

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO COLOR PRINTS OF MARY CASSATT
TO PREMIERE AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 24, 1989 - The first major exhibition devoted to the color prints of American artist Mary Cassatt will premiere at the National Gallery of Art, June 18 - August 27, 1989. Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints has been organized by the Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA, in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, MA, and in association with the National Gallery.

Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints includes many images from the artist's oeuvre that are familiar to the public through her paintings and pastels, particularly her studies of mothers and children which have universal appeal. The color prints, which many consider her greatest work, will be presented as extraordinary experiments in graphic technique and creative process. Some twenty-three major color prints will be clustered in groups of up to nine versions, including preparatory drawings, early color and noncolor preliminary states, and color variations of the final states. In some cases, related pastels and paintings will be presented.

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"The National Gallery is pleased to be a part of this fascinating presentation of Mary Cassatt's color prints. In addition to enjoying the masterful design and technical virtuosity of Cassatt's work, viewers will learn more about this important early phase of modern printmaking," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art.

Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints chronicles the development of each print through several preliminary states that reveal Cassatt's progressive technical implementation and design changes. Cassatt added and subtracted both linear and tonal areas in the progress of the print -- a process which did not end with the final state. Since she hand-inked the plates, each final proof is unique and coloration can vary dramatically from one to the next.

The most important single collection of Cassatt's progress proofs and final prints was assembled by Lessing J. Rosenwald in the 1940s and 1950s for the National Gallery of Art. More than thirty of the works from the Gallery's collection, including those from the series In the Omnibus, Afternoon Tea Party, A Portrait of the Artist's Mother, The Bath, The Coiffure, Peasant Mother and Child, and Mother's Kiss, are in the exhibition.

Prints have also been lent by public and private collections in over 15 states in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In addition, an installation of one of the rare original sets of ten color prints from The Metropolitan Museum, executed and exhibited by Cassatt in 1890-91, will be presented.

Cassatt was born in Allegheny City, PA, in 1844. She was enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from 1860-1864 and later studied in Paris. After Edgar Degas invited Cassatt to join the French impressionists, she became the only American ever to exhibit with the group. While Degas had a major influence on Cassatt's work, her subject matter, the intimate relationship between mothers and their children, was totally her own.

Cassatt's reputation grew on both sides of the Atlantic as she became an innovative printmaker, a master of colored drypoint and aquatint. By 1911, when failing eyesight caused her to stop working, she had produced over 220 prints in addition to numerous paintings, pastels, and other works on paper. Before her death near Paris in 1926, she had become a staunch defender of modern art and had influenced the formation of many major American art collections.

The exhibition curators and authors of the accompanying catalogue are Nancy Mowll Matthews, Prendergast curator, Williams College Museum of Art, and Barbara Stern Shapiro, associate curator of prints, drawings, and photographs, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The 209-page catalogue with 120 color plates and 115 black and white illustrations will be published by the Williams College Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams. The organization of the exhibition, Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints, is underwritten in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The exhibition will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, September 9 - November 5, 1989, and Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA, November 24, 1989 - January 21, 1990.

National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBITION FACT SHEET

Exhibition Title:

MARY CASSATT: THE COLOR PRINTS

Location:

East Building, Ground Floor
National Gallery of Art
Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20565

Dates:

June 18 - August 27, 1989

Organizers:

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA, in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, and in association with the National Gallery of Art.

Description:

Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints is the first comprehensive exhibition devoted to the color prints of Mary Cassatt and includes all twenty-three of her color etchings. The exhibition chronicles the development of the various compositions through numerous preliminary states and reveals the course of their artistic creation through her refined adjustments in the images and their colors. The individual prints are presented with many of their preparatory drawings, rare and sometimes unique black-and-white or color trial states, and color variations of the final states. Some related pastels and paintings are also included. Among the well-known images of women and children to be shown are In the Omnibus, The Bath, The Letter, The Fitting, Afternoon Tea Party, and Gathering Fruit.

Curators:

Nancy Mowll Mathews, Prendergast curator,
Williams College Museum of Art

Barbara Stern Shapiro, associate curator of prints,
drawings, and photographs, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Support:

The organization of the exhibition, Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints, is underwritten in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Exhibition Catalogue:

Title: Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints. Written by Nancy Mowll Mathews and Barbara Stern Shapiro. Published by the Williams College Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, the 207-page catalogue includes 122 color plates and 115 black and white illustrations. Catalogue prices will be \$22.50 for softcover and \$39.95 for hardcover.

