
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY GALLERY OF ART, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

ILLUSTRATED
CHECKLIST
OF THE
COLLECTION

Paintings, Sculpture and Works on Paper



WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
IN ST. LOUIS

Cover illustration: George Caleb Bingham, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap*, 1851-52

Back cover illustration: Marsden Hartley, *The Iron Cross*, 1915

Printer: Jefferson Printing Co.
Typesetting: Adrian Typography, Inc.

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Library of Congress Card Catalog Number 81-51198
ISBN: 0-936316-01-2

One Hundred Years of the WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION

MAY 10, 1981, marks the Centennial of the formation of an art museum by Washington University. Originally known as the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts, the first art museum established west of the Mississippi, this institution was conceived as a resource embodying truth and beauty worthy of emulation by students, study by scholars and appreciation by the public. The original museum and school were also intended to respond to the specific needs of a growing industrial and mercantile economy by stimulating the development of American art. The success of this institution was eventually sufficient to engender a municipal art museum which advanced the initial aims of the University museum until its role as progenitor was generally forgotten.

Today the intentions and artistic tastes of the original founders are reflected in the objects they collected which are housed in the Washington University Gallery of Art. Paralleling the changing requirements of university education, the collection has evolved and continues to grow in response to contemporary concerns and aspirations of students, faculty and community. The following history will delineate some of the changes during the first hundred years of the University art museum, indicate its original and present purposes, and suggest the scope and character of the exceptional art collection at Washington University.

On the evening of May 10, 1881, Wayman Crow handed to Washington University Chancellor William Greenleaf Eliot the title deed to the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts. That this occasion was intended to inaugurate a new era in the aesthetic, educational and economic life of St. Louis, and indeed the entire Mississippi Valley, was articulated in the remarks of the inaugural speakers. *The Missouri Republican* reported that Wayman Crow began by citing the example of Athens and reminding the audience of the time when Indians roamed where their city presently stood. He stated: "It will be the aim of this School of Fine Arts to educate the public taste, instil (sic) sound principles of aesthetic culture and foster a distinctively American type of art." It was his vision that "this institution ought in the lapse of years to become

to this portion of the Mississippi valley what the South Kensington museum is to England." Today known as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the South Kensington Museum was an outgrowth of the London World's Fair of 1851. This Fair brought together highly crafted utilitarian objects from an international array of artisans. The South Kensington Museum displayed much of this material together with historical examples of craft such as metalwork, textiles and carved ivories. The purpose of this museum was to stimulate the British economy by raising standards of industrial design and improving the technical skills of native craftsmen.

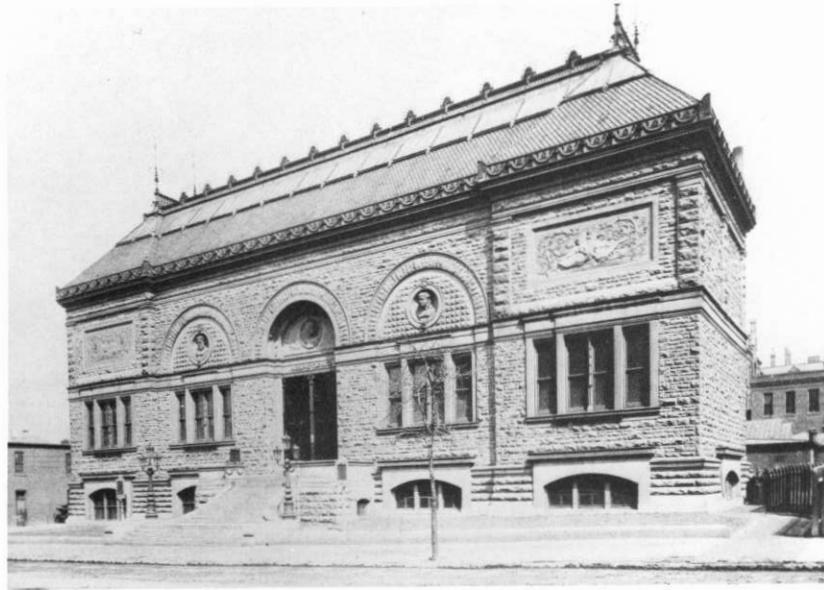
This same utilitarian outlook influenced the founders of the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts. The importance of Crow's gift for St. Louis was stressed by former Senator John B. Henderson who warned that without the teaching of drawing in the schools:

...there may be workmen, there cannot be artisans; without it the range of occupation cannot well be extended. The number of professions cannot be increased. In a few years unskilled workmen will likely crowd the places of inartistic labor. They will reduce wages at home, produce discontent and continue our dependence on foreign nations for the products of art.

