

Discover Iowa

Hoyt Sherman — a surprising Place

By C.R. Mitchell

You've "done" the Art Center and viewed the latest science exhibits; your ankles are too weak for ice skating and you've exhausted your shopping budget. So what's to do on a gloomy, winter day when you just have to get out of the house?

Well, how about a visit to Hoyt Sherman Place, that grand pile of masonry at the corner of Fifteenth Street and Woodland Avenue?

Now the home of the Des Moines Women's Club, the mansion was built in 1877 by Des Moines pioneer Hoyt Sherman, the younger brother of Civil War General William Tecumseh of marching-through-Georgia fame.

When Hoyt Sherman died in 1904, a far-sighted City Park and Recreation Board bought the property and in 1907 leased it to the women's club. The lease later was renewed for 99 years — until 2019 — with the proviso that the club provide all the maintenance and upkeep.

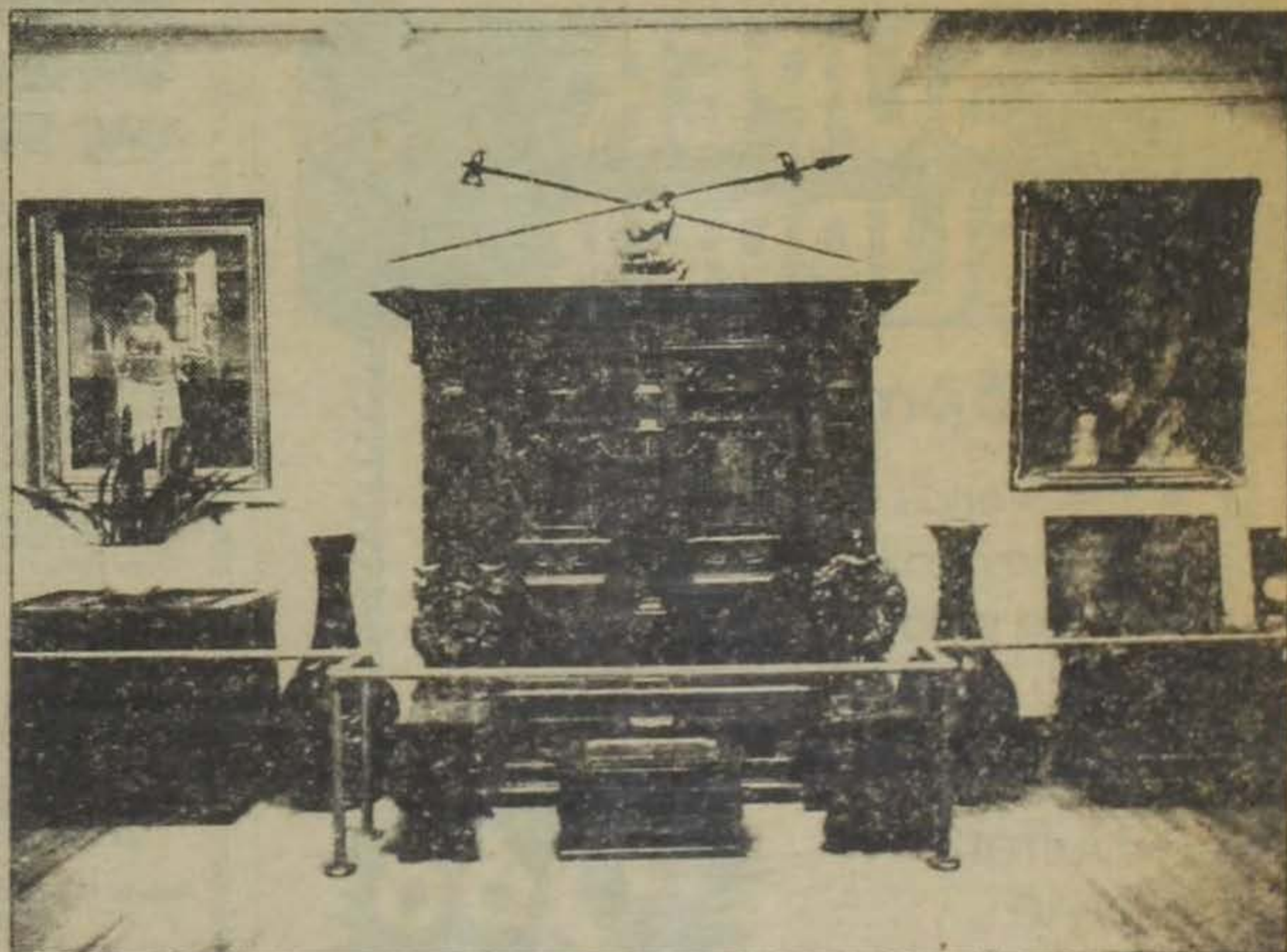
The women's club, organized in 1885 to promote cultural pursuits, immediately made the most of its new home, adding a two-room art gallery — the first in the city — and later, in 1921, a 1,400-seat theater.

The art and artifacts housed at Hoyt Sherman range from Greek to Chinese, from oils to marble statuary, and include a set of hand-carved Swiss furniture. The theater, decorated with unique rococo plaster-work designs, currently is called home by the Civic Music Association and the Des Moines Symphony. Other groups also rent the theater for dance recitals, concerts and the like.

Much of the original character of the mansion portion of the complex remains, according to Anna Belle Wonders, Des Moines Women's Club executive secretary, and the house is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Six rooms in addition to the two-room gallery and the theater are open to visitors. These include the parlor and library, now used as club offices; the former music room, called the mirror room because it features a huge mirror salvaged from one of Des Moines' first drugstores; two meeting rooms, converted from four original bedrooms and containing a number of paintings and marble sculptures; and the dining room.

This stately dining chamber with its original furnishings — including a table that seats 18 — is still used for special



These items on display are part of the permanent collection.

luncheons.

Beautiful walnut, mahogany, cherry, oak and bird's-eye maple woodwork is intact throughout the house.

Hoyt Sherman Place is generally open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. However, meetings sometimes are scheduled during these times, and so it's a

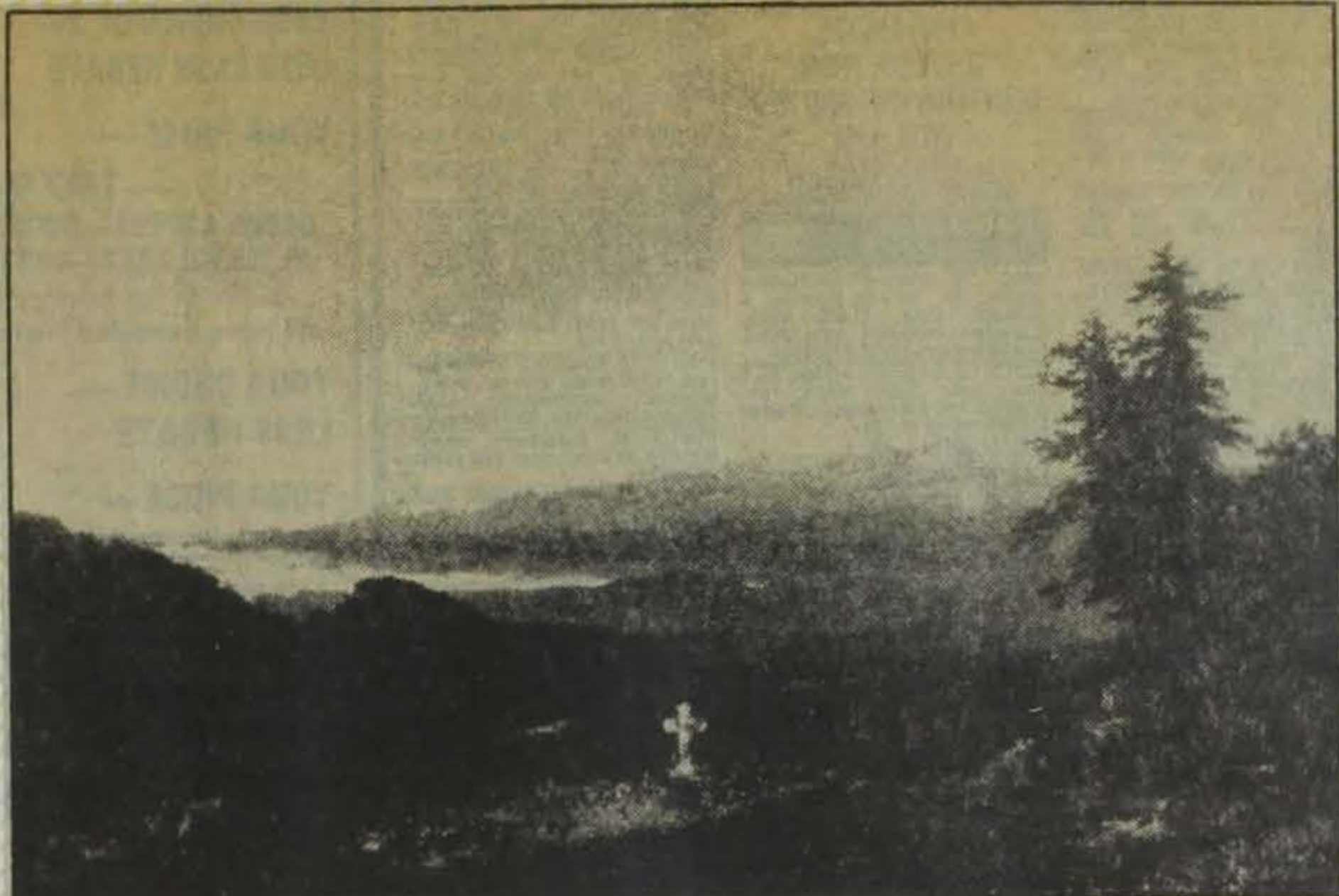
good idea to call 243-0913 first to make sure you'll be able to wander through. If you want to look on your own, the visit is free. A dollar gets you a guided tour — an amenity well worth the price.

You might also visit during the women's club annual antique show, scheduled this year for Feb. 23, 24 and 25. Call for times and ticket prices.

PHOTOS BY GEORGE MILLENER



Anna Belle Wonders, executive secretary of the Des Moines Women's Club, stands in city's oldest art gallery at Hoyt Sherman Place.



"Sunrise in the Catskills" by Frederic Church.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL,
Friday, Jan. 18, 1980

Price Surge Creates Search for Works By Frederick Church

So Dust Off That Landscape,
It Could Fetch a Bundle;
Auction Will Test Market

By AMANDA BENNETT

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

BIRMINGHAM, Mich.—Last October in New York, "Icebergs" by Frederick Church sold for \$2.5 million, the most ever paid at auction for an American painting and more than double the price expected by the auction house.

Tomorrow, in this suburb north of Detroit, an unidentified descendant of the artist will offer to sell a small version of "Icebergs." While most Church experts agree that a year ago the painting would have sold for about \$50,000, the auction house is predicting the canvas now will bring up to \$300,000.

Whether or not it does—and there are skeptics—its sale is evidence of the furor that can follow a highly visible art sale. A sudden realization of the value of the artist's work sends people scurrying to attics and basements in pursuit of a similar windfall.

"Church is right up there with gold and silver now," says Linda McLean, curator of Olana, the home the 19th Century artist built for himself that now serves as a New York State museum.

More Discoveries Seen

One result will certainly be the discovery of more works by Mr. Church. "Every time something like this happens, more and more pictures come out of the woodwork," says Miss McLean.

One reason is that there are so many to be found. Mr. Church's paintings and sketches number in the thousands. Hundreds of them are in museums and private collections around the country. But David Huntington, a University of Michigan Church scholar, says the painter often gave sketches away—to friends' children as wedding presents, for example, so many smaller works are probably languishing unappreciated in attics.

The big "Icebergs" gathered dust in a British boys school until the owners decided to raise some funds. The smaller version hung in the heir's living room unknown to the art world, too.

Art experts are getting a spate of calls from possible Church owners. Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc., the auction house that sold the large "Icebergs," reports that interest has picked up. Mr. Huntington, the Church scholar, says he's received "eight to 10" calls including "at least two" that appear to involve genuine Church paintings. And Miss McLean says an Olana museum staff member validated a tiny sketch at a home in South Carolina just after the New York auction. The delighted owners found that the 4½ inch by 8½ inch drawing that hung in their hall might have a \$7,000 value.

Part of a Trend

Even before the large auction, the value of Church's work had been rising. Mr. Church was a prominent member of the Hudson River School of American artists that developed in the mid-1800s. Its work was held in such low esteem in the 1930s and 1940s that the paintings were used as cheap movie props, but it has benefited from the resurgence of interest in American art and the interest in art as an investment.

