

The Met and the Masses
in Postwar America

*A Study of the Museum and
Popular Art Education*

Mitchell B. Frank

BLOOMSBURY VISUAL ARTS
LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

Contents

List of Illustrations	viii
Preface	x
Acknowledgments	xii
Introduction	1
1 <i>The Metropolitan Museum of Art Miniatures: Culture and Commerce</i>	15
2 <i>The Metropolitan Seminars: Middlebrow Culture</i>	49
3 The Met and Art Education in Postwar America	83
4 Rembrandt's <i>Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer</i> : Reproductions and Quality	103
5 The Met, Popular Art Education, and the Problem of Abstract Art	127
Appendices	157
Notes	167
Bibliography	217
Index	235

Illustrations

Plates

- 1 *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Miniatures*, albums and stamps, 1955.
- 2 *Metropolitan Seminars in Art*, 1958.
- 3 *The Metropolitan Miniatures Art Gallery*, Series 1, 1947.
- 4 *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Album Art Stamps*, 1941.
- 5 *Adventures in Art*, 1941.
- 6 *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Miniatures*.
- 7 Peter Blume, *The Eternal City*, 1934–7 (dated 1937 on the painting).
- 8 Ben Shahn, *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*, 1931–2.
- 9 Pierre Cot, *The Storm*, 1880.
- 10 Oscar Kokoschka, *The Tempest* or *The Bride of the Wind* [*Windsbraut*], 1913.
- 11 Honoré Daumier, *The Soup*, c. 1862–5.
- 12 Honoré Daumier, *The Print Collector*, c. 1860.
- 13 *Metropolitan Seminars in Art* promotional envelopes.
- 14 *Metropolitan Seminars in Art* promotional brochure.
- 15 Photograph from *Metropolitan Seminars in Art* promotional brochure.
- 16 1950s Family Watching Television.
- 17 “Color Proofs in Progression,” from Julian Soubiran, *The Art and Technique of Photo-Engraving*. New York: Horan Engraving Co., 1952, p. 45.
- 18 Arnold Böcklin, *Island of the Dead*, 1880.
- 19 Rembrandt, *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, 1653.
- 20 Otis Kaye, *Heart of the Matter*, 1963.
- 21 Promotional envelope for the BOMC Print of Rembrandt’s *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, 1962.
- 22 Promotional brochure (recto and verso) for the BOMC Print of Rembrandt’s *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, 1962.
- 23 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Gray and Black No. 1: Portrait of the Artist’s Mother*, 1871.

- 24 Altered version of James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Gray and Black No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, Metropolitan Seminars in Art Slide Program (1965).
- 25 David Alfaro Siqueiros, *From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz to the Revolution—The People in Arms*, 1957.
- 26 William Sidney Mount, *The Raffle (Raffling for the Goose)*, 1837.

Figures

- 1.1 *New York World-Telegram*, January 11, 1941, p. 11. 16
- 1.2 Promotional photograph for *The Metropolitan Miniatures*, 1947–8. 22
- 1.3 Promotional Photograph for *The Metropolitan Miniatures*, 1947–8. 23
- 1.4 Promotional brochure for *The Metropolitan Miniatures*, 1947. 24
- 1.5 Photo from “Stamps on Kromekote,” *Stet: The House Magazine for House Editors* (March, 1948), no. 90, p.4. 25
- 1.6 *The Metropolitan Miniatures* portfolios. 29
- 1.7 Promotional photograph for *The Metropolitan Miniatures*. 44
- 1.8 Promotional photograph for *The Metropolitan Miniatures*. 45
- 2.1 John Canaday, 1965. 51
- 2.2 *Metropolitan Seminars in Art*. 52
- 2.3 *Metropolitan Seminars in Art: Great Periods in Painting*. 58
- 2.4 Supplementary Material included with the *Metropolitan Seminars in Art*. 60
- 2.5 John Canaday, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Art*. 65
- 2.6 “The Aesthetic Cop” [Theodore L. Shaw], “How the Metropolitan Museum Misteaches Art,” a leaflet published by Stuart Publications, Boston, n.d. [c. 1961]. 75
- 3.1 Junior Museum plan, from Francis Henry Taylor, “Report of the Director on the Reorganization and Consolidation of the Museum's Educational and Extension Services,” pp. 4–5. 87
- 4.1 Suzuki Harunobu, *Mother and Child with Bird* or Poem by Fujiwara no Motozane (c. 860) from the Series Thirty-Six Poets, c. 1768. 104