In the 1960s many campuses across the United States opened ambitious art museum facilities. The dedication in 1960 of Washington University’s Mark C. Steinberg Hall—with its galleries for the exhibition of art, its spacious auditorium, and at a later stage its dedicated art library—exemplifies this moment of growth in resources for the study of the visual arts in American higher education.1 The progressive building, funded by Etta Eiseman Steinberg (née Etta Alice Eiseman), prompted other donors to support the Gallery of Art (now the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum) in the 1960s, profoundly enhancing its significant holdings in modern and contemporary art. The essay that follows examines that midcentury moment through the lens of one significant patron, exemplifying a key St. Louis story of collecting, taste, and deeply felt civic-mindedness. Steinberg’s story is, to be sure, part of a larger pattern in this dynamic period, which witnessed multiple instances of arts philanthropy that still benefit the University, community, and region alike. My focus here on the efforts of one woman opens for our understanding this particularly robust moment in the expansion of interest in the collecting, exhibition, and study of modern and contemporary art in the Midwest.

Etta Steinberg came from a family whose history epitomizes the success of a new generation of entrepreneurs that emerged in St. Louis in the years after the Civil War. This was an era of prosperity brought about in part by the development of major industrial concerns in the city, such as slaughterhouses, tobacco and grain processing, the manufacture of shoes and other ready-made garments, and (of course) a booming brewing industry. By the late 1890s St. Louis was the nation’s fourth-largest city, a position of strength consolidated by its central location in the country and the active trade made possible by its site on the Mississippi River, coupled with growing railroad networks. It was in this dynamic era of regional growth—capped by the international attention that the World’s Fair of 1904 brought to the city, establishing its reputation as a center of culture and industry—that Steinberg matured. Her father, David Eiseman (born Eisenmann), was a German merchant who came to the United States in 1865 and joined the Rice-Stix dry goods firm in Memphis, which had recently been cofounded by his oldest brother, Benjamin. Fleeing a yellow fever epidemic in Tennessee, the firm moved to St. Louis, attracted by the city’s flourishing business climate. In 1883 in Cincinnati, Eiseman married Aurelia Stix, the niece of one of his business partners, and the couple settled in St. Louis. Rising in the company to the post of vice president and then to that of president, he led the firm to become the third-largest wholesale goods business in America in the period before World War I; he also served as a director of Mercantile Bank of St. Louis.2 Significantly, Steinberg, born in 1887, grew up observing her father’s ambition, his business acumen, and also his strong commitment to civic philanthropy in St. Louis.3
Steinberg was a highly educated young woman of her time. She graduated from Mary Institute in St. Louis in 1905 (fig. 1). The private girls’ school had been founded in 1859 by Washington University chancellor William Greenleaf Eliot and was named in honor of his recently deceased daughter, Mary. (The school was a precursor to the present-day Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School.) In Steinberg’s day, Mary Institute was still officially part of Washington University, and the graduates of her era received directly from the University’s chancellor, Winfield Scott Chaplin, their engraved diplomas identifying the school as “the female Department of Washington University.” This close affiliation with the University illuminates Steinberg’s lifelong love not only of liberal arts education but also of Washington University in particular: she was, in the terms of her day, an alumna of the University’s prep school. Her class yearbook of 1905 describes her as remarkably strong-willed, praising her for her humor and her clear talent for getting her way. She stated at graduation that her goal was to travel, a youthful dream she would realize over the next six decades, particularly as she became engaged in the collecting of European modern art in the 1950s and 1960s. Her studies at Mary Institute included the natural sciences (physics), social sciences (political history), French language, French and English literature, and, in her final year, an elective in art history, a choice that anticipated future interests. Moreover, her eight years of French language studies likely contributed to the development of her taste for French modernism and gave her a limited facility with the language that she used on her many trips to France in later years.

Like many young women of her generation, Steinberg married into a family with a cultural background similar to that of her own. In 1913 she married Mark C. Steinberg, also descended from a German American Jewish family that had settled in St. Louis. Mark Steinberg began work as an office boy in the brokerage firm of Altheimer and Rawlings and eventually, in 1915, founded the Mark C. Steinberg and Co. brokerage firm, where he worked until his death in 1951. Though Steinberg was busy raising their three daughters, she and her husband often dedicated their energy and resources to local causes. In the wake of World War I, for example, Mark Steinberg led a fund-raising effort for the Jewish War Relief campaign of St. Louis, a group whose ambitious goal of raising $250,000 for the Red Cross and Liberty Bonds indicates the wealth of...
In the 1920s Steinberg was active in parallel efforts in Jewish women’s groups that raised funds in St. Louis for immigrant aid, the physically handicapped, and the reconstruction effort in postwar Europe. On the eve of the Great Depression, the couple made a substantial gift that both honored Steinberg’s father and foreshadowed one of her future charitable causes, giving $150,000 to erect a new wing for the Jewish Hospital of St. Louis. Only setbacks brought by the Depression slowed their giving, but they reemerged after World War II, their fortunes once again robust.