Such were the ambitions of the original benefactors, summarized by Chancellor Eliot with teleologic force as he accepted the deed: "This whole building will become a conservatory of art; a treasure-house of beauty; the historical artistic record of all that the past has accomplished; the promoter and creator of greater and better things to come."

The new museum and school were a manifestation of the vision and combined effort which shaped Washington University from its inception. In 1853 Wayman Crow, then state senator, had authored a charter enabling the formation of an educational institution named Eliot Seminary after his pastor and friend, William Greenleaf Eliot. The form of the institution was

1. St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts.
Dedicated May 10, 1881.
(Courtesy of Archives, St. Louis Art Museum)



unspecified; Eliot shaped the character of what became Washington University and inspired prominent St. Louisans with his gift of integrating moral, spiritual and educational values with the economic resources and needs of St. Louis.

As its population and economy grew, mid-nineteenth century St. Louis required many forms of education. When the fledgling institution was officially inaugurated in 1872 as Washington University, Eliot affirmed a commitment to serve the practical requirements of the working class through developing a polytechnic department and a school of art and design. The same year he sought to gather a dispersed collection of casts of the Elgin marbles and other monuments which the University had possessed since the 1860s for the proposed school of art and design. Thereafter the promotion of an art school appeared frequently on Eliot's public speaking agenda.

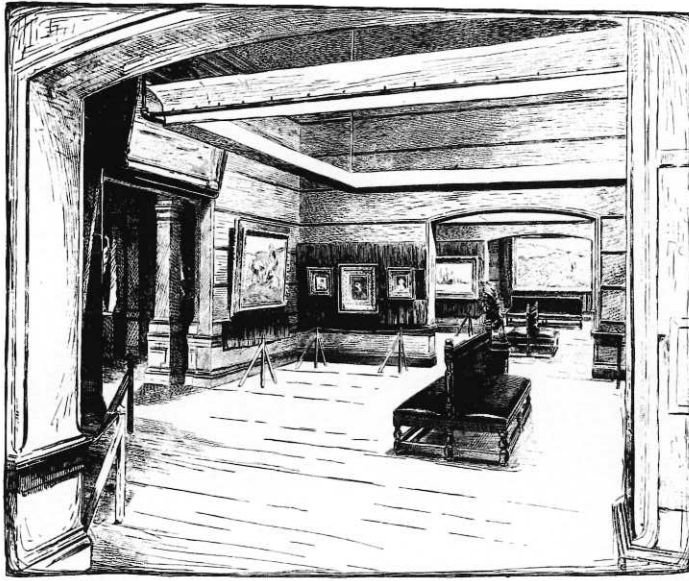
While Crow may be credited with the idea of the educational institution, and Eliot for giving it definition, a young designer from New York who began teaching free evening classes at Washington University in 1874 must be acknowledged for giving substance to the anticipated art school. Halsey C. Ives appears to have influenced, more than any other individual, the development of the visual arts in St. Louis. Having studied at South Kensington, Ives maintained a lifelong commitment to the useful and practical application of art. By 1876 he developed, as part of the Polytechnic Department, a School of Art and Design based on a twenty-two course curriculum which progressed from copying casts through life studies and modeling to technical and applied design. This program was directed toward the aim of enabling students "to make a practical application of Art to the common objects of use in every day life, and to the graceful forming and decoration of the products of manufacture." Using his personal wealth, Ives traveled to Europe to buy casts, prints and mechanical reproductions of paintings and drawings for the service of students. Simultaneously he studied the organization and curricula of industrial and art schools in Europe, especially French and German schools which were demonstrated to be superior in the

London World's Fair of 1851. The early culmination of Ives' teaching and administration was the organization and direction in 1879 of the St. Louis School of Fine Arts, a department of Washington University.

