

Briefly Noticed

Katharine A. Lochnan, *The Etchings of James McNeill Whistler*. 308 pp. and 309 black and white illustrations. Yale University Press. 1984. \$14.95

This publication accompanied the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Gallery of Ontario, mounted to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Whistler's birth in Lowell, Mass. (11th July, 1834) It is a solid catalogue, copiously illustrated to provide a maximum of visual support. Its four chapters are: (1) The Early Years: London, Washington and Paris, 1834-58; (2) Whistler and Realism, 1859-67; (3) Whistler and Aestheticism, 1867-81; (4) The Last Etchings, 1881-1903. Two appendices furnish the reader with a chronology of Whistler as etcher. Unfortunately, the publication does not include a list of plates.

Lochnan's book is a lively and informative addition to the large literature on Whistler. The quantity of its illustrations makes it exceed the bounds of the exhibition it was designed to serve; and there are as well numerous plates of works by other hands put in for purposes of comparison or contrast. Lochnan uses this material to examine the sources of Whistler's etching style in the context of his relation to his contemporaries and to Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Hogarth, Millais and others.

The author further comments on the influence of Japanese artists, such as Hokusai and Hiroshige, on the etchings of Whistler. And she elaborates on the contemporary

developments in photography and how they affected the craft of this inquisitive artist. Fortunately for the reader, Whistler's etchings are here reproduced alongside specimens of the old masters and of Japanese woodcuts.

The first part of the catalogue is a summary of Lochnan's doctoral dissertation submitted to the Courtauld Institute in 1982. The appendices provide a *revised* chronology of Whistler's etching career based on her new research. The central portion of the text allows significant thematic and technical insight into the sources of Whistler's graphic procedures. For the first time, the impact of Seymour Haden upon the artist's earlier etched work is traced, analyzed and fully documented. Lochnan also brings to light the rivalry between Whistler and his brother-in-law, the etcher Francis Haden.

Readers interested in these matters might profitably turn to two related books of recent date: David Park Curry, *James McNeill Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art* (Norton, 1984) and the carefully annotated analysis by Robert Getscher and Paul Marks, *Critical Studies of Whistler and Sargent* (Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985). Taken together, these three source books are bound to provide an invaluable insight into the complex art of Whistler.

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