Some major Church works were already commanding hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Detroit Institute of Arts, for example, paid \$450,000 in 1977 for "Cotapaxi," a large painting of an erupting volcano. But many art experts believe the "Icebergs" sale gave the steady price rise a big boost. "The whole Church market has risen 50%" since the auction, says Theodore Stebbins, curator of American art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

The seller of the smaller "Icebergs" hopes the close association with the larger work will increase its value even more, says Frank Boos of Stalker & Boos, the auction house that will handle the sale. (So does Mr. Boos. The auction house will make 20% of whatever the painting brings.)

Smaller Version

The big "Icebergs" was painted after an 1859 schooner trip by Mr. Church up the coast of Labrador. The nine-by-five-foot canvas shows a towering, stylized iceberg in a chilly Arctic light. The smaller version, which is 10 inches by 18 inches, was painted first to test color and shape before beginning the larger canvas. It is more compactly arranged and much less striking than the later version.

While many experts believe the smaller "Icebergs" will benefit from the interest in Church and its resemblance to the giant painting, others aren't so sure. The ante "isn't necessarily raised" just by the big painting's sale, says Peter Rathbone, vice president of American painting at Sotheby's. "It doesn't hurt, but it doesn't help." He concedes, however, that in an office pool at Sotheby's, "acknowledged experts" bet on final sale prices for the big painting of \$750,000 to \$5.1 million. That shows "how hard it is to guess," he says.

It's so difficult to gauge the market precisely because "it's a small, volatile, personal market," says Mr. Stebbins of the Boston Fine Arts Museum. Unlike stocks, he says, where each share of a company has the same value, each painting is different. "All it takes is two people who want something badly for the price to go out of sight," he says.



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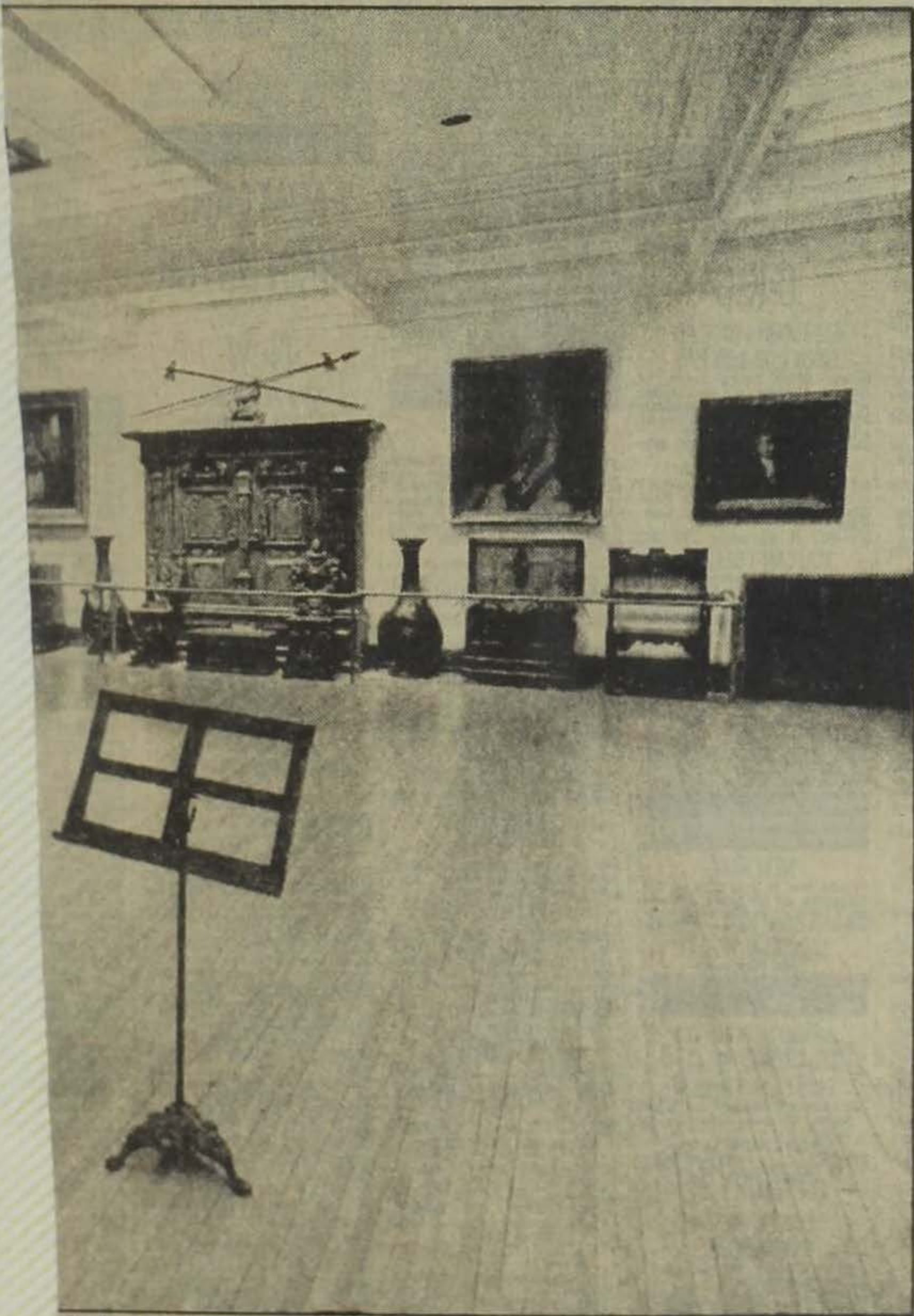
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A gallery at Hoyt Sherman Place is lined with paintings, vases, sculptures and furniture under the care of

Page/Arts

May 26, 1980



the Des Moines Women's Club.

TRIBUNE PHOTO BY WARREN TAYLOR

Restoration of Women's Club art collection a slow process

By Denise Caringer

The Des Moines Women's Club quietly is looking for private donations to help restore its important collection of 19th and early 20th century art.

"There's a lot of artwork here that needs to be restored and cleaned," said Anna Belle Wonders, executive secretary of the club, "and so far we've been going at a snail's pace at it because of the cost." (Restoration work on a Frederic Church painting, not currently on display, cost \$2,000 recently.)

The collection of about 80 paintings, in addition to sculptures, furniture, vases and other artifacts, is on display to the general public at Hoyt Sherman Place, which has housed the Des Moines Women's Club since 1907.

Wonders said the club is accepting donations for its Heritage Fund, the interest from which would be used to have paintings restored at a brisker pace. The fund currently totals \$50,000. The goal is to raise \$200,000 more.

"We just want to do work at a faster pace, and we would like to install a humidity system (to help protect the works), which will cost from \$20,000 to \$25,000."

Wonders took issue with the tone of some recent news accounts which, she said, "made it sound as if we are desperate. . . The situation isn't critical. . . and the club is financially healthy."

She said the club could sell one work of art from its collection to bring the Heritage Fund up to its \$250,000 goal if private contributions are not forthcoming, "but only the interest from that money would be used to restore the other works. And, we really don't want to sell anything at this time."

An appraiser from the New York auction house of Sotheby Parke Bernet was in Des Moines last week to

appraise some of the works in the collection, she said.

The collection, amassed through gifts, bequests and purchases, includes such prizes as two paintings by George Inness, one by Elihu Vedder, two by W.T. Richards, one by Thomas Moran and one by Frederic Church. (The Church landscape, "Sunrise in the Catskills," has not been on exhibition since it was cleaned.)

The galleries in Hoyt Sherman Place are open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at no charge. Wonders suggests calling before visiting the galleries, because the rooms sometimes are rented to private groups for meetings.

Hoyt Sherman Place, named for the prosperous Des Moines pioneer who built the home in 1877, has been preserved carefully over the years by the club.

After Sherman's death, the house came into the possession of the City of Des Moines, which agreed in 1907 to rent it to the Des Moines Women's Club for \$1 a year. Later provisions required that the club maintain an art gallery in the house at no charge to the general public.

Wonders stressed that the city spends no money on the house and that the club, through private funds, has maintained, preserved and furnished the house over the years, as well as building additions to it — the first gallery in 1907 and a second gallery and the auditorium in 1922.

Last year, Wonders said the club "put \$65,000 to \$68,000 back into the property with a new furnace, driveway and painting."

Despite additions to the house, it appears inside much as it did originally, providing an appropriate viewing place for the works of art — many of which are of a similar vintage as the house.

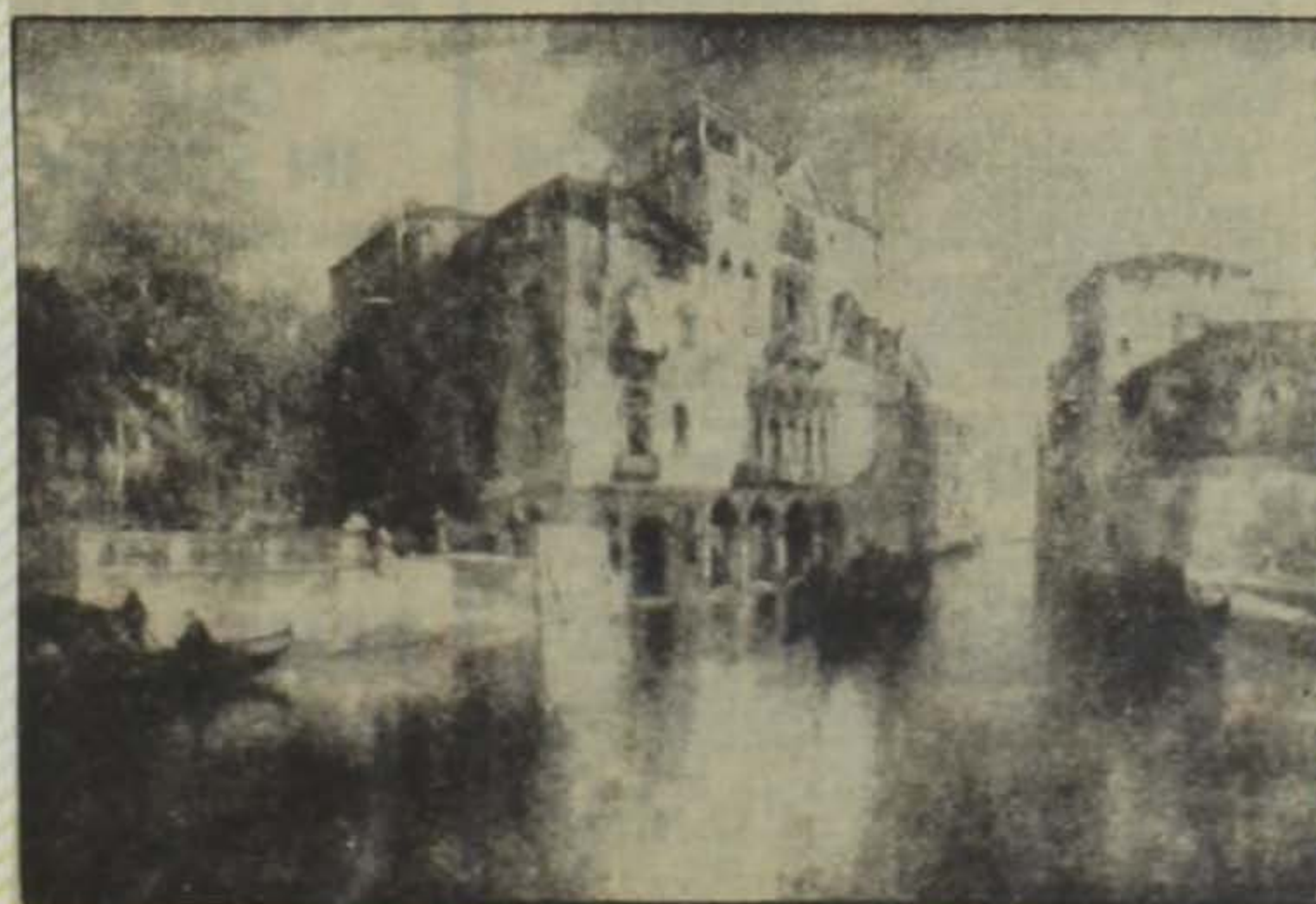
The works hang in the galleries and throughout the house, so the viewer is provided an intriguing experience of exploring the house and the art work at the same time.



"House by the Sea" by Elihu Vedder.