True to Steinberg’s youthful ambition, the couple traveled extensively throughout their marriage. Ship manifests track their myriad voyages, usually with one of their three daughters, including trips to Bermuda, Cuba, and England in the 1920s and 1930s (fig. 2). A trip to Egypt to visit the pyramids followed around 1950, and on their first postwar trip to Paris, they spotted a canvas by Marc Chagall, one of the best-known Jewish artists of the School of Paris, that would become their first major painting acquisition. They purchased Over the Town of 1924 (fig. 3) from Galerie Katia Granoff in May 1950. This picture, a copy made by Chagall after his composition of 1914–18 (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow), engages in a quasi-Surrealist play on the worlds of the unconscious and the dream by depicting the artist and his wife floating effortlessly over the Russian town of Vitebsk. The work likely appealed to the Steinbergs for its exuberant color, its romantic theme, and its magical account of daily life in the Old World. Steinberg’s two ambitious decades of art collecting began with this purchase, a choice from an artist already popular in the United States just after the war, thanks to the endorsements of such leading figures as the critic Harold Rosenberg, the gallerist Pierre Matisse, and a comprehensive Chagall exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in 1946.

But collecting modern art was not to be a joint enterprise for the couple. Only a year later, Mark Steinberg died, leaving Etta Steinberg, a healthy and independent widow of sixty-four, in charge of a charitable trust funded by their considerable fortune. The founding of charitable trusts surged in the United States in the post–World War II era, reaching some five thousand in the early 1950s. This trend emerged because growing wealth was newly available to distribute in the healthy postwar economy and, notably, because Roosevelt’s enduring programs of tax breaks had incentivized charitable giving. In fact, the 1950s became what has been termed a golden age of mass philanthropy, with unprecedented new private resources being directed to the development of institutions of higher learning and to art museums and other nonprofit arts institutions. For Steinberg the 1950s brought new opportunities and freedoms. As for many talented women of her social class and level of education who had not worked
professionally, the chance to contribute and shape cultural enterprises offered her a kind of satisfying de facto career. Moreover, Steinberg was heiress to a broad tradition of Jewish womanhood that fostered individual commitment among the fortunate classes in serving the community through volunteerism and civic-mindedness.

As Steinberg adapted to widowhood after nearly forty years of marriage, she was able to deepen her existing interests. To honor the civic priorities of both her late husband and her father, she gave generously in the 1960s to found the Mark C. Steinberg Hospital (1967), thus supporting the St. Louis Jewish Hospital, where her husband received care during his final illness and where both her father and her husband had served as president. But she also avidly pursued new interests, with a democratic mind to improving the daily life of the ordinary St. Louisan. Having been delighted by the Wollman Rink in Central Park on a visit to New York City, she decided that St. Louis should enjoy a comparable ice-skating rink but only if it could be open to persons of all races and ethnicities and be free to all children. With those democratic stipulations, which coincided with the early desegregation efforts of the civil rights movement, the Mark C. Steinberg Memorial Skating Rink opened in Forest Park in 1957. Steinberg also spread her support among various educational institutions, including the Pope Pius XII Library at St. Louis University and John Burroughs School. In the 1950s and 1960s she focused her cultural interests on the visual arts and began forming her own collection, a passion sparked by the acquisition of the Chagall painting in Paris in 1950. Surely aware of the impact of American women collectors, she briefly continued the tradition of bringing both European old master and more modern works to her city, as had Isabella Stuart Gardner in Boston a half-century earlier.

