

Rare Cabinet by Emile Bernard Acquired by the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Bernard cabinet is one of only four known examples of carved furniture produced by Pont-Aven School



INDIANAPOLIS, IN, July 13, 2010—The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced today the acquisition of a rare corner cabinet with scenes of Breton life, carved and painted by Pont-Aven School artist Emile Bernard. One of only four known examples of important wood furniture produced by the Pont-Aven School, this cabinet further enhances the IMA’s renowned Pont-Aven School collection—the most distinguished in North America.

The Pont-Aven School was named for a remote village in the French province of Brittany where an international group of progressive artists gathered during the 1880s and 1890s. A founder of the School, Emile Bernard (1868–1941) collaborated closely with Paul Gauguin and was an innovator of early modern painting. Inspired by the carving they discovered in Brittany, both artists were moved to create wood sculpture and furniture.

The cabinet, acquired from the famed collection of Samuel Josefowitz, is a strategic complement to the IMA’s holdings. Its Breton imagery and stylistic elements not only provide new insight into Bernard’s working methods, they offer fascinating links to the 18 paintings and nearly 100 prints that comprise the IMA collection.

“The Bernard Cabinet is a masterful fusion of painting, sculpture, and furniture, and is a major addition to our world-renowned collection of 19th century art,” said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA.

In combination with the IMA’s recent acquisition of Gauguin’s Volpini prints, the addition of this rare cabinet brings the IMA’s Pont-Aven collection to a new level of excellence. “This highly unusual piece is as clever as it is beautiful,” said Ellen W. Lee, The Wood-Pulliam Senior Curator at the IMA. “It reveals Bernard’s unique take on life in Brittany – and his growing prowess as a carver. At nearly 10 feet tall and capable of fitting snugly into a corner, it has real gallery presence.”

The cabinet is embellished with vignettes of Breton life (also known as *bretonneries*) such as the women’s intricate headdresses, as well as a subtly inserted self-portrait. It is distinctive for its harmonious colors, elegant surface pattern, and stylistic unity. Adorned with winding tendrils and flowers, the cabinet also offers rich connections to art nouveau and the arts and crafts movement.

About the Cabinet

Emile Bernard
French, 1868-1941

Corner cabinet with Breton scenes
1891-92
Carved and polychromed wood

109 7/8 x 42 1/4 x 5 1/4 in. (279.1 x 107.3 x 13.3 cm.)

Samuel Josefowitz Collection of the School of Pont-Aven, through the generosity of the Jane H. Fortune European Art Fund, the Josefowitz Family, Anonymous III Art Fund, The Ballard Fund, Rick and Alice Johnson, and the Beeler Fund
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About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Recognizing the inherent connections between art, design and nature, the IMA offers visitors experiences at the Museum, in the newly opened 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, one of the largest contemporary art parks in the United States, and at Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA's grounds.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and included renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with a new 10,000-plus-square-foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's second level. In November 2008, the IMA opened the renovated 600-seat Tobias Theater. Nicknamed, "The Toby," the theater is a venue for talks, performances and films.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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