

Mr. Cavins

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TWO WORKS BY RENOIR
BEQUEATHED TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
BY THE LATE MRS. SAM A. LEWISOHN

Washington, September 11th: David E. Finley, Director, announced today that the National Gallery of Art has received two works by the French artist Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) by bequest of the late Mrs. Margaret Seligman Lewisohn of New York City. These are: "The Vintagers," a landscape signed and dated 1879, and a bronze portrait head of the artist's son, Claude, nicknamed "Coco" in childhood, dating probably from 1908, and signed by the artist.

The collection formed over many years by Mrs. Lewisohn and her husband, the late Sam A. Lewisohn, was outstanding among collections of modern art in this country. Upon the death of Mr. Lewisohn, the National Gallery became the recipient of one of the loveliest of Renoir's landscapes, the "Oarsmen at Chatou," as well as the beautiful Gauguin "The Bathers," and a fine example of the work of the American artist, Albert P. Ryder.

"The Vintagers" evokes the peaceful charm of the French countryside. Across the fields, down a winding path, vintagers carry baskets of grapes toward the little village with its few houses and its church clustered in a grove of trees. Lush vegetation covers the rolling hills in the distance, vibrating in the heat of a drowsy autumn day. It was in the late 'seventies that Renoir became increasingly interested in landscape, making excursions to the banks of the Seine and painting views of the river and the fields around Chatou and Bougival with their ever changing, luminous atmosphere of the Ile-de-France.

Renoir turned to sculpture late in life. With the exception of a few earlier attempts, of which the head of "Coco" is one, his principal sculptural works were made between his seventy-third and seventy-fifth years, when he was almost totally paralyzed. The actual execution of these late sculptures, which are comparatively limited in number, was done by assistants under his supervision. The head of "Coco" is, however, considered to be entirely by his own hand. The simplification of features brings out the solidity of the form, comparable to that of the monumental figures in his paintings. Though the treatment is truly sculptural, one senses here the brush of the painter in the modelling and play of light over the surface.