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Bennington College

A meeting of the Art Division was held on Wednesday, February 22, 1939, in Room #25, Barn, at 3:00 P.M. Present: Mr. Hirsch, Mrs. Hirsch, Mr. Moselsio, Mrs. Moselsio, Mr. Park, Mr. Krob, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Smith, Miss Shelly, Natalie Disston, Secretary.

JOAN MCARTHUR
NON-RESIDENT

Mr. Park presented the request of Joan McArthur for non-resident work during her last semester at the University of Illinois Research Hospital, Chicago. He reported that when Joan registered for work at the beginning of last term (fall, 1938) she indicated that her senior project was planned for dark room and medical photography. Later she told him that she was going to be offered the job of introducing clinical photography at St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago. Her senior project was then modelled into a set-up for hospital photography, which Mr. Park approved as a good project for her. She then came to the conclusion that she needed more color photography than she could get at Bennington, and Mr. Park advised her at that time (early in the term) to apply then for special permission for non-resident work for her last term, but at that time she didn't want to do so. However, during the winter period Joan wrote asking permission to do what she had not thought necessary before. Mr. Park forwarded Joan's letter to Miss Godsill with his approval. Joan's reason for applying for non-resident work at this time was that the opportunity to work at the Illinois Research Hospital had not presented itself until the winter months. Mr. Hirsch reminded the division that the second term of the senior year is not generally permitted to be used for non-resident work, and asked Mr. Park if he still approved of the plan. Mr. Park stated that he thought it was directly related to what Joan wanted to do, and added that he considered her education at Bennington had been sufficiently broad in other fields for her now to specialize in her chosen field.

Upon motion from Mr. Park, it was

VOTED THAT: The Art Division unanimously approves of Joan McArthur's plan for non-resident work for this term and considers it educationally sound.

FOURTH TERM
STUDENTS

Mr. Hirsch reported that he has a number of students who are going into the last term of Junior Division who have had three introductory courses already and who do not wish to take any theoretical work in this fourth term. There are two individual students who wish to take two studios, and both Mr. Hirsch and Mr. Moselsio feel that two studios is too much for any student to include in her program in one term. Mr. Moselsio advised one of these students to substitute a history of art course for one of the studios. In special cases, Senior Division students have been allowed to take two studios in one term but Mr. Hirsch reminded the division that even then it has not often been successful. Mr. Park suggested that these students might take a theoretical course outside of the division but related to art, such as theory of stage design, critical writing, etc. They might have a special program and it will be considered only if the quarter in theory is exchanged for a theoretical course in another field. It had been suggested in a previous meeting, of which there are unfortunately no minutes, to include practical

work in all introductory groups in such a way that studio and theoretical work really take place simultaneously. It would then be possible for a student to take two studios, one eighth in one and three eighths in another without any detriment. Mr. Hirsch recommended that this matter be taken up again before the beginning of next term, and that the new chairman of the division should be notified of this recommendation.

