

INTRODUCTION

When the Metropolitan Museum was founded, my father and uncle were its photographers, remaining so for many years. I have no memories farther back than those of being at the Museum.

—Walter Pach

No American artist has had a more auspicious beginning in his chosen field. Within a year after his birth on July 11, 1883, Walter Pach was taken by his father, Gottlieb, from their home on upper Park Avenue to assignments at the Metropolitan on Fourteenth Street, where the infant is said to have crawled around on the museum floor even before he learned to walk.¹ By the time he was seven he was being encouraged by the museum's curator of paintings, George H. Story, who invited him to start copying the drawings of old masters in the Metropolitan's collection.

By all rights, however, Walter should have elected a career in photography. He was being groomed to become the second generation to head the family firm of Pach Brothers, official photographers to more than a dozen U.S. presidents beginning with Ulysses S. Grant. But a single photo assignment seems to have put a damper on that as Walter's chosen profession. While a student at the City College of New York, he worked for his father as a photographer's assistant during summer vacations. One job involved ascending the as-yet unfinished Flatiron Building, Manhattan's first skyscraper, to take panoramic pictures of the city. From a vantage point twenty stories above the street, Pach recalled, he used one arm to steady the tripod with the other tightly wrapped around an outside steel beam.²

During his last year at City College, he was enrolled in a drawing and aesthetics class taught by Leigh Harrison Hunt, a New York artist and writer. An indication of Walter's future interest and direction can be gleaned from his senior oration at the college, in which he stated that "as moderns—it is the tendencies of plastic art, music, and literature in our own era that we prefer to consider."³

Walter Pach's one goal in life was to become a successful professional artist and he craved to work at the easel on a daily basis. (Indeed, when I arranged an interview with him in 1952, he requested that I visit after the sunlight had begun to fade, for, as he put it, "I still paint every day.")⁴

Although he did gain a reputation as a painter and etcher, Pach became the consummate art educator as well. Through his writing of books, articles in some forty magazines and newspapers, and lectures in museums and colleges throughout the United States and beyond, he sought to teach the general public, as well as the art collector, the meaning and appreciation of modern art.

Pach wore the multiple hats of professor, art critic, historian, exhibition organizer, art consultant, and translator in order to accomplish this end. He helped in the formation of major American art collections and aided numerous museums in obtaining notable examples of both contemporary art and distinguished works from the past.

Upon graduation from college in 1903, Pach enrolled at the New York School of Art, where he took classes for the next three years with both of the school's leading instructors, William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri. The two men appeared to be opposites in their teaching styles and demeanor, yet one similarity was their praise for the Spanish master Diego Velázquez. Chase was labeled "one of the most ardent admirers of Velázquez"⁵ at about the time that both he and Henri were making copies of the Spaniard's canvases in the Prado. And Henri informed his classes that "Velázquez . . . made a dozen strokes reveal more than most other painters could accomplish in a thousand."⁶

Pach attended Chase's summer class in Madrid in 1905 where he, too, copied Velázquez, as did his fellow students. Pach occasionally lectured to the group, for he could read and speak Spanish, as well as French, Dutch, Italian, and German. One of his classmates expressed an admiration for Pach's intellect by writing him:

There is a large and always increasing demand for information by the public for *real* information about art from an artistic standpoint. . . . With your scholarly abilities I cannot see why you wouldn't make a fine writer on art subjects.⁷

Pach heeded the advice, for when he returned to Madrid the following summer with a class led by Henri, he devoted more time to researching an article about Velázquez than to painting in his style. The result was a treatise of nearly ten thousand words, which was published in *Scribner's Magazine*.⁸ When Pach received a check for the article in the amount of \$250,⁹ he must have realized that his future livelihood would rest with the pen rather than the brush.

During the summer of 1907 Pach was once again with William Merritt Chase's class, this time assuming the dual roles of art history lecturer and instructor of painting in Florence. Pach stayed on in Europe after the Italian class ended, eventually taking up residence in Paris for nine months during the winter, spring, and summer of 1907–1908.

Thanks to his fluency in French, he gained entrée into the studios of well-known artists, resulting in several ground-breaking articles for *Scribner's*.

First there was the story about Claude Monet and “the scheme to bring [him] to America.” According to Pach, “A French statesman who had recently visited our country conceived the idea . . .” (The statesman was Georges Clemenceau, who had married an American and was, in 1908, the premier of France.) Monet’s response to Pach:

“But I am old, now, to learn another country—one must know a place thoroughly before one can paint it. That’s why I stay here in the country where I was born. I know it.” So Monet will not go at once to make a record of America, though he expressed a desire to visit it.¹⁰

Now Pach also began to sharpen his writing skills by initiating what was to become an extensive, lifelong correspondence with individuals residing on both sides of the Atlantic. Among the first to whom letters flowed back and forth was Alice Klauber, a native of San Diego who had enrolled in Chase’s 1907 summer art class in Italy [See p. 194].