But even within her first years of collecting, Steinberg began to concentrate on Impressionist and Post-Impressionist canonical artists. This area had of course been a far more radical choice when works by these artists were first imported at the turn of the twentieth century by such leading women collectors as Louise Havemeyer (1855–1929) of New York and Bertha Palmer (1849–1918) of Chicago. While for that generation investment in Impressionism had been a somewhat bold and experimental move into cosmopolitan art collecting, by midcentury the acquisition of works by French Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and the School of Paris was a more stable enterprise, one that promised a solid investment in an established cultural tradition. For regional museums in the United States, adding such works to their collections was a means to display a sense of worldly taste. Steinberg’s eye was thus on Paris, and she did not expand her collecting practice to reflect her own affiliations—that is, she did not (beyond a few examples) turn to the art of modern Jewish artists or to American or St. Louis artists. Rather, her personal taste and her cultural philanthropy of the 1950s were based on aesthetic priorities that developed as she sought an increasingly sophisticated understanding of modern French art. She aspired to a collection that would not just speak to her own taste but would garner for her community the national and international profile enjoyed by larger metropolitan art centers like New York, Boston, and Chicago.
with their massive museums and well-pedigreed collections. It was a realizable goal. In the decade following the end of World War II, opportunities for collectors of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art were indeed many as great troves of canonical modern works came into the art market, and prices for desirable French masterpieces were, for a short while at least, somewhat within reason.

Etta Steinberg learned quickly about the business culture of art galleries and was ready to search carefully but buy quickly if necessary to build an outstanding collection. Over the 1950s and early 1960s she worked with a number of leading European galleries that sold works by classic modernists (as identified in the influential lineage established in the early twentieth century by Roger Fry) such as Edouard Manet and Pablo Picasso. The dealers she patronized include the signature names of the era: Galerie Beyeler (Georges Braque), Fritz Nathan (Eugène Boudin, Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh), Paul Rosenberg (Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Picasso), Sam Salz (Manet), Gimpel Fils (Claude Monet), Knoedler (Monet and Picasso), and Louise Leiris (Picasso). From when she began collecting in earnest in the early 1950s until her death in 1974, Steinberg amassed considerable holdings, largely of French modernism, in the vein of the modernist School of Paris lineage established by MoMA director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., earlier in the century. Her gifts to the Saint Louis Art Museum, made between 1953 and 1959, included major works by Cézanne, Gustave Courbet, Edgar Degas (both a pastel and a sculpture), Paul Gauguin, Van Gogh (two canvases), and Monet. In the 1950s Steinberg had come to know the Washington University community well, particularly Ethan Shepley (chancellor from 1953 to 1961). When William Eisendrath, assistant director at the Saint Louis Art Museum, moved across the park to become curator of the collection at the Gallery of Art at Washington University in 1960, Steinberg strengthened her link to the University by moving her arts patronage with him. She made substantial gifts to the Gallery of Art between 1960 and 1967, including sculptures by Alexander Calder (fig. 14), Pietro Consagra, Jacob Epstein, and Ibram Lassaw (fig. 10) and canvases by Roberto Matta, Picasso (fig. 8), and Jean-Paul Riopelle (fig. 9). In addition to making or promising significant gifts to the museums of her city, she added to her personal collection. By her death it comprised a few dozen more paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by such figures as Pierre Bonnard, Boudin, Braque, Cézanne, Salvador Dalí, Ingres, Henri Laurens, Jacques Lipchitz, Aristide Maillol, Manet, Monet, Henri Moore, Picasso, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edouard Vuillard.

Just as Steinberg had voyaged abroad frequently with her family in the interwar period, she traveled in
Unlike her St. Louis contemporary and friend Morton D. (“Buster”) May, however, Etta Steinberg seems to have had little taste for modern German art, and only in the 1960s did her interests grow to embrace some American contemporary art. In the 1950s her focus was Paris, but she could not have amassed such a superb collection of French modernism, particularly in less than ten years, had she not been tutored and assisted at critical moments by those more experienced in the art market. As she declared her interest in collecting, she came into the circle of pursuit of art in the 1950s and 1960s, going to New York, Paris, London, and Rome to visit museums and galleries, usually in the company of her daughter Florence and son-in-law Richard K. Weil (and sometimes their children). In 1958 Steinberg and her daughter and son-in-law paid a call on Peggy Guggenheim, a leading collector of modern art who was living in Venice. In Paris, Steinberg frequented both leading galleries of modern art (André Seligman, Louise Leiris, Katia Granoff, Georges Bernier, Galerie Maeght, and others) and the hallmark museums, such as the Musée du Jeu de Paume, with its stunning collection of Impressionist pictures (now relocated to the Musée d’Orsay). She usually made these visits in the company of Florence and Richard Weil, who had also become committed collectors of modern and contemporary European art and shared her sense of excitement in exploring galleries and museums. The two generations of this family clearly inspired each other in their new passion for collecting and also in an ideal of civic philanthropy, resulting often in parallel acts of giving artworks to the Saint Louis Art Museum and, increasingly after 1960, to Washington University. In the postwar era, such American collectors often took full advantage of federal government policies allowing donors to take generous deductions for the purchase of works of art that they promised to give to public museums but could keep in their homes during their lifetimes.