POSTER CLASS

Mr. Hirsch then asked for the opinion of the division on the poster class which had been given last term as a sort of "trial balloon". The following discussion took place: Hirsch: The poster work was a sort of trial balloon started without previous discussion by the division. Do we want to deal with the constant request from various agencies in the College for posters? Also with the request on the part of students to get instruction in this kind of work? Last term it was given two and a half hours a week and counted one sixteenth. Do we want to handle that sort of thing at all? Should we deal with "commercial art"? Shelly: We have to have posters. Hirsch: Mr. Leigh at one time told me that if it would be clear that, through teaching students this kind of work, they were taught something about art in a broad sense - design, color, form, technique, etc. - then he didn't see any objection to it; but if we offered only professional preparation for commercial art, he would be against it. Park: The Introduction to Design takes care of that. Hirsch: It deals with the theoretical side, but doesn't give them concrete projects as they are also given in the commercial field. E. Hirsch: The poster work could be taught in any one of the fields offered here. My idea was to have a workshop. Shelly: If it is not properly organized, the posters get done but the work is inefficiently done. Hirsch: It can be worked out. The question just now is not how it could be organized, but whether it should be done at all. a) I don't think Elsa or anyone else should take a class that the division thinks is wrong. b) This work should not be done if the division is half-hearted about it. Posters will be made anyway whether we give the class or not. Are we going to do anything about extra-curricular work of this sort? Shelly: The only thing wrong with this poster work is that the girls go about doing it badly. Moselsio: Every art school in Europe has a poster department and considers it part of an artistic education. Park: It would be better to substitute the phrase "industrial art" for all phases of art that have entered the commercial scene. Hirsch: I am not suggesting that extra classes in industrial art be introduced, but I am asking whether the poster work should be done or not. We don't want to devote time to teaching students to compete in the advertising field outside. The question is whether the division approves of this class or not. Moselsio: If we don't do anything about it, the posters will be bad. Park: Did it not work out well last semester as a "free" class? E. Hirsch: It was not a free class - it was definitely scheduled but took only two hours a week, and it did not work out very well because of the little time given to it. Hirsch: Incidentally, in addition to this the decoration of the theatre for dances could probably be handled by that poster group or by the design group supervised by Russell or Elsa through some student who would take it as a project. Park: There should be some provinces in which the students exercise art not under supervision. I should think the decorating of the theatre might be a legitimate enterprise of that nature without faculty supervision. Krob: It might be interesting to try as an experiment, as a design project. E. Hirsch: There is something to what Billy says about doing projects without supervision. Moselsio: I should think we might offer the poster class if the demand is great enough, early enough. Krob: It is better to do something about it than not. We ought to give them what they want. But we should not bring illustration into it. Hirsch: Charles is teaching that anyway to the degree we want it. Of course, we don't want to go into the Saturday Evening Post kind of thing. Park: This entire question might be studied with an eye on the scope of what we are doing

in art here. It will work itself out, but should be studied by a committee or group. Hirsch: The poster class, if continued along the lines begun, would not violate the tenets of the Art Division. E. Hirsch: What is the philosophy of the Art Division anyway? Park: We have none, but we must have some guiding principle in relation to industrial art. There is the question of further teaching in that direction - is it within the scope of our teaching or should it remain amateur (extra-curricular)? That is more involved than this particular instance. Hirsch: We can't teach students certain special techniques of industrial art; they should go to a school of industrial design for that. We can teach them certain esthetic principles in relation to furniture, printed materials, etc. In the matter of the posters, some of the esthetic principles of art can be taught. After all, it involves the sort of thing that is also involved in a great deal of painting. Park: They receive instruction in essentials of painting, furniture design, etc. Hirsch: If the poster class should be a full quarter, I would be dead against it. But the difference between the poster thing and the other painting is that in the case of the posters, there is a definite outside social demand - advertising either educational events or the store, etc. It is the only field in painting that has this direct social connection with life, outside of mural painting. But I don't think it can be taught during the same studio hours as the regular painting class. Students who do poster work should also do some painting. Moselsio: There should be some provision for it, rather than having students doing any kind of art. Hirsch: If we don't do it, the posters which will be made anyway hanging around the College invite a kind of criticism which will constitute a sort of criticism of the Art Division. Moselsio: The work should take the form of some kind of competition. Hirsch: Are you against instituting such a class for one eighth? Park: I don't object to the idea. But the students should operate without supervision in many areas. The Social Studies Division doesn't take responsibility for morals on campus... Hirsch: A painting student could do one eighth of her work in poster work. E. Hirsch: I feel there is no use in doing it unless there is co-operation; and I think a) it could be done; b) it could not be done; c) it could be done by someone else but me; d) it could be done cooperatively between two departments. Hirsch: Is there any objection to trying it out if there is enough student demand?

It was finally decided that there should be some provision made for a poster class if there was enough demand for it early enough in the term, and that it should count one eighth. After counselees were assigned for the spring term, the meeting adjourned.