



PRINCESS X—Brancusi's "Princess X" stands beneath the bridge stairway in the Great Hall. The view is from the print room located on the first level in the north suite of rooms. (U. of N. Photo by Kaz Tada)

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery—

# Structure Reflects American Art

**EDITORS NOTE:** Although the recent opening of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery has already been highly publicized throughout the state, we felt that the first edition of the Summer Nebraskan should include additional coverage of the building, the Sheldon and the art work so that the summer students may become more familiar with the Gallery.

Over 17,000 people visited the new Sheldon Art Gallery during the first three weeks following its opening, according to gallery officials.

Designed by New Yorker Philip Johnson, the structure reflects the very recent development of this disciple of Mies Van der Rohe to fuse the Romantic-Classic period of the 1800's with contemporary American architecture.

The facade of the building—measuring 100 by 150 feet—is dominated by tapered and curving piers, standing 16 feet apart and ringing the building. The play of natural light on the arch system gives the building a changing appearance, with the moving angles of the sun. The building's exterior is illuminated during the night with artificial lights placed at the base, giving the structure still another character.

The interior spaces of the two-story Gallery are enclosed and contrasted, with clearly departmentalized elements. A majestic Great Hall spans the width of the building and is faced on the two exterior sides by recessed glassed vestibules, the only natural light entering the structure. The Hall is sheathed in Italian Travertine marble.

A modern bridge stairway, which connects the second-story galleries, bisects the two-story entrance hall. Flanking the stairway are two works of permanent sculpture, memorials in honor of the Gallery donors, A. Bromley Sheldon and his sister, Frances Sheldon.

**Two Sculptures**  
The two sculptures are "Bather," a seven-foot bronze by Jacques Lipchitz, and "Song of the Bird," a composition in Norwegian granite and Greek marble, by Isamu Noguchi.

Beneath the bridge stairway is "Princess X," a 22-inch high figure worked in white marble in 1916 by Constantin Brancusi, one of the world's leading sculptors of the 20th Century. This permanently displayed piece is the most important

and valuable work in the Olga Sheldon of Lexington.

The Great Hall rises 30 feet high, dominated by the arch system of piers with concave profiles. The ceiling's arch system is separated and emphasized by large circular recessed panels, covered with gold leaf.

Harmonizing with the golden color of the ceiling is the dark bronzed facing of the many-angled stairway, which cuts sharply through the rectangular Great Hall.

To the north of the Great Hall on the first floor are the general offices, two small galleries, a print room, and the Teak paneled board room for the trustees of the Nebraska Art Association.

The first-floor south area contains a 300-seat amphitheater with projection room and small stage, suited for lectures and small chamber-music recitals.

**Nine Galleries**  
In the north Gallery area on the second floor are three principal galleries, each averaging 50 feet long by 25 feet wide. In the south Gallery area, there are six smaller galleries, each measuring approximately 30 feet long by 24 feet wide.

Plastic coated cotton pile fabric of biscuit coloring, mounted over plywood, covers the gallery walls. This system permits an indefinite hanging of pictures without visible damage to the walls.

The basement area has special storage rooms for paintings, sculpture, graphic arts, and decorative arts, along with special viewing rooms for students and specialists, a mechanical equipment room, facilities for catering services, and shipping and preparation shops.

The Sheldon Gallery is completely wired for television transmission and has a Television Control room in the basement. An electronic guide-service will be provided for visitors in the near future.

The lighting for the exhibition areas is entirely artificial, designed by Richard Kelly, a noted New York lighting consultant who has supervised the lighting in a number of U.S. museums.

Mr. Kelly has distributed the artificial light through permanently installed recessed fixtures so as to pro-

University Collections. It is a memorial to A. B. Sheldon, from his wife, Mrs. vide a gentle wash of light over the gallery walls. The light is concentrated at picture-hanging height, a band from two feet above the floor to nine feet above the ceiling, but with no scalloped shadows.

**Brightest Objects**  
This designed effect permits the paintings or sculptures in the Gallery to be the brightest objects in the normal field of vision, with no distraction from any exterior light.

The collections to be housed at the Gallery consist of the permanent collection of the Nebraska Art Association, and the University's own art collection, the latter centered around the F. M. Hall Collection.

Director Norman Geske says the two collections are predominately American, with the strongest part consisting of paintings and sculpture dating after 1920. These works of art include exceptional pieces by Demuth, Hopper, Hartley, Marsh, Kuniyoshi, O'Keefe, Weber, and others.