National tour after the National Gallery of Art:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
September 9 - November 5, 1989

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA
November 24, 1989 - January 21, 1990

-end-

National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

MARY CASSATT: THE COLOR PRINTS checklist

- # color transparency available
- * black and white photograph available

[S] Except where [S] appears, measurements given for prints and drawings refer to the image (or platemark) size. Where [S] appears, the measurements refer to the sheet size.

PRECEDENTS

1. THE VISITOR, c. 1879-1880
recto: graphite, 15 3/4 x 12 3/16 in. [S]*
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Fifty Members of The
Print Club of Cleveland on the Occasion of the Fiftieth
Anniversary, 1966
2. THE VISITOR, c. 1879-1880
sixth state
softground etching, aquatint, and drypoint, 15 5/8 x 12 3/16
in.
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA
3. AT THE DRESSING TABLE, 1879-1880
recto: graphite; 16 x 12 in. [S]
Private Collection
4. AT THE DRESSING TABLE, c. 1880
first state
softground etching and aquatint, 12 3/4 x 8 1/8 in.
Private Collection
5. AT THE DRESSING TABLE, c. 1880
third state
softground etching and aquatint, 12 3/4 x 8 1/8 in.
Private Collection
6. AT THE DRESSING TABLE, c. 1880
fourth state
softground etching and aquatint, 12 3/4 x 8 1/8 in.
Private Collection

NURSE AND BABY BILL

7. ON THE BENCH, 1889-1890
aquatint and softground etching, 7 1/4 x 5 1/2 in.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
8. BABY BILL IN CAP AND SHIFT, 1889-1890
pastel on paper, 16 7/8 x 15 1/8 in. [S]
Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, TN, Gift of Benwood
Foundation
9. NURSE AND BABY BILL (No. 2), second state, c. 1889-1890
softground etching and aquatint on one plate, 8 5/8 x 5 in.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Pennell Fund
Committee, 1949
10. NURSE AND BABY BILL (No. 1), fourth state
softground etching and aquatint on one plate, 7 1/8 x 5 3/8
in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A.
Wick, 1958
11. HELENE HELD BY MATHILDE
softground etching and aquatint on one plate
7 1/8 x 6 in.
Private Collection, Florida

A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER

12. PORTRAIT OF MRS. ROBERT S. CASSATT, c. 1889
* oil on canvas, 38 x 27 in.
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase,
William H. Noble Bequest Fund, 1979
13. DRAWING FOR A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER, c. 1889
graphite on pink-tan paper, 9 1/2 x 6 5/8 in. [S]
Private Collection, Maine
14. A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER, second state
c. 1889-1890
softground etching on one plate, 9 15/16 x 7 1/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1949
15. A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER, third state
c. 1889-1890
softground etching and aquatint on one plate, 9 15/16 x
7 1/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1949
16. A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER, fourth state
** c. 1889-1890
softground etching and aquatint, 9 15/16 x 7 1/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1946

THE SET OF TEN

17. THE BATH, seventeenth state
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 17 x 12 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

18. THE LAMP, fourth state
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 1/8 x 12 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

19. IN THE OMNIBUS, seventh state
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 x 11 7/8 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

20. THE LETTER, fourth state
* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 x 11 7/8 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

21. THE FITTING, seventh state
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 x 12 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

22. WOMAN BATHING, fourth state
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates
17 1/8 x 11 7/8 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

23. MOTHER'S KISS, fifth state
#* drypoint and aquatint on two plates
16 5/8 x 12 3/8 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

24. MATERNAL CARESS, sixth state
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 x 12 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

25. AFTERNOON TEA, fifth state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 17 1/8 x 12 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

26. THE COIFFURE, fifth state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates
17 1/8 x 11 7/8 in. [S]
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Paul J. Sachs, 1916

THE BATH

27. MOTHER MARIE DRESSING HER BABY AFTER ITS BATH, c. 1890
drypoint, 9 3/4 x 6 5/8 in.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
28. DRAWING FOR THE BATH, 1890-1891
recto: graphite and black crayon, 13 1/2 x 10 13/16 in. [S]
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1948
29. THE BATH, second state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
The George A. Lucas Collection of the Maryland Institute,
College of Art, on indefinite loan to The Baltimore Museum
of Art
30. THE BATH, fourth state, 1890-1891
#* drypoint and aquatint on one plate, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
31. THE BATH, sixth state
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Private Collection
32. THE BATH, eighth state
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Private Collection
33. THE BATH, ninth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Private Collection
34. THE BATH, fifteenth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on one plate, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Private Collection
35. THE BATH, seventeenth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Private Collection, Boston
36. THE BATH, seventeenth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 5/8 x 9 3/4 in.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

