

## Editor's Note

Arizona State University marked its founding one hundred years ago in 1985. To celebrate this event and to foster research and creative work for the future, the University has sponsored a number of Centennial projects. This special issue of *Phoebus*, devoted to the American Art portions of the University Art Museum's collection, is one of the several publishing efforts.

As editor I must acknowledge the unstinting efforts of the Editorial Board composed of graduate students in the Art History program at ASU. These students have worked long hours to make this issue a collection of critical and scholarly essays of which the university can well be proud. Gratitude must also be expressed to Professor Bettie Anne Doebler, Chair of the Centennial Publications Committee, Professor Leonard Lehrer, Director of the School of Art and Professor Karen Hayes-Thumann of the Graphic Design faculty for their support.

Early in 1948 Jackson Pollock in an essay entitled *My Painting* made the following observation:

The idea of an isolated American painting, so popular in this country during the thirties, seems absurd to me, just as the idea of creating a purely American mathematics or physics would seem absurd. An American is an American and his art would naturally be qualified by that fact, whether he wills it or not. But the basic problems of art are independent of any one country.

Pollock's observations are quite correct. American art, though distinguished from European art by its subject matter at times, and the vicissitudes of the American experience, reflects the tensions and aesthetic concerns with our European neighbors. The American Art portions of the University Art Museum constitute the most wide-ranging collection of American art west of the Mississippi, aside from perhaps the Rockefeller Bequest to the M. H. deYoung Museum in San Francisco. The thirteen essays in this issue but gloss the rich holdings. Space simply did not permit examinations on leading artists such as Homer, the Peales, The Eight, Calder,

or the impressive holdings in American graphic art. The issue does provide, however, an important introduction to this collection which it is hoped will be visited and studied by those intrigued by the last four centuries of American Art.

Anthony Lacy Gully