In becoming robust patrons of St. Louis’s art museums, Steinberg and the Weils echoed the efforts of Joseph Pulitzer and other distinguished midcentury collectors of modern art. In 1953, only three years after buying her first canvas, Steinberg presented to the Saint Louis Art Museum a painting by Van Gogh, a deeply revered figure in the United States whose work would attract a ready audience. And the example was indeed a major work, *Vineyards at Auvers* (1890; fig. 4), a landscape featuring the thick, insistent brushstrokes of his signature late style. That same year, Florence and Richard Weil gave the museum Vuillard’s *The Art Dealers* (1908; fig. 5), a striking salmon-colored interior that features the Bernheim brothers, leading gallerists in the Parisian world of pictures in the early twentieth century, a milieu that the Weils had come to frequent several decades later.

Unlike her St. Louis contemporary and friend Morton D. (“Buster”) May, however, Etta Steinberg seems to have had little taste for modern German art, and only in the 1960s did her interests grow to embrace some American contemporary art. In the 1950s her focus was Paris, but she could not have amassed such a superb collection of French modernism, particularly in less than ten years, had she not been tutored and assisted at critical moments by those more experienced in the art market. As she declared her interest in collecting, she came into the circle
of Perry Rathbone, the charismatic and cultivated director of the Saint Louis Art Museum from 1940 to 1955. Trained at Harvard in the distinguished museum course at the Fogg Museum, taught by Paul Sachs, Rathbone was committed to bringing more masterpieces of the highest caliber to the rapidly growing collections of St. Louis. His cultivation of Steinberg as a new but sophisticated collector was made easier in 1952, when William Eisendrath joined his staff. Keen to develop the quality of local collections, they together advised her—as well as other leading St. Louis collectors—in the acquisition of key masterworks, in her case with an emphasis on French modernism. They alternated in serving as intermediaries with European dealers in a number of her major purchases.22

Steinberg often kept the pictures she gifted to the museum on loan, both long- and short-term, in her home, which she decorated as many collectors of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works did in that era: with Asian porcelains and European decorative arts, used as accents to complement the colorful and highly textured surfaces of her Impressionist works.23 Her house (and later her apartment) became a destination for distinguished out-of-town visitors. Rathbone and Eisendrath (both in this period and later, when the latter was at Washington University) escorted scholars and collectors such as Samuel and Florence Marx, important collectors of Matisse and board members at MoMA.24 Leading cultural figures of the day also stopped at the Steinberg residence, such as the Russian-born prima ballerina Alexandra Danilova, who came for a private viewing of Degas’s pastel rendering of dancers preparing for performance (fig. 6). A collection of such note claimed a prominent place for St. Louis on the national art scene, as evidenced by an article published by Eisendrath in Connoisseur magazine.25

For all her growing authority in developing a leading collection, and her clear confidence in her own taste, Steinberg was willing to be coached in what was productive to bring to St. Louis and what was not. Her sensitivity about bringing in works that would not overlap too much with other private collections in town is revealed in her correspondence while on a European tour in 1959. She had spotted a Gauguin sculpture (surely a posthumous cast of a wood original), and she was keen to check with Eisendrath before buying it. When he confirmed that the Shoenberg family in St. Louis indeed already had the same sculpture, he advised her to pass on the Gauguin and to consider instead a Monet that he had spotted at Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York, advice that she apparently followed.26 She also turned to Rathbone, asking him to keep an eye out for excellent examples by artists whose works she longed to acquire.27

Her ambition in bringing the best to St. Louis was particularly evident in her highly important gift in 1956 of one of Monet’s panels of water lilies, a segment of the Agapanthus triptych (c. 1915–26; fig. 7).28 This late enterprise of Monet’s is now understood as a significant breakthrough in modernist painting, fusing decorative tendencies with a monumental, environment scale that tested the inherited boundaries of nineteenth-century easel painting while opening an important door to
the abstraction and surface-oriented painterliness of the years that followed. But in the 1950s these works were little known or appreciated in the United States. Steinberg's purchase stimulated Eisendrath, who had been central to her purchase of the work, to coorganize in 1957 a major Monet show, including fine examples of the lesser-known late work. While the impressive Monet was not the last work Steinberg would give to the Saint Louis Art Museum (she would give an important portrait by Gauguin, *Madame Roulin* [1888], for example, in 1959), she soon shifted her philanthropic energies to Washington University, following her friend and mentor Eisendrath to the Gallery of Art.

