Clock-tower arch to frame views of sorts of imaginary or half-imaginary vistas, and the arched entrance to the Doge's Palace in the same way. There is, furthermore, a general disadvantage in strict adherence to an arrangement of subject-matter, which applies to the drawings and not to the paintings: that Guardi often used both sides of a sheet of paper, and if (as is often the case) the *verso* is used for a different subject, it must appear under a separate catalogue number. This, however, is a disadvantage that must probably be accepted.

\* *L'Opera completa di Antonio e Francesco Guardi*. By Antonio Morassi. Volumes I and II (Alfieri).





1. Benedict Nicolson: Summer, 1977.

*Photo: Ben Set*



## Benedict Nicolson (1914-1978)

Two lines in Benedict Nicolson's monograph on Terbrugghen (1958) will probably conjure him up vividly to those who were happy enough to know him and may also help to illustrate some aspects of his attitude to art and to scholarship: 'I have walked up and down that stretch of the Oude Rijn, ridiculously imagining myself in the artist's shoes. This section of the canal has been ruined by improvements in boats and traffic; and no amount of historical melancholy could conjure up the atmosphere of the Snippevlucht in his time. And the house that might have given me a clue to his life has long since disappeared'. It is easy to visualise his long strides and rather sloping gait; his shabby, patched shoes; the cigarette hanging from his mouth; the air of intense concentration on his brooding face which would have made him dangerously indifferent to the traffic that had ruined the canal. . . . Ben, despite the reputation for objectivity acquired by this Journal under his editorship, did not despise a private, imaginative approach to those artists whom he studied. On the contrary. Biography was always his favourite reading, and his reviews of current exhibitions were freely sprinkled with the personal pronoun. It is not appropriate to try and convey some impression of the man as well as the achievement.

The two cannot, of course, be separated, not only because the personality of any editor is directly relevant to the success of the journal for which he is responsible, but also because for the last thirty-one years THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE had constituted an intimate part of Ben's life. I can think of no other person I have ever known for whom so much was so intrinsically woven into the very fabric of his life: from the discovery of a new article ('Oh, Francis, what a *such* an interesting piece in the February number') to the minute correcting of page-proofs. And yet – to those who did not know him – it has to be stressed that, though the magazine did indeed revolve round the magazine, he was never really about it. I can convey his feelings best if I suggest that THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE gave Ben something of the intimacy that can be given by a really happy home – always, but not to be inflicted on others unless they wanted to hear about it: in which case, whether or not they were colleagues, he would love to explain its problems, its successes, its weaknesses; never mysteriously or condescendingly, but just as one talks to friends who share common interests.

Ben really did have a genius for friendship. He retained many old friends, and he was always acquiring new ones, and treated them all as if they were exactly the same age as himself. He loved social life of almost every kind whether in the acute discomfort of an undergraduate room or in a grand restaurant or in the splendour of some grand, ceremonial dinner – for one of the most appealing sides to his character was that he never seemed to discriminate by colour or on principle. Of course, he liked some people

decisively – he was exhilaratingly unpredictable. How often I remember asking him, after he had been away to see some friend, or country, or museum, whether he had enjoyed himself: there would be a moment of hesitation before he answered, as if he was trying to get the nuance exactly right, and then he would begin: 'I thought it was *absolutely*' and here would follow a long pause during which I had no idea whether he was going to conclude '*terrible*' or '*wonderful*'. But it was usually the latter, for he had a great capacity for liking people and things.

He loved clubs, going regularly to Brooks's and to the Beefsteak and, with Philip Toynbee (one of his oldest and closest friends) he founded an informal lunch club which meets once a fortnight at Bertorelli's in Charlotte Street – and he belonged to other institutions of the kind. And yet, despite so much social life (for being much loved, he was also much invited out by his friends), he was not always an easy companion. He could sit absent-minded and silent through a whole dinner, for no apparent reason and quite unaware of what must have appeared bad manners to an embarrassed neighbour, for afterwards he might well comment on how pleasant an evening he had passed. When concentrating on some issue he would become so absorbed that he would ignore everything that went on around him. He liked eating, but (as if defying the cliché that taste in cooking and art go together) he had little, if any, discrimination. 'The paté is simply *delicious*', he would say enthusiastically about some raw, indigestible mess and when, towards the end of his life, he took to making suppers for his friends in his own flat, the results were sinister – but somehow became palatable through the warmth of his advocacy and because it was almost impossible to be with him without enjoying what he enjoyed.