Soon after interviewing Monet, Pach wrote to her from Paris:

I did see Monet, and had a splendid two hours with him. . . . He showed me numberless pictures of all his career nearly. . . . Finally I came to the great question. . . . I said what was the opinion of some people on Matisse, and then asked: “Do you see these qualities?” There was not an instant’s hesitation in his reply “Nullement.” *French has no stronger* (polite) negation. He went on to say, quite fully, that . . . he has studied the [Matisse] pictures attentively . . . with all desire not to see another’s mistakes added to the list of which his own misjudgment forms so prominent a part . . .¹¹

The December 1908 issue of *Scribner's* contained another landmark piece by Pach titled “Cézanne—An Introduction.” It has been heralded as the first appreciation of the artist to appear in an American magazine. Pach boldly characterized the Frenchman as “by all odds the strongest of recent influences in continental painting, and practically an unknown name in America!” Having viewed the Cézanne retrospective in the previous year’s Salon d’Automne, Pach argued that “his greatness lies more in an intensely individual way of seeing nature than as an expresser of abstract artistic concepts.”¹²

The explanations and arguments in favor of Cézanne were enlightening and even convincing to a portion of the uninformed public.

During his residency in Paris, Pach came to know numerous artists: Constantin Brancusi, whom he described as “that worker in the wooden shoes, living by himself in what seems a stone quarry . . .” and Raoul Dufy, “whose grandfather, having been a Scotchman, spelled the family name with a double ‘f’”;¹³ Renoir, whose interview with Pach was the first one he had agreed to in thirty years;¹⁴ and the brothers Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and Jacques Villon.

The amiable American would one day call upon Auguste Rodin and watch as the master sculpted a head in his presence,¹⁵ while on two occasions Georges Rouault, who described himself to Pach as living “in the time of the cathedrals,” came to visit *him*.¹⁶

By 1907 Pach was friendly with Gertrude and Leo Stein, and became a regular guest at their Saturday night soirees. Two years later Gertrude, who made a practice of writing portraits about the artists in her circle, including Picasso and Matisse, composed such a portrait of Pach:

Some things are to him beautiful things, some things are to him desirable things . . . learning anything is to him a natural thing, succeeding in living is to him a natural thing, teaching any one is to him a necessary thing, teaching everything is to him a necessary thing. . . .¹⁷

It was at the Steins that Pach met Picasso and renewed his acquaintance with Matisse, to whom he was initially introduced during the summer of 1907 at the Steins’ rented villa outside of Florence.¹⁸ At first Pach found Matisse’s work “just too incomprehensible for one of my background,”¹⁹ but that changed quickly, in part because he was allowed to sit in on an art class taught by Matisse. At the urging of the art critic for the *New York American*, Pach, still in Paris, wrote an appreciation of Matisse for that newspaper. But when the editor viewed accompanying photographs of Matisse’s work, he deemed them too unintelligible, and the article never saw the light of day.

Soon after Pach returned to New York toward the end of 1908 he met Arthur B. Davies and the two of them, together with Walt Kuhn, would select the foreign works for the 1913 Armory Show, an event destined to alter the course of American art. Davies had read Pach’s article about Cézanne in *Scribner’s* and then began sending French magazines to him for translation, as well as requests for photographs of art by French artists. “I am more delighted than ever with Gauguin and his work . . . ,” Davies wrote Pach in 1909. “I would wish to know more of this true artist”²⁰

Pach was also partly responsible for another major exhibition, the 1910 Independent Show. For years the National Academy of Design, the conservative mold of public taste, had made a practice of accepting more paintings for their annual exhibits than the galleries could accommodate, then eliminate those with strong evidence of being different in subject matter or technique. When the Academy’s exhibition was held in December 1909, Pach was singled out for the ultimate affront when six of his entries were accepted, but none were hung in the show.²¹

The following month he attended a meeting with Robert Henri, John Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and Jerome Myers to plan an alternate exhibit, resulting in the 1910 Independent. Purposely planned to overlap the National Academy’s spring annual and held in rented buildings, the exhibition featured more than six hundred works by over one hundred artists.

Between the fall of 1910 and January 1913 Pach was back in Paris. He studied for a time at the Académie Ranson with Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis, two of the most avid followers of Gauguin who had belonged to the art group known as the Nabis (“Prophets” in Hebrew). In 1890 Denis had written an article titled “Définition du Neo-Traditionnisme,” which began: “It is well to remember that a picture before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote—is essentially a flat surface covered with colors assembled in a certain order.”²²

Whether Pach had actually read these words or heard them uttered by his mentor, he was already sympathetic to the Nabis philosophy of art inspired by the imagination and as an expression of ideas, as opposed to purely naturalistic representations. In Pach’s article on Cézanne written two years before, he referred to the increase in artists and laymen who were “giving less attention to the externals and caring more for what is within. . . .”²³ This preference was to become the cornerstone of his critical writing for the rest of his career.

