

Mrs. T. in Wine Silk, George Wesley Bellow, 1919, oil on canvas, 48-1/2 x 38 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.



The exceptional group of American paintings, works on paper, and sculpture in the collection of the Mitchell Museum at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts has made Mt. Vernon, Ill., one of the most remarkable small towns in the United States. The collection was largely formed between the 1940s and 1960s by John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, a prosperous Mt. Vernon couple, who acquired major examples by Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent, George Bellows, Robert Henri, William Glackens, and others at a time when American art was underappreciated and much undervalued. Of course, those artists have since proven to be among the most crucial figures not only in the development of American painting, but in the greater history of art. The Mitchell collection can be seen as part of the *Cassatt to Wyeth: American Masterworks from the Mitchell Museum, John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation, Mt. Vernon, Illinois* at The Mennello Museum of American Art.

The Mitchells inspired other downstate Illinois residents to collect American art as well, most notably their close friend, Illinois state senator John J. Parish. By the 1950s, Parish and others from this farming and coal-mining region

Cassatt to Wyeth

An American Art collection travels to the Mennello.



Jeune femme allaitant son enfant (Young Woman Nursing Her Child), Mary Stevenson Cassatt, c. 1908, oil on canvas, 33-3/4 x 28 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.

owned works of American art that were becoming increasingly sought after by museums and art galleries. As interest in American art deepened in the 1960s, the Mitchells founded the John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation for the purpose of building a museum on their 80-acre estate (called Cedarhurst) in Mt. Vernon. Eleanor Mitchell passed away in 1968 and John Mitchell died in 1971,

but both knew that their dreams of enriching the cultural life of southern Illinois would be realized. In 1973, the Mitchell Museum at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts opened to the public, with the Mitchells' and Senator Parish's collections of American art as the centerpiece of a vital new institution.

Although well known to area residents and to scholars of American art

Banquet, Guy Pene Du Bois, 1939, oil on canvas, 20 x 24-1/2 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.



The Garden Table, Frederick Childe Hassam, 1910, oil on canvas, 39-1/2 x 29-3/4 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.

everywhere, the Mitchell Museum's permanent collection has never been exhibited as a whole beyond the gates of Cedarhurst. While the museum undergoes renovation and expansion, the collection will travel, allowing American art enthusiasts outside of southern Illinois a rare opportunity to see these remarkable works of art. **oam**

Cassatt to Wyeth: American Masterworks from the Mitchell Museum, John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation, Mt. Vernon, Illinois
The Mennello Museum of American Art
Nov. 3 - Feb. 25
407. 246.4278
www.mennellomuseum.com



Ilex Wood at Majorca with Blue Pigs, John Singer Sargent, 1908, oil on canvas, 22-1/4 x 28-1/4 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.



By the Seashore, Maurice Brazil Prendergast, 1905-1906, oil on cradled panel, 11-3/4 x 16 inches. Gift of John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell, 1973.