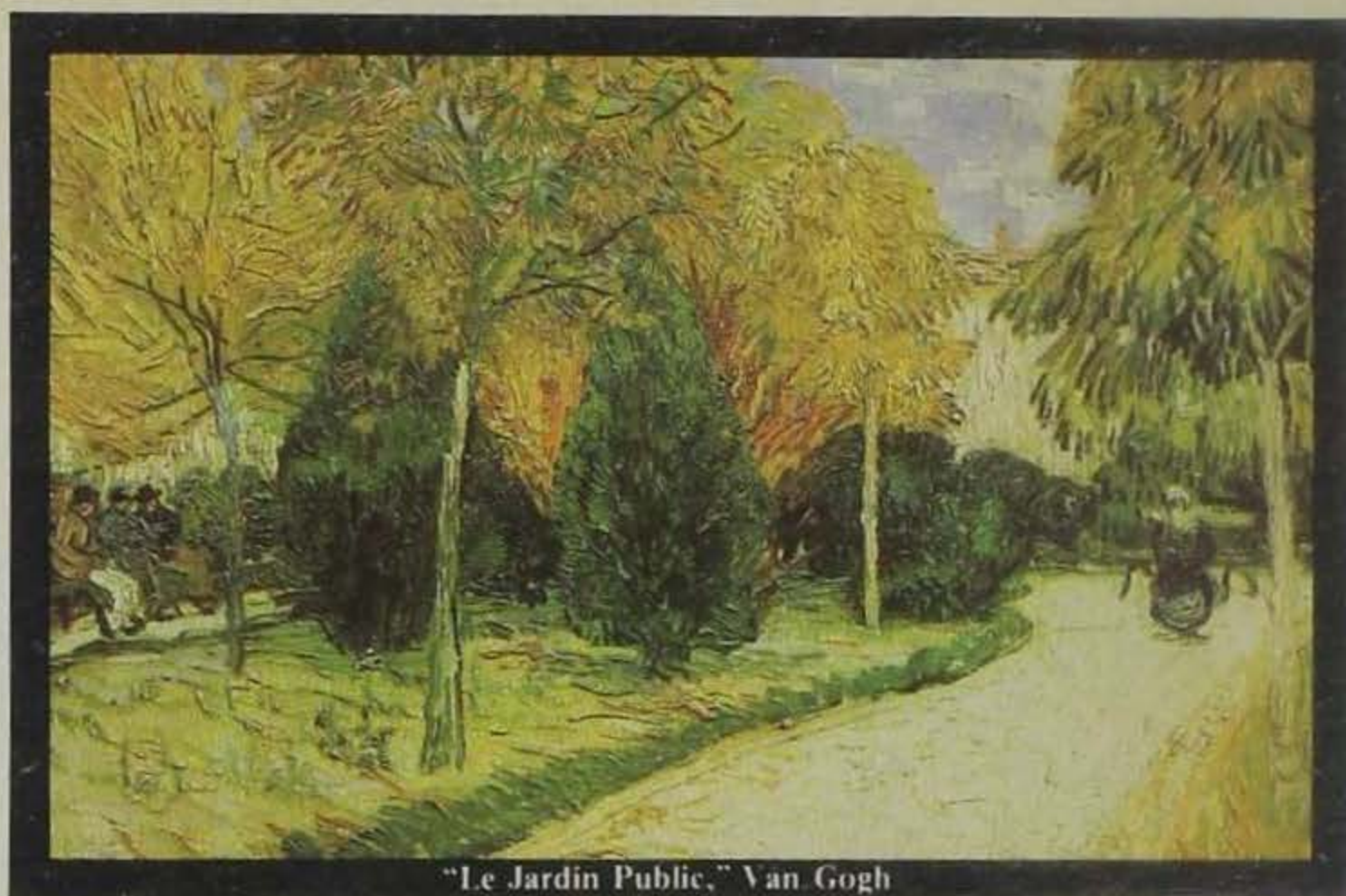
"Thompson's Bend" by Gardner Symons.



"Venetian Castles" by Thomas Moran.



"Woman in an Oriental Costume," Renoir



"Le Jardin Public," Van Gogh

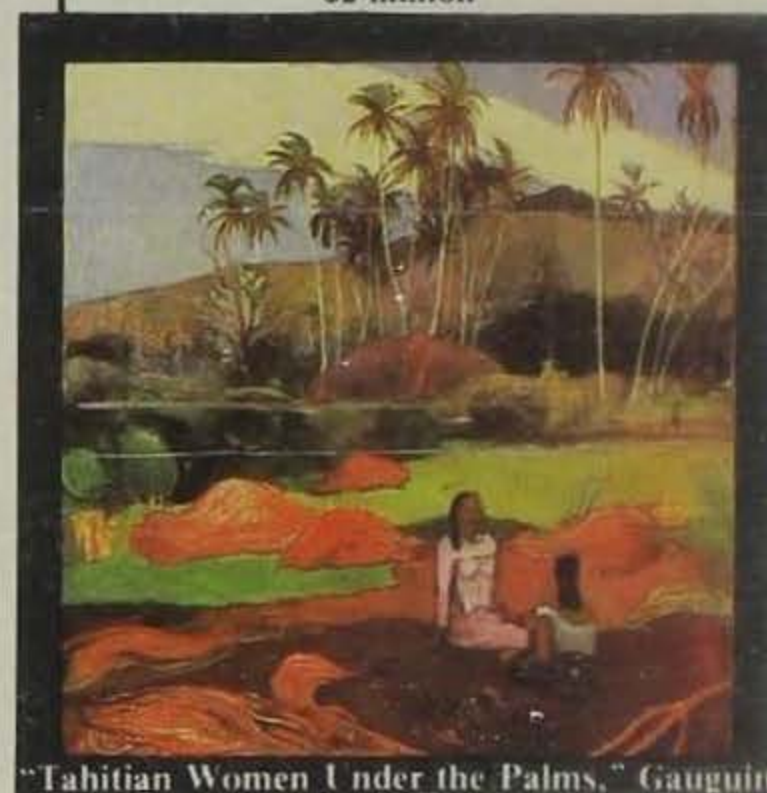
\$1 million

\$1.5 million

\$2 million



"La Serre," Renoir



"Tahitian Women Under the Palms," Gauguin

The Auction Boom:

What Price Art?

by James Mellow

Even the normally unflappable New York art world took notice last May when the city's two rival auction houses, Sotheby Parke Bernet and Christie's, sold some 10 well-touted masterworks of painting for, in most cases, well above the million-dollar mark. One evening sale in May included about 41 works of Impressionist and modern paintings, drawings, and sculpture from the estate of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch. A Picasso, "Saltimbanque," more notable for its charm than for its importance in the Picasso canon, sold for \$3 million, breaking records for the sale of a 20th-century painting at auction. A Gauguin Tahitian landscape with figures and a painfully constrained Van Gogh portrait (of Adeline Ravoux, the 16-year-old daughter of an innkeeper in Auvers) brought \$1.8 million

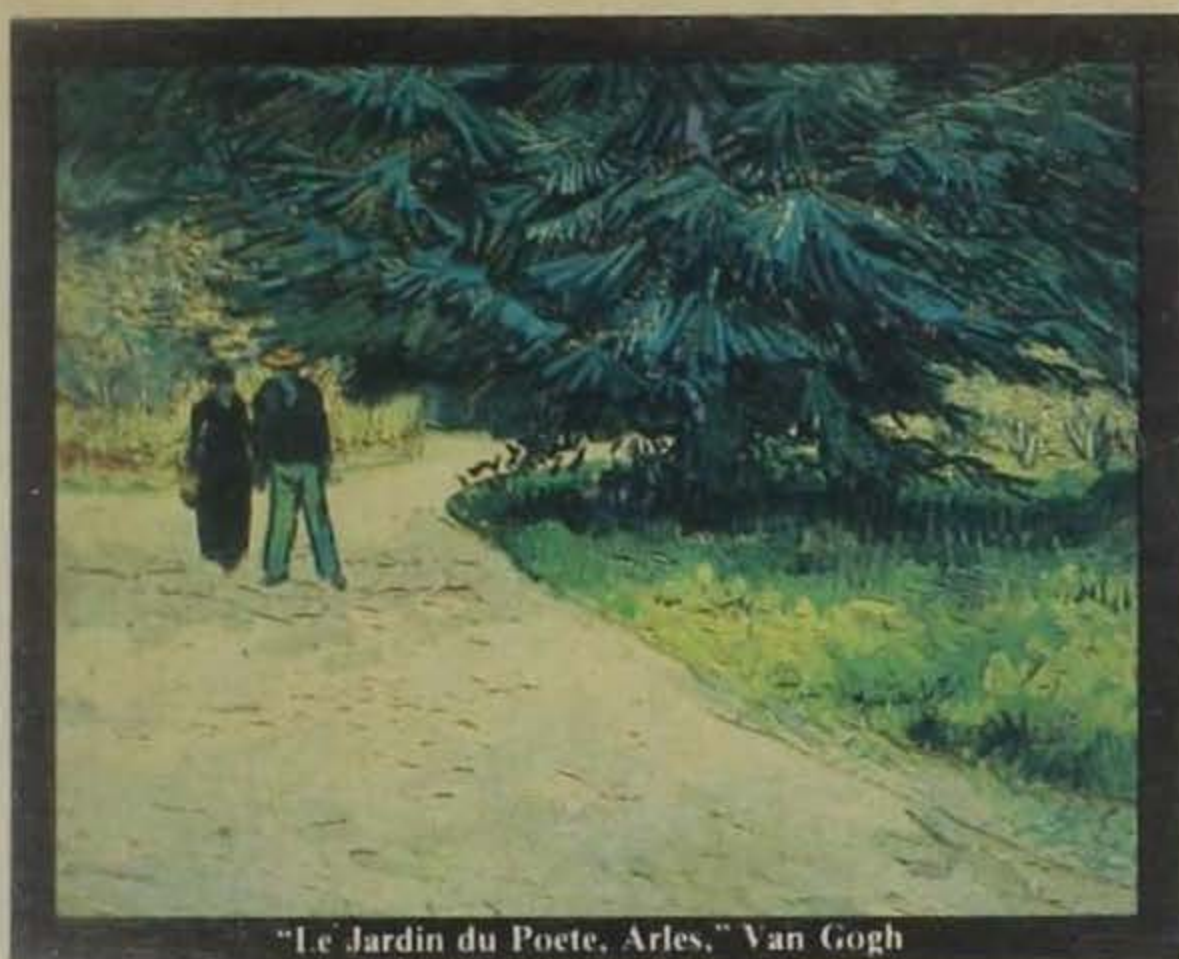
apiece. A late overripe Renoir figure painting, "Woman in an Oriental Costume," fetched an even \$1 million.

On the following night, in Christie's packed Park Avenue salesrooms, 10 paintings from the collection of Henry Ford II produced equally spectacular bids. A haunting Van Gogh landscape, "Le Jardin du Poete, Arles," sold for \$5.2 million, while an even more impressive Cezanne, "Paysan en Blouse Bleue," went for \$3.9 million. This time one of Gauguin's Brittany landscapes, "La Plage au Pouldu," broke the million-dollar barrier, selling for \$2.9 million, while another Van Gogh, "Le Jardin Public," and a second Renoir, "La Serre," went for \$1.9 million and \$1.2 million respectively.

Finally, on May 29, to the amazement of many, a panoramic view of Venice titled "Juliet and Her Nurse," by

the 19th-century English landscapist, J.M.W. Turner, sold for \$6.4 million at Sotheby's—breaking every record for a work of art at auction.

Nor did the million-dollar pictures tell the complete story. During a four-day period in which a consignment of modern American painting and sculpture was put on the block, Christie's harvested an impressive \$30 million. In an equally formidable week, from May 12 to 17, which also saw a hefty sale of contemporary American art, Sotheby's brought in \$27.2 million. This flurry of activity in the business capped off a year of record sales for both of the former English auction firms. Christie's, at the end of its third season of American operations, was projecting more than \$100 million in sales, over double its record for the previous year. Sotheby's, which had joined forces with the



"Le Jardin du Poete, Arles," Van Gogh



"Juliet and Her Nurse," Turner

\$5 million

\$5.5 million

\$6 million

hard-edge painters. Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly were topping their sales records. Pollock's swarming, earthy 1953 abstraction, "Four Opposites," sold for an impressive \$550,000—a peak price for a contemporary American painting at auction. Roy Lichtenstein's suave comic-strip melodrama, "Oh, Jeff...I Love You, Too...But..." heralded a new record for that artist's work, a lofty \$210,000.

At the end of the 1979-1980 season, even 19th-century American landscape painting seemed to offer the promise of greener auction pastures. In October 1979, Frederick Edwin Church's nine-foot panoramic view, "Icebergs (The North)," brought a stunning \$2.5 million at a Sotheby sale, creating a noticeable stir of interest in a field that had been otherwise quietly and patiently cultivated and promoted by generations of American dealers, critics, and scholars. The evidence was clearly in; there was gold in the hills of 19th-century landscape painting.

Publicly, New York's art dealers welcome the attention that headline auction prices bring to the field and the broader audiences—and increasing sales—they bring to the galleries. But privately, some are having second thoughts.