Until that time, many of the artworks owned by the University had been stored at the Saint Louis Art Museum, but a new city policy regarding the storage of property of other institutions forced the University to make firm plans for a new building on campus that could both house and exhibit the world-class collection. Previous exhibitions of works as important as Picasso's drawings for *Guernica* (1937), a show organized by MoMA, had been displayed in cases in the University's library, as no better-secured exhibition space was yet available on campus. Steinberg was recruited as the major donor for an ambitious new edifice for a museum on campus. The gift was announced in 1957, and construction began in early 1959. Mark C. Steinberg Hall was designed by the young Fumihiko Maki, a faculty member at Washington University's School of Architecture since 1956. The exceptional building—with tall galleries designed to showcase art and a daringly cantilevered second floor with faculty offices and classrooms—was the most radically contemporary work that Steinberg had yet underwritten. In 1957 she proudly hailed the plans for the building as “a wonderful design and . . . a fine addition to Washington University.”

Indeed, in 1960 she made a major gift of a work by Picasso, arguably the most famous living artist of that moment. Possibly inspired by the anonymous loan to the Saint Louis Art Museum in the winter of 1956 and spring of 1957 of two versions of Picasso's series based on Eugène Delacroix's *Femmes d’Algers*, Steinberg donated a Picasso canvas from that series in honor of the new Gallery of Art at Washington University (fig. 8). From the canvases available through Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York, Steinberg selected the penultimate version of *Femmes d’Algers* in the series of fifteen canvases made in 1955, choosing a version that Picasso...
himself especially favored. Given the explicit nature of this scene of odalisques, which challenges the viewer both through the aggressive forms and the domineering scale of the figures, this was a bold choice for a woman in her seventies. It represented a major recalibration of her taste, moving away from mainline Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masters such as Degas, Cézanne, and Gauguin, whose works she had gifted to the Saint Louis Art Museum in 1956 and 1959. Perhaps she found Picasso's visual conversation with the motifs of Delacroix, a sanctioned master of Romanticism, an intriguing entrée into the world of contemporary art. At the time she made the gift, the painting had been away from the artist's hand for a mere five years, making this her most contemporary selection to date. Picasso became a central pathway into the diversity of twentieth-century modernism for Steinberg: starting in 1959, she bought three additional Picasso paintings for her own collection. Probably under the influence of her daughter and Eisendrath, she also made a limited foray into the collecting of contemporary abstraction, acquiring such paintings as Riopelle's Abstraction (1964; fig. 9). She did not fully enjoy this “automatiste” strain of contemporary art, however, whereas she proudly hung Picasso's Femmes d'Algers in her bedroom. The more adventurous path of collecting postwar European abstraction was taken up with acumen by the next generation of the family, namely Florence and Richard Weil.

Under the guidance of Frederick Hartt, curator of the University's collection during the planning of the new building, and in response to the modernist space of Steinberg Hall, Steinberg expanded her interests into contemporary sculpture. For the dedication of the structure, she sponsored the commission of a sculpture by Ibram Lassaw, an artist of Russian Jewish heritage who was chosen for her by a University committee. After developing a signature style of abstract welded constructions in the 1940s, Lassaw had begun in 1953 to execute commissions nationwide for public venues such as synagogues and universities. In May 1959 Steinberg enjoyed what for her was the novel experience of meeting the artist who would carry out her commission on-site in St. Louis, welding it with the help of art students. The unveiling of his monumental yet delicate fabrication Presence (1960) at the opening of Steinberg Hall was a source of satisfaction to his patron, as evidenced by photographs that show her happily inspecting the work during its installation and at various openings (fig. 10). Interested now in the intersection of public spaces and public art, she returned in 1962 to the Steinberg Skating Rink in Forest Park to add the massive bronze Joie de vivre by Jacques Lipchitz to the site (fig. 11). Lipchitz, like Chagall, was a Jewish artist who had fled Paris for New York during the war. Lipchitz was now well-established in the United States, yet this was no contemporary piece. The sculptor had designed it in Paris in 1927 and fabricated it later in several casts, one of which Steinberg purchased. The theme of the sculpture was obviously intended to echo the physicality and joy of the athletic pastime of skating, the focus of the site. Steinberg clearly appreciated how public art could fully complement the spirit and function of public spaces.