THE LAMP

37. DRAWING FOR THE LAMP, 1890-1891
recto: graphite and black chalk, 15 1/8 x 12 in. [S]
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, Bequest of Edith
Malina K. Wetmore

38. THE LAMP, first state
* drypoint with softground etching on one plate, 12 1/4 x 9 15/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1946
39. THE LAMP, second state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 12 1/4 x 9 15/16 in.
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library
40. THE LAMP, third state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 12 1/4 x 9 15/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1943
41. THE LAMP, fourth state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 12 1/4 x 9 15/16 in.
The Art Institute of Chicago, Bequest of Mrs. Gordon Palmer, 1985

IN THE OMNIBUS

42. DRAWING FOR IN THE OMNIBUS, 1890-1891
** recto: graphite and black chalk; verso: gray-black lines, possibly offset from a smoked plate, 14 7/8 x 10 3/4 in. [S]
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1948
43. IN THE OMNIBUS, first state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library
44. IN THE OMNIBUS, second state, 1890-1891
* drypoint with graphite additions on one plate, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1943
45. IN THE OMNIBUS, third state, 1890-1891
#* drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1943
46. IN THE OMNIBUS, fourth state, 1890-1891
* drypoint and aquatint on one plate, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1943
47. IN THE OMNIBUS, seventh state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
Boston Public Library, Print Department

THE LETTER

48. DRAWING FOR THE LETTER, 1890-1891
black crayon and graphite, 13 3/4 x 9 1/16 in. [S]
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Charles T. Brooks,
1941
49. THE LETTER, first state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 13 5/8 x 8 5/16 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur
Sachs, 1916
50. THE LETTER, second state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 5/8 x 8 5/16 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1950
51. THE LETTER, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 5/8 x 8 5/16 in.
The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Bequest of Guy M.
Drummond, Montreal, 1987
52. THE LETTER, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 5/8 x 8 5/16 in.
St. John's Museum of Art, Wilmington, NC, Gift of Therese
Thorne McLane in honor of Samuel Hudson Hughes and Zeling
Comegys Brunschwig

THE FITTING

53. DRAWING FOR THE FITTING, 1890-1891
graphite over black chalk, 19 1/2 x 11 15/16 in. [S]
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1954
54. THE FITTING, first state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1946
55. THE FITTING, second state, 1890-1891
drypoint on two plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur
Sachs, 1916
56. THE FITTING, third state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and
Photographs, The New York Public Library
57. THE FITTING, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and
Photographs, The New York Public Library

58. THE FITTING, fifth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
The Art Institute of Chicago, John H. Wrenn Memorial
Collection, 1924
59. THE FITTING, sixth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Charles T. Brooks,
1941
60. THE FITTING, seventh state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/4 x 10 1/8 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of William Emerson and
Charles Henry Hayden Fund, 1941

WOMAN BATHING

61. WOMAN BATHING, second state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 14 1/2 x 10 1/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1946
62. WOMAN BATHING, third state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 1/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1950
63. WOMAN BATHING, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 1/8 in.
The R. Stanley and Ursula Johnson Collection
64. WOMAN BATHING, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 1/8 in.
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation
for Graphic Arts purchase and William H. Noble Bequest Fund,
1980

MOTHER'S KISS

65. THE FIRST CARESS, 1890-1891
black chalk, 11 x 9 in. [S]
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and
Photographs, The New York Public Library
66. MOTHER'S KISS, first state
* drypoint on one plate, 13 3/4 x 9 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943

67. MOTHER'S KISS, fourth state, 1890-1891
 #* drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 13 3/4 X 9 in. [S]
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
 1943
68. MOTHER'S KISS, fifth state, 1890-1891
 drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 13 3/4 x 9 in.
 Library of Congress, Washington, Pennell Fund, 1949

