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Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: Cunningham, John J., Jr. (of Van Dyke Gallery), 1924-1925

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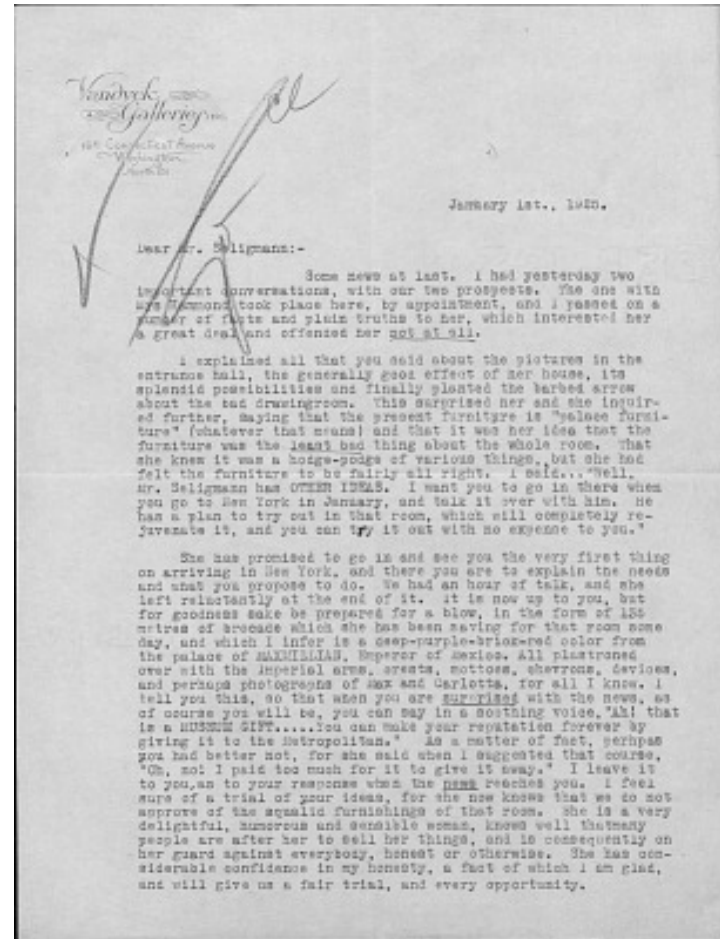
January 1st, 1925.

Dear Mr. Seligmann:-

Some news at last. I had yesterday two important conversations, with our two prospects. The one with Mrs Hammond took place here, by appointment, and I passed on a number of facts and plain truths to her, which interested her a great deal and offended her not at all.

I explained all that you said about the pictures in the entrance hall, the generally good effect of her house, its splendid possibilities and finally planted the barbed arrow about the bad drawingroom. This surprised her and she inquired further, saying that the present furniture is "palace furniture" (whatever that means) and that it was her idea that the furniture was the least bad thing about the whole room. That she knew it was a hodge-podge of various things, but she had felt the furniture to be fairly all right. I said..."Well, Mr. Seligmann has OTHER IDEAS. I want you to go in there when you go to New York in January, and talk it over with him. He has a plan to try out in that room, which will completely rejuvenate it, and you can try it out with no expense to you."

She has promised to go in and see you the very first thing on arriving in New York, and there you are to explain the needs and what you propose to do. We had an hour of talk, and she left reluctantly at the end of it. It is now up to you, but for goodness sake be prepared for a blow, in the form of 135 meters of brocade which she has been saving for that room some day, and which I infer is a deep-purple-brick-red color from the palace of MAXMILLIAN, Emperor of Mexico. All plastroned over with the Imperial arms, crests, mottoes, chevrons, devices, and perhaps photographs of Max and Carlotta, for all I know. I tell you this, so that when you are surprised with the news, as of course you will be, you can say in a soothing voice, "Ah! that is a MUSEUM GIFT.....You can make your reputation forever by giving it to the Metropolitan." As a matter of fact, perhaps you had better not, for she said when I suggested that course, "Oh, no! I paid too much for it to give it away." I leave it to you, as to your response when the news reaches you. I feel sure of a trial of your ideas, for she now knows that we do not approve of the squalid furnishings of that room. She is a very delightful, humorous and sensible woman, knows well that many people are after her to sell her things, and is consequently on her guard against everybody, honest or otherwise. She has considerable confidence in my honesty, a fact of which I am glad, and will give us a fair trial, and every opportunity.



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