This new openness to the power of sculpture to inhabit and transform public spaces likely informed Steinberg’s enthusiasm for the Calder exhibition organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, which Eisendrath brought to Washington University in 1965. She sponsored not only the show and its opening (figs. 12, 13) but also the Gallery of Art’s commission of Calder’s Five Rudders (1964).
Not surprisingly, during the second half of the twentieth century, several of the larger American cities between the coasts witnessed a similar florescence of collections of modern art, combined with ambitious agendas of arts philanthropy, at local museums and universities. A key comparison is the case of Margaret McDermott, still living in the Dallas area. McDermott also came from a family that had lived in her city for generations—in her case, a pioneer Texas family. She too became interested in collecting art through travels in Europe following World War II, and her collecting practices closely paralleled those of Steinberg, particularly in French Impressionism (in fact, both women donated major Water Lily canvases by Monet to their city museums). Following the death in 1973 of McDermott’s husband, Eugene, a cofounder of Texas Instruments, she devoted decades to supporting culture and the arts in Dallas. Notably, McDermott’s contributions to the Dallas Museum of Art and to the University of Texas, Dallas, offer a striking parallel to Steinberg’s arts philanthropy across museums and educational institutions in St. Louis. Such determined and generous women, devoted to enhancing the cultural landscapes of the cities of their birth, have made a substantial impact on the public experience of modern art. In particular, the life of Etta Eiseman Steinberg reveals a fascinating intersection of a postwar American passion for collecting modern European and contemporary art with a generous spirit of community, a commitment to higher education, and Midwestern pride. Her philanthropic activities constitute one the most significant episodes of arts patronage in mid-twentieth-century St. Louis, and the city continues to enjoy the benefits of her vision more than half a century later.
Notes


2 This history of David Eiseman is taken from the Weil family history, researched by Paula Weil. I am very grateful for her generous help on matters of biographical detail. Any errors that remain, however, are my own.

3 By 1912 he was serving as president of the St. Louis Jewish Hospital and was active in the United Jewish Charities in the city. On David Eiseman, see Albert Nelson Marquis, The Book of St. Louisans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the City of St. Louis and Vicinity, 2nd ed. (Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1912), 177.

4 Mary Institute, founded in 1859, remained part of Washington University until 1949. In 1958 the Saint Louis Country Day School (for boys) moved to share the campus with Mary Institute in Ladue. The two schools officially merged into Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School (MICDS) in 1992.

5 I am grateful to the archivist of Mary Institute (present-day MICDS), Anne Stupp McAlpin, for the opportunity to consult the 1905 graduation program, the 1905 class yearbook, and the book MICDS: 150 Years of Great Teaching and Learning (St. Louis, 2009). I also thank her for confirming Steinberg’s course schedules for me.

6 Information on Steinberg’s French skills is based on Paula Weil’s recollection of being with her grandmother in Paris in the early autumn of 1958. E-mail correspondence with the author, August 4, 2014.

7 The Reform Advocate: America’s Jewish Journal 54 (January 19, 1918): 570.

8 “Program of the 10th Triennial Convention Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis, Mo., November 11–16, 1923,” xxviii.

9 Records available through Ancestry.com confirm that the Steinberg family traveled to Bermuda in 1924; to England twice in 1934 and again in 1935; and to Havana in 1938.

10 Notes by Florence Weil on Etta E. Steinberg’s collection, Weil Family Archives. The painting is no longer in the family collection; its location today is unknown.


13 Women’s Philanthropy Institute at the Center of Philanthropy at Indiana University, “A Sense of Place: A Short History of Women’s Philanthropy in America” (March 2010), 1–2.


15 Obituary for Etta Eiseman Steinberg, Kansas City Times, September 6, 1974.

16 A letter from Rathbone to Steinberg dated May 30, 1963, details his efforts to help her identify a small Dutch painting that she had acquired. Rathbone files, Saint Louis Art Museum Archives.

17 William Eisendrath was assistant to the director at the Saint Louis Art Museum from 1952 to 1955 and assistant director from 1955 to 1960. He also served as acting director briefly in 1955