The causes are largely economic. Of the 21 paintings that sold for more than \$1 million during the decade of the 1970s, more than half—11—were Impressionist and Post-Impressionist



"Juan de Pareja," Velasquez

works. Paintings by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cezanne, Renoir, Manet, and Seurat head the list of the most lucrative and salable items at auction. With the escalating prices for such works, few new collections have been formed, and collectors with topnotch Cezannes or Renoirs—or inferior works, for that matter—prefer to sell them at auction. For the private dealer in Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works, the sources are gradually drying up, in America, at least, unless he can afford to buy them at the inflated auction prices.

The issue of quality is not one that auction houses address in any serious way, particularly when it comes to individual works. Any item for sale is, presumably, "choice." Sotheby's affable and shrewd president, John L. Marion, asserts that a collector can never go wrong "in buying the best of quality." And Christie's president, David Bathurst, publicly deplores the tendency to view art purely as an investment. "I find it inconceivable," he stated at a recent ARTnews conference on the world art market, "to suggest that someone with

no interest in art put a great portion of his wealth in this area."

But the tendency to establish "capriciously" inflated prices for minor or negligible works by major artists is one of the inevitable results of the flourishing auction scene. And it is a tendency that has a lengthier history in the American art market than the record-breaking May sales. In 1961, Rembrandt's "Aristotle With a Bust of Homer," which is undoubtedly the dullest overpriced old masterwork in existence, was bought at auction by the Metropolitan Museum at the then-incredible price of \$2.3 million. It was considered the talisman of the coming-of-age of the affluent American art scene and the establishment of New York as the new center of the international art market.

That Turner's large, scenic, and sentimental "Juliet and Her Nurse," admittedly a rarity on the market, should have now broken every auction record says volumes about the economics of the current art scene. By no stretch of the imagination is it a work of real importance in Turner's oeuvre or in the history of Western art. (Flora Whitney Miller, who put the painting up for sale, was stunned by the price, which says something about her good judgment.)

There seems to be no end in sight for those rosy auction prospects. Sotheby's most confident estimates are pinned to their fall auction works from the collection of the late Andre Meyer, the former senior partner of the investment

bankers, Lazard Freres & Co., New York, a remarkably astute collector and the benefactor of the Andre Meyer Galleries at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Out of the 32 paintings and drawings that will go up for bids in late October, Sotheby fully expects that at least five—a Van Gogh, two paintings by Degas, a Rembrandt, and a Renoir—will bring upward of \$1 million each.

Christie's major summer auction in London, on July 11, will offer a rare and notable large-scale canvas by Peter Paul Rubens, "Samson and Delilah," painted for the burgomaster of Antwerp, Nicolaas Rockox, around 1610, which is expected to break further auction records. But as Christie's officials are careful to point out in their press releases, the picture is being sold on behalf of an anonymous European family—that is, it is not from an English collection and therefore not subject to stringent British export regulations on the sale of national treasures.

Despite the overflowing optimism, there are a few voices of discontent and caution. The *New York Times* critic, John Russell, in a thought-provoking piece written after the May sales, itemized the precipitating factors for the unprecedented sales figures: the prestige of owning great works of art, the rarity of paintings by such artists as Turner and Van Gogh, the "galvanic" effect of the auction-room atmosphere ("midway between bullring and bordello," as he pointedly described it), and the security of the investment in a risky economy. "In times of crisis," Russell acknowledged, "great art is an immediately recognizable and rapidly negotiable form of wealth."

Museum directors and curators are notoriously reticent about discussing the commercial aspects of the art scene, but it is no secret that with skyrocketing auction prices, poorly or modestly endowed institutions—and there are a good many around the country—are finding it impossible to compete with wealthy collectors and commercial dealers for the auction prizes. Few museums have the financial clout of the Kimbell Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, which copped the \$3.9 million Cezanne in the Ford sale.

Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan, however, offers some cautionary advice against placing undue importance on the recent sales. Auctions, he maintains, represent only one side of the question and often create prices that are "capriciously high or capriciously low. . . . Thousands of works of art trade hands in private negotiations often at exceedingly high prices that the press is not aware of."

Still, the Metropolitan has been known to go the auction route, and has quietly disposed of several pictures during the past season. Last November, the museum put up Manet's "Danseurs

**Most museums simply
can't compete with
collectors and dealers
for the auction prizes.**

Espagnols" for sale at Christie's, expecting between \$70,000 to \$90,000. It must have been a pleasant surprise when the picture sold to a private European collector for \$170,000.

Undeniably, a good many factors have precipitated the current boom, some of them complex, others easy to discern. It is no coincidence, surely, that so many works by Picasso, many of them rather minor, should have come on the market when the Museum of Modern Art is staging its mammoth Picasso exhibition.

At Sotheby's, Marion seems anxious to counteract any impression of panic-selling among American collectors. In separate interviews, both men repeated arguments given to the press shortly after the May sales—that the Garbisch and Ford sales were coincidental, matters of death, taxes, and divorce.

The Garbisch pictures were auctioned off to liquidate an estate; the Ford paintings were sold to settle a divorce agreement between Henry Ford II and his second wife, Christina. Marion attributes the proliferating sales to the "maturity" of the market.

There has been, he says, a major change in the spread of wealth and a broadening of interest in the art field in the 20 years he has been in the profession. Of course, however, more and more wealthy collectors—and predominantly American collectors—have been putting their salable art treasures up for auction; otherwise there would be no flourishing American auction trade.

Behind the phenomenon there is a nagging, unpopular, and unanswered question. For the six decades through the 1960s, American collectors, in their affluence, were devouring many of the incomparable masterpieces in the history of art. Now, it seems, we have arrived at that point when the process is being reversed. The older collections are being dismantled, the priceless objects are gravitating elsewhere.

In the recent Garbisch and Ford sales, as well as at the Turner auction, works were dispersed to foreign buyers; and the reports on the growing strength of Japanese, German, Italian, Dutch, and Israeli buyers—particularly in the sales of Impressionist and modern work—are becoming increasingly noticeable.

Naturally, the auction houses consider the "two-way-flow" of money and masterpieces a thoroughly healthy sign of free trade. But with American collections of both Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works drying up, have we reached the point of no return when, like other nations, we must begin to worry about the unchecked dispersal of our treasures?

And is the rampant auction boom really such a healthy system after all? To be sure, it may well be the perfect time to sell a second-rate Picasso for a hefty profit. But it probably isn't a good time to buy that same second-rate Picasso, at today's overinflated prices. In the end, the skyrocketing prices for works by major artists (and minor) are sure to have a damaging effect upon the art market. The embarrassment of riches we are witnessing in the current auction boom may carry a high price tag of its own. ■

James R. Mellow, a freelance art critic, is the author of a forthcoming biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

DECEMBER 31, 1979

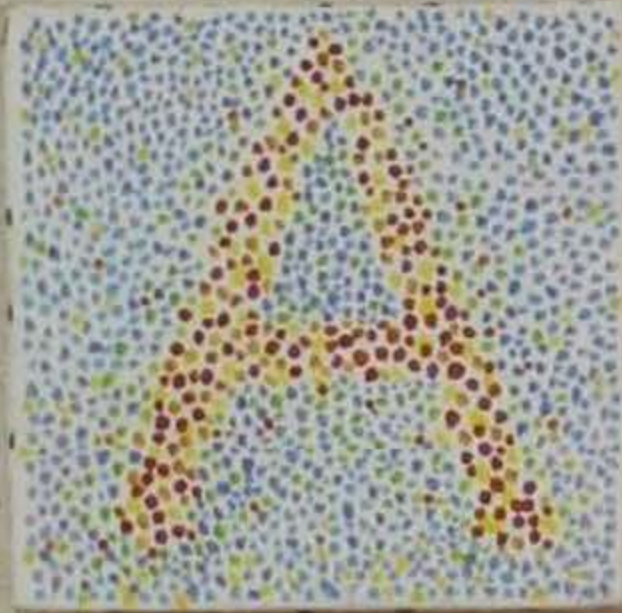
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TIME

After Seven Weeks
A Cruel
Stalemate



GOING...GOING...GONE! The Art and Antique Boom



ECTBO BRH HR60199T 99 03 12
MR JAN V BERRY
5601 HARWOOD DR
DES MOINES IA 50312



Auction of contemporary art held at Christie's main salesroom in Manhattan fetched an impressive total of \$2 million for 136 works

Art Possessions Committee Living

COVER STORY

Going . . . Going . . . Gone!

The auction business is booming as more and more Americans catch art-collecting fever

Those wily old Romans started it all. They developed the form of sale that became the auction, and used it to sell everything from statues to tapestries to palaces and, finally, the relics of their republic. They knew well that *auctio* (literally, an increasing) was where the action was. They should be around today.

Not since the first hammer dropped to the highest bidder have sales of valu-

ables commanded such audiences, such publicity, such prices. While anything that is relatively rare is sure to fetch a pretty penny at auction these days, things of beauty and lasting worth—"objects of virtue" to the trade—are going for sums that would boggle the *I* of Claudius. *Ars gratia auctionis*. Throughout the U.S. and the rest of the West, once listless salesrooms thrum with auctiophiliacs in search of a piece of the past; the top firms hold sev-

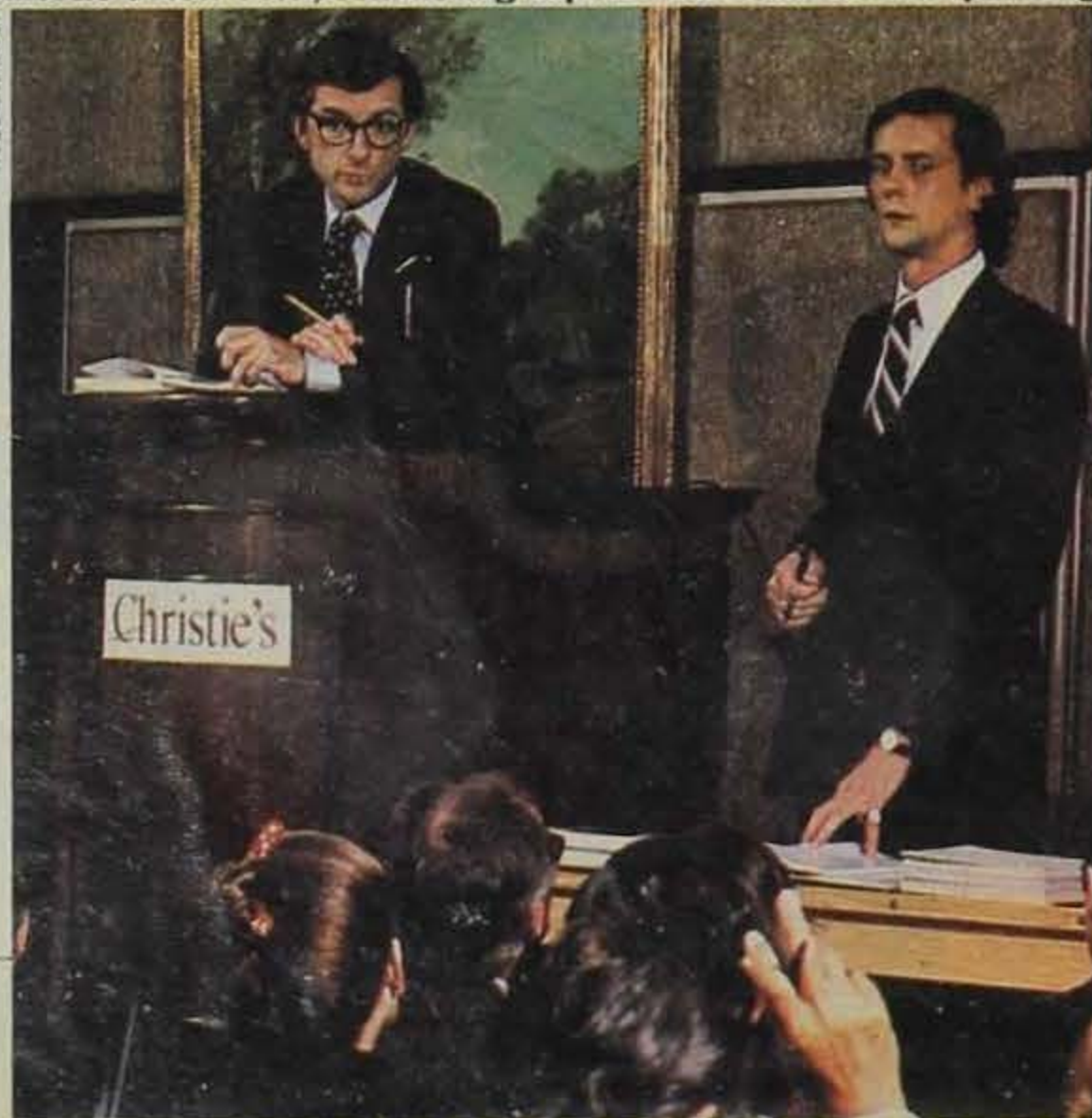
eral simultaneous sales a day six days a week. In 1979 Sotheby's and Christie's, the two London-based giants of the international fine arts auction business, together have netted \$702 million worldwide. Nor does anyone expect recession to cool the fever. Some indicators:

► A huge painting of scarlet lips suspended over a landscape, the work of American-born Dadaist and Photographer Man Ray, sold Nov. 5 at Sotheby

Center: David Bathurst, president of Christie's New York, conducting impressionist and modern painting and sculpture sale for \$7 million



Bidder at Cleveland house sale



Architect Philip Johnson at sale

Photographs for TIME by Ted Thal



Gripped by the action

Parke Bernet in Manhattan for \$750,000. It was by far the highest price ever paid at auction for a surrealist work.

