OUT OF THE PAST
UAMA AT FIFTY
deploy the Museum’s extraordinary collections to look back to an earlier era, in celebration of a half-century of growth and change. This presentation re-creates the exhibition aesthetics of the Museum’s early years to underscore the role of design in framing our encounter with and understanding of the visual arts. By reconstructing display conventions that may seem quaint today, the exhibition provokes a collision between past and present, offering visitors an opportunity to consider installation design as a medium in its own right — one often unacknowledged, but nonetheless caught in complex relation to history, ideology, politics and taste.

OUT OF THE PAST makes explicit the many decisions that comprise museum exhibition design. The most important elements — wall color and texture, framing, labeling, scale, lighting, and juxtaposition — act as unspoken language. In this case, the paneled and brocaded background mounts, elaborate framing, low light levels, and decorative floral accents explicitly refute Modernist installation aesthetics and their articulation of art objects as “autonomous.” By eschewing the spare, “neutral” exhibition design that today prevails as the “white-cube” convention, the domestic flair of early UAMA exhibitions confirmed art as a vital sign of cultural sophistication; if art ownership was the privilege of the few, then exhibitions such as this one aimed to introduce a broader public to its elevating effects. Similarly, the organization of works in coloristic relation, rather than by chronology or intellectual affinity, favored the pleasures of taste (of the curator and the presumed viewer) over other imperatives.

The decision to limit the presentation to decorative, mostly figurative works of Continental origin re-articulates a historical preference for the “high brow” pedagogy and posh interior design of the European aristocracy and invites viewers to consider changes in “taste” over time. To enhance the domestic ambience, works were often presented without identification labels or contextual information (interpretation, now expected of museum education and curators, was not in evidence as a part of the exhibition itself). Rather, the exhibition acted as a projection of cultural values; the intended experience was one of civilizing enlightenment, rather than engaged edification.

While this exhibition is an amalgam of many early installations, it relies heavily on the 1971 Kees van Dongen exhibition, designed by then-director William E. Steadman. By 1971, such traditional installation design was already retrospective of much earlier, more conservative, anti-Modernist aesthetic interests; as such, it looked to the past. Here, we hope to provide an opportunity not only to step back into history but also to post revision and reconsideration as essential to any move forward into the future.

More than an elaborate storehouse or showplace, the museum is both a repository for and a producer of memory. While museum collecting endows carefully selected objects with cultural value and historical meaning, thereby generating memory at the public level, exhibitions offer artfully designed experiences that enter memory in more personal terms. exhibitions invite viewers to question both public and private expectations regarding the experience of viewing art in a museum setting and to consider the ways in which museums construct meaning and memory through encounters with art over time.

Dr. Lisa Fischman, Chief Curator
Susannah Maurer, Assistant Curator
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Located on the edge of the UA campus, near the corner of Park and Speedway, General Information (520) 621-7567
UAMA Hours: Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm; Saturday and Sunday, Noon – 4:00 pm; Closed Holidays and University Holidays
Museum Admission is Always Free! Visit the University of Arizona Museum of Art on the web at artmuseum.arizona.edu
Henri Montassier
Eglise de Saint-Bernard (The Church of Saint Bernard), 1932
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Maurice Utrillo
Paysage de Provence (Provence Landscape), not dated
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.003

Yves Brayer
Soins donnés aux chevaux de course (Caring for the Race Horses), not dated
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Kees van Dongen
La Piazza, Venice, not dated
watercolor on paper, Gift of Barbra and George Rosenberg, 1983.007.001

Raoul Dufy
Les Villas (St.-Barts), 1907
oil on canvas, Museum Purchase, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Raoul Dufy
Deux Poissons (Two Fish), 1932
color lithograph on paper, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Max Pechstein
Sonn-er Ostseestrand (Sun on the Baltic Beach), 1925
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.002

Pierre Tail-Coat
Le Pigeon, Paris, 1920
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.003

Marina Santamari
Raoul Dufy, Basket of Fruit, not dated
color lithograph on paper, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Henry Jarvis
Oil on paper, Museum Purchase, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Maria Santamari
Rudi and Prians, Basket of Fruit, not dated
color lithograph on paper, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Antonio Clavé
Gold Necklace, 1944
oil on canvas, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Emile Nelligan
Le Saint Breton, 1906
oil on board, Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Edward J. Gallagher Memorial Fund, 1982.081.001

Hippolite Hidalgo de Caviedes
Le Cafetier, India, 1924
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Carlo Carrà
In the kitchen, Italy, 1928
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.002

Moise Kisling
Flowers in a vase, 1952
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.003

Maurice Denis
La Seine, 1929–30
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Maurice Denis
Portrait de Diodata Danda O'Toole, 1938
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.006.003

Hippolyte Moreau
La Piazza, Venice, 1922
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Maurice Denis
La Gare, Paris, 1904
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Memorial Fund, 1982.041.001

Henri Fantin-Latour
Grenelle, October 2, 1868
Baigneuses dans un paysage (Bathers in a Landscape), 1881
oil on canvas, Museum Purchase, Gift of George E. Woodruff, 1965.007.003

Henri Fantin-Latour
Grenelle, October 2, 1868
Baigneuses dans un paysage (Bathers in a Landscape), 1881
oil on canvas, Gift of George Gregson, 1957.002.001

Dietz Edzard
German, 1895–1970
Knife, 1941
oil on paper, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.002

Dietz Edzard
German, 1895–1970
Still Life—Flowers, not dated
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.002

Dietz Edzard
German, 1895–1970
Still Life, 1941
oil on paper, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.002

Théo van Rysselberghe
Ballet Rose, not dated
oil on canvas, Gift of George Gregson, 1954.001.008

Maurice Denis
Les Peuples, (The Peoples), 1915
oil on canvas, George Gregson Bequest in Loving Memory of Patricia Janss Gregson, 1997.002.002

Theo van Rysselberghe
some men playing in the sun, (After the Hunt), 1928
oil on canvas, Gift of George Gregson, 1957.002.001

Théo van Rysselberghe
Les Peuples, (The Peoples), 1915
oil on canvas, George Gregson Bequest in Loving Memory of Patricia Janss Gregson, 1997.002.002

Vittorio Caradossi
Italian, 1864–1940
Still Life—Lemons, 1938
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.003

Vittorio Caradossi
Italian, 1864–1940
Still Life—Flowers, 1938
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.002

Hildegard Rasch
German, 1893–1963
Carnival, 1921
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Hildegard Rasch
Knees of a Woman, 1921
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.001.001

Hildegard Rasch
The Piazza, Venice, 1922
oil on canvas, Gift of Edward J. Gallagher, Jr., 1954.005.003