Plans for a museum building to house the new School of Fine Arts and its collections were presented to Eliot by Wayman Crow as a memorial to his son, Wayman, Jr., who died in 1878. Located at the northeast corner of 19th Street and Lucas Place (now Locust Street), the building was designed by Peabody and Stearns of Boston in the Ruskin-approved Italianate style deemed appropriate for the lofty purposes of an art museum. The two-story museum wing was built of a roughly-dressed gray limestone with a red tile roof (*illus. 1*). Over the central portal was a medallion containing a colossal bust of Phidias flanked by medallions of Michelangelo and Raphael. Inside, the galleries were paneled in polished oak and trimmed in dark walnut. The first floor received natural light through the large windows facing south while the upper floor was skylit. In addition, brilliant gas-light was provided from a pipe with gas-jets suspended from the ceiling and joined to a metal reflector which concentrated light on the walls (*illus. 2*). Memorial Hall, an amphitheater seating close to seven hundred, connected the museum wing through a shared central vestibule (*illus. 3*). Studios were located above the auditorium, and classrooms and storerooms were in the basement.

At the conclusion of the dedication ceremonies on May 10, 1881, those present exited from Memorial Hall back through the polished oak vestibule. Standing in the vestibule, symmetrically flanked by two galleries on each side, visitors were surrounded by more than 200 casts of the monuments of civilization including Assyrian reliefs, Egyptian artifacts, classical temple friezes, pediments and sculpture (*illus. 4*).

Ascending to the upper floor, viewers encountered the work of contemporary artists. Chief attractions were marbles depicting *Puck*, *Zenobia*, *Triton*, and *Oenone* by Harriet Hosmer and *Freedom's Memorial* by Thomas Ball. St. Louisans were proud of Hosmer, the diminutive, energetic sculptress, who had come to



2. St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts.
Picture gallery, looking west from center, ca. 1885.
(From *The Magazine of Art*, London, 1885)

St. Louis from Massachusetts under the patronage of Crow some 30 years earlier. In order for her to study anatomy, Crow arranged for her entrance into the medical school which eventually affiliated with Washington University. He was also instrumental in obtaining important early commissions for Hosmer when she settled in Rome, where she carved *Oenone* and a bust of Crow (pp. 45, 46). *Oenone* was one of the most famous works in the city, having been exhibited previously in the St. Louis Mercantile Library.

A "Loan Exhibition" of 143 paintings lent by prominent citizens was displayed in the five picture galleries on the upper floor. Of more than one hundred artists featured, the majority was living in Paris, Düsseldorf, Berlin and Munich. Frederic Church, Sanford Gifford, Jasper Cropsey, Eastman Johnson and George Inness were among the two dozen American artists represented. Locally nurtured talent was seen in works by Carl Guthertz, W.L. Marple, Louis Schultze, Joseph Meeker, Paul Harney and Charles Wimar, among others. Wimar was the most extensively shown artist with six canvases including *The Abduction of Daniel Boone's Daughter by the Indians* (p. 77).

Excellence in the visual arts was defined in the inaugural remarks of John Henderson who stated: "fidelity to nature is the highest achievement of art." The collection of Charles Parsons, bequeathed to the University in 1905, exemplifies this aesthetic attitude and contains more than a dozen works displayed in the 1881 "Loan Exhibition." Critics of the day gave special notice to Gustave Brion's *The Invasion*, a history painting which depicts in heroic terms a group of Alsatian peasants who flee their homeland rather than submit to invading Prussians (p. 22). Another work collected by Parsons, Frederic Church's *Mount Desert Island, Maine* (p. 26), was deemed by critics of the day to be superior to William Turner's *Sunrise*, also displayed in the inaugural exhibition.

The School and Museum of Fine Arts were conceived as interdependent units complementing and magnifying the influence of each other. Display of the "Loan Exhibition" was followed by a student exhibition timed to coincide with the June 1881 graduation exercises held in Memorial Hall. *The Spectator* noted the

quality of the student work as evidence of the remarkable progress of art development attributable to Ives' efforts. Art students themselves spoke with pride about the new museum in a special supplement to *Student Life* published at the time of their first graduation in the new facility. Affirming that the sculpture collection was without precedent, they continued, "To us, as students, they are invaluable. We have enjoyed to the utmost these, undeniably the best of all educators. . . ." Launching their own journal, *Palette Scrapings*, the art students frequently reviewed the changing exhibitions in great detail and occasionally published woodcut illustrations of objects they especially admired. The April 1883 issue gives a rare account of how a "Loan Exhibition of Water-colors" was installed:

The pictures were grouped with reference to size and color, those of the most brilliant colors being placed in the centre, around which were clustered the more quietly toned ones. As a rule, the larger pieces were hung above. . . . There was none of that "skying" so often the abomination of the beholder. Each picture was separated from its neighbor by folds of well arranged dark maroon drapery.

