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THE ART COLLECTION AT DESHONG MANSION – RARE Treasures in the Old Colonial Edifice at Tenth and Edgmont Avenue

In the May number of the Art Critic and Collector, one of the foremost New York publications dealing with art in its highest form, the editor, David G. Preyer, contributes an account of a visit to this city and his impression of the A.O. Deshong art collection of which we, as a community, take just pride. Mr. Preyer's article is as follows:

Standing on an eminence in the center of an entire city block in Chester, Pa. is an old colonial mansion, surrounded by hundreds of rare specimen of arboriculture. It is the home of A.O. Deshong. No collector is more highly respected than Mr. Deshong for his taste in selection. The result has been a collection of Oriental wares of the finest and rarest specimen, while his pictures were chosen, not for the names the bore, but for the quality of excellence of their kind which they possessed.

Among his bronzes are found two large vases which were once in the Mary Jane Morgan collection. They are in the finest style of Japanese art, twenty years having been devoted to their production. In all there are some fifty bronzes, every one having some extraordinary merit.

About twenty ivories are displayed in suitable cabinets. The most perfect of these in the hollow section of a tusk, twenty-four inches high and eight inches in diameter, upon which is carved a winged dragon in the clouds. The texture of the ivory is exceedingly soft and the design and workmanship simplicity itself.

A number of specimen of Japanese lacquers are of extraordinary beauty and rarity, while the collection is very profuse in Chinese chinabar lacquer, some specimens of this carving being much less outside of the collection of the Chinese Emperor.

In carved minerals such as amethyst, topaz, crystal, agate, jade, lapis, lazuli, malachite, and the collection bids fair to rival that of the late Heber R. Bishop. Notably among these are a few specimens in amber, exceedingly rare. The Chinese procured most of this mineral from the Baltic in their caravan routes of ancient times. Of this Baltic amber there is one carving in particular which is the finest specimen known. It is designed in the form of a lotus flower with leaves and branches and is exquisitely delicate. Among the strange and unusual objects is a rhinoceros horn, wonderfully carved in the form of an elephant's head.

The paintings fill the walls of two entire floors of the house. They are of special interest in the fact that Mr. Deshong preferred the best example of a minor master to a poor or average canvas of a man with a great name. As the gathering of this collection extends the gathering of this collection extends over a period of forty years. It is not surprising that many names of artists which have lost their luster are found here. But the loss of reputation or fashionable acclaim cannot be ascribed to their examples found here. I will enumerate a few of the pictures.

There is a landscape by Alexander Catame, whose Swill scenery has always been popular. The genre work of Felix Schlesinger is shown "The Children's Party at the Convent." It is full of life and color and is free of the Munich school drawbacks of the artist. The late S.P Avery, the noted art expert, considered the Gaetano Chievict, "The Hasty Pudding," the best example that has come from the brush of this humorous painter. A watercolor by Garela, showing some camels at a stream, is exceptionally tonal.

Theodore Weber, the pupil of Isabey, has a marine, which was exhibited at the Salon of 1895. An example by Giuseppe Castiglione came from the A.T. Stewart sale. A familiar name is Paul Larerges, the still life and landscape painter, whose "Arabs in a Night Came in the Desert" is exceptionally fine. A cattle picture by Volte hangs under an old city street by Achille Jules Noel, whose coloring is as strong as Isabey's Jean Baptise Robie, the famous flower painter has here a bouquet of roses while Charles Chaplin, at one time a landscape painter is represented here by one of his small dainty pictures entitled, "The Two Doves."

Two paintings which have become famous through multitudinous reproductions and which by some are ranked among the "one hundred masterpieces," are found in this collection. One is the 1839 medal picture of Jaroslav Czermak, the famous Slav painter of Bohemia. Czermak at first studied with Baron Wappers of Antwerp and was selected by Galloit as his only pupil. The canvas is entitled "Christian Girls Captured by Bashi-Basouks." The other well-known canvas is "The Temple of Carman" by G. Clarin from the Salon of 1897. Clarin who was the pupil of Picot, has been regarded as a worthy successor to Regnault, and is accredited with having painted the best portrait of Sarah Bernhardt.

Edmond de Pratere, the late Brussels animal painter, has some Russian wolfhounds depicted, which rival anything from the brush of Landseer. These dogs have those sentiment human qualities which elevate them above the beasts. The dog of Snyders was a treacherous snarling cur; that of Bewick a robber and a thief – these animals of Pratterer's are the companion of man, an adjunct of human society, the generous friend and true comrade. Frank R. Unterberger belonged to the Munich set, yet here we have a "Siracuse" which is light and airy, not tight and finicky. The spirited and often sketchy work of Charles Hogue, the pupil of Krause, is seen in two striking canvases, a "Fishmarket" and a shorescape. Pieter Van Schendel, the Atwerp artist, has one of his famous old market scenes with candlelight. Grison shows us Strasburg Cathedral" graphical, Mari Tenkate has one of his playful anecdotes of children making free with an artist's paraphernalia during his absence. It is an open air composition of great charm. The "Arab Combat" by Alberto Pasini, is as marked and strong as a Schreyer. The old Baribaldian warrior, Cav. Girolamo Induno, portrays a "Satage Coach Accident in the Italian Alps." This painting is gorgeously framed and ornamented with the insignia of the royal house of Italy, as originally it was a present of the late King Humbert to Sefer Pasha, minister to his court.

J.W. Preyer, the famous still life painter, is represented by a bunch of grapes and some tiny birds, an admirably depicted that one does not forget to rank them with Heda or Voligh.

One of the masterpieces in the collection is a J. Weiland, which came from the Toon Galleries and represents an old woman reading her Bible. In sincerity of execution, beauty of tone, luminosity of the shadows, marvelous picturing of the brass kettle standing on the floor, it is a gem. Neuhuya, Blommers, nor even Israels ever painted an interior that surpasses this one in serious worth. Another painting here by Welland, "The Doctor," comes very near in it in intrinsic merit.

I can only speak yet of an ideal head by Rossi in watercolor which is highly meritorious, and a rare portrait by Safrit Memin, the French etcher of the early part of the last century, which is modeled of wax in relief.

When passing through the grounds and looking back at this hospitable mansion, one sees an enormous Japanese, bronze eagle guarding a home that is a temple of culture and of taste.

Keith Lockhart Collection