Pach continued to expand his friendships with European artists of the avant-garde. During November 1911 he met with several of the Italian Futurists—Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini and Carlo Carrà—who had gathered in Paris prior to the first Futurist exhibit there. In 1911–1912 he was welcomed to artists’ get-togethers in the Paris suburb of Puteaux, held in the adjoining studios of the brothers Duchamp: the painter Jacques Villon (who was born Gaston Duchamp) and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, sculptor. As Pach recalled years later:

Two important events derived from these meetings. One was the splendid effort at collective expression staged by the Autumn Salon of 1912; the other was the exhibition entitled *La Section d’Or*, held simultaneously in the Rue la Boétie.²⁴

The 1912 Salon, seen from October 1 to November 8, marked the exhibit’s tenth anniversary, so the milestone included a historical survey of more than two hundred nineteenth-century paintings, with canvases by Delacroix, Courbet, Corot, Manet, Monet, van Gogh, and Gauguin; Picasso and Matisse were among those represented in the contemporary section.

Arthur B. Davies had already approached Pach to suggest European artists for inclusion in the Armory Show scheduled for the following February, and Pach quickly envisioned the New York exhibition duplicating the Salon. Davies’s letter of October 2, 1912, stated:

Kuhn sailed for Hamburg to see the Sonderbund [Exhibit] at Cologne and to enlist for our show such artists with promise of the newest tendencies. . . . To those of us and men like yourself the possibilities loom tremendous . . .²⁵

When Davies joined Walt Kuhn in Paris on November 6, they were guided by Pach to the studios of first-line artists, to the Steins, and to various galleries, with the hope that works would be loaned to the show. Pach’s role was crucial. He once recalled a typical pitfall:

One dealer . . . raised the issue of America's unpreparedness as to modern art; he was loath to let his pictures be used as a means to attract a merely gaping crowd. I was able to convince him that he must do his share in educating a new public . . .²⁶

By the time Davies and Kuhn bid farewell to Paris and Pach, he had agreed to write biographies of each of the foreign artists, arrange for shipping the art to New York, serve as spokesman before the public and salesman at the armory, and produce pamphlets about Duchamp-Villon and Odilon Redon, plus a translation of Elie Faure's seventy-six-page essay on Cézanne, to be sold during the exhibition. For these services Pach was paid \$1,200, becoming one of only two salaried employees (the other was Frederick James Gregg, art critic for the *New York Evening Sun*, who was named chairman of the Press Committee).

As Walt Kuhn acknowledges in *The Story of the Armory Show*:

Walter Pach . . . furnished inestimable service to our undertaking. To his wide acquaintanceship among French artists and dealers, the advantages of his linguistic abilities and general knowledge of art, should be credited a large measure of our success.²⁷

The reasons behind Pach agreeing to participate in the project were succinctly stated by him:

It was, essentially, to get a better definition of living that the Armory Show was undertaken. America was living off the canned foods of art; there was fresh fruit, fresh meat on the tables of Paris, and it wanted its share. . . . It also set itself to end the reign of ignorance as to modern art that had prevailed in America since the bringing over of the Impressionists, almost thirty years before.²⁸

The success of the Armory Show in ending America's "reign of ignorance as to modern art," though not immediate, was surely a strong beginning, and Pach was its major spokesman. It was he who consummated the sale of Cézanne's *The Poorhouse on the Hill* [retitled *View of the Domaine St. Joseph*] (late 1880s), to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the first oil by that artist to enter a U.S. museum collection [See page 120]. Marcel Duchamp's infamous *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (1912) was also sold by him [See page 53], as was Matisse's *The Blue Nude* (1907), among dozens of other modern works.

Pach was represented in the Armory Show by five oils and a like number of etchings; his painting, *Flowers* (undated), was purchased by Henry Clay Frick.

When the exhibit moved on to Chicago, Pach accompanied it, causing him to bear the brunt of much of that city's hostility toward modern art. The day after his arrival, a newspaper reproduced a Pach painting alongside one by Matisse, beneath which were images of a pair of curious-looking people. The caption read: "Two of these Cubists are in Dunning [the local insane asylum], the other two are still at large. Can you tell which is which?"²⁹

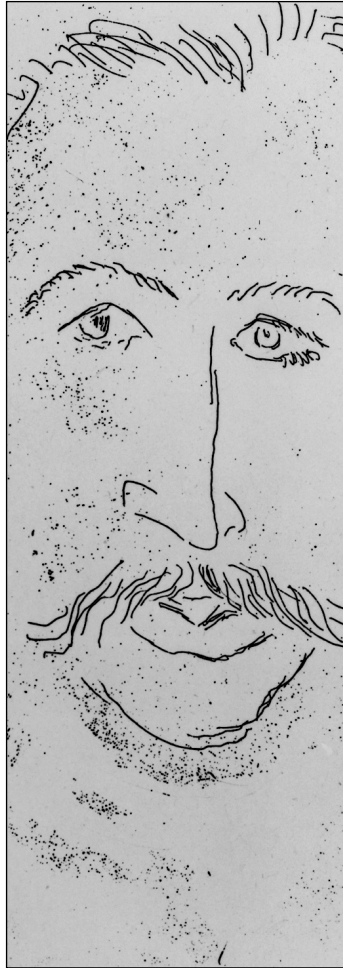


Henri Matisse, *Blue Nude* (“*Souvenir de Biskra*”), 1907. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 55 1/4 in. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland. BMA 1950.228.