Affection for Ives is apparent throughout *Palette Scrapings*. His taste was admired and influential, and the opportunity to see his most recent acquisitions was always welcomed. An 1882 issue of *Palette Scrapings* reported on a canvas which had just been painted especially for Ives, Julien Dupré's *Haying Scene* (p. 32). The students admired the "vivid, life-like beauty" of the peasant woman who has "lifted the load with such a visible effort that one would give a sigh of relief to see her drop it."

The collection grew slowly, and many of the earliest acquisitions were later sold. Prominent among those remaining from the first decade of the museum are four canvases by Charles Wimar given in 1886 (p. 76), as well as the most famous object in the University collection, George Caleb Bingham's *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap, 1851-52* (cover).

3. St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts.
Main vestibule, ca. 1895.
(Courtesy of Archives, St. Louis Art Museum)



William Merritt Chase's *Courtyard of a Dutch Orphan Asylum* was added to the collection by purchase through subscription in 1885 (p. 25). Ives continued his travels and efforts to augment the collection on the South Kensington model, emphasizing decorative and applied art. So quickly did the collection of applied arts grow that the spaces intended to serve as studios for advanced students became exhibition galleries for metalwork, furniture and ceramics.

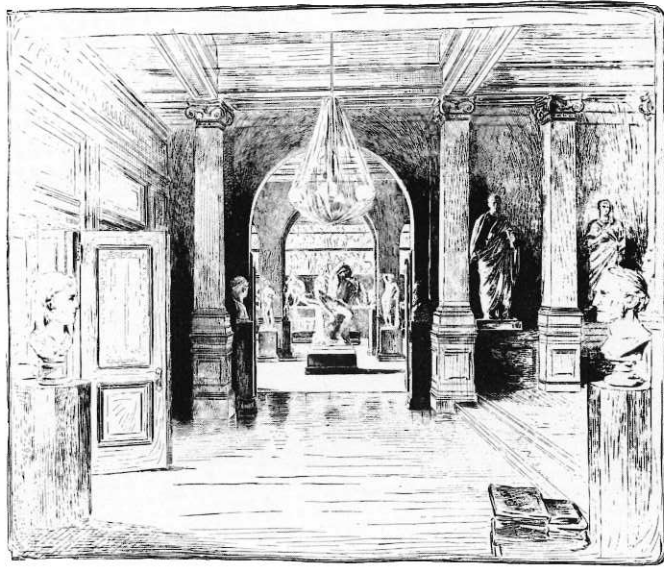
Ives rapidly established himself as an international expert on art education and was elected chairman of the Art Department of the 1893 Chicago Columbia Exposition. In this capacity Ives was able to feature the applied and industrial arts in the Exposition. His own St. Louis School of Fine Arts won first prize among the international field of art schools represented. The Exposition also enabled Ives to build his museum's collections. He commissioned for the World Exposition more than 120 reproductions of classical treasures from Herculaneum and Pompeii. At the conclusion of the event, the entire collection was brought to St. Louis where parts of it may still be seen in a local hotel and a neighborhood restaurant. A collection of more than 20 bookbindings from the Danish Section of the Chicago Fair also came to St. Louis, contributing to interest in this applied art which was taught for many years in the art school; the collection is now housed on campus in the Special Collections of Olin Library. Among paintings which entered the museum's collection was a prize winner from the Spanish section, Joaquín Sorolla's *Another Marguerite* (p. 73).

