

NEWS RELEASE

Mr. Cairns

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, November 20: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announces the opening on November 21 of an exhibition, Paris the Favorable Climate, made up of prints and drawings by Bonnard, Vuillard, Maurice Denis, Dunoyer de Segonzac and Matisse. The exhibition has been arranged in memory of Frank Crowninshield of New York who died last year. A large collection of the prints, drawings and illustrated books by Segonzac was recently given to the National Gallery by Mrs. Frederick J. Bradley, Mrs. D. Percy Morgan and Mr. Caspar de Gersdorff, the two nieces and nephew of Frank Crowninshield, in his memory and in accordance with his intentions. A number of the Matisse lithographs included in the exhibition were formerly in the possession of Frank Crowninshield. These were sold at auction after his death and were purchased by Lessing J. Rosenwald for the National Gallery of Art.

Mr. Crowninshield began to collect Segonzac's work in the late twenties. In 1947 Segonzac wrote to him, "I believe that, except for my personal things, you have the most complete collection of my etchings. You were interested from the beginning and you have contributed truly in making me known in America."

The exhibition once again calls to attention the continuity of certain aspects of French art. Bonnard and Vuillard were trained in the Academy Jullian in 1888. Later when they shared a studio together in the rue Pigalle they were exposed, through their friends, to the theories of Serusier who expounded Gauguin's color harmonies, to the doctrines of Maurice Denis and the mysticism of the Dutchman, Verkade. They also felt the impact of the colored poster, as designed by Cheret, and the novelty of the Japanese colored prints, then still fresh to European eyes. In spite of all these influences, both artists very quickly succeeded in formulating a personal style. A number of colored lithographs in the exhibition made by Bonnard and Vuillard between 1895-1900 are typical of the themes which the two artists later often repeated in their paintings. They represent such subjects as the interior of a bourgeois apartment, a corner of a Paris street or a peaceful French landscape.

Segonzac began to etch in 1919 after serving in the first World War, after a short lesson in engraving from Laboreur. He quickly mastered the medium, and the plates for Les Croix de Bois, a war book by Roland Dorgeles, was issued in 1921. Thereafter Segonzac's subjects fall into several categories, his pictures of boxing which are drawn with ease and catch the rhythm of the fighters, scenes of Paris such as the plates of Bubu de Montparnasse, a novel by Charles-Louis Philippe and landscapes made both in the Isle de France and in the south.

Since 1930 Segonzac has been at work on a monumental project, - illustrations for the Georgics of Virgil. The work was to have been published by Vollard, who died in 1939, but it was finally completed this year at the Imprimerie Nationale with Lacouriere the printer of the plates. The country near St. Tropez in the south of France provided Segonzac with material for the book. There he drew in the vineyards, watching the peasants as they worked, and noting the heavy primitive ox carts. The Georgics represents the culmination of Segonzac's career as an etcher. In it is to be found a summing up of all that he so profoundly understands of light and movement in nature. The volumes of the Georgics have been sent from Paris especially for the exhibition and it is the first time that they will have been shown in America.

The exhibition will remain on view until the middle of January.

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