In the aftermath of the Armory Show, Pach’s expertise was sought as new art galleries sprung up in New York. He organized exhibits of Matisse, Brancusi, and the Duchamp brothers for the Joseph Brummer Gallery, and in the fall of 1914 he traveled abroad to obtain work by the French moderns for the Carroll, Bourgeois, and Montross galleries. Although World War I had already erupted in Europe, the French capital appeared sufficiently safe for Pach to visit; besides, he was armed with a “To Whom It May Concern” letter from Theodore Roosevelt seeking official cooperation. As a result, Pach was successful in acquiring and transporting back to the United States art by Picasso, Derain, Redon, Rouault, Dufy, and Matisse.

The resultant one-man show of Matisse’s art, comprised of nearly seventy-five drawings, paintings, sculptures, and prints, represented his first fully comprehensive solo exhibit in the United States when it opened at the Montross Gallery in January 1915.³⁰ (During Pach’s visit with Matisse, the Frenchman showed his appreciation by etching a portrait of his American friend.)

Henri Matisse, *Portrait of Walter Pach*, 1914.
Etching, printed in black, plate: 6 5/16 x 2 3/8 in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Steven C. Clark Fund. Photograph © 2001, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Walter Pach was not only a promoter of European modern art, but its defender as well. Writing in *The New York Times* in March 1916, he admonished

a young painter, back from abroad, who declared that the war had swept away Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and the other developments of art . . . and that those who were formerly ultra-modern in their tendencies, have become conservatives. . . .

On the same day that these statements appeared, another New York paper published interviews with Marcel Duchamp, Albert Gleizes, Jean Crotti, and Francis

Picabia [who,] far from indicating any turning away from the principles of the Cubistic group . . . guaranteed their continuing the advance of new truths without a hint of going back to the old ideas . . .

Then, from a personal point of view, Pach added:

Of the most important remaining members of the new schools—Matisse, Derain, Duchamp-Villon, Brancusi, Metzinger, Dufy, Rouault, and others, the writer can affirm, from having visited their studios since the war began, that nothing is further from their minds than any renunciation of the principles for which they have been contending for so many years.³¹

Pach's friend Marcel Duchamp was kept abreast of happenings in the New York art world by Pach, who sent him a copy of the catalog for the January 1915 Matisse exhibition at the Montross Gallery [See page 154]. The following April, Duchamp, expressed an interest in leaving France for America "on the condition that I could earn my living there."³² Encouraged by Pach, he set sail for New York and was greeted at dockside by his friend.

As time would tell, even Pach had his limits when it came to the appreciation and acceptance of avant-garde art. In 1916 he and Duchamp were among the founding directors of the Society of Independent Artists. Anyone, amateur or professional, would be allowed to exhibit two works in its annual shows upon payment of a small initiation fee and dues. Democratic to the end, installation of the art would be done alphabetically, with no jury involved.

Perhaps Pach, for all his knowledge of Duchamp's creative outpouring, was unaware of the changes that had transpired since the *Nude Descending a Staircase*, for when Duchamp submitted a porcelain urinal titled *Fountain* (1917) and signed it with his pseudonym "R. Mutt," Pach joined other directors in voting it out of the show. As a Society press release sought to explain: "The *Fountain* may be a very useful object in its place, but its place is not an art exhibition and it is, by no definition, a work of art."³³ Duchamp resigned from the association, though he continued to correspond with Pach in subsequent years [See page 150].

The decade of the 1920s was a period when Pach was most prolific as a writer: he produced the translation of Elie Faure's five-volume *History of Art*, five books of his own, and more than sixty pieces for periodicals. Pach began contributing to *The Freeman*, an intellectual weekly, in 1920, writing thirty-one articles between June of that year and September 1923. Excerpts reveal the passion for his points-of-view:

. . . why is there not more appreciation of art in this country? . . . we should have far more art-buyers . . . and we should be educating the public to the idea that possessing beautiful things is not the sole privilege of the very rich . . .³⁴



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain (Second Version)*, 1950. Readymade: glazed sanitary china with black paint, 12 x 15 x 18 in. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift (by exchange) of Mrs. Herbert Cameron Morris. Photograph by Graydon Wood, 1998.

