The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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Archives of American Art Transferred to Smithsonian

by Benjamin Ruben

The Archives of American Art, the major center of historical material on American artists and their work, this spring became established at the Smithsonian. The announcement was made early this month by Secretary Ripley and Russell Lynes, President of the Archives.

Organized in Detroit in 1954 and currently maintaining offices there and in New York, the Archives is devoted to research in the visual arts in America. Its large collection of original source material is supplemented by a microfilm library containing five million photographic frames.

At the Smithsonian, the Archives is located in the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries (the Old Patent Office Building) at 8th and F Streets N.W., in downtown Washington. It shares space there with the National Collection of Fine Arts and the National Portrait Gallery. Administrative headquarters of the Archives as well as a regional branch office are being maintained in New York, as is a regional branch in Detroit. Duplicate microfilm libraries are kept in New York, Detroit, and Washington. Original source materials—documents, sketchbooks, tape recordings, photographs—were brought to Washington from Detroit during the several months the Archives used in establishing its new facility.

Secretary Ripley said of the agreement: "When the possibility arose that the Archives of American Art might become a member of the Smithsonian family, we enthusiastically promoted this goal. It fits so beautifully into our aim to make Washington and the Smithsonian a great center of scholarship in the field of American art and art history. Details of the transfer were worked out after meetings stretching over a period of more than two years."

Mr. Lynes, the noted critic and author, said: "We are delighted to join the Smithsonian, an institution whose goals in serving scholarship are in complete accord with our own. An affiliation with the Smithsonian and the assurance of support this involves promises the continuation and expansion of our programs of collecting the documentary history of America's arts on a national basis and the broadest possible use of our holdings."

Under the terms of the agreement, which was approved by the Smithsonian Board of Regents, all assets of the Archives became the property of the Smithsonian. The Archives' papers and other source material, a large moving van load, have been placed in the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries.

William E. Woolfenden, Director of the Archives, is in charge of the national activities of the Archives. He is based in New York and will divide his time among the three centers: Samuel McCloy, Deputy Director of the Archives, also serves as Archivist and oversees archival procedures at the three centers. He is based in Washington. In addition to Mr. McCloy, the staff at the Archives is...

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In the past few months there has been a small spate of derogatory-sounding stories in the local Washington press about the Smithsonian. The impression is given, it seems to me deliberately given, that somehow or other the Institution is in trouble or in for trouble.

Much of this publicity appeared just prior to the mid-winter meeting of the Regents of the Smithsonian. More of it may be expected before the spring meeting on May 20. I regret this publicity, which is the first such that we have had in my years of tenure as Secretary, and which is inevitably damaging to our own morale as workers and believers in our great Institution.

Like all similar institutions of an academic character, we have been suffering from the drying up of grants and gifts. On the one hand, government agencies are constantly cutting back research support, and we have suffered along with universities. On the other hand, private sources of funds have been thrown into consternation and confusion by last year's deficits in its overall budgets. The result, along with the failure of Federal support to keep up with steadily rising costs all along the line, has been to threaten the Smithsonian with deficits in its overall budgets.

We cannot, obviously, countenance deficit spending and we will not do so. Consequently, we are seeking the necessary means to curtail activities and decrease expenses. This is the atmosphere of austerity in which press reports inevitably encourage our own internal feelings of "crisis," or at least of uneasiness.

Since last summer, as is normal for all organizations receiving direct Federal appropriations, the General Accounting Office has been auditing our use of such funds for construction and other purposes. Much of this study has gone back to the construction of the wings of the Natural History Museum building in the late Fifties and early Sixties.

These discussions between G.A.O. and our Fiscal Office were in a provisional draft form and still under consideration by both sides when they were leaked to the press in two articles in January, which implied poor management and faulty procedures on our part.

These same articles also implied that somehow, in spite of appropriate procedures and continual audit, the responsible officers of this Institution had, or intended to, reallocate restricted private funds and misuse them by assigning them to other purposes. Such allegations are slanderous and wholly unfair to officers operating under accounting procedures, as well as to the character of the officers themselves. There is no truth in these stories.

Recently there have been a number of letters and a newspaper column denigrating and down-grading the magnificent gift of Mr. Hirshhorn to the nation and the Smithsonian. These are the tactics of the smear. They are unworthy.