In 1894 a parcel of land opposite the northwestern corner of Forest Park was purchased by the University and plans were initiated to move the downtown campus to the new location. Although at least one of the preliminary plans for the new campus included a museum, it was proposed that the University build a museum within Forest Park. Upon completion the new museum was to be deeded to the city for use by the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts and governed by its original Board of Control to which the Mayor, Comptroller and Park Commissioner of St. Louis would be added. Because the St. Louis School and

Museum was a department of Washington University, a private institution, the result would have been the creation of a quasi-public institution. Ives was elected to the City Council in 1895, and an ordinance authorizing the University to proceed with this plan was passed in 1900.

There were several reasons for building a new museum facility. While the collection of paintings was not extensive, the collection of decorative, applied and industrial arts continued to grow under Ives' direction until there was no room left for expansion at the downtown site. Moreover, the collections were threatened by pollution, particularly smoke produced by waterfront industry. Most important was Ives' ambition to multiply the influence of the art school and museum through expansion of facilities and attendant development of a larger public constituency. While the museum remained financially well-supported, Ives struggled with growing deficits in managing the art school and sought to increase enrollment by diversifying the curriculum to appeal to the working class. Towards this end, Ives taught classes on Sunday mornings to insure accessibility of his programs for the public which he sought to influence and serve. He hoped that a larger, more complete facility in Forest Park, managed in cooperation with the city, would finally engage the constituency the school needed to establish a firm financial foundation.

The Museum Board of Control selected a hilltop site for the new facility in Forest Park. Shortly thereafter, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company was formed to organize a World's Fair in St. Louis. This allowed civic interest in a public museum to be merged with Ives' ambition; the Exposition Company was authorized to build a Palace of Fine Arts which would remain a permanent structure after the 1904 festivities, and Ives was appointed Chief of the Art Department of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Subsequent to the Fair, the School and Museum of Fine Arts were separated when the University art collection was moved into the Palace of Fine Arts in 1906 and the School of Fine Arts was established on the recently opened campus nearby. The newly established museum, called the St. Louis Museum of Fine



4. St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts.
Sculpture gallery, looking west from the main vestibule, ca. 1885.
(From *The Magazine of Art*, London, 1885)

5. Steinberg Hall. Dedicated May 15, 1960.

Arts, was directed by Ives and governed by the original Board of Control of the St. Louis School and Museum of Fine Arts.

In 1907 the Missouri legislature enabled the citizens of St. Louis to tax themselves in support of the new museum, and an "Art Museum Fund" was collected that year. However, municipal officials refused to release the funds to the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, arguing that it was a department of Washington University, a private corporation, and should not be allowed to administer a public facility or disperse public funds. Twenty-six years earlier, John Henderson had explained at the museum dedication:

Under our forms of government institutions of this character have not been patronized by the state. Their support has been left to individual support and private enterprise. . . . The state is unable to help us. . . .

This was no longer the case after 1907 once St. Louisans chose to tax themselves in support of the new museum, a decision which necessitated the formation of a municipal governing board and administration. As a result the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts was dissolved and in 1909 Ives became Director of what would be newly constituted as the City Art Museum. The University collection was left in the City Art Museum on indefinite loan and the era of the University museum was temporarily brought to a close. For the next half-century two collections co-existed in the City Art Museum, one held in trust for the citizens of St. Louis, the other lent by Washington University.

In its early years the City Art Museum exhibited the University art collection and provided space to the School of Fine Arts for student and faculty shows. As its success and fame grew, so did its collection, which gradually displaced all but the most important objects belonging to the University. By the mid-1920s University administrators were forced to find space in classrooms, offices, attics and basements to store the least desirable items which were the first to be returned to campus. At the same time, although the City Art Museum was but a ten-minute walk from the edge of campus, concerned faculty lamented the loss of intimacy with the

University's art treasures.

In 1929 plans to establish a "Washington University Art Center" were announced in the April *Washingtonian*. The center was to join buildings housing the Schools of Fine Arts and Architecture with an art museum. But it was many years before the museum was constructed. The University collection, however, continued to grow in anticipation of a campus museum, as evidenced by the gift of more than two hundred old and modern master prints from Dr. Malvern B. Clopton in the 1930s. Clopton, then President of the University Corporation, gathered with a connoisseur's discrimination a collection including major prints by Dürer, Whistler, Meryon and Rembrandt (p. 68).