It is American life itself that must move on to the mature individuality out of which will naturally grow self-realization, style—art. We are outgrowing the formlessness of a pioneering people pushing out into the gigantic adventure of a new continent . . . [t]he unspeakable trash that the crowd likes—moderately—in our magazines and exhibitions [should not] be thought of as American art simply because there is so much of it.³⁵

. . . pictures [by amateurs in the 1921 Society of Independent Artists exhibition] are not as bad as many of the “serious” works of the professionals; for, weak in

craftsmanship as most of the amateur things are, they have at least the attractiveness of things done *con amore* [with love], whereas most if not all of the work done nowadays by men who paint solely to earn money is as unlovable as the other products of commercialism.³⁶

It was Cézanne—and to this he owes his immense importance—who saw that the reality we sought was not to be obtained by making an eye-deceiving counterfeit of nature, but that by erecting a structure of form and colour whose intervals and harmonies repeat the rhythm that the world establishes in our brain, we produce a “truer” thing than any imitative process can pretend to.³⁷

It was through this publication that Pach became friendly with Van Wyck Brooks, a member of its editorial staff [See page 93], and Lewis Mumford [See page 204]. Pach referred to Brooks as “one of the most brilliant and likable men I know.”³⁸ On the other hand, Mumford praised Pach in his book, *The Brown Decades*, stating that he

placed the American artist on a footing with his contemporaries in Europe, and overcame, through his keen criticism and excellent expositions, the touch of provincialism that would in the long run have proved a serious handicap to American art.³⁹

Another contact on *The Freeman* proved invaluable, for the magazine’s publisher and business manager, B. W. Huebsch, aided in the publication of one or more of Pach’s books. Pach’s *The Master of Modern Art* (1925) probably did more than any other volume at the time to explain modernism methodically and sympathetically to a public still largely suspicious and unaccepting of the new art forms. In clarifying Cubism, for example, Pach wrote:

Our knowledge of objects depends on seeing them from different sides. Braque and Picasso paint them so; the recombination of the planes . . . [provides] the means for relating, one with another, the phases of sight retained by memory . . .⁴⁰

Three years later Pach’s volume, *Ananias, or the False Artist*, appeared. In it he attacked an academician such as William-Adolphe Bouguereau as one with “the bad ideas of a generation or two ago, whom we blush to remember on our grandfather’s walls” and Léon Bakst as “a slight and ill-schooled draftsman, without vision or conviction . . .⁴¹

Pach also castigated the American portraitist J. Carroll Beckwith for his “ingenious explanation of Germany’s bloodlust” during the early days of World War I. Beckwith was quoted in *The New York Times* as feeling that

France was responsible for it, for she had been systematically exporting large quantities of modern art to her neighbor . . . and it was German consumption of such stimulants that had driven the good, industrious nation to madness and war.⁴²



Walter Pach, *Untitled (Cubist Still Life)*, 1914. Watercolor on illustration board, 13 3/4 x 9 7/8 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of Francis Steegmuller, in memory of Gerda and Beatrice Stein. 85.22.

Pach concluded that part of the blame for the false artist rested with the American museum, since it was

the most important factor in the progress toward better taste on the part of the public. But not until the institution has reached the maturity of knowing how to deal with modern work will it fulfill its whole function.⁴³

Pach's heavy writing schedule did not preclude his devoting considerable time to producing and exhibiting his art. Despite the brouhaha over Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* and its rejection from the 1917 Society of Independent Artists show, Pach continued to expend his energies on the organization, accepting the position of treasurer in its inaugural year and retaining the post for the next fifteen seasons. (For five of those years his wife Magda, whom he had married in 1914, served as its secretary.)

In the Society's first exhibit, Pach's entries included *Sunday Night* (later retitled *St. Patrick's at Night*) (1916), a cubist cityscape. It is this style in which he had been painting since the Armory Show. Pach continued to exhibit with the Independents each year during the 1920s and 1930s, showing oils and watercolors of varied subject matter, as indicated by such titles as *Seated Nude*, *Flowers*, and *Street in Mexico City*.