► Earlier this month in Manhattan, the highest amount ever brought by a poster at auction—\$26,000—went for Toulouse-Lautrec's color lithograph of Parisian Cabaret Singer Aristide Bruant.

► A study for the Rodin sculpture *Burghers of Calais*—not the final work—went for \$255,237 in Monaco. The price set a record for any Rodin bronze.

► A Picasso drawing, *Tête Classique*, fetched \$210,000 in Manhattan—another record.

► In five days of November, impressionist, modern and contemporary art sales at SPB netted nearly \$21 million, close to the firm's entire 1967-68 turnover.

"The whole scene is slightly crazy," said Leslie Waddington, a leading London dealer who attended the sales—and observed that few of the offerings were of

Sotheby Parke Bernet

LOT 587	\$	47000
UK POUNDS		22349
SW FRANCS		76986
FR FRANCS		197095
GER MARKS		84003
IT LIRE '000'		38897
JA YEN '000'		11285

ALL CONVERSIONS APPROXIMATE



Exchange board records bids in leading international currencies

The Romans, who developed the auction, would love it.

premier quality. "It's public insanity."

No sale in years has come closer to craziness than Sotheby Parke Bernet's Auction 4290 in Manhattan on Oct. 25. It took only three minutes and 45 seconds to gavel down Frederic Edwin Church's *The Icebergs* for \$2.5 million. That was the third highest bid ever made for a painting at auction* and more than twice as much as any other Amer-

*The two highest: Velázquez's *Portrait of Juan de Pareja*, \$5.5 million, in 1970; Titian's *Death of Actaeon*, \$4 million, in 1971.



David Rockefeller waits

ican work of art has ever fetched (see ESSAY). In all, the 264 works by 146 American painters of the 19th and 20th centuries posted a record for a sale of U.S. art: \$6,750,950. *The Icebergs*, a flamboyant canvas by one of America's best landscapists, was bought by Texas Oilman Lamar Hunt. Despite its size (9 ft. by 5 ft.), weight (more than 500 lbs. with frame) and fame, the painting had disappeared for more than a century until it was rediscovered last June in a penny-pinched English juvenile home.

Sotheby Parke Bernet's 4290 was a landmark sale: the prices realized at the auction will serve as reference points for years to come. Thus in the hierarchy of cash a relatively obscure artist by world standards ranks, for now at least, above any Dutch old master, any English painter, any French impressionist, any American abstract expressionist, any sculptor of any age.

Nor are high prices limited to paint-

At Sotheby Parke Bernet in Manhattan, canvas of scarlet lips by Man Ray sells for \$750,000, highest ever bid for a surrealist painting



At Sotheby's in London, Catalogue and value going for sums that would boggle the

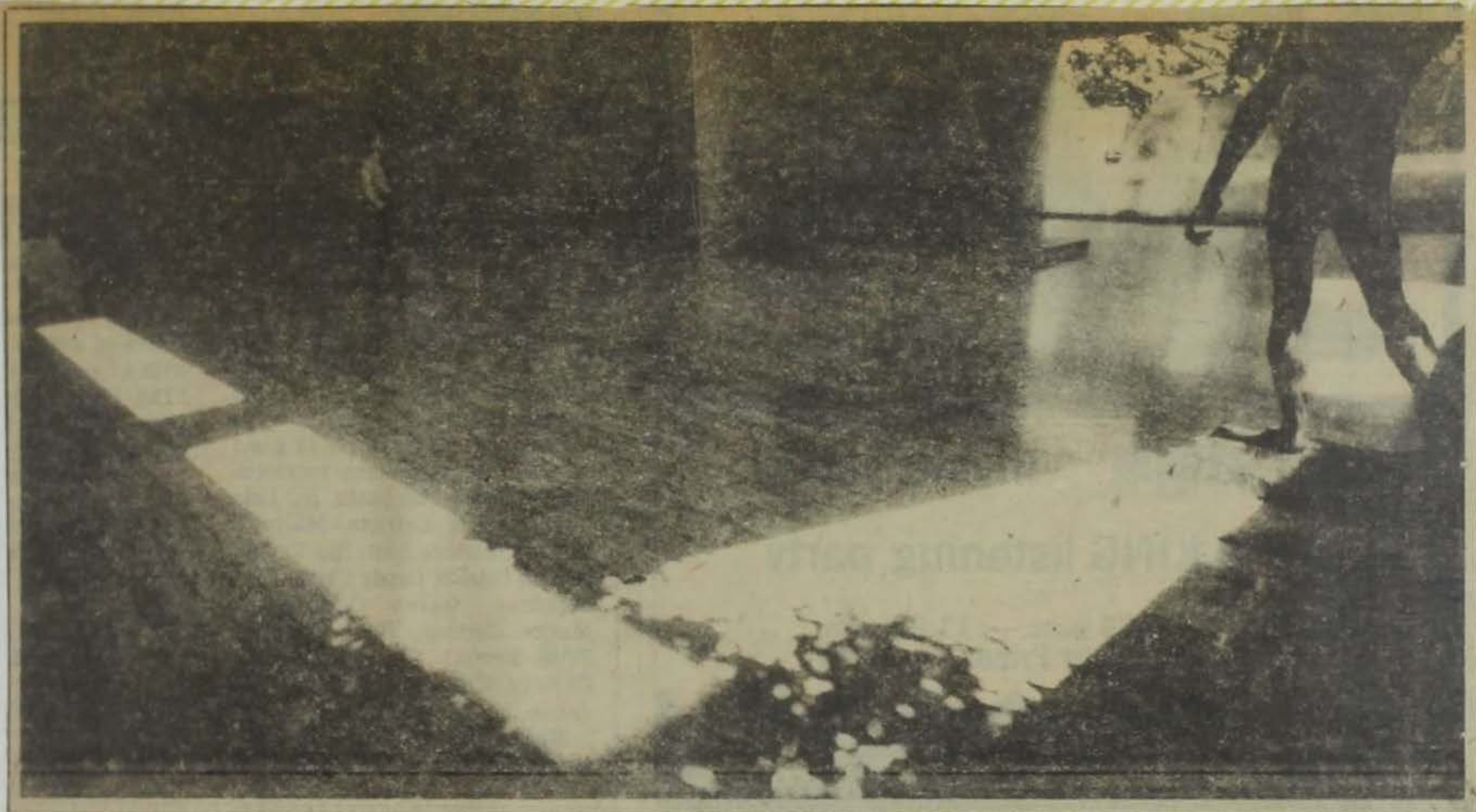
POSSIBILITIES FOR COLLECTORS III



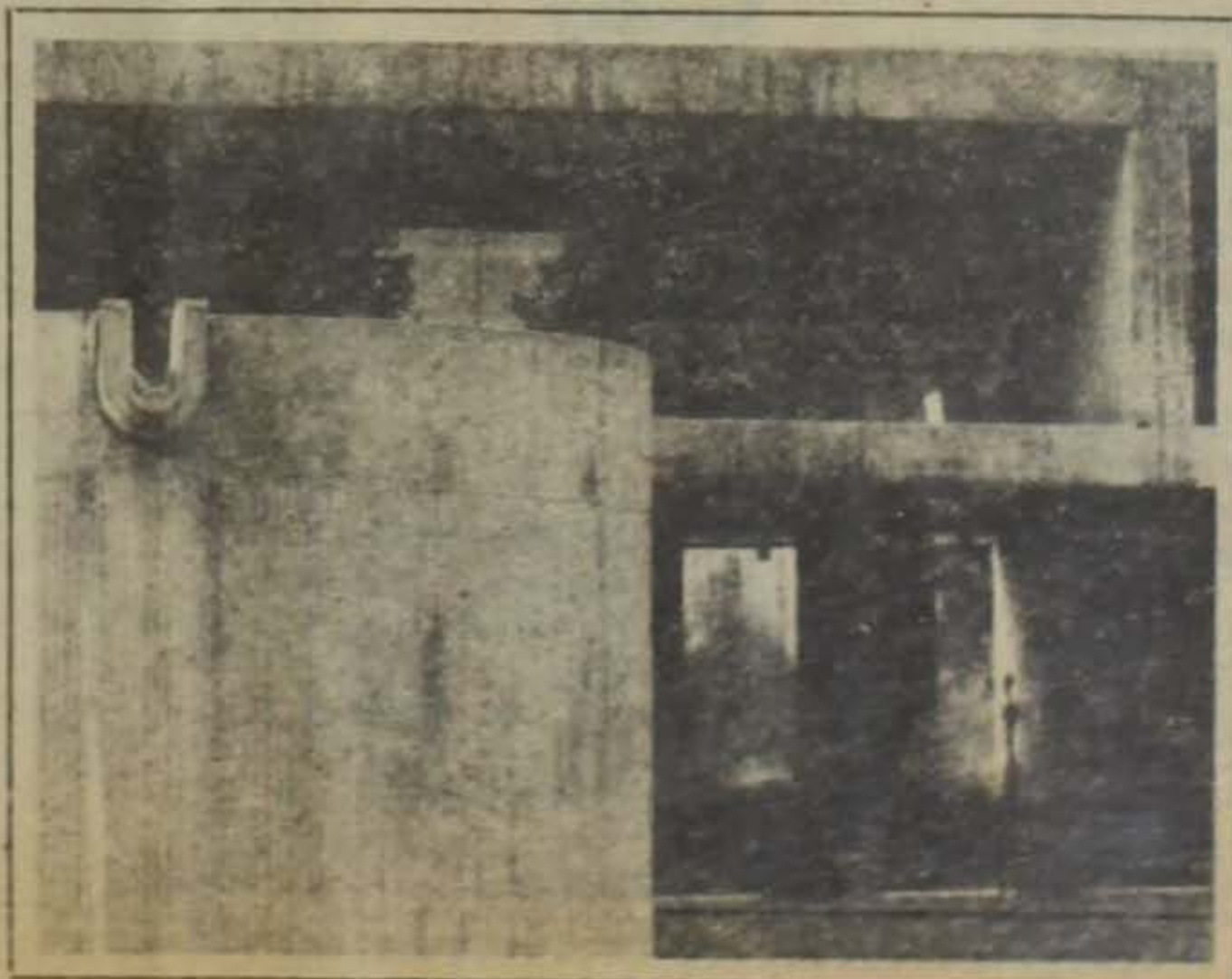
Des Moines Art Center Director James Demetrian, right above, helps delineate the difference between art and seersucker. The painting, "Plato," is by Gene Davis; the sports coat is not.

Right below, Carl Milles' "Pegasus and Bellerophon" casts an abstract shadow on the Art Center's courtyard reflecting pool.

Middle and far right, the sculpture gallery, designed by I.M. Pei, is itself a sculpture worthy of contemplation.



DATEBOOK PHOTOS BY BOB MODERSON



A lesson in *in* object



tivity

By Eliot Nusbaum

A cartoon appearing in the New Yorker magazine a few years ago showed two people standing in front of a very abstract sculpture. One says to the other: "It's definitely an *objet*, but is it *d'art*?"

The answer to this and several other equally provocative questions can be found at the Des Moines Art Center and at several of Des Moines' leading art galleries.

And what better way to spend the dog days of August than perusing the local art offerings?

Not only will you beat the heat, chances are you'll also get something of an art education. In fact, Art Center Director James Demetrian thinks learning about art is "75 percent exposure."

"Look constantly. Go to museums and see what they are collecting — this can be very instructive. And go to lots of galleries."

Actually, through the month of August you can do both in one stop at the Art Center's "Possibilities for Collectors Show," a show of works for sale that Demetrian puts together every three or four years.

"This kind of show stimulates collecting," says Demetrian, "because the more people are exposed to art, the more interested they become in it."

