

II, B. 3, Fall 1956

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# NEWSLETTER

Fall, 1956

*friendly notes about alumni and the School  
issued from time to time by the Alumni Association  
of the Philadelphia Museum School of Art*

## *the restoration of the school building*

All of us who have had our schooling at Broad and Pine, have carried away an indelible image of the wide tier of marble steps and the broad columned portico. A thousand and one other images are attached to it but for most, it is our visual symbol of the School. That symbol has been freshened for us by what has happened, largely during the past few months.

First, about two years ago, the thickened layers of paint were removed and the granite facade and sandstone columns were revealed in their original textures. More recently the worn marble steps have been replaced by slabs of the same local blue-veined marble. The old cast-iron fence, which had disintegrated badly in recent years, was removed and low granite walls before each wing have created two courts in which will be gravel walks, shrubbery and trees. These will tend, partially, to mask the wings and emphasize the projecting mass of the portico.

This work has been under the direction of our school architect, Norman Rice, who says, "The central portico, dignified in proportion and severe in detail is an outstanding monument of the Greek Revival period. Designed by an excellent architect, it is worthy of every respect. Its architectural qualities far surpass those of the two side wings which were added later. The fence, a still later addition, was merely a typical example of cast iron work of the 1880's. Both the fence and the wings diminish the architecture of the portico. The basic design idea of this project has been to accentuate the monumental qualities of the portico."

It seems to be an almost unanimous opinion that the familiar facade of the School has acquired a new size and impressiveness.

Too few of us know much of the history of the School and its building. Some of us knew that the building was originally erected as an, "Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb," and designed by an architect who had drawn the plans for the Eastern Penitentiary, only because these facts were ammunition for the jibes of rival schools. The portico and the building behind it, which is the core of the School, was designed by John Haviland, an architect of distinction. He was an Englishman brought to this country by John Quincy Adams.

The original building finally became too small for the needs of the asylum and in 1852, the side wings and additional buildings at the rear were added under the direction of a rising Philadelphia architect, Frank Furness. Furness became a kind of avant-garde architect of his time but certainly he curbed his sense of adventure in designing the wings.

When the School was chartered in 1876, a pioneering experiment launched under the impetus of the Centennial Exposition, it moved from one small building to another during its first struggling years. By 1893 it was thriving and growing rapidly and in need of elbow-room. The asylum had moved; its building was available and a generous gift of \$100,000 by William Wightman made possible its purchase. The School, together with its sister school the Philadelphia Textile

(continued)

*The central portico is an outstanding monument of the Greek Revival period.*



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School, had found its home. For years the art school occupied the north wing and the textile school the south wing, each with a director but under a common principal.

Over the years additions were made to the building in the rear such as the one story brick structure at the 15th Street end of the north courtyard which now houses the Photographic Department. Under Dean Warwick the painting studios in the north courtyard were added to accommodate the increased post-war enrollment. When the textile school separated itself from the Museum corporation in 1949 and moved to Germantown, the vacated south wing was extensively rehabilitated and the art school came into possession of the entire block of buildings.

When E. M. Benson became Dean of the School in 1953, renovation of the front and of the interior was begun. In keeping with the idea that a design school should reflect the best of modern interior planning, the lobby, lecture rooms, cafeteria, conference room and administrative offices were redesigned under the direction of Paul McCobb. The exhibition area was greatly enlarged so that frequently changing and varied exhibitions could be presented to the students and public in the most meaningful setting. Designers whose work is represented in these new interiors include Saarinen, Eames, Nakashima, Finn, Juhl, Jens Risom and Paul McCobb. The central courtyard has been transformed with shrubbery and seats and is now a fair weather lounging space for the students.

Gradually the corridors and classrooms are undergoing renovation and this will be a continuing process. Dean Benson is completing an over-all plan which will reach into the years to come and eventually bring into being all the best of our accumulated experience and our ripest foresight. We will tell the details of this plan in a future issue of the Newsletter.

HENRY C. PITZ

### *other accomplishments*

A good deal of this Newsletter has concerned itself with mortar and stone; the physical shell which is the background for the School's life and spirit. Many other activities are contributing to the well-being of the students and faculty or are enlarging its range of opportunity.

1. In May of 1956 the School's Board of Governors approved a Pension and Annuity Plan effective October 1956, available to all instructors and staff who have been employed by the School for no fewer than three days a week for a minimum of three years. This arrangement was made with the Teachers Insurance Annuity Association, a Carnegie endowed non-profit corporation. The School contributes 5% of the salaries of those eligible and the persons insured contribute a like amount. Prior service claims amounting to 1/2 of 1% of current salaries are set aside by the School for employees who have been with the School for more than three years.