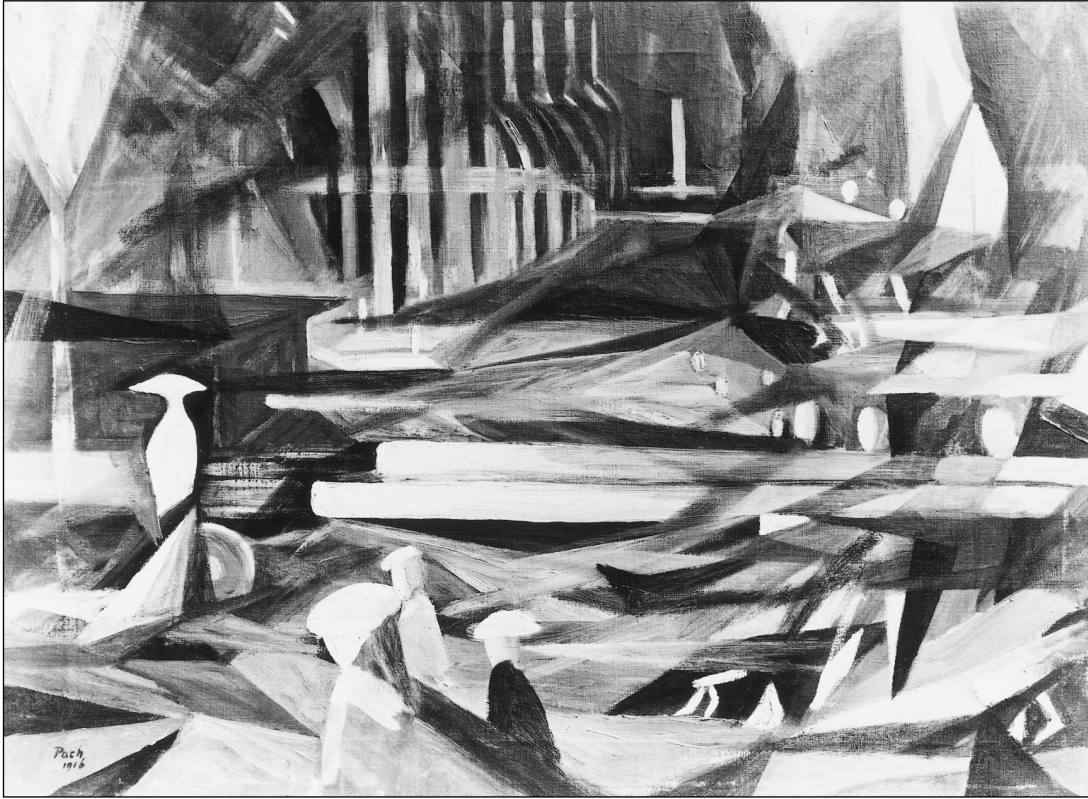
The latter painting, exhibited in the 1923 Independent, was created as a result of Pach's having been in the Mexican capital the previous year to teach at the National University of Mexico. This was his first year-long experience of lecturing in a foreign land. "The work will be light and along the lines I know," he wrote a fellow artist, (except that it will be in Spanish, which I never before spoke publicly).⁴⁴ Pach observed that the most assiduous visitor to his sessions was José Clemente Orozco, a political cartoonist at the time who would shortly turn to creating murals.⁴⁵

Pach was instrumental in having seven Mexican artists invited to exhibit with the Independents the following year, which number included Diego Rivera, Jean Charlot, and Orozco. He subsequently wrote an article about them:

The special feature of this year's [1923] exhibition was the remarkable group of Mexican artists who were the guests of the Society. The admirable cultural life of these people across the border is very little known in the United States; . . . I can remember no previous showing of Mexican painting in our exhibitions.⁴⁶

Walter Pach's own art received mixed reviews. Commenting on his abstract canvas of *Sunday Night*, Frank Jewett Mather Jr., art critic for *The Nation*, found it "very soothing and fascinating, without having the least idea of what it's all about. It looks rather hypnotizing."⁴⁷

Pach had his first one-man show in 1925 at the age of forty-one. Of a solo exhibit the following year featuring his prints, a *New York Herald Tribune* critic wrote that



Walter Pach, *Sunday Night* (retitled *St. Patrick's at Night*), 1916. Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. Photograph courtesy Peter A. Juley and Son Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Pach, hitherto known to us only as a painter, comes forward at the Weyhe Gallery with a quantity of etchings. To put it candidly, he is about three times as skillful with the [etching] needle as he is with the brush, and, in fact, leaves a capital impression with these plates.⁴⁸

The Art News reviewed Pach's one-man show at the Kraushaar Galleries in 1927, its critic commenting that

Pach paints in big masses; his edges are hard and his whole statement is precise, [his canvases] carefully balanced and deliberately planned . . . sometimes by a quite complicated system of forces . . .⁴⁹

Another one-man exhibit in 1928 at the same gallery evoked this response:

. . . although he has a tendency to report his findings in the field of modern painting with encyclopaedic dryness . . . in the present exhibition the painter has made himself more clearly heard and, in consequence, the show is by far the best Pach has had.⁵⁰

Amid all of the painting and writing, the exhibitions, magazine articles, and books, Pach left for Paris to spend the summer of 1926 directing the first courses for Americans held at the École du Louvre. His teaching often involved lecturing both mornings and afternoons before rows of paintings in the Louvre Museum.

Four years later Pach returned to Paris to take up residence there, a move occasioned by the hostile reception voiced by some critics of his latest book, *Ananias, and the False Artist*. Shortly after its publication in the fall of 1928, Pach received a letter from Lee Simonson, editor of *Creative Art Magazine*. After thanking him for “being so pleasant about extending your article on Rivera at the last minute,”⁵¹ Simonson described his own forthcoming review of *Ananias* as

extremely hard hitting. I have maintained, as I told you personally that everything you say is true and all of it unimportant, and . . . that if you succeeded in what you desired to do you had merely found an institution that within ten years would be an academy, although under another name.