That increased interest is felt by private galleries, too, says Bonnie Percival, owner of the Percival Gallery in the Shops Building, 800-810 Walnut St.

"The Art Center show gives excellent exposure to artists. And we definitely see an increased interest in art here."

But as interest increases so does demand and, subsequently, prices.

"The 19th and 20th centuries are the area the Art Center collects in," says Demetrian.

"It's still possible to put together a significant collection of significant works by important artists in this period, but even these areas are becoming so popular with collectors it's getting too expensive."

"There's incredible work around from this period — stuff I'd love to have here, but we can't afford it."

Which raises the question: If museums can't afford to buy modern works, how can the average person hope to?

Prints is the answer.

Prints by modern greats and prints by up-

and-comers.

The "Possibilities for Collectors Show," for example, includes signed prints by such well known artists as Andy Warhol (\$2,000) and Ellsworth Kelly (\$1,000) as well as the less prominent Lois Lane (\$350) and Yoshisuke Funasaka (\$150).

But just because a piece of art carries a recognizable name doesn't mean it's worth any price.

"Artists are human; they have bad days just like everyone else," says Demetrian. "Some even have bad years."

So, if you're planning to buy a piece of art, you'd better check out as much of his or her other work as possible, particularly if you're hoping to buy a piece that will appreciate in value.

But Demetrian warns against buying art as an investment.

"Buying art as an investment is foolish. You should buy what you like. But first research it. Make inquiries."

"Quality is the key. The best things — prints in particular — seldom show up on the market. And it's the price of these quality pieces that has skyrocketed."

Percival echoes Demetrian's warning against buying art strictly for investment purposes.

"Don't buy a piece unless you like it, unless it brings you enjoyment. You shouldn't buy a piece unless you have a feeling for it."

To get that "feeling," Percival recommends reading the various art magazines available at most libraries — magazines like "Art in America" and "The Print Collectors Newsletter."

But to really get the feeling, you have to seek out art collections.

The Art Center is a good place to start. The permanent collection is pretty representative of the modern art movement (from the late 1850s on).

But Demetrian is quick to warn that the center's collection is "small — that's our weakness."

So he tries to schedule exhibits of older works.

"We're always looking for older works on exhibit, but it's very difficult to find shows of pre-1900 work."

"And then, there's the cost factor. We are not often offered shows of older works."

Exhibits of that type go to the larger cities."

But Demetrian has managed to get the Boston Museum of Fine Art to bring in a show of early Boston-area artists. "The show is going to Houston, Philadelphia and New York. We're the only town on the tour."

Demetrian also suggests a visit to Hoyt Sherman Place, Fifteenth Street and Woodland Avenue, which houses a collection of about 60 pre-1900 paintings by the likes of Frederick Church.

Hoyt Sherman is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from September through May (8 a.m. to 2 p.m. June through August).

It's a good idea to call 243-0913 in advance to make certain the rooms are not being used for a private function.

For a look at more modern art, give Dial Corporation, 207 Ninth St., a try. The Dial collection, which is available to the public, includes artists such as Claes Oldenberg, Frank Stella, Richard Diebenkorn, Ellsworth Kelly and Roy Lichtenstein.

A spokesman for Dial asks that anyone wishing to see the collection call Alfred Winick at 243-2131 to make arrangements.

Another corporation that makes its collection available to selected groups from time to time is American Republic Insurance Co., Sixth Avenue and Keo Way.

Company spokeswoman Mianne Stuart says there aren't any steadfast rules about who can and who can't tour the collection, but generally the group must have a proven interest in art.

The best way to find out if you or your group fits into this category is to call Stuart at 245-2000 and ask. Or, you can wait until American Republic throws its next open house, which, says Stuart, will be a year from this October.

And don't forget Des Moines-area galleries. Des Moines' dozen or so galleries range in focus from wildlife to ultra modern, from posters to original works, from weavings to cast bronze to lithographs. And what the galleries don't have, they may be able to get.

Finally, check the card catalogs at your local library or the Art Center library. Look under art.

Art, after all, is your *objet*!

\$2.5 million for a 'lost' painting

By RITA REIF

© 1979 New York Times

NEW YORK, N.Y. — "Icebergs," the long-lost masterpiece by Frederic Edwin Church, the American 19th-century landscape painter, was sold Thursday for \$2.5 million, the highest price ever paid at public sale for an American painting.

The price for "Icebergs" — which had hung unidentified for years in a home for delinquent boys in Manchester, England — has been surpassed only twice in art history, by Titian's "Death of Actaeon" at \$4 million in 1971 and Velasquez's "Juan de Pareja" at \$5.5 million in 1970.

The glowing oil, painted by Church after he had sketched icebergs off the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, was acclaimed when it was first shown in 1861 as the "most splendid work of art that has yet been

produced in this country."

It was purchased at Sotheby Parke Bernet in New York by an American collector who did not want to be identified. The final bidding was between two private American buyers who battled it out over the telephone, aided by Sotheby's representatives in the auction room.

Minutes later, James P. Miller, a Sotheby British paintings specialist who originally recognized the painting as a Church from a photograph, placed a trans-Atlantic call to the sellers of the work in Manchester to relay the news of the record price. He spoke with C.A. Hilditch, director of Manchester Social Services, owner of Rose Hill, a reformatory for boys that had decided to dispose of the painting to raise funds for maintain-

ing and improving the institution.

"There was a prolonged silence," Miller reported. "After all, the painting went for more than double their wildest hopes." Then, Miller said, Hilditch spoke:

"It's a very good bit of news at the end of a hard day." Hilditch added that everyone was very surprised and delighted, and they felt justified in their decision to put the painting up for auction because no one had known beforehand exactly what it was worth.

John L. Marion, chairman and chief auctioneer at Sotheby's, gavelled the historic dispersal in 3 minutes and 45 seconds while a standing-room-only audience of 800 people listened in

PAINTING

Please turn to Page 12A

Outsized painting weighs 500 pounds without frame

PAINTING

Continued from Page One

silence. The bidding opened at \$500,000 and advanced at \$50,000 increments. When the hammer fell on Lot 34 at \$2.5 million, the audience cheered at what is the highest figure ever registered at an art auction in the United States.

It eclipsed the \$2.3 million bid in 1961 in that same room for Rembrandt's "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer," which hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The presale estimate of "Icebergs" was \$750,000 to \$1 million, with the high estimate well above the previous record for American art of \$980,000. That earlier figure was written at Sotheby's in Los Angeles in June 1978 with the sale of George Caleb Bingham's "The Jolly Flatboatmen No. 2" to Hirschl & Adler, the New York dealers.

More Significant

When asked whether he had anticipated such a high price for "Icebergs," Peter B. Rathbone, who heads Sotheby's American paintings department, said, "It did surprise me." He added that although the previous record set for a Church, a year ago, was so much lower — \$230,000 — "Icebergs" was regarded as a far more significant painting.

When the painting was first shown in New York in 1861, a report in The New York Tribune described it as "thoroughly original in conception and execution." "It is," the report added, "an absolutely wonderful picture, a work of genius that illustrates the time and the country producing it."

Two years later, the painting was exhibited in London. Following its showing there, it was sold. But until last June, the identity of the owner was unknown. It is now known that Sir Edward William Watkins, a railroad tycoon, bought it and hung it in Rose Hill, his Victorian residence in Manchester. After his death in 1901, the mansion changed hands several times, but the painting remained in the house, and later owners were unaware of who had painted the work or what it was worth.

Eventually the house was taken over by the City of Manchester and transformed into the home for delinquent boys. Recently, funds were needed to expand the facilities, which prompted Hilditch to send a photograph and letter to Sotheby's of London asking what the painting might bring.

Without Frame

Not only did Miller recognize the painting, but he contacted Sotheby's American art specialists in New York. In late June, Grete Meilman of the New York staff was in Manchester, and after she viewed the painting, which was hung without its frame on

a stair landing used only by the institution's staff, she confirmed his judgment.

Then the outsized and weighty oak-backed painting — it measures more than 5 by 9 feet and weighs 500 pounds outside of its frame — was shipped to New York, where it was cleaned and placed on exhibition at Sotheby's.

Late Thursday, it could not be ascertained if the painting would be placed on public view again.

It was determined that the anonymous purchaser had not been acting on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum.

Another report, that the purchaser intended to give "Icebergs" to the White House as a gift, was denied by the White House. There was also speculation that the painting had been bought by Paul Mellon, the art patron and philanthropist, for the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Mellon is chairman of the gallery's board.

\$2.5 million for Church art

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP) — "Icebergs" — a 19th-century painting by Frederic Edwin Church — sold Thursday for \$2.5 million, the most ever paid at auction for a painting by an American and the third highest for any painting, the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction house said.

The winning bid on "Icebergs" was made by an agent for an unidentified U.S. collector, the auction house said.

The big painting, which measures 4 inches by 112 inches, was discovered last summer in the hall of a boys' home in Manchester, England. It had been presumed lost for more than 100 years.

The sale was at Sotheby Parke Bernet, which said the price was the

third-highest in the history of art auctions, surpassed only by \$5.5 million for a Velasquez and \$4.0 million for a Titian.

The long-missing oil painting signed and dated 1861, was discovered at Rose Hill, the family estate of Sir Edward William Watkin, where it had hung since 1863.

767 deaths claimed

ALGIERS, ALGERIA (AP) — Polisario guerrillas fighting Morocco for control of the mineral-rich former Spanish Sahara claimed they killed 767 Moroccan soldiers at a garrison in the disputed territory.

Turner painting auctions for record \$6.4 million

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP) — "Juliet and her Nurse," an oil painting by the 19th-century English landscapist J.M.W. Turner, set a world record for auction of a single work Thursday when an anonymous buyer bought it for \$6.4 million.

The masterpiece was sold by Flora Whitney Miller, honorary board chairman of the Whitney Museum of American Art, who stipulated that half of the proceeds go to the museum.

Bidding at the Sotheby Parke Bernet auction house began at \$100,000 and climbed quickly. At \$4 million, the overflow crowd of spectators broke its hush. There were sighs and whistles as the bidding increased to \$100,000 steps.

Applause erupted when the bidding reached \$5.5 million, which surpassed the single-painting auction record of \$4.4 million for Velasquez's "Portrait of Juan de Pareja" in December 1970. The buyer, represented by an unidentified dealer, outbid Stanley Seeger of London, who bid via telephone. Seeger, who stopped at \$3 million, recently purchased the

former English country estate of the late oil magnate, J. Paul Getty.

It was the eleventh time this season that a painting has been auctioned in New York for more than \$1 million, according to Peggy Shannon of Sotheby.

Miller said she was "just staggered" by the price.

She said she had no idea why the buyer paid that price, but smiled and said, "No," when asked if she would have paid that much.

The buyer actually paid a total of \$7,040,000 for the painting, counting an additional 10 percent commission to the auction house.

Turner painted the picture in Venice in 1836. It depicts the heroine of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" with her nurse in the right foreground looking across an expanse of St. Mark's Square in Venice, where a crowd has gathered to watch fireworks.

With a wide expanse of sky and reflections of the fireworks in the surrounding canals, the painting is predominantly blue and yellow.

Tues., May 13, 1980 ■ DES MOINES REGISTER / 7A

Art collection auctioned for record \$14.8 million

By RITA REIF

© 1980 New York Times

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The Garbisch collection of impressionist and modern art sold Monday night at Sotheby Parke Bernet for a record total of \$14.8 million, the highest figure ever reached in an art auction in the United States and the most for an impressionist and modern art sale anywhere in the world.

The most dramatic moment of the sale came when the gavel fell at \$3 million on the final painting — Pablo Picasso's "Saltimbanque (Acrobat) Seated with Arms Crossed." It became a record at auction for 20th century art, the highest price ever paid for a painting other than an old master and for any painting purchased at auction in New York.

The oil-on-canvas painted in 1923 in Picasso's "classical" style was bought by Susumu Yamamoto, a Japanese dealer of the Fiji Television Gallery in Tokyo, who was representing the Bridgestone Museum in that city. It nearly tripled the previous auction record for Picasso registered last July at Sotheby's in London with the sale of "The Bottle of Wine" for \$1,017,520.

Hammer Down

"Never have I brought the hammer down so hard on any lot I've sold," John Marion, Sotheby's chairman and president in the United States, said as he stepped from the rostrum. "It was a thrilling beginning for what will be the most exciting series of sales in America."

The collection of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch is expected to total over \$20 million when fully dispersed by the end of next week, and would become the second most valuable art collection ever sold, exceeded only by that of Robert von Hirsch, which sold for \$34 million at Sotheby's in London in 1978. Bernice Garbisch, a daughter of Walter Chrysler, founder of the Chrysler Corp., died last December hours after the death of her husband, a retired corporate executive.