In this connection, it is interesting to scan the Congressional Record and the newspapers of the time when Congress was wrestling with the acceptance of the bequest of Mr. James Smithson in 1835-46 and at the time of the munificent gift of Mr. Andrew Mellon in 1935-37. The motives of both benefactors were similarly impugned and the question of the gift down-graded in the process. Years later, no one knows or cares. All are merely glad that it happened. Yet the pattern reappears. It is apparently very difficult and indeed suspect to give anything to our Government!

Time alone will rate the performance of all of us as members of this special and unique Institution. Meanwhile, we can count many solid accomplishments. We can also remember the shrill voices of yesterday's news as a running accompaniment to the current state of unhappiness and turbulence and doubt of our world.

(See background report on page 4.)

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-

Ripley: "The Tactics of the Smear"
--- Notes and Comments ---

**Mall Boomerang Throw Planned By Associates**

Although programs have been known, on occasion, to boomerang, the Smithsonian Associates have scheduled one that is planned to.

The event is a boomerang making and throwing workshop. Benjamin Rube, the Smithsonian art information officer and sometime Australian cowboy, will lead the adult-child program.

As a jackeroo on a sheep and cattle station near Boggabri, New South Wales—where he used to chug kangaroos on my cow pony—"Rube" had ample opportunity to perfect his boomeranging skills. But surprisingly, the returning missiles were always going in circles there as they are here.

Rube had to inquire to find a group of aborigines who used the returning boomerangs, and had his first demonstrations at famous Botany Bay. He recalls that when he himself was throwing boomerangs in a public park in Sydney he drew a crowd of about 1,000 people, some of whom told him that they had never seen one thrown before.

The appeal of boomerangs is evident from the response to the workshop. The first session, on May 16, was filled almost immediately, and sessions set for two subsequent Saturdays have also been filled. In fact, so many adults without children wanted to attend that there may be an adult-only workshop later this summer.

The workshops will include anthropological films on the making and use of boomerangs, a lecture by Mr. Rube on the aerodynamics, throwing techniques, safety precautions, etc., and a display of various boomerangs. The display will include a collection that belonged to Secretary Langley and is now in the Air and Space Museum.

Following the formal part of the workshop, each participant will be given a boomerang blank to finish off for flying with pocket knife and sandpaper. In addition, each student will be given an authentic boomerang, now being made to order in Australia.

An area of the Washington Monument grounds will be roped off, with National Park Service approval, for throwing the small, lightweight boomerangs. When they are completed, QANTAS, the Australian airline, has contributed a $50 trophy for the adult-child team that throws with most accuracy.

It won't be the first time that boomerangs have been thrown on the Mall. NMNH's Paul Garber, who is assisting with the workshop, remembers seeing Henry Wallace tossing them in front of the Agriculture Department when he was Secretary.

**Vision '70**

Leonard B. Pouliot, Director of SF's Office of Personnel and Management Resources, has announced a new developmental program for employees, called VISION '70. It will utilize lectures, films, seminars, and workshops to explore such diverse subjects as modern organizational life and environmental problems and their consequences. The films in the series are being shown at 11:30 on each Tuesday of the month in the National Natural History Auditorium. The theme for May is "Drugs in American Life."

**E-Day**

Smithsonian scientists were in the thick of last month's environmental activities: Stan Sheller of NMNH's Department of Botany was one of the ones who took part in community programs, speaking at an Earth Day teach-in at an area high school; Dale Jenkins, the new director of SF's Office of Ecology, was quoted extensively in a national newspaper, Dr. Sidney Galler, SF's Assistant Secretary for Science, provided commentary for four hours on E-Day events for a local radio station. The previous week Galler had chaired the seventh session of the Smithsonian's "Encounters," an ongoing series of informal, problem-oriented discussions designed to bridge the gap between the Office of Oceanography. The next in that series, "Man and Our Troubled Earth," will be presented on April 21, in the NMNH's Dr. Clifford Evans Auditorium. As a follow-up to Earth Day, Jon Seger of the Office of Academic Programs and Martin A. Busas of NMNH's Department of Paleobiology, organized several afternoon seminars that will attempt to bring together some of the latest research findings and new research suggestions. The sessions will be held at the National Museum of Natural History, beginning with the presentation of a slide show entitled "Man's Impact on the Natural Environment." The workshop, which is expected to last about three hours, will be open to the public and directed at the general public, not specialized scientists. 