In fact, I have attacked your point of view so hard, that I feel you should have the opportunity to reply—at our usual rates—in the next number. . . .⁵²

Pach refused the offer.

Rockwell Kent, a former classmate of Pach’s at the New York School of Art and “admittedly unmodern,”⁵³ produced a similarly negative review in *The Bookman*:

Walter Pach has written . . . three hundred and forty-five pages of professional drivel. . . . What moral priggery to call Meissonier and his kind “false artists”! They are exactly what they tried to be, good photographic painters. . . . There’s room in the world for every kind of art but no room in a decently ordered society for the artist who plays politics.⁵⁴

And William Howe Downes, retired art critic for *The Boston Transcript*, took Pach to task in an *American Magazine of Art* article, writing that, in *Ananias*,

he sets aside the goats on the one hand and the sheep on the other, quite in the Ruskinian manner. . . . It must be a grand and glorious feeling to be as sure as he seems to be of his own infallibility.

Downes elucidated:

As an instance of intolerance, the treatment of John Sargent is especially to be noticed. Was it not disingenuous to pick out one of the poorest examples of Sargent’s



John Singer Sargent, *Lady Warwick and Her Son*, 1905. Oil on canvas, 105 1/2 x 60 3/8 in. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, Museum Purchase 1913.69. Photograph courtesy Peter A. Juley and Son Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

work in America—the picture in the Worcester Art Museum—as a target, when there are so many Sargents far better than that in our museums?⁵⁵

What Pach had said in his book was that

[Sargent] really hated the “society portraits” that crowded in on him in ever-increasing numbers. “I’ve simply got to finish that damn thing,” he said of his big canvas of the Countess of Warwick and her son, “the boy keeps getting older and the woman keeps getting younger”;—which did not prevent him from recommending the picture as one of his best works to the museum of Worcester, Mass., which purchased it accordingly.⁵⁶

A footnote in *Ananias* indicates that the former of these two facts came from Sargent’s friend and admirer, William Merritt Chase; the latter from the one-time director of the Worcester Museum.

Lost on the average reader of Downes’s criticism of Pach was the fact that Downes had authored a biography of Sargent just three years before, in which he quoted from the *Bulletin* of the Worcester Museum that Sargent’s *Lady Warwick and her Son* (1905) “was said to be a favorite with the artist himself; it was painted with a professed liking for the subject.”⁵⁷ Adding insult to injury, Pach highlighted his disdain for the Sargent portrait by giving it the dubious honor of being reproduced on the dust jacket of his book.

Pach’s three-year, self-imposed exile in Paris did not diminish his role as champion for worthy causes. Early in 1931 he initiated efforts to have a painting by Thomas Eakins accepted by the Louvre [See pages 158, 161ff]. Pach had interviewed Eakins many years before, and in a 1923 article titled “A grand Provinciale” he pointed out that “We have been long in realizing the importance of his work.”⁵⁸

Simultaneously, Pach was instrumental in arranging the sale of Jacques Louis David’s masterpiece, *The Death of Socrates* (1787), to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, having learned that its French owner was willing to part with it [See page 124]. And when John Sloan was on the verge of resigning as president of The Art Students League the following April over his attempt to have George Grosz, the satiric German artist, hired to teach there, Pach cabled the school in support of Sloan [See page 373].

The sum of Pach’s paintings, drawings, and prints produced during the preceding thirty months were displayed in a one-man show at Paris’ Galerie Dru during March 1932. Some were portraits, others florals, landscapes, and Parisian street scenes; still others were created at the time, during a visit to Tangier, Morocco, which had long fascinated him because of that country’s effect upon Eugène Delacroix, one of Pach’s favorite artists. Yet the most surprising subjects in his exhibit were a series of watercolors of animals: A pig, fox, leopard, tiger, and wild boar. While Delacroix, well-known for such subject matter, chose to sketch his beasts in the Paris zoo, Pach enrolled at L’École d’Art Animalier, an art school that housed such animals on the premises.



Walter Pach, *The Fox*, 1931. Charcoal and watercolor, 10 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland. BMA 1950.355.

Pach's fascination with Delacroix would culminate in his translation of *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix* from the French; the 731-page volume appeared in 1937.

Walter Pach's return to the United States in the fall of 1932 was heralded by *Time* Magazine in an article headlined "Pach Back." *Time* reminded its readers that

[F]or years he has blazed a defense of modern painting up and down the columns of a dozen newspapers and magazines in language that would have pleased a frontier editor in gold rush days.⁵⁹

Less than nine months later Pach was engaged in another crusade, this one involving the dismissal of Diego Rivera from his Rockefeller Center mural project and the boarding up of the art. As a member of a committee of artists and writers, Pach sought to personally negotiate a settlement with Abby and John D. Rockefeller Jr. [See page 326].