MATERNAL CARESS

69. DRAWING FOR MATERNAL CARESS, 1890-1891
 recto: compressed charcoal and graphite
 14 1/2 x 10 7/16 in. [S]
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and
 Mrs. Daniel H. Silberberg, 1964
70. MATERNAL CARESS, first state, 1890-1891
 drypoint on one plate, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, Gift of Ivy Lee
 Callender, Walter R. Callender Memorial Collection, 1962
71. MATERNAL CARESS, second state, 1890-1891
 drypoint, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 The Miriam and Ira. D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and
 Photographs, The New York Public Library
72. MATERNAL CARESS, third state, 1890-1891
 drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 Private Collection, Boston
73. MATERNAL CARESS, fifth state, 1890-1891
 drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 The Miriam and Ira. D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and
 Photographs, The New York Public Library
74. MATERNAL CARESS, sixth state, 1890-1891
 drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 The Baltimore Museum of Art, Estate of Mrs. Q. A. Shaw
 McKean, 1953
75. MATERNAL CARESS, sixth state, 1890-1891
 drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 1/2 x 10 9/16 in.
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
 1943

AFTERNOON TEA PARTY

76. DRAWING FOR AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, 1890-1891
graphite and black chalk, 13 1/2 x 10 1/2 in. [S]
Collection Mrs. John W. Griffith
77. AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, first state, 1890-1891
#* drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 13 11/16 x 10 3/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
78. AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, fourth state, 1890-1891
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates
13 11/16 x 10 3/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
79. AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, fifth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 11/16 x 10 3/8 in.
Australian National Gallery, Canberra
80. AFTERNOON TEA PARTY, fifth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 11/16 x 10 3/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Chester Dale
Collection, 1963

THE COIFFURE

81. GIRL ARRANGING HER HAIR, 1886
oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 24 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Chester Dale Collection
82. DRAWING FOR THE COIFFURE, 1890-1891
graphite and black chalk, 15 1/8 x 10 7/8 in. [S]
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1948
83. THE COIFFURE, first state, 1890-1891
drypoint on one plate, 14 3/8 X 10 1/2 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs.
Gustavus S. Wallace, 1932
84. THE COIFFURE, second state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on one plate, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1946
85. THE COIFFURE, third state
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943

86. THE COIFFURE, fourth state, 1890-1891
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of William Emerson and
Charles Henry Hayden Fund, 1941
87. THE COIFFURE, fifth state, 1890-1891
* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 14 3/8 x 10 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Bequest of Chester
Dale, 1963

GATHERING FRUIT

88. BABY REACHING FOR AN APPLE, 1893
oil on canvas, 39 x 25 1/2 in.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Gift of an Anonymous
Donor
89. GATHERING FRUIT, second state, c. 1893
drypoint on one plate, 16 5/8 x 11 3/4 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
90. GATHERING FRUIT, third state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates
22 3/8 x 16 15/16 in. [S]
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
91. GATHERING FRUIT, sixth state, c. 1893
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 16 5/8 x 11 3/4 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of W.G. Russell Allen,
1963
92. GATHERING FRUIT, eighth state, c. 1893
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 16 5/8 x 11 3/4 in.
The R. Stanley and Ursula Johnson Collection
93. GATHERING FRUIT, eleventh state, c. 1893
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 16 5/8 x 11 3/4 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918

THE BANJO LESSON

94. THE BANJO LESSON, c. 1894
pastel on paper, 28 x 22 1/2 in.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, The Williams Fund
95. THE BANJO LESSON, second state, c. 1893
drypoint on one plate, 11 9/16 x 9 3/8 in.
The R. Stanley and Ursula Johnson Collection

96. THE BANJO LESSON, third state, c. 1893
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 11 9/16 x 9 3/8 in.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Temple Fund, 1949
97. THE BANJO LESSON, fourth state, c. 1893
drypoint and aquatint with monotype inking on two plates
11 9/16 x 9 3/8 in.
Library of Congress, Washington, Pennell Fund
98. THE BANJO LESSON, fourth state, c. 1893
#* drypoint and aquatint with monotype inking on two plates
11 9/16 x 9 3/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mrs. Jane C.
Carey as an addition to the Addie Burr Clark Memorial
Collection, 1959

PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD

99. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, first state, c. 1894
drypoint on one plate, 10 1/4 x 7 3/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1954
100. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, second state, c. 1894
drypoint on one plate, 11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1946
101. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, fifth state, c. 1894
drypoint, aquatint, and monotype inking on three plates
11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
102. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, sixth state, c. 1894
drypoint on one plate, 11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Special Print Fund, 1916
103. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, seventh state, c. 1894
#* drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
104. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, eighth state, c. 1894
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943
105. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, ninth state
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 11 11/16 x 9 1/2 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,
1943