Records for categories of paintings and for artists were toppled over and over throughout the 65-minute sale. With the sale for \$1.8 million of Gauguin's "Tahitian Women Under the Palms" painted in 1891, records were established for the artist and for post-impressionist art. It was purchased by a Argentinian private collector.

Minutes later Van Gogh's "Portrait of Adeline Ravoux" sold to an unidentified American collector for the

private collector. Other high prices reached were the \$1 million paid for Renoir's "Woman in Oriental Costume" by an American dealer and the \$800,000 bid successfully for Toulouse-Lautrec's "Woman Seated in a Garden" that had sold in 1965 for \$105,000. It was purchased by a London dealer. The Degas "Dancing Girl" brought \$600,000.

Fever Pitch

Bidding opened enthusiastically and quickly reached fever pitch as the majority of paintings soared past Sotheby's most optimistic expectations. The gathering of dealers and collectors seemed in high spirits on what was the first session of a week of sales at Sotheby's and Christie's offering more than \$60 million worth of impressionist, modern and contemporary art. About half that figure is concentrated in collections formed by automotive fortunes — that of the Garbisches and of Henry Ford II, whose art — 10 paintings valued at \$11 million — will be sold at Christie's.

Mike Nichols, a movie director, who had said he did not expect to buy anything at this week's sales, changed his mind and purchased Edouard Vuillard's "Self-Portrait" for \$40,000, well above its top presale estimate of \$30,000.

But Paloma Picasso, a daughter of the artist, went away empty-handed. Picasso, in town for the opening of the Picasso show at the Museum of Modern Art May 22, said she had been determined not to miss the auction. "I love that painting — that's why I came tonight," she commented. "I would be happy to have it in my collection."

Bill to aid inmates of state institutions

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The House on Monday passed and sent to President Carter a bill giving the federal government more power to protect inmates in state institutions from unsafe or unhealthy living conditions.

The measure, which tied the Senate up for nearly two weeks in a filibuster, was approved by voice vote with little debate.

Backers said the bill was needed to assure the constitutional rights of persons in state prisons and mental institutions.

DES MOINES WOMENS CLUB
ART POSSESSIONS COMMITTEE

1979-80

Committee: Mrs. Robert Throckmorton (Frances) - Chairman
Mrs. Frank DePuydt (Manda)
Mrs. G. W. Moret (Maxine)
Mrs. Robert O. Anderson (Bea)
Mrs. Birney Baker (Lucile)
Mrs. Charles Ray Barnes (Dorothy)
Mrs. Paul E. Brown (Lorraine)
Mrs. Burl V. Berry (Adria)
Mrs. Connie Sue Casey
Mrs. H. B. Church (Dorothy)
Mrs. A. W. Corey (Jerri)
Mrs. B. A. Ferguson (Marjorie)
Mrs. Wm. R. Hartung (Edythe)
Mrs. Kirkwood E. Jewett (Eleanor)
Mrs. James Windsor (Mary Belle)

The Art Possessions Committee, which has general supervision of all art possessions and loans of art objects to the Club and provides for their care and preservation, has had a very exciting year. This is the time when we realized that our collection of mid-nineteenth century paintings had soared in value. Now we eagerly await the appraisal on May 22 by Sotheby Park Bernet of New York of fifteen of our most-likely-to-be-valuable items. We are unable at this date to resolve the many questions regarding our collection, and some of these arguments -- aired in many meetings of our committee -- are marshalled at the end of the report. Hopefully, after the appraisal, we can recommend to the Womens Club Board the appropriate action that could or should be taken.

Our traditional duty during the summer before Club opened was to clean and care for all the art objects. We followed closely the directions given by Helen Fisher, 1976-77 Chairman of this Committee (except that because the paintings were still hanging -- not having been taken down as in 1976 -- it was necessary to climb upon ladders to do the cleaning). As noted in earlier reports, the work was very time consuming. We became even more aware that some of the beautiful antique frames as well as paintings need restoration.

We had a special meeting with Tom Worthen, expert on Renaissance paintings (he is on the faculty at Drake University; his wife Amy is the distinguished print-maker artist with Des Moines Art Center) regarding our alleged "Boraccio" [Date on painting is _____]. Mr. Worthen regretfully pointed out that only

the upper left hand corner is part of the original painting. Clumsy restoring has obliterated the remainder. There is obviously a much later addition in the lower right. He was much more hopeful regarding our Jordaens. It seems to be authentic but Mr. Worthen says an expert on Flemish work should give a definite opinion. We are grateful to Mr. Worthen for his invaluable help.

Dorothy Church recommended Mr. Stanley Liederethal (278-2518) as a possible helper in restoring and repairing our antiques. He has recently come to Des Moines rather than to a larger city after considerable experience abroad. He is originally from South Africa, where he worked in a museum in Praetoria and the Johannesburg Art Center. In Europe he was on the Restoration Staff at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; on the Staff at Academie de Beaux Arts in Paris; at the Israeli Museum at Jerusalem and also at the Persian Museum in East Jerusalem. He repairs porcelains and figures. We are fortunate that he came to Des Moines.

Another goal of our committee is to safeguard our possessions. One step toward this aim was to obtain from the Des Moines Police Department an engraver and two tubes of invisible ink for labelling appropriate objects with our assigned number.

Our most difficult task, of course, is to decide what to do with our valuable art works. Mr. Demetrian, of the Des Moines Art Center, was kind enough to come at our request on at least three occasions to look over our paintings and designate our fifteen most worthy, as well as recommending three dependable appraisers. After several meetings, the Committee finally chose Sotheby Park Bernet (correspondence in Anna Belle Wonder's file). I have tried to list here the various problems that we must consider with regard to our possessions together with differing views as to their resolution.

It was recommended by Jerri Corey to tape the comments of the appraiser; by Bea Anderson to allow Kirby Shiffler, who has volunteered, to attend the "possible" auctioneering of any of our works at Sotheby's; by Fran Throckmorton to allow Tom and Amy Worthen and his friend to come also. One of the most valuable contributions to the Club will be the new catalogue of art possessions as compiled by Connie Sue Casey. This has taken months of work and will be a great asset to the Club. We hesitate to mention the need for caution with regard to dissemination of information about our art objects. However, this of course, brings us back to our original purpose of serving as a museum.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE CLUB
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO OUR
ART POSSESSIONS

Can we keep our treasures or must we sell some? How many?
Our most valuable? Our least valuable?

TO KEEP

Our heritage.

Our original purpose. Our lease depends on our maintaining a free art gallery (could be argued in Court: changing times in our 95 year history -- Des Moines Art Center has taken over, etc.)

Our duty to Des Moines.*
Can we loan to Art Center?
No, according to By-Laws (could be changed).

Once sold, our treasures cannot be replaced.

Too beautiful to let go.

Tax problem.
Probably none.

We are not in a hurry
(Demetrion says "Church" will never decrease in value).

*Only the rich can speculate.

How invest if great deal of money?

Sell least valuable. Maybe it will be enough to cover the purposes outlined on the right.

Repercussions if we sold "Church". Notoriety.

Alternatives to selling:
Loan to Art Center.

What kind of museum are we?

TO SELL

If we keep, what about security?

Can we afford system (beyond our means?)

Cost \$25,000 or more -- burglar, cold, smoke, door, mat, window, guard on duty --

Can we afford Climate Control Humidification System?

Can we first give Art Center a chance to buy, in order to keep work in the community?

Restoration Costs:

Must: Not only paintings and frames, but all antiques.

(No choice: Byers' loan insists)

Market high right now.

New paintings by Church "popping up" all over.

Use money for restoration:

burglary system; climate control and humidity; educational purpose (catalogue?).

Should we limit such funds to maintenance of art works or, under a broad interpretation, to maintenance of building [i.e. leaks dangerous for art works].

What good will it do in bank vault?

Can we sell it anonymously?

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Mrs. James Windsor (Mary Belle)

The Art Possessions Committee, which has general supervision of all art possessions and loans of art objects to the Club and provides for their care and preservation, has had a very exciting year. This is the time when we realized that our collection of mid-nineteenth century paintings had soared in value. Now we eagerly await the appraisal on May 22 by Sotheby Park Bernet of New York of fifteen of our most-likely-to-be-valuable items. We are unable at this date to resolve the many questions regarding our collection, and some of these arguments -- aired in many meetings of our committee -- are marshalled at the end of the report. Hopefully, after the appraisal, we can recommend to the Womens Club Board the appropriate action that could or should be taken.

Our traditional duty during the summer before Club opened was to clean and care for all the art objects. We followed closely the directions given by Helen Fisher, 1976-77 Chairman of this Committee (except that because the paintings were still hanging -- not having been taken down as in 1976 -- it was necessary to climb upon ladders to do the cleaning). As noted in earlier reports, the work was very time consuming. We became even more aware that some of the beautiful antique frames as well as paintings need restoration.

We had a special meeting with Tom Worthen, expert on Renaissance paintings (he is on the faculty at Drake University; his wife Amy is the distinguished print-maker artist with Des Moines Art Center) regarding our alleged "Boraccio" [Date on painting is _____]. Mr. Worthen regretfully pointed out that only

TO ALL MEMBERS OF
THE DES MOINES WOMEN'S CLUB

Enclosed are copies of letters and exerpts written by Art experts sent for your information.

This information illustrates the importance of our Frederic Church painting which is a part of the collection contributed to the Des Moines Womens Club over a period of more than 80 years by members of the club and the community. These paintings and artifacts were delivered into our custody for our enjoyment and pleasure and for the public's enjoyment and pleasure. and not to be disposed of for care or maintenance.

Hoyt Sherman Place was established and maintained as a Cultural Center, not just for works of art and artifact, but for the quality of our programs, fine speakers, scholarships, and the contributions we make to community life.

It is our concern that to lose these possessions and treasures of the club would be a discouraging development to many members, and could possibly discourage many contributions that might be made in the future.

The finances of the club are entirely another matter. They have and should be solved by other means. If the Womens Club is unable to discharge the responsibility of perpetuating these gifts, they should still remain within the community.

There is also some question as to whether morally we have the right to dispose of something that was given to the community and was intended to remain in the community. Paintings of this stature and dimension add importance to the club, the city, and the state.

The decision of our Board last Wednesday, January 14th, to submit the Frederic Church painting to Sotheby's of New York for auction would mean the loss of our most cherished possession.

We feel that this decision is important enough that it should be made by the entire membership of the club. Because there is disagreement among members concerning the disposal of this painting, we are asking that you make your feelings known to the Board of Directors by Wednesday, January 21.

Also, there is a petition available for your signature at the office of the Des Moines Womens Club.

We urge you to learn more about this significant painting before it is too late, and to view it Wednesday when the painting will be on display -- perhaps for the last time.

Sincerely,

Lena Cook
Alice & Mattie
Betty Bishop

PAINTING SELLS FOR \$3,723,000, A NEAR-RECORD

From The Register's Wire Services
LONDON, ENGLAND — Actress Jennifer Jones, acting on behalf of the Norton Simon Museum of Pasadena, Calif., bought a painting Wednesday by 15th century Flemish master Dieric Bouts for \$3,723,000 — the second-highest price ever paid for an art object at auction.



JENNIFER
JONES

Jones is the wife of Simon, a food-packaging executive who founded the museum bearing his name in 1974.

The painting depicts the Resurrection, with an elongated figure of Christ emerging from the sepulcher with a cross in His left hand and His right raised in benediction. It is painted in tempera on linen.

The man who discovered the painting, Derek Johns, said it was in such "extraordinary" condition that "it is almost impossible to believe it was done 500 years ago."

During the sale, David Bull, who took over two weeks ago as director of the Simon Museum, was at Sotheby's in Mayfair, and Simon was at his home in Malibu Beach, Calif., with a phone line open to London. Together, they coolly outbid Sir Geoffrey Agnew, an English dealer representing the National Gallery of London, who stopped at \$3,614,000.

Only Velasquez's portrait of Juan de Pareja has ever brought a higher price. It was sold in 1970 by Christie's, Sotheby's great rival, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for a price equal to \$5,059,000 at Wednesday's exchange rates. No other object ever sold by Sotheby's matched the price commanded by the Bouts — a long-lost picture by a painter little-known outside the narrow circle of lovers of old masters.

Museum director Bull said in an interview that the picture had cost considerably more than he had anticipated. He said it was the "absolute delight" that Jones took in "the drama and the impact" of the painting, which she viewed privately after her arrival in London Tuesday night, that persuaded Simon to pay so much.