The reality of having to earn a living in New York City “at American prices,” compared with the lower costs in Paris, occurred to Pach prior to his return to the United States. Early in 1932 he wrote to John Sloan:

I've sent off some letters, lately, with regard to lectures . . . the idea has been turning around in my head that instead of working with a lay public, I ought to pass on what I've been learning of works of art to those who are most directly interested—to art students.⁶⁰

Consequently, rather than continuing to present lectures primarily in museums, as he had been doing on weekends for thirteen years at the Metropolitan Museum and during the week at similar institutions throughout the country, Pach arranged to provide a series of illustrated talks beginning in 1932 at The Art Students League of New York.

In 1936 he continued to target students of art by becoming a member of the advisory board of the American Artists School in Manhattan, serving with Max Weber, Margaret Bourke-White, William Gropper, and others.

By June of that year Pach was involved in producing another book for, as he explained, “my friend Van Wyck Brooks . . . [is] eager for me to go through with my scheme of writing on the artists I have known.”⁶¹ The result was Pach's autobiographical *Queer Thing, Painting*, published in 1938. The unlikely title is typical of Pach's penchant for research and scholarship; he once revealed that those words had been uttered by J. M. W. Turner at a Royal Academy banquet a hundred years earlier.⁶²

Because of the hostile reception of *Ananais* a decade before, Pach craved reactions to his latest volume. The first one he received came from Brooks, who wrote him that *Queer Thing, Painting*

has moved me more than anything I have read this year. . . . Most of this book is wise, with the wisdom of the heart. It is steeped in your attitude in all these matters, that “humility is a primary need,” etc., etc. You have the humility,—you couldn't know as much if you didn't! . . .⁶³

At some point during the Depression of the 1930s, Pach sought to obtain a steady job in order to ease his own financial shortfall. By then the Pachs' son Raymond, born in 1914, was a student at Bowdoin College.

Between 1934 and 1938 Pach averaged publication of only two magazine articles a year, and royalties from two books—*Queer Thing, Painting* and *Vincent Van Gogh, 1853–1890*—could not be counted on to cover his day-to-day expenses. He had already concluded that “my painting, not being anything to depend on for a living, I thought of a museum position.”⁶⁴

An opportunity arose when plans for establishing a National Gallery of Art in Washington were announced. Pach wrote to his friend Paul J. Sachs, associate director of Har-

vard's Fogg Art Museum, in October 1939, seeking his aid in obtaining a position there [See page 345]. Although a curatorial post was not forthcoming, the lengthy resumé sent to Sachs was shared by him with David E. Finley, chosen to become the first director of the National Gallery, and John Walker III, its chief curator. All three men were members of a special advisory committee for the 1940 New York World's Fair, and within weeks Pach was hired to organize a sizable "Masterpieces of Art" exhibition for the coming summer's event.

With the title of "Director General" bestowed upon him, Pach was charged with the daunting task of seeking the loan of sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth-century masterpieces to fill three pavilions erected on the fair grounds for their display. The "Masterpieces of Art" exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair had been limited to works from foreign collections; however, the outbreak of World War II scuttled any plans to borrow from Europe again.

Pach pressed his wife into service as a typist and sent out dozens of letters. Replies ranged from Edsel Ford's refusal to part with his Renoir to Duncan Phillips's proposal to lend works other than the ones Pach had sought. Pach was also required to crisscross the country in order to view private collections from which he could earmark substitutes for art that was unavailable.

The exhibit for the 1939 Fair had not included nineteenth-century art, so Pach had a field day choosing selections from that period. Among the European examples were works by David, Ingres, Delacroix, Corot, Daumier, Courbet, Millet, Degas, Manet, Morisot, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Renoir, Cézanne, Redon, Gauguin, van Gogh, Seurat, and Toulouse-Lautrec; among the Americans, Inness, Whistler, Homer, Ryder, Sargent, Eakins, Duveneck, Davies, Glackens, Prendergast, Henri, Luks, and Cassatt.

The artists represented were many of those who had been in the Armory Show. And, upon request, the Rockefellers contributed \$500 to provide documents for the exhibit, a role Pach himself had played at the 1913 exhibition. Pach's expertise and untiring efforts resulted in the gathering together of better than two thousand works of art; then, after the exhibit opened, he found it necessary to be on hand on a regular basis.

The fall of 1942 found Pach once again in Mexico City, lecturing at the University. He revealed the reason for his move in a letter to John Sloan:

The last two years—since the World's Fair job—have been a time of almost absolute financial drought for me. We have been living almost wholly on past earnings, and the prospects for the coming season looked worse than ever. The jobs I tried for were refused me; no sale of pictures, few lectures; and every attempt to earn by writing knocked on the head. So, as expenses here [in Mexico] are from a fourth to a third of what they were in New York . . . I am happy over our outlook.⁶⁵

During the years of World War II, Pach had begun writing another book, *The Art Museum in America*, which was published in 1948. Reviews were favorable. *Art News*