106. PEASANT MOTHER AND CHILD, tenth state, c. 1894
drypoint and aquatint on three plates with hand touches
11 11/16 x 9 5/8 in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Graphic Arts Council fund
in memory of Ruth Sprecher, 1976

FEEDING THE DUCKS

107. ON THE WATER, c. 1895
oil on canvas, 23 3/4 x 28 3/4 in.
Private Collection, Mickelson Gallery, Washington, D.C.
108. FEEDING THE DUCKS, first state, c. 1895
drypoint on one plate, 11 5/8 x 15 1/2 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs.
H.O. Havemeyer, The Havemeyer Collection, 1929
109. FEEDING THE DUCKS, third state, c. 1895
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 11 5/8 x 15 1/2 in.
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Jem Hom
110. FEEDING THE DUCKS, fourth state, , c. 1895
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 11 5/8 x 15 1/2 in.
Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, Daniel J. Terra
Collection
111. FEEDING THE DUCKS, fourth state, c. 1895
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 11 5/8 x 15 1/2 in.
Private Collection

UNDER THE HORSE-CHESTNUT TREE

112. TWO YOUNG GIRLS WITH A CHILD, c. 1897
oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 25 1/2 in.
Collection Marsha Mault, Santa Barbara, CA
113. UNDER THE HORSE CHESTNUT TREE, first state, 1896-1897
drypoint on one plate, 15 7/8 x 11 1/4 in.
Private Collection, Maine
114. UNDER THE HORSE CHESTNUT TREE, second state, 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on one plate, 15 7/8 x 11 1/4 in.
Private Collection, Maine
115. UNDER THE HORSE CHESTNUT TREE, third state, 1896-1897
#* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 15 7/8 x 11 1/4 in.
Private Collection, Maine
116. UNDER THE HORSE CHESTNUT TREE, third state, 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 15 7/8 x 11 1/4 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of W.G. Russell Allen,
1963

BY THE POND

117. BY THE POND, fourth state, c. 1896
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 x 16 7/8 in.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of R. Sturgis Ingersoll,
Frederic Ballard, Alexander Cassatt, Staunton B. Peck and
Mrs. William Potter Wear, 1946
118. BY THE POND, fourth state, c. 1896
* drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 13 x 16 7/8 in.
Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, Daniel J. Terra
Collection

THE BAREFOOTED CHILD

119. THE BAREFOOTED CHILD, second state, c. 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 12 x 16 5/8 in.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Horace Binney Hare,
1956
120. THE BAREFOOTED CHILD, fourth state
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 9 5/8 x 12 5/8 in.
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Ladd Collection, Gift of
Herschel V. Jones, 1916
121. THE BAREFOOTED CHILD, fifth state, c. 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 9 5/8 x 12 5/8 in.
Private Collection
122. THE BAREFOOTED CHILD, fifth state, c. 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on three plates, 9 5/8 x 12 5/8 in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs.
H.O. Havemeyer, The Havemeyer Collection, 1929
123. PICKING DAISIES IN A FIELD, first state, c. 1896-1897
drypoint and aquatint on two plates, 9 5/8 x 12 5/8 in.
Private Collection, Norfolk, VA
124. L'ALBUM, c. 1895
First monotype impression
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des estampes

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National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBITION BACKGROUNDER

Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints

June 18 - August 27, 1989

"In them we find her main characteristics, such as the originality of vision, the elimination of non-essentials, the arabesque quality of assymetrical design, the strong linear patterns, as well as the unconventional angle of perspective and well-articulated, rounded forms."

Adelyn D. Breeskin
The Graphic Work of Mary Cassatt
1948

Mary Cassatt, born into an upper class family in western Pennsylvania in 1844 -- the middle of the Victorian era, was an unlikely candidate to become a key member of the avant-garde French impressionist movement and a major contributor to the field of printmaking. At the age of sixteen she had already mapped out a career in art for herself. In 1860 she enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia where she studied for four years.

Cassatt's discipline and inventiveness, which fueled her successful lifelong career in art, are best reflected in her color prints, considered by many to be her greatest work. It is ironic, therefore, that printmaking did not interest Cassatt during the first two decades of her career, 1860-1879. She focused instead on those branches of art she considered the highest, such as figure painting. In fact, she is most familiar to the public through her paintings and pastels, particularly her studies of mothers and children which have universal appeal.

After studying at the Pennsylvania Academy, Cassatt departed for Europe where she studied and painted with such artists as Gérôme, Chaplin,

Soyer, and Couture. She believed that she could best learn her craft by also studying the works of such Old Masters as Parmigianino, Correggio, Rubens, and Hals.