The School had for many years considered the possibility of introducing a pension and annuity plan and is now glad to announce its existence.

2. The Museum School is now a member of the Tuition Exchange, an association of colleges and universities incorporated in the state of Massachusetts, by

which the children of faculty members may attend another member school tuition free with the stipulation that schools sending students to other schools must have enrolled an equivalent number of students at their own school.

3. The Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools will evaluate the Museum School in February to determine whether it is deserving of accreditation by this organization. The entire administrative and teaching staff of the School has worked for more than a year to prepare the documentation required by the Middle States Association. We welcome this opportunity to re-examine ourselves in terms of objectives, present and future.



### *our commencement*

For the past three years our commencements have been held in the painting studio in the north courtyard. This is not, perhaps, an ideal assembly hall but it brings one of the School's most important occasions under the home-roof and certainly makes it easier for the graduates, their families and friends to enjoy the exhibition and reception. Our commencements now have a somewhat broader significance because of the new Philadelphia Museum School of Art Design Award. This is a symbolic cluster of gold stars, presented to the artist-designer, who, during the past year, has through his work done the most to broaden public acceptance of good design as it relates to contemporary life. The first award, in June 1954, was made to designer Paul McCobb, in 1955 it was given to the great photographer, Edward Steichen, and at last year's commencement to the Ford Motor Company for its development of the Mark II model and the Thunderbird. The award was accepted by George Walker, head of the company's design department, who also delivered the commencement address.



Another award, of particular interest to the alumni, was instituted in 1955. It is a cluster of silver stars, designed for distinguished achievement in the arts by Museum School alumni. At the 1955 commencement it was given to Tina Leser, the well-known dress designer, and to the equally well-known photographer Irving Penn. At the last commencement it was awarded to Raymond Ballinger for advertising design and to Henry Pitz for illustration.

At the last commencement, many interesting and significant things were said by the various speakers but two paragraphs taken from the opening address by Dean Benson seem of particular importance.

*Exactly 80 years ago the founders of this college, with more wisdom than we were once willing to credit them,*



*decided that art and industry could live happily under one roof. I'm not too sure I know what they meant by art, but I suspect from what they chose to exhibit as art at Philadelphia's famous centennial exhibition of 1876, that we might have been in sharp disagreement. But this much I do know: they had a deep vision of what it could mean in the years to come.*

*Thus this college started as a dream in the minds of men who felt that some day the artists and the men of business would find a way to talk a common language. It has taken almost a century for this to become possible. We would like to think that the graduates of this School, some 5000 since 1876, have done much to create the climate of understanding that now exists.*

### *the 80th anniversary celebration*

On June 1, 1956 the Philadelphia Museum School of Art celebrated its 80th Anniversary with a preview of the "Young Designers 1956" exhibition for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund.

Sponsored by the Alumni Association of the School and the Associate Committee of Women of the Philadelphia Museum School, with enthusiastic support from the Board of Governors, the School, and its many friends, the event made it possible for the School to give needed financial aid to many worthy students.

The guests of honor for this anniversary celebration were: Mr. René Bouche, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Budd, Mayor and Mrs. Richardson Dilworth, Anne Fogarty, Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Dr. and Mrs. Chevalier L. Jackson, Melanie Kahane, Mr. and Mrs. Paul McCobb, Mr. and Mrs. Robert McLean, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Milliette, Mr. Arnold Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Lessing Rosenwald, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Shahn, Hope Skillman, Mrs. J. Stoddell Stokes, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Warwick.

During the early part of the evening Mayor Richardson Dilworth spoke briefly of the contribution the School and its graduates had made over the 80 years to the growth and vitality of the city. Many people generously contributed original works of art to be used as door prizes, and the awarding of these prizes by Dean Benson and Mr. Ben Wolf was a highlight of the evening. Mrs. Ben Wolf was the chairman of the committee which received works of art from the following:

Raymond A. Ballinger, Rita Wolpe Barnett, William Barnett, Morris Berd, Charles T. Coiner, Bob Carlen, Stella Drabkin, Ben Eisenstat, Emlen Etting, Maurice Freed, Paul Froelich, Virginia Mason Gifford, Albert Gold, John M. Hathaway, Martin Jackson, Jerome Kaplan, Mrs. M. Wenger, James Kirk Merrick, Henry Mitchell, Henry C. Pitz, Bertha K. Schoenbach, Verna Shaffer Spence, Benton Spruance, and Ben Wolf.

Of special interest to guests were the DuPont Parisian Originals with accessories and mannequins generously furnished and installed by the Wanamaker Tributou Shop.