In addition to the permanent memorial works in the Gallery, the sculpture collection includes notable works by Laurent, Zorach, Nadelman, and Balzerman. A British group includes works by Moore, Hepworth, Armitage and Butler. Other European artists such as Rodin, Rosso, and Barlach are also represented.

In graphic arts, the Hall Collection includes prints representing 15th and 16th

Century book illustration, German Expressionism, the modern Mexicans, and contemporary Americans. Outstanding drawings are by Copley, Hartley, Hopper, all Americans; and Brancusi, Morandi, and Pechstein, all Europeans.

Director Geske said of the collections:

"Our primary interest is in American art of the 20th Century in all of its plastic manifestations. Secondly, we have an interest in our American past, not, certainly, in the direction of comprehensiveness, but at least in the succinctness of prime examples. Thirdly, we hope to achieve a scope in our collections of sculpture and graphic arts which will be wide in terms of both time and place. Finally as the complement to the permanent collections, our program of temporary exhibitions can furnish what we cannot own."

Mr. Johnson is playing a leading part in the design of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City

Mr. Johnson, in conceiving the Sheldon Gallery as a contemporary work of art, has attempted to create an art gallery free of foot weariness, of eye fatigue, and of the obligation of chronological viewing.

In its stead, he has sought through pure and subtle use of color, texture, materials, and form to place objects of art in a setting, free of distractions, so that the observer and the art object can reach the highest possible point of contact.

The Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery becomes a part

of the cultural heritage of Nebraskans through the generosity of the late Frances and A. Bromley Sheldon. The funds were made available to the University through their estates.

**Sheldon Family**  
The brother and sister were the children of George Sheldon, who came to Nebraska as a young man from Vermont. After a successful start in the fertilizer business in New York, he moved with his family to Lincoln.

George Sheldon, the father, invested in private stocks and real estate in Lincoln until his death in 1936.

Frances, the daughter, died in Lincoln June 27, 1950. Frances was an amateur naturalist and highly interested in the arts. She died unmarried and lived in the Sheldon home for 50 years.

A. Bromley, who died Sept. 1, 1957, was the owner of a number of Nebraska farms and invested in several lumber businesses. He made his home in Lexington, and was survived by his wife, Mrs. A. B. (Olga Nielsen) Sheldon.

The Gallery will be closed to visitors each Monday, but open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

**Visiting Schedule**

On Sundays, the Gallery will be open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

From Oct. 1 through June 1, the Gallery will also be opened Tuesday evenings until 10 o'clock. Office hours will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each week day.

## Oslo Youth Excels In Extension Work

A 17-year old American-born high school boy from Oslo, Norway, who has several of the United States' leading universities vying to recruit him, will not soon be forgotten by the University of Nebraska either.

Geoffrey M. Swan has just completed four years of high school through correspondence courses offered by the University of Nebraska Extension Division. He is in first place scholastically in the University's overseas student division.

Geoffrey, son of Marshall W. Swan, a foreign affairs officer with the American Embassy in Oslo, applied for admission at Harvard, Yale, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dartmouth and Tufts, and was accepted by all of them.

The young man has accepted Harvard's offer and will begin majoring in mathematics there in the fall.

Mrs. Goldie Thorpe, assistant supervisor of pre-college instruction, said Geoffrey has an academic average exceeding 95 per cent for four years of high school work and has excelled in the advanced course offerings of physics, mathematics, chemistry and romance languages.

"Geoffrey has never had a class inside a normal high school but has attended primary schools in Holland, Italy, and England," she explained. "I don't know that I can remember a more outstanding or interesting case." Geoffrey chose the extension courses of the University of Nebraska when he was 14 years old after he discovered that the nearest good college

preparatory school was more than 500 miles away. His 16-year old sister, Ingrid, is also enrolled and has a junior standing.

The high school instruction of the University's Extension Division, a self-supporting and non-tax subsidized organization, now has 18,000 registrations (6,000 students taking from one to five courses).

The students, who do all their work by correspondence, include handicapped adults and children, adults wishing to receive a high school diploma, youth who have dropped out of school or have not had the opportunity to attend high school, and overseas students like Geoffrey and military personnel.

Mrs. Thorpe explained that the University's extension program is recognized as the leading institution of its kind in the offering of high school correspondence courses.

"We have youngsters from 80 countries in the world, many of Geoffrey's caliber, taking work from us and we're naturally proud to know that they can excel," she said.

The first place graduating student in the adult division for 1963 is Hildegard Evanson of Davenport, Ia. The handicapped division winner is Donna Eddy, Lusk, Wyo.; and stateside division, Carole Engel of Ketchikan, Alaska.

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