He loved reading, but music he actively disliked rather than found meaningless: almost the only time I have ever seen an expression of real misery (rather than boredom) on his face was when he was compelled to attend an – admittedly awful – evening of Irish folk songs at a splendid country house in County Cork. His appreciation of natural beauty was genuine, but it did not (I think) play a very important part in his life. Despite his mother's passion for the countryside he was essentially an urban man.

Ben could be extraordinarily perceptive (and sometimes sharp) about the people he met. This may come as a surprise, for what he said so often appeared to be ponderous, conventional, at times even banal. But then, when discussing some friends whose marriage might be in difficulties or some bizarre social occasion, he could suddenly, unexpectedly, analyse the situation with a finesse that truly was worthy of a Stendhal or a Proust. There were moments when he could seem so innocent of the ways of the world as to be ingenuous; others when he could surprise one with an oblique comment that revealed that he knew exactly what were the issues at stake.

This combination of directly contradictory qualities was, I believe, one of the secrets of his exceptional success as an editor. He could feel very strongly about issues affecting the arts, and readers of his editorials will know that he could express himself very vigorously (even harshly) about them;



and yet, having done so, he had the rare and enviable capacity of being able to separate his private and public personalities, and to adopt a resigned, if necessary calm, attitude to those very same issues. Similarly, he loved his friends, but he would never accept articles from them if he thought that they were not up to the standard that he expected and he would not interfere with their making venomous remarks about each other in the pages which he edited. He did this neither because he enjoyed goading his contributors so as to stimulate circulation nor because he was insensitive, but because he genuinely could not understand that people could carry over scholarly disputes into private relationships. In fact, people usually do just this, but Ben himself did not; he had a real streak of innocence about him which was constantly surprising and constantly delightful. And he had no sense of possessiveness about his researches which he freely communicated to others working in the same field.

Ben was an exacting scholar of the first order who really loved pictures: he was not, however, eloquent about them – except sometimes in print. Visiting an exhibition with him was exciting because of the intense feeling he generated (like an electric discharge) rather than because of anything he specifically said: in this he was unlike his great friend and admirer, Vitale Bloch, who shared so many of his tastes and who was commemorated so recently by him in these pages. For years he refused to lecture, but quite recently he had taken to accepting invitations from undergraduate societies and similar bodies, and his casual, conversational, undogmatic approach was greatly appreciated by his audiences. And he too, very much enjoyed such occasions – because he was a man who genuinely loved communicating with people more than merely imparting information or showing off his personality.

Ben was born on 6th August 1914, the elder son of Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West, and until the end of his life he remained devoutly attached to the memory of his father (in whose published diaries there are many references to him) and to those 'Bloomsbury' values which came to him at first hand from Virginia Woolf. He was not happy at Eton, but he enjoyed his time at Oxford (he was at Balliol), and he made lasting friendships there with Jeremy Hutchinson, Stuart Hampshire, Francis Graham-Harrison, Isaiah Berlin – the values of Beaumont Street, where he had lodgings, with its 'almost harsh demand for *emotional integrity*' are vividly recalled in Philip Toynbee's *Friends Apart*, and they remained with him to the end: he could, on occasions, be painfully frank – even tactless – when what one wanted from him was sentiment and consolation.

With some of these friends he helped to found the 'Florentine Club', which invited guest speakers such as Kenneth Clark, Herbert Read and Duncan Grant to talk about art. Ben's own tastes at this period were centred on the early Italian and the contemporary. He travelled quite widely in Europe and America, and – like many other English and American art historians of his generation – he 'graduated' with Berenson at I Tatti. Recalling his stay there, Nicky Mariano referred to his 'slow and halting reactions. B.B. used to say that Ben was like a deep well of crystal-clear water, and that it was worthwhile making the effort to draw it up'. While writing this brief memoir of Ben,

I have tried to get in touch with as many of his friends of this period of his life (before I knew him) as possible, without exception – they have all told me that the essentials he never changed: Berenson's comment indeed remain extraordinarily apt.

Through the influence of Kenneth Clark he was appointed Deputy Surveyor of the King's Pictures in 1939, but this intervened almost immediately. Ben served in the army in the Middle East and in Italy, where he was badly injured in an accident that had nothing to do with the fighting. In 1947, at the age of 32, he took up his appointment as Editor of THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE.

It is little more than a year ago that the Editorial Board of Directors tried, on the occasion of his thirtieth anniversary in the post, to record his achievements. There is obviously not much that can now be added to the editorial of 1977, especially as many of the readers of that tribute themselves have had personal experience of his direction of this magazine. To what was then said I would like to add only that Ben treated contributions from the most distinguished of veterans to the rawest of newcomers with exactly the same degree of critical attention: he was never intimidated by celebrities and he was impossible to bluff. I can be up to others to gauge the true extent of his achievements, but they will have to realise that he was as stubborn as a kind editor and that, for better or for worse, THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE has, since 1947, been the creation of one man.