**SI Staff Members Can Showcase Artistic Talent**

Smithsonian staff members and their families are now getting a chance to show off their very considerable artistic talents. The MHT TV Studio Gallery, opened in January, provides a permanent showcase for the display of employee art in a wide range of media and expression. The gallery is open daily from 9:00 to 4:30 and there is a showing of paintings, through June 12. The group exhibitions open May 12, and is the third gallery show. Earlier, Leonard Ludes and Ken Young combined in a two-man display of paintings, followed by a group graphics display. "The MHT TV Studio Gallery," a children's exhibition (June 25 through the middle of July), a crafts show (mid-July through September); "The Human Figure in Art," a group show of portraits and figure studies (October); photography (November); and "In the Smokies Special," a craft show (November). The group shows are juried by a selection committee that changes for each exhibition. Critical reviews of major shows will be sought from key SI museum personnel and from outside art critics, for publication in The Torch.

The exhibitions thus far have shown SI artists to possess a talent and degree of professionalism which has surprised some. Robert Tyler Davis, Assistant Director of the NCFA, commented of the graphics exhibition: "It is the best group show I've seen in Washington this year." Many SI staffers, in fact, are professional artists in their spare time, and several run galleries. Contributions thus far have ranged from secretaries to high-ranked personnel. Ludes, a driving force in the program, believes that upwards of 100 serious artists will have been enabled to show their work by the end of this year, in addition to the many weekend artists of skill and dedication.

The committee in charge seeks to make the operation broad-based, and empha-

**RBL Report:**

**Pall Over Mall**

The Smithsonian's Radiation Biology Laboratory scientists have produced evidence that man is a significant factor in the changes observed on the Mall. Air pollution has increased to the point that there has been about a 16 per cent loss in the amount of light in the direct sun during the winter, an increase of 5 per cent in RBL, instrument on the north tower of the Old Smithsonian Building.

And that's on an extremely clear day. On a smoggy day the loss might easily be twice as high. They came up with this data by comparing their current readings against ones made between 1905 and 1907 by Dr. Charles G. Abbot, first Secretary of the Smithsonian.

Their explanation is that there is a considerable amount of the sun's energy being reflected and scattered by dust particles in the earth's upper atmosphere. Scientists estimate that total smoke and dust emission to the atmosphere from automobiles and industries in the U.S. is 130 million tons per year. Other combination including smoke from jet planes and trash burning contribute on average 30 million tons or more a year."

RBL, Director William H. Klein says if the trend continues, it could cause serious interference at some future date with plant photosynthesis—which provides the energy for animal and human life.

Meanwhile the RBL has vacated its old offices at 742 15th Street, N.W. and moved into new quarters at 12441 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Md. Its scientists soon will be collecting data that will indicate if the dust in the air is as thick in the suburbs as it is in the city.

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Spanish Man Gets a Plastic Soaking

By Tom Harney

In a humidity controlled room in the west court of the National Museum of Natural History, a coffin-shaped carton full of clay and sand in which a 30,000-year-old fossil of a buried man is being kept for a lost 13-gallon plastic.
Background Report

A Chronology of Facts

What is the substance behind some recent unfavorable publicity relating to the Smithsonian? Here are the facts. Judge for yourself.

The first of these stories occurred last January, shortly before a regular meeting of the Board of Regents. The story appeared to have widely exaggerated the nature and purposes of a normal internal review report. The report was leaked to the local press, in fact, before the Secretary had time to discuss with the members of the Board of Regents the preliminary report, was addressed to use of funds for construction and other services of the Smithsonian Institution, and was sent to the National Museum of Natural History. On the late 50s and early 60s.

The same articles in January concerning the Board of Regents inspection also mentioned the Trust's management of private funds. In particular, it discussed a managerial proposal then being considered by the Trust's Treasurer for pooling of endowment funds, including the Freer Fund, for investment purposes only—an approach to investment that is now used by nearly all major universities and other non-profit institutions. None of these steps would depart from the existing endowment funds to any other. None of these steps would depart from the existing endowment funds to any other.

The same story in January concerned the Board of Regents meeting the following day, during which the Freer gift and bequest of his art.