

Four Objects of Pre-Columbian Art



Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951), Vol. 26, No. 5. (Sep. - Oct., 1932), pp. 57-59.

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Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951) is currently published by The Art Institute of Chicago.

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FOUR OBJECTS OF PRE-COLUMBIAN ART

TO a small but carefully selected group of objects of primitive art have been recently added four pieces representing the art which flourished among the tribes of Mexico and Central America before the Spanish conquest. The earliest in date is the stone ritual mask from the state of Guerrero on the west coast of Mexico. This was made by the Toltecs, those people who are supposed to be the first bearers of arts and knowledge and to have settled in the valley of Mexico about 720 A.D. where they were dominant until 1116, when the Aztecs took possession of the land. The mask is fine in feeling and design, having that compactness and sculptural quality characteristic of many of the early objects from this area. Undoubtedly, since it is so heavy, it was not worn as a mask, but was hung on significant occasions on an idol to bring him to life and timely action. Possibly it was worn on the breast of a priest during special ceremonies and perhaps a more life-like quality was given it by an inlay of shell and obsidian representing eyes and teeth. This piece, illustrated in the *BULLETIN* for November, 1931, p. 112 and in the *Annual Report*, 1931, p. 31, was purchased from the Robert Alexander Waller Memorial Fund.

Two interesting pieces, later in date, come from the Guetar tribe in Central Costa Rica. These people whose culture was at its height in the early 16th century when the Spanish came are best represented by their bowls, stools, and metates,

carved from lava stone with crude stone tools. A bowl purchased from the Adeline Wheeler Bequest is typical in form and decoration. Four squat human figures support on their heads and uplifted arms a shallow bowl, the arms making a definite rhythm and the bodies maintaining a sculptural contour from every point of view. Lozenge forms incised on the figures repeat the forms in their structure and incised zigzags on the edge of the bowl add a new rhythm to that of the supporting figures. (See p. 64.) The second piece from the Guetar tribe, lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erwin H. Wunsch, is a typical stone metate, a handmill for grinding corn, carved from lava stone in the form of a jaguar. These low oval bowls range in size from eight inches (here shown) to three feet. Some, showing little sign of use, were perhaps only ceremonial in purpose, although in a corn growing country at this period in its development, hand grinding of corn must have been an everyday affair.

The fourth piece, purchased from the Samuel P. Avery Fund, is a corn goddess of Aztec origin (late 14th or early 15th century) and comes from the Highlands of Mexico. It is carved from andesite, a hard and dark colored lava stone, and carved with characteristic attention to the contour as well as the compact arrangement of the masses within. (Illustrated in the *Bulletin* for [February, 1932] p. 24 and in *The Annual Report*, [1931], p. 31.) As was customary, the goddess



LAVA-STONE METATE IN
THE FORM OF A JAGUAR
(GUETAR TRIBE). LENT BY
MR. AND MRS. ERWIN H.
WUNSCH

holds two ears of corn in each hand, and the form of these coupled ears repeats in pleasing fashion the form of the head and headdress, and the form of the whole. This goddess was sincerely worshipped in an agricultural land where crops were of utmost importance and although it may be hard to understand the cruel sacrifices and rites which were practised in her honor, it is not hard to recognize a sense of sculptural design in the carver of a piece such as this. All four of these objects are now on exhibition in the Children's Museum.

HELEN F.
MACKENZIE

GOODMAN
THEATRE

THE Art Institute Members' Series given at the Goodman Theatre last season proved so popular that many members were disappointed by their inability to secure tickets in the unreserved section and so a new system has been inaugurated for the coming season which will enable a greater number of members to secure free tickets for the productions. Twelve coupons will be sent to each member, allowing two tickets for each production, the coupons so numbered that two will expire with end of each production. Members desiring to bring guests may avail themselves of the fifty cent discount for the unreserved seats and twenty-five cent discount for the reserved section. There will be eight rows of reserved seats for

each performance, which members may purchase for fifty cents each with the coupons numbered for that production and seventy-five cents for guest tickets upon presentation of their membership cards.

