

only affected the production of corn, wheat, and other grain crops, but also changed the cultivation of fruits and vegetables by reducing dependence on migrant labor and increasing the scale of production. Ill-timed purchases also forced many marginal farmers into excessive debt and, eventually, out of business.

Meticulously researched and deftly written, Nordin and Scott's analysis is distinguished by a dispassionate tone that neither lauds nor laments the changes they chronicle. Rather than waxing nostalgic, they view the transformation of midwestern agriculture as a logical consequence of technological change and a rational response to a growing nation's need for food. While the authors express concern about the attendant manifestations of rural decay and urban sprawl, they note that many rural families benefited in the long run from opportunities for better education and alternative employment and that complaints about new neighbors "often ended with sales to land devel-

opers at prices well above the prevailing level for farmland" (p. 152).

I do have one factual clarification. The authors state that decentralization of livestock marketing ended the International Livestock Show in Chicago (p. 158). More precisely, when the Union Stock Yards closed, the International Livestock Exposition merged with the North American Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, to create the North American International Livestock Exposition, the nation's largest purebred livestock show. But this is a minor quibble. Nordin and Scott's contribution to the literature of midwestern agriculture will have a lasting influence upon our understanding of the history of rural life.

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Chicago Painting 1895-1945

The Bridges Collection

By Wendy Greenhouse and Susan Weininger

(Springfield: University of Illinois Press with the Illinois State Museum, 2004. Pp. 251. Illustrations, notes, checklist of the collection. Paperbound, \$32.95.)

The publication of *Chicago Painting 1895-1945: The Bridges Collection* follows a 2000-2001 traveling exhibition organized by the Illinois State Museum and displayed in Chicago as well as in three of the museum's

ancillary galleries. Produced in collaboration with the University of Illinois Press, the book offers an ambitious overview of Chicago art and artists at the turn of the last century.

Although some museum professionals may question the decision to offer a single donor an exclusive exhibit and publication, the variety and quality of the paintings owned by Powell and Barbara Bridges prove worthwhile both as educational tools and as historical documentation of the city's artistic trends. The book's three main sections include two well-researched essays as well as a catalog comprising succinct biographies of each of the forty-nine artists along with fine images of the works themselves. An introduction by Susan C. Larsen deftly discusses the nature of art collecting, traces the evolution of the Bridges' accumulation of artwork, and summarizes the artists and styles represented in the collection.

Wendy Greenhouse's essay, "More of Beauty and Less of Ugliness: Conservative Painting in Chicago, 1890-1929," explores the underlying social structure influencing the city's early twentieth-century art trends. The 1879 founding of the Chicago Academy of Design (later named the Art Institute of Chicago) by civic-minded businessmen seeking "to nurture the past, present, and future of art under a single broad roof" successfully institutionalized art as a civic commodity (p. 24). Heavily influenced by studio instructors' preferences and by the progression of dominating boards of directors, the artwork produced at the school remained primarily traditional in the early 1900s. Because several Chicago-trained artists spent summers painting in Brown County,

Indiana, their conservative influence affected painting styles in the Hoosier state as well.

Greenhouse's lucid description of the growing disparity, beginning in the early 1940s, between the ideals of Chicago's conservative painters and those of the emerging local modernists smoothly leads into Susan Weininger's essay, "The Spirit of Change': Modernism in Chicago." Weininger contends that Chicago's modernist movement evolved fairly independently from developments in New York. Although an exhibit of work by the East Coast Ashcan School artists traveled to the Art Institute in 1908, and the next decade included several exhibits of their followers, Chicago artists preferred a sanitized version of social realism. Generally, they showed more interest in creating pleasing images than in adhering to theoretical principles.

Greenhouse's and Weininger's contextual essays create a thorough overview, not only of art styles, but of the development of civic and artist-driven associations in early twentieth-century Chicago. These vital groups each formed to address different issues: the perpetual challenge of achieving success as a Midwest artist, the rebellion against the established exhibition regime, and the desire to infuse with cultural ambiance a city best known for its stockyards.

The catalogue of works, with the biographical essays divided between Greenhouse and Weininger, show-

cases the wonders of current color technology. Each of the seventy-eight paintings receives respectful “breathing room” in the form of exclusive page placement conducive to the diverse painting styles. Listed alphabetically by artist name, the essays reveal careful research with notes conveniently placed in the side-margins. Fascinating details spice up the factual writing, such as Ivan Albright’s penchant for signing both the tops and bottoms of his paintings to facilitate upside-down hanging.

An awkward size to carry and read, the book is bound with lami-

nated soft covers that mitigate price but discourage coffee-table permanence. A checklist with artwork provenance enhances the publication’s value for serious collectors as well as for curators.

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Prairie Power
Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest
 By Robbie Lieberman

(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. Pp. xvi, 264. Bibliography. \$44.95.)

In this regional perspective on what radical-turned-scholar Todd Gitlin called the “years of hope and days of rage,” Robbie Lieberman explores how the student New Left manifested itself in “working-class institutions in rural, conservative areas of the country” (p. x). Through a collection of oral histories from former activists affiliated in varying degrees with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapters at the University of Kansas, University of Missouri, and Southern Illinois University (SIU), Lieberman attempts to present “Prairie Power” activism not simply as a disruptive contingent of SDS—the most high-profile and influential New Left group

of the Vietnam era—but as a distinctive ethos, value system, and style of protest based on a genuine commitment to organizing around local issues and on a penchant for complementing direct-action politics with cultural rebellion. Concomitantly, by giving voice to these midwestern radicals, Lieberman intends to challenge orthodox perceptions of Prairie Power (advanced by SDS leaders such as Gitlin) as having been little more than a collection of unsophisticated, long-haired, dope-smoking anarchists whose ascendancy within SDS after 1965 derailed that organization and helped steer what is loosely referred to as “the movement” down the path