

# SPOTLIGHT

THE KEENE SENTINEL THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007 PAGE 21

## *Cassatt to Wyeth*

*Thorne plays host  
to important visitors*

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A group of works by well-known artists had never been seen outside the walls of an Illinois museum until last year, and now Keene is...

Mitchell. They were an Illinois couple who acquired the artwork between the 1940s and 1960s, before it was properly valued.

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Known artists had never been seen outside the walls of an Illinois museum until last year, and now Keene is one of only five locations that the public can see the art until it is returned to those walls next year.

The Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery at Keene State College will be one of the national venues for "From Cassatt to Wyeth: American Masterworks from the Mitchell Museum."

The Mitchell Museum is located at the Cedarhurst Center for Visual Arts in Mt. Vernon. The KSC show opens Friday, Sept. 14, with an opening reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the gallery, and it will run through Nov. 11.

The traveling exhibition visited the Southern Vermont Arts Center in Manchester from June through September last year before it went to Florida until February and finally to Iowa before it stops at The Thorne. It will wind up in Nashville through April 2008.

The Mitchell Museum decided now was the best time to send the permanent collection around the country because the museum is undergoing a major renovation and expansion.

"It's to safeguard the pieces," said Vonda Rister, executive assistant to the Mitchell Museum's director of visual arts. Once the project is complete, the collection will be returned in time for the museum's grand re-opening.

The 33 pieces, which include paintings, works on paper, and one sculpture, come from the private collection of the late John R. and Eleanor R.



Rister said the Mitchells were entrepreneurs — a furniture store, radio station and oil investments among their business ventures — and they were world travelers. Eleanor founded the local high school's art department and taught art at the school for awhile. She and her husband were also philanthropists, having founded Cedarhurst and bequeathing their entire estate to the center.

Although the Mitchells' collection is well known to American art scholars and residents in the area around the Illinois museum, Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery director Maureen Ahern said most aren't aware it exists.

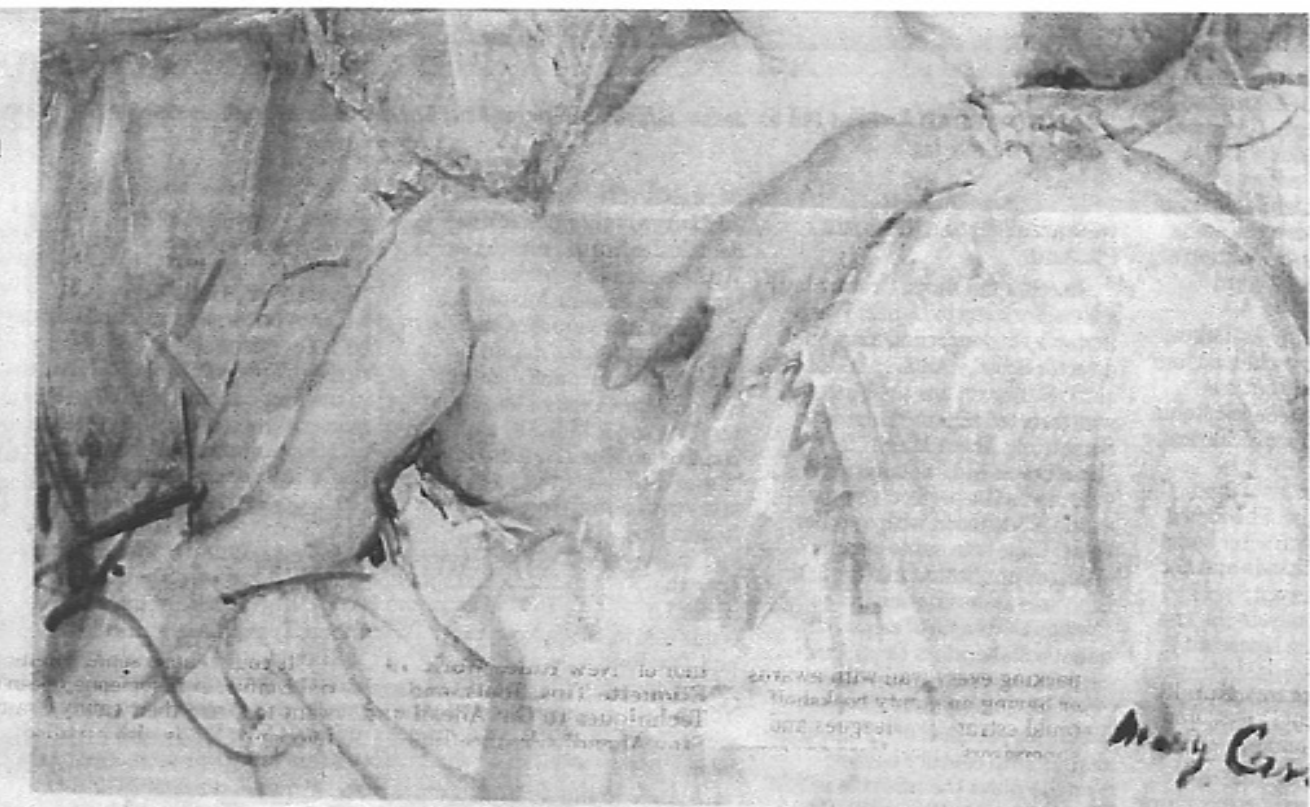
As the exhibit will attract national

attention at each venue it travels to, Rister hopes it will put the Mitchell Museum on the map. "It's the only cultural institution in southern Illinois," she said.

Showcased will be work by renowned artists, including Mary Cassatt and Andrew Wyeth, as well as Frederick Childe Hassam, John Singer Sergeant, George Wesley Bellows, Robert Henri, William Glackens and others.

They are considered some of the most significant contributors to the development of American art, their work being products of several major art movements.

Several artists featured, including Thomas Eakins, Robert Henri, William Glackens and Maurice Prendergast, were members of a group dubbed by the press the Eight Independent Painters, or The Eight. They



The painting above, "Jeune Femme Allaitant Son Enfant" (Young Woman Nursing Her Child) by Mary Stevenson Cassatt, canvas, and "The Garden Table," left, by Frederick Childe Hassam, 1910, oil on canvas, are two of the pieces showcased in a Thorne Sagendorph Art Gallery at Keene State College, set to open mid-September.

## At a glance

► "From Cassatt to Wyeth: American Masterworks from the Mitchell Museum," opens Friday, Sept. 14, at The Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery at Keene State College, Wyman Way. For more information, call 358-2720 or visit [www.keene.edu/tsag/](http://www.keene.edu/tsag/)

were a group who chose to exhibit work without pre-approval by the juries of the art establishment. Some of those same artists and others exhibited in this show, including George Bellows,

were a part of the realist artistic movement known as The Ash Can School, which became well known during the early 20th century. Collectively they were best known for work depicting

the poor, urban life. Edward Hopper, a recognizable name, was a student of Henri (as was Bellows) and became part of the Ash Can School later on.

Hassam, who had ties to Charlestown, was a member of another exclusive artists' group known as The Ten American Painters — or The Ten. This bunch of artists, all influenced by Impressionism, resigned from the Society of American Artists in the late 19th century for similar reasons The Eight seceded, namely to protest commercialism. Interestingly, Keene painter Abbott Handerson Thayer

er was asked to join when it was formed.

Like Cassatt, attracted to the Impressionist style while visiting

The show includes three by Eakins, several seascapes for are Glackens' "Bellport, Long Island" and Prendergast's "By the Water" (1906) and Bellows' "Huts" (1918). Also two pieces by surrealist

See THO!