Public perception of the University collection was problematic. An anonymous writer published in the March 19, 1922, *Globe Democrat* remembered seeing the City Art Museum grow from "an ill-favored offshoot of Washington University, to a great institution, the first one in the country to be supported entirely from the public treasury." By the mid-1940s "the university's art collection had disappeared from public consciousness altogether," declared Horst W. Janson, who served as Curator on the Art Collections Committee which was appointed to consider the problems of housing and using the University collection.

The Committee developed a bold plan based on the premise that a museum would eventually be built on campus. It proposed deaccessioning about one-sixth of the collection and purchasing a core of modern works of art. Reporting in the *College Art Journal* of Spring 1947, Janson outlined the goal of building a collection to serve the needs of students as well as the campus community through acquisition of individually significant pieces, rather than "examples," indicative of twentieth century artistic development. Especially prized today among his purchases are works by Max Beckmann, Max Ernst, Juan Gris, Philip Guston, Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, Antoine Pevsner, Pablo Picasso and Joseph Stella (pp. 18, 35, 40, 51, 58, 63, 64, 75). A teaching gallery was opened in Givens Hall to allow display of selections from the collection and small traveling exhibitions. Works were also



shown elsewhere on campus as interest in the visual arts was revitalized by the actions of Janson and the Art Collections Committee.

During the 1950s the Art Collections Committee strengthened holdings of American art by purchases with the Bixby Fund which had been established at the turn of the century. William K. Bixby had been one of the most prominent supporters of Washington University and the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts. He served as the first President of the City Art Museum and donated Bixby Hall for the School of Fine Arts. Purchases made with the Bixby Fund during his lifetime include works by Childe Hassam and George Inness (pp. 43, 46). With Frederick Hartt serving as Curator, the Art Collections Committee used Bixby Funds to acquire works by Lyonel Feininger, Arshile Gorky, Marsden Hartley, Willem deKooning, Jackson Pollock and other American artists (pp. 34, 38, back cover, 50, 66).

The dream of an art museum on campus was finally fulfilled through the generosity of the Steinberg Charitable Trust in 1959 when ground was broken for a new facility named in memory of Mark C. Steinberg (*illus. 5*). Housing the Washington University Gallery of Art, Department of Art History, Art and Architecture Library, classrooms and auditorium, Steinberg Hall was conceived as an educational, architectural and aesthetic link between the adjacent School of Fine Arts in Bixby Hall and School of Architecture in Givens Hall. The collection was placed at the center of those academic units which create and study the visual arts with the intention that the Gallery serve as a catalyst to a working synthesis of students, faculty and community.

William N. Eisendrath, Jr., the first Director of the Washington University Gallery of Art, developed a lively exhibition schedule featuring the University collection and major traveling shows and frequently coordinated exhibitions with undergraduate and graduate seminars taught in Steinberg Hall. Eisendrath also initiated a new era of growth of the collections by purchase and through gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Weil and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Significant works by Alexander Calder,

James Ensor, Sam Francis, Naum Gabo, Joan Miró, Aristide Maillol, Henri Matisse, Gustave Moreau, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg and Bradley Walker Tomlin, among others, were added to the collections (pp. 13, 33, 36, 57, 54, 55, 59, 65, 68, 74).

The University collection has continued to increase since its establishment in Steinberg Hall. Today preservation and display of this treasure which embodies the heritage of nineteenth century St. Louis are fundamental to the purposes of the Washington University Gallery of Art. The collection is the cornerstone of numerous activities in the Gallery and makes it a grand place to visit. Exhibitions bringing university art student and faculty work before the public are part of the century-old tradition of nurturing the development of American art. Responding to contemporary educational goals, the Gallery serves as an educational resource supporting scholarly research and providing tutorial museum training for students. Student and faculty involvement often leads to the organization of special exhibitions drawn from the University collection as well as from collections around the world. As a result of the various exhibitions and activities in Steinberg Hall, the Gallery is a public forum where theory and knowledge about and appreciation of the visual arts are exchanged through publications, lectures, tours, discussions and related programs. It was the original aspiration of Wayman Crow, William G. Eliot and Halsey C. Ives that the University art museum be a vital educational force and a source of visual delight and pleasure. One hundred years later this vision of the museum and its collections remains the inspiration sustaining the Washington University Gallery of Art in St. Louis.

Gerald D. Bolas, Director
Washington University Gallery of Art