Behind the sale lay a tale of aesthetic detective work by Johns, the 35-year-old head of Sotheby's old



Actress buys \$3.7 million painting

American actress Jennifer Jones, wife of industrialist Norton Simon, paid \$3.7 million Wednesday for a painting sold at a Sotheby's auction in London. "The Resurrection," above, by 15th century Flemish painter Dieric Bouts, was in a private collection.

in what is now Belgium. His paintings, of which the Metropolitan owns two Madonnas and a portrait, are known for the delicacy, precision and glowing color of their backgrounds.

When he returned to London, Johns went to the National Gallery to see an Entombment by Bouts that hangs there. He knew from reading the notebooks of Sir Charles Eastlake, director of the National Gallery in the mid-19th century, that the Entombment had belonged to the Guicciardi family of Milan, along with three other pictures by the same artist. And he found that the Resurrection also had once belonged to the Guicciardis.

The Guicciardi Crucifixion, which he had never seen and had been in a private collection, passed into the hands of a Belgian museum, where Johns inspected it. The style and materials matched exactly those of the National Gallery's painting and the one just bought by Simon.

Women's Club may be forced to sell artwork

By NICK BALDWIN

Register Art Critic

An important Des Moines collection of 19th and early 20th century art is in grave danger of being dispersed unless its owners find other means to raise additional funds.

The art collection is housed at Hoyt Sherman Place, home of the Des Moines Women's Club since 1907, when the city agreed to lease it to the club for a fee of \$1 a year.

The high cost of cleaning and restoring works in the collection (about \$2,000 to have one Frederic Church painting cleaned), as well as the rising cost of maintaining the Hoyt Sherman Place facility are causing some thought to be given to selling from the collection.

Anna Belle Wonders, executive secretary of the Des Moines Women's Club, said an official from the New York auction house of Sotheby Parke Bernet is coming to Des Moines May 22 to appraise some of the works in the collection.

Wonders says no works are being consigned to the auction house at this time and the expert has been retained only to place a value on the paintings.

"It will then be up to the board of directors to decide whether to sell or how else to raise the money to maintain the collection and pay for the upkeep of the building," she said.

"We don't want to sell anything because we feel that all of it is of great interest to the community, but we may have to do it if funds can't be found elsewhere," she said.

The collection at Hoyt Sherman Place, augmented over the years by bequests, gifts and purchases, now consists of about 80 paintings as well as sculptures, furniture, vases and other artifacts.

It is in the area of American paintings that its chief strength lies

'Terrible mistake' feared if art sold

ART

Continued from Page One

and it is to appraise some of these works that the expert from the New York auction house is coming.

The prize pictures in the collection at Hoyt Sherman Place belong to a period of 19th century art that has witnessed a sharp upturn in fortunes in the last few years.

5, 6 Figures

Considered old-fashioned and overly sentimental not so long ago, works by good painters of the 19th century have been coming into their own and selling in the five- and six-figure range.

Among the more desirable paintings at Hoyt Sherman Place are two by George Inness, one by Elihu Vedder, two by W.T. Richards, one by Thomas Moran and one by Frederic Church.

The landscape by Church, "Sunrise in the Catskills," was recently returned from the East Coast where it was sent for cleaning and is not currently on exhibition.

The painting by Moran is a luminous scene of Venice ("Venetian Castles") and the Vedder work is a small but elegant seaside view ("House by the Sea"). One of two landscapes by Inness is severely cracked and will require major restoration work.

The widely publicized sale of Frederic Church's "Icebergs" for \$2.5 million last year came at a time when the market in paintings from the period was already experiencing a revival.

Maintenance of the gallery has been expensive, too.

"We recently spent \$54,000 to install a new furnace and we need humidity control which will cost an additional \$20,000 to \$25,000," Wonders said.

"Last year we started to consider the possibility of selling some of the art works in order to have funds with which to clean and restore the balance of the collection," she said.

The Des Moines Women's Club has a membership of about 800 with each member paying annual dues of \$50. Additional income comes from special events and rental of the

tional funds in the hope of establishing a \$250,000 endowment fund that only \$50,000 was raised. Many of the members are older men living on fixed incomes," she

James Demettrion, director of the Des Moines Art Center, said, "In my opinion it would be a terrible mistake for the club to sell works from that collection."

"Its strength is in 19th century American art of the latter half of the century and there are no other opportunities in Des Moines to see that kind of material," he said.

"Our collection at the Art Center of 19th century and early 20th century American art is tiny and the works at Hoyt Sherman complement what we have here.

"The collection is for the people of Des Moines to enjoy and works in public collections are not privately owned at the Des Moines Women's Club or at the Des Moines Art Center.

"The standard practice at museums and art centers when works are sold is to use the funds for purchase of other works and not for maintenance or other purposes.

"There are undoubtedly some legal ramifications involved in the selling of these works," Demettrion said.

Selling a Few

Wonders explained, "If we sold everything and closed the gallery we would no longer qualify under the terms of the lease."

She added, however, "We have been

looking into it and it would appear that by maintaining the gallery but selling a few things we would still qualify."

The \$1 a year lease arrangement was approved by the Legislature and the club's lease was extended in 1921 from an original 49 years to 99 years on condition that the club provide an art gallery for the city of Des Moines.

The part of the agreement between the Des Moines Women's Club and the city, signed in November 1920, that deals with the art gallery reads as follows:

"That the party of the second part [the club] may make repairs, changes and alterations in the said building now upon said premises at its own expense and shall maintain therein an art gallery which shall be open to the public without charge under proper rules and regulations on at least three days in each week."

Women's Club to reconsider sale of art

By NICK BALDWIN

Register Staff Writer

The board of directors of the Des Moines Women's Club will meet this morning to reconsider the sale of an important work of art from its collection.

The board will consider a petition that seeks to forestall the sale at auction of "Sunrise in the Catskills," a painting by Fredric Church.

Acting on a recommendation from its executive committee, the board met Jan. 14 and voted in favor of selling the painting.

Since then, those opposed to the sale of the Church painting have circulated a petition, which has been signed by about 200 club members.

The petition states that "since this painting is the most important piece of art in this community, we feel that this decision is one that should be made by a vote of the full membership of the Des Moines Women's Club."

The Des Moines Women's Club, which has its home at Hoyt Sherman Place, owns about 80 paintings as well as sculptures, furniture, vases and other art objects.

The painting by Church generally is considered to be the most important work in a collection that has other desirable examples of American art of the 19th century.

Rising Costs

The club has been considering selling from the collection to meet rising costs of maintaining Hoyt Sherman Place.

An official from the New York auction house of Sotheby Parke Bernet was in Des Moines last May to appraise some of the works in the collection.

Anna Belle Wonders, executive secretary of the Des Moines Women's Club, said that "51 members constitute a quorum according to the bylaws of the club and the board must recognize the petition."

She said the Des Moines Women's Club currently has about 700 members.

Board members today will decide whether to reverse their decision of Jan. 14 or go ahead and call for a vote of the full membership.

Hoyt Sherman Place is leased to the club by the city for \$1 a year on condition that the club provide an art gallery open to the public without charge.

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"Terrible Mistake"

James Demetrion, director of the Des Moines Art Center, feels very strongly that selling a major work from the collection at Hoyt Sherman Place would be "a terrible mistake."

Demetrion said Tuesday that "every possible effort should be made to keep significant paintings in the community, and this applies to the Church [painting] as well as other works of art that have been collected."

"The Church [painting] is not duplicated in this community and the responsibility on the part of those entrusted with the care of a work of art which is part of our heritage is consequently even greater," he added.

Demetrion said the strength of the collection at Hoyt Sherman Place is in 19th century American art of the latter half of the century. He said there are few examples of this type of art in the Des Moines Art Center.

"The works at Hoyt Sherman complement what we have here and there are no other opportunities in Des Moines to see that kind of material," he said.

No comment on art sale by D.M. club

By Jane Norman

Des Moines Women's Club officials refused comment Wednesday after a closed meeting of their board on whether the organization will sell an important work of 19th-century American art from its collection.

Under consideration for sale is "Sunrise in the Catskills," a painting by Fredric Church.

The board met Jan. 14 and voted in favor of selling the painting, but a petition signed by 200 members protested the sale and asked that the decision be made by the entire club.

The petition states that "since this painting is the most important piece of art in this community, we feel that this decision is one that should be made by a vote of the full membership of the Des Moines Women's Club."

James Demetrion, director of the Des Moines Art Center, has said selling the work would be a "terrible mistake."

Club officials would not comment on when they will reveal their decision on the sale.

'Catskills' will stay at women's club—for now

By NICK BALDWIN

Register Staff Writer

The Fredric Church painting, "Sunrise in the Catskills" will remain in custody of the Des Moines Women's Club, at least for now, the board of directors decided Wednesday.

The board reversed its decision to sell the important painting from its collection, saying a key committee had not been consulted.

On Jan. 14, the board of directors, acting on recommendation from its executive committee, voted in favor of selling the painting, considered the most important work in the collection of about 80 paintings owned by the club.

The decision to sell prompted about 200 club members to sign a petition protesting the sale.

The board Wednesday agreed to drop the matter because procedures called for in club bylaws had not been observed.

Mrs. J. B. McCabe, president of the Des Moines Women's Club, said a recommendation to sell by the club's art possession committee was made without the approval of an interior decorating and gift committee.

"Therefore, all action taken pertinent to this recommendation is null and void as of this date," she said.

The club, which has its home in Hoyt Sherman Place, has for some time considered selling works from its collection to meet rising costs of maintaining the facility.

MINUTES OF
ART POSSESSIONS COMMITTEE

Monday morning, July 7, 1980

Present: President, Lemah McCabe
From the Board — Executive Committee, Helen Rothfus
and Helen Anderson, Parliamentarian
Chairman, Manda De Puydt

Members: Bea Anderson, Lorraine Brown, Dorothy Church,
Edythe Hartung, Eleanor Jewett, Fran
Throckmorton, Alice Tjaden, Andria Berry

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Manda De Puydt. The two reports (copies of which are attached) submitted by Peter Rathbone, who represented Sotheby Parke-Bernet on a visit (at our request) to our Club on Thursday, May 22, to appraise what we consider our best fifteen paintings, were read, discussed and compared. Since the reports had been delayed at Sothebys--mislaidd while Mr. Rathbone was on vacation--our deadline for submitting a picture or pictures for the sale at Sothebys the third week of October was extended to early August (the earlier the better for including an illustration in the catalog advertising the sale). The Committee should make a recommendation to the Board which can then act upon the recommendation Wednesday. The final Board meeting in July would be the last acceptable date.

(One report showed Mr. Rathbone's appraisals; the other the insurance figures.)

Bea Anderson told us she had been assured that cleaning and restoring the W. T. Richards' painting would greatly increase its value.

Manda reminded the members of Mr. Rathbone's charming story of Frederick Church's admiration of his teacher and the possibility that the artist had painted our picture with the cross in it as a tribute to him upon his death in 1858.

It was agreed that we should have appraisals on our other valuable antiques and furniture. Bea pointed out that while we have legal title to these fifteen paintings there is language on some gifts to the effect that they were given for "the lifetime of the Club" --a possible cloud in the title to these items. She did not indicate which items these are.

Edythe Hartung made the motion to sell the Frederick Church painting. In the discussion which followed, Lemah said that if we instead sold

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Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc.

980 Madison Avenue • New York 10021
Telephone 212/472-3400

Copy:
Mrs. Robert O. Anderson
3017 S.W. 37th St.
Des Moines, Iowa
50321
Tel. 288-7760

June 27, 1980

Des Moines Women's Club
c/o Anna Belle Wonders
Hoyt Sherman Place
15 & Woodland Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Ms. Wonders:

This is to confirm that the items described below have been examined by our expert Mr. Peter Rathbone, and to the best of his knowledge, their insurance values for purposes of replacement are as follows:

1- R. SCHULTZ
Lake Maggiore
Signed
Oil on canvas
26 x 39 inches

\$ 1,500.00 - \$ 2,500.00
\$ 2,800.00

2- WALTER ELMER SCOFIELD
Approaching Storm #52
Signed and dated '22
Oil on canvas
29 x 36 inches

\$ 3,000.00 - \$ 5,000.00
\$ 7,500.00

3- THOMAS MORAN
Venetian Castle
Signed and dated 1904
Oil on canvas
19 x 30 inches

\$ 20,000.00 - \$ 30,000.00
\$ 40,000.00

4- WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS
Children in a Wooded Landscape
Signed and dated 1853
Oil on canvas
36 x 50 inches

\$ 8,000.00 - \$ 12,000.00
\$ 18,000.00

5- EDWIN LORD WEEKS
Loading the Caravan
Signed
Oil on canvas
65 x 98 inches

\$ 6,000.00 - \$ 8,000.00
\$ 10,000.00

6- GEORGE GARDNER SYMONS
River in Winter
Signed
Oil on canvas
39 x 49 inches

\$ 10,000.00 - \$ 15,000.00
\$ 20,000.00