Paris eventually became Cassatt's home and it was there that she made the transition from academic painting to a style imitative of impressionism. A strong friendship developed between Cassatt and Edgar Degas, who invited her to become the only American to join and exhibit with the French impressionists. In 1879 Degas and Camille Pissarro asked Cassatt to produce a series of etchings with them for La Jour et La Nuit, a new print journal they planned to launch. Although the journal never got off the ground, Cassatt was won over to printmaking. Years later during a meeting with her biographer, she pointed to one of her impressionist prints and said, "That is what teaches you to draw."

Around 1885 Cassatt began to experiment with pure drypoint, a process that involved scratching lines directly into the plate with a specially hardened or diamond-tipped drypoint needle. Drypoint was a rarely-used medium, in part because it involved a slow and painstaking technique that required much practice and a sure hand. Cassatt's adoption of drypoint in her prints coincided with a dramatic shift in her paintings from the active, transitory images of impressionism to a quieter, more classical art.

Cassatt began a new era of printmaking in 1888, still working in drypoint but also returning to the aquatint and softground techniques she had learned from Degas and Pissarro. Her drypoints of this phase display a coolness and deliberation that foreshadow the precise drawing of the outlines in her color prints to come. By 1890 Cassatt was experimenting with color in her aquatints. It was in these prints that she began to balance the linear perfection of her drypoint designs with the more painterly qualities of color. Both the drypoints and the aquatints of

the period were of equal importance to the development of Cassatt's color prints of 1891 which combined those two media.

Cassatt was inspired to execute color prints after viewing the 1890 exhibition of Japanese ukiyo-e prints at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Fascinated by their subject matter and technique, she collected Japanese prints and used them as models for her own color prints. The idea of popular and affordable color prints for mass audiences also appealed to Cassatt.

In the Japanese tradition of producing prints in groups, usually bound together to preserve a specific sequence, Cassatt conceived a set of ten color prints that presented a survey of a woman's daily life in Paris. Five of the prints presented subjects that were already familiar in her work, such as Mother's Kiss, The Lamp, and Afternoon Tea Party. The remaining five prints dealt with new themes, such as In the Omnibus, The Letter, and The Fitting as well as two nude subjects, Woman Bathing, and The Coiffure.

In producing the set of ten in 1890-1891, Cassatt allowed herself a great deal of flexibility in the creation and coloring of the prints. Combining drypoint, aquatint, and sometimes softground etching, she used two and three different plates for each image, working them over and over again until she achieved the composition that satisfied her. At the same time, she experimented with combinations of colored inks applied à la poupée (daubed or painted on the plates), a technique which made each impression unique. She was assisted by the professional printer Leroy in pulling the final impressions of each print in editions of twenty-five.

Final impressions of all ten prints were exhibited in Cassatt's first solo exhibition mounted by the Paris dealer Durand-Ruel in April 1891, where they met with considerable success. Her most important exhibition was also held at the Paris Galeries Durand-Ruel just two years

later when she was almost 50. More than half the works shown were prints.

After the set of ten of 1890-1891, Cassatt produced only nine more color prints. From 1893 to 1895 Cassatt produced five new color prints: Gathering Fruit, The Banjo Lesson, Peasant Mother and Child, Feeding the Ducks, and the monotype The Album. It was in The Banjo Lesson that she first experimented with monotype, in which an oily ink is painted onto a plate and then printed. She also used touches of monotype in the two succeeding prints and finally used monotype alone in The Album. This experimentation signaled an awakening of interest in the monotype process among printmakers in Europe and the United States, including Degas and Maurice Predergast.

A new color print by Cassatt, Under the Horse Chestnut Tree, appeared in the journal L'Estampe Nouvelle in 1897. It was part of a body of work including pastels, paintings, and three color prints, By the Pond, The Barefooted Child, and the unfinished Picking Daisies in a Field. The final group of four color prints reveal Cassatt moving away from Japanese influence toward a more Western style of drawing and design. In these prints she strove for a subtle modeling of flesh with drypoint, very different from the abstract linear approach she had used in the set of ten.

By 1911, when failing eyesight caused her to stop working, Cassatt had produced over 220 prints in addition to numerous paintings, pastels, and other works on paper. It was in her twenty-three color prints that she proved to be most innovative, creating an original vision in a wholly inventive technique that defied imitation. She was recognized in her own time as a dominant figure in contemporary color printing and has since been accorded a well-earned position of importance in the history of printmaking.