Coupons may be exchanged at the Theatre or at the entrance desk in the Art Institute two weeks prior to each production. The dates of the productions will be announced in the Art Institute BULLETINS. Members desiring unreserved seats for any

performance must enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with their coupons, as it is absolutely impossible for reservations of any kind to be made for the unreserved seats. Reservations by mail or phone will be taken for the reserved seats only. A letter will be enclosed with the coupons which will explain the

use of coupons in more detail.

The plays for the season 1932-1933 will be "The Three Sisters" by Tchekov; "Tartuffe" by Molière; "Lucky Sam McCarver" by Sidney Howard; "A Trip to Scarborough" by Sheridan; "The Concert" by Hermann Bahr, "Leonardo da Vinci," an original manuscript, and possibly a special production of "The Merchant of Venice" by Shakespeare.

No coupons will be mailed out this year for the Children's Theatre, as a discount of twenty-five cents is allowed members upon presentation of their membership card on all dollar tickets and all seventy-



TOLTEC MASK OF STONE. ROBERT ALEXANDER
WALLER MEMORIAL FUND

five cent tickets for the Saturday matinees. The plays given by the Children's Theatre for the season 1932-1933 will be "The Nightingale" by J. K. Thompson, dramatized from the story of the same name by Hans Christian Andersen; "Jack and the Beanstalk"; "The Prince and the Pauper"; "Tom Sawyer"; "The Princess and the Vagabond" and a revival of "Little Women."

NOTES

A COLLECTION of 232 prints and two drawings by Donald Shaw MacLaughlan has come into the possession of the Print Department of the Art Institute, the gift of Walter S. Brewster. Beginning with the rare second plate of "St. Julien le Pauvre" done in 1899, the sequence is almost complete, with all of the important plates included. There are also splendid proofs of "Lauterbrunnen" and "The Pool" of the Thames series. These, together with many unique proofs and rare states of other important

plates, make this undoubtedly the most complete collection of this artist's graphic work. In addition Mr. Brewster's gift includes proofs pulled by Mr. MacLaughlan from Rembrandt's plates of "Johannes Utenbogardus" (R.279) and "The Bathers" (R.195) now in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

* * *

In memory of her husband, Isaac K. Friedman, Mrs. Friedman has given to the Print Department of the Institute a group of etchings, aquatints, and illustrated books collected by him. The gift includes Milton's *Minor Poems* and *An English Version of the Eclogues of Virgil* with illustrations by Samuel Palmer, plates from such noteworthy color-plate books as *Microcosm of London*, Malton's *Picturesque View of the City of Dublin*, Dubourg's *Views of Rome*, books of travel with lithographic illustrations printed by Hullmandel, and a set of Boydell's *Shakespeare*.

EXHIBITIONS

- May 26—October 15—Selections of Prints by Nineteenth Century Masters. French Eighteenth Century Color Prints. Modern French Prints. Prints by Rembrandt. Selection of Drawings from the Leonora Hall Gurley Memorial Collection. Prints by Old Masters from the Clarence Buckingham Collection. *Galleries 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18.*
- July 21—October 9—A Survey of American Painting from the Permanent Collection of the Art Institute; Exhibition of Paintings by Tressa Emerson Benson, Fred Biesel, Ruth Van Sickle Ford, Agnes Potter Lowrie, Irving Manoir, and David McCosh; Water Colors by J. Karl Rauschert; Exhibition of Works by Artists Who have won Prizes in the Chicago Artists' Exhibitions for 1930, 1931, and 1932; Fourth International Photographic Salon. *Galleries G51-60.*
- October 1—December 12—Process Cases and Other Objects from the Permanent Collection. *The Children's Museum.*
- October 1—December 1—Etchings of London by Joseph Pennell from the Clarence Buckingham Collection. *Gallery 18.*
- October 20—December 30—Actor Prints by Katsukawa Shunshō from the Clarence Buckingham Collection. *Gallery H5.*
- October 27—January 2—Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture. *Galleries G52-60.*