Much of the gaiety and charm of the party was a result of the work of Mr. Samuel R. Rosenbaum and his committee who secured the donations for the champagne.

It was a most successful party. Over one thousand guests attended, many of whom saw one of the School's

exhibitions for the first time. The generous contributions of friends in time, money, refreshments and original art works made it possible to add to the School's Scholarship Fund the sum of \$3,409.47, which represented the excess of receipts over expenditures.

We are looking forward to making this an annual affair and hope you will be with us at the Scholarship Fund Party May 31, 1957. With your continued help it will be even more successful than our first Scholarship Party. Do come.

MRS. MALCOLM LLOYD  
Co-chairman

MRS. SAMUEL LAVERY  
Co-chairman

## *faculty notes*

Raymond A. Ballinger's splendid new book, "Layout," has just been published by the Reinhold Company. Material from the book has been exhibited at the Museum School and is now on a country-wide tour.

Instructor Ben Wolf and his wife, Ruth, have given a scholarship of \$750 per annum in memory of Daniel Banks, one of last year's freshmen, who met a tragic death in an automobile accident this summer.

Artists' Equity is well represented with Museum School personnel this year. It is headed nationally by instructor Emlen Etting, and locally by Rita Barnett.

William Emerton Heitland, N.A., was awarded the Gold Medal of Honor at the Forty-third Annual Exhibition of the Allied Artists of America.

Three former students of the school have been added to the faculty: Russell Anderson, Robert McGovern and Leonard Lehrer.

Articles by Henry Pitz on the work of two faculty members, Albert Gold and Jacob Landau, have appeared in recent issues of *American Artist*.

## *personalities*

Praise comes from many quarters for the integrated fine and industrial arts program at the Abraham Lincoln Junior High School in Philadelphia, headed by Robert D. Goldman. He is also Advisory Editor of School Arts Magazine.

Mac S. Fisher was awarded the Bambridge Prize at the Forty-third Annual Exhibition of the Allied Artists of America for his watercolor "New Orleans Cemetery."

Thomas Bates, formerly A.D. at Philco Technical Publications, is now A.D. at Renner Advertisers.

Ray McDevitt now associate art director TV Guide.

Donald Streeter has become an authority on early American hardware. In his shop on Delsea Drive, Iona, New Jersey, he has recently done all the metalwork for the Van Cortlandt Manor restoration and is working on the hardware for old St. Luke's Church in Smithfield, Virginia.



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Jan Ozog is Scenic Director for Educational Station WHYY.

Ruth A. Wescott is teaching art at the Vineland, N. J. High School.

Zen Yonkovig is working in the Art Department of the Saturday Evening Post.

Ursula Koering, who has a long list of illustrated books to her credit, has had a new one, *Holly River Secret*, just published by Doubleday and Co.

Joseph Pezely, Industrial Design '56, is now with the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn in what he calls a "top secret division, designing a car for the 1959-60 market." He has started an independent newsletter to his fellow alumni of the Industrial Department.

Interior planning at the Robert LeFort Company in Philadelphia, which handles Herman Miller and Paul McCobb furniture, is headed by '56 Interior Design graduate Mike Moreken.

Container Corporation of America has employed Dottie Masteller in its package design department, where she is designing gift and cosmetic packages.

Alumni members Alan Klawans and Norman Levinson, who have been honored by an exhibition at the School, both graduated, went into the army, served in Germany, were discharged and have returned to the Museum School for graduate work.

## calendar of events

Thursday evenings through March 14—Sketch Group, 7 to 10, Studio 329. Free to Alumni Members

Friday, December 7—Reception for opening of exhibition of stained glass from Henry Willet Studio

Thursday, December 13—Reception for exhibition "The Best of Harper's Bazaar"

Friday, January 11—Reception for opening of exhibition of cover designs for paper back books

Four Senior-Alumni Career Conferences (8 P.M.):

Tuesday, February 5—Fabric and Fashion Design Departments

Tuesday, February 12—Fashion Illustration and Illustration Department

Tuesday, February 19—Dimensional, Industrial and Interior Design Departments

Tuesday, February 26—Advertising Design, Photography and Art Teacher Education Departments

Friday, March 1—Reception to open "Meet Our Instructors 1957"

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, March 12, 13, 14—Evening School Open House; Exhibition through March 23

Saturday, April 6—Homecoming Day, Alumni Banquet and Exhibition Opening

Saturday, May 11—"Young Designers 1957," Part I exhibition opens

Friday, May 31—Scholarship Fund Party and opening of "Young Designers 1957," Parts I and II

Monday, June 3—Commencement

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