The Editorial Committee
Art Bulletin of Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

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The Nationalmuseum building from 1866 is currently undergoing an extensive programme of renovation, with reopening planned for 2018. Meanwhile, the internal and external activities of the Museum have moved out and assumed partly new forms. The public programmes entrusted to us by the state are continuing during the refurbishment – making use of both temporary venues for exhibitions and other events, and collaborative projects in Sweden and abroad. Since the summer of 2013, the Museum’s temporary exhibitions, chiefly of pictorial art and sculpture, have found a home at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (Konstakademien), together with a museum shop and creative activities in artists’ studios hallowed by centuries of use.

The ongoing development of a new display of the collections in readiness for the expected return to the building in 2018 remains one of the Nationalmuseum’s biggest challenges. On the one hand, we have a responsibility to show those areas of our holdings, both known and unknown, that make the Museum unique. Another focus is on areas that need to be further strengthened. For several years, therefore, a very active acquisition effort has been under way. The lack of targeted government funding for acquisitions means that this is only possible thanks to grants from generous donors and returns on the Museum’s own funds.

The Nationalmuseum has in its collections a great many important works by the masters of world art. These include one of the world’s finest holdings of 18th-century French art, for example, though for historical reasons with an emphasis on the Rococo period. The later 18th century is less well represented, as is the early 19th. The acquisition of Anne Vallayer-Coster’s masterpiece Portrait of a Violinist (1773), painted at the age of 28, therefore represents an important addition to the collection (see article on p. 17). Another is the self-taught painter Louis Boilly’s portrait of Madame Saint-Ange Chevrier (1807). These acquisitions were made possible by the Wiros Fund and the Hedda and N. D. Qvist Fund, respectively.

Dutch and Flemish painting has long found a home in Sweden, and hence at the Nationalmuseum. Here, particular note may be made of the acquisition of Jacques de Gheyn the Younger’s A Young Woman Mourning a Dead Dove, a Partridge and a Kingfisher (c. 1620), one of twenty known works by that artist. The painting, which is in need of conservation, will at the same time be the subject of more extensive technical studies, undertaken in collaboration with international experts. Another significant addition is the Dutch artist Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert’s Study of a Boy’s Head (c. 1644/45), a preparatory study for the head of Cupid in one of the old treasures of the Museum, Triumphant Cupid among Emblems of Art and War (see article on p. 11).

Master drawings make up one of the best-known elite collections of the Museum. Despite the current high price levels, the Nationalmuseum has managed to acquire important works by Govert Flinck and an unknown master from the circle of Hendrick Goltzius (see article on p. 37). Mention may also be made of drawings by Michel Corneille, François-André Vincent, Théodore Géricault, Jean-Baptiste Massé and Jean-Baptiste Jacques Augustin.

Swedish art has a natural place at the Nationalmuseum. Exceptional new acquisitions include Amalia Lindegren’s Study of a Man in Turkish Dress (1854), painted in Munich (see article on p. 21), and Johan Gustaf Sandberg’s portrait of the Egyptian admiral Ismail Gibraltar on a visit to Stockholm. Jenny Nyström, too, was active on the international scene, with her large painting The Convalescent (see article on p. 25), which she probably submitted to the Paris Salon of 1884. While studying in the French capital she also became an accomplished watercolourist, capable on occasion in her youth of rivalling Anders Zorn (see article on p. 31).

Especially noteworthy among the acquisitions of sculpture is Between Two Loves (Entre deux amours), by Auguste Rodin’s teacher Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse. Another key addition to the collection is Aimé Jules Dalou’s Head of a Sleeping Baby (Buste de bébé endormi) (see article on p. 29).

As previously reported, since 2012 the Nationalmuseum has had a particular focus on acquiring works by female designers of the 20th century. An initial result of this campaign was the exhibition Women Pioneers: Swedish Design in Between the Wars, first shown at Läckö Castle in the summer of 2015 and then at Nationalmuseum Design, at Kulturhuset Stadsteatern in Stockholm, the same autumn (see article on p. 163).

Like the female pioneers of Swedish design in the interwar years, some of the male designers of that period are also now largely forgotten. Their importance is amply illustrated by the magnificent cabinet and two armchairs which Carl Hörlvik designed for the Swedish pavilion at the
Paris *International Exhibition* of 1925. These pieces, which won a Grand Prix, are a generous gift of Ernst and Carl Hirsch and the Friends of the Nationalmuseum (see article on p. 57).

Monitoring Sweden’s portable cultural heritage is part of the Nationalmuseum’s remit. During the year, a number of priceless remnants of the collections at Skärva Manor could be rescued, including a musical clock with a case carved by Pehr Ljung (see article on p. 51) and two ornamental urns from KPM in Berlin. The clock was a gift of the Friends of the Nationalmuseum.

A highly prestigious object from earlier times now included in the collections is a festive drinking cup of a type known as a kronkhäsa, decorated with the conjoined arms of Councillor Gustaf Axelsson Banér and his wife Christina Sture. Carved from spruce root, it is a memento of the aristocracy of Renaissance Sweden, where Gothic forms still held sway (see article on p. 45). This drinking vessel can be compared with another new acquisition, Erik Öhrmark’s highly fashionable Neoclassical stool for Queen Sofia Magdalena’s apartments at the Royal Palace, Stockholm, from the late 18th century.

The Nationalmuseum not only holds Sweden’s premier collection of older decorative arts, but is also a leader in the area of design and contemporary applied art. In February 2015, the Museum opened a second exhibition venue in central Stockholm. In the glazed galleries of Kulturhuset Stadsteatern, a meeting place called Nationalmuseum Design, was a project that had as its starting point, the empty Nationalmuseum building (see article on p. 149). The exhibition *Denise Grünsten: En face* and yet this was a project that had as its starting point, and its setting, the empty Nationalmuseum building (see article on p. 149). The exhibition *100 Great Paintings*, aimed primarily at a summer audience, presented a rich selection of the Nationalmuseum’s most loved paintings. In the accompanying texts, the Museum tested different modes of address by involving six outside writers, all of whom work with words in various ways, as authors, poets or songwriters. The resulting texts conveyed a personal voice and an individual view of the historical images, linking them to our own times (see article on p. 153). Auguste Rodin’s significance as a renewer of sculptural art was the theme of the major exhibition held in the autumn and winter of 2015, in collaboration with the Ateneum Art Museum/The Finnish National Gallery in Helsinki and the Musée Rodin in Paris. Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, former Chief Curator at the Musée Rodin, served as senior advisor to the project. The display was well received by visitors and critics alike, and Swedish, English and Finnish editions of the catalogue were produced. The exhibition was shown in Helsinki in spring 2016 (see article on p. 157).

A key responsibility of the Nationalmuseum is to develop and represent research in art history, primarily in connection with the display and care of its holdings. Research undertaken by the Museum will form an important and integral part of the future display of the collections. Exchanges with foreign scholars are one aspect of this work. In this issue of the *Art Bulletin* we are for the first time able to publish the latest *Tessin Lecture*, given by Sir Nicholas Penny, former Director of the National Gallery in London (see article on p. 167).

The present issue of the *Art Bulletin of Nationalmuseum* is the third to be published exclusively in a digital format. Steady growth in the number of downloads shows that this allows knowledge of the Museum to be disseminated more easily and more widely, including to an international audience. The Nationalmuseum’s aim is to expand the digital publication of its collections and research results. In 2015, additional work was done to register, for example, the Italian master drawings acquired by C. G. Tessin and the Tessin Collection in Paris. Another goal is to increase the number of digital images available, and to that end recent and older photographs are being linked to records in the database.