His books and articles too can only be adequately judged by the experts in the many fields in which he worked (to be hoped that a bibliography can be drawn up but not too long to show his extraordinary range), but a few points can be made about them even in a personal memoir: they offer so vivid a reflection of his own character. The son of a diplomat and man of the world, educated at Eton and Oxford, trained by Bernard Berenson (the last serious art historian to be wholly convinced that real art came to an end with the end of the Italian Renaissance), Ben was drawn instinctively to the outcasts, the offbeat, the provincial: the painters of Ferrara (1950), Terbrugghen (1951), Wright of Derby (1968), the Treasures of the Foundling Hospital (1972), Courbet (1973), Georges de la Tour (1974; with Christopher Wright), the Followers of Caravaggio (to be published next year). How many art historians are there whose *œuvre* is at once so consistent in spirit yet so varied in time and place, so personal and yet so absolutely scholarly? Nearly all these books make notable contributions to the history of art, but though the *Terbrugghen* is his most ambitious and most important work, perhaps it is often: the contrast he draws between the shy, introverted, sensitive Terbrugghen and the coarser, worldly-wise, successful Honthorst may perhaps be a little simplistic but it gives him a wonderful opportunity to proclaim the values that were always dear to him and that he could describe with unrivalled sensitivity – for when on form he was surely one of the very best contemporary writers on art in the English language.

Over the past two or three years Ben's health had deteriorated noticeably. He had become a little deaf; he had had to spend some time in hospital after being knocked down

any been afflicted with a disturbance of the circulation which left him lame in one leg. He was (he had always been) impossible invalid. His friends conspired to organise appointments with the doctor, tried to stop him smoking which he had been told was particularly dangerous) and think more carefully. Such precautions – understandably irritated him and brought accusations of nagging. Who now tell whether they would, if pursued more systematically, have delayed the final outcome? It can only be said while his death was a terrible shock, it was not entirely unexpected.

But these last years of his life were certainly among his finest – for it was his friends, and not he, who worried about his health. In 1956 he had married the distinguished art historian Luisa Vertova who was then working with Bernard Berenson. Six years later the marriage broke up, causing great grief to both of them: for some time Ben had a series of troublesome, absurd, and obviously psychosomatic illnesses – he could not, for instance, walk across bridges, and I well remember the infinite logistical complications during a visit to Pisa of trying to get him to the Arno in the absence of adequate public transport or a reliable taxi. Yet time healed the wounds, and they were warm friends (Luisa arrived in London to stay with Ben on the day after his death). Their daughter Vanessa, in the inevitable reaction against two art-historical parents, herself took up the study of art history and this Ben (who had always been a most loving parent as well as an enchanting companion) the utmost pleasure. His absence as vanished, and – after a very long interval – he even

exhibitions far more frequently than he had been able to do for years. Honours came and he enjoyed them: membership of the Executive Committee of the National Art-Collections Fund, a CBE (1971), fellowship of the British Academy (belatedly, in 1977). In the same year, THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of his editorship with a handsome party at Brooks's and, surrounded by colleagues and admirers, he heard his toast drunk in the splendid room hung with Reynold's group portraits of the Society of Dilettanti of which he was a member (characteristically, he gave a tiny dinner afterwards for a few close friends in the upstairs room of a small Soho restaurant to which he had long been attached). Messages arrived from all over the world and he was obviously very pleased – but not (I think) wholly surprised. He was a genuinely modest man, but he knew that he was a remarkable editor.

On 22nd May the Chairman of the Editorial Committee of this journal wrote to tell him that by a unanimous decision of the Committee he was invited to stay on as editor despite the fact that he was about to reach normal retiring age. There is every reason to believe that Ben knew of this invitation, but he never received the letter. On the same day he dined at the Beefsteak, and the friends who were there all describe him as having been cheerful and in excellent form. He walked to Leicester Square underground station and there he collapsed and died instantaneously. The coronary thrombosis that killed him was so massive that he could neither have felt any pain nor even realised that he was ill.

FRANCIS HASKELL

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## NACF Benedict Nicolson Fund

Directors of THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE invite all those, both in England and abroad, who would like to record their appreciation of Benedict Nicolson's long editorship of this journal, to contribute to a special fund (administered by the National Art-Collections Fund) which will be devoted to purchasing a picture in Ben's taste and presented to a national gallery in his memory.

Contributions should be sent to the "NACF Benedict Nicolson Fund": NACF, 26 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1. A list of donors to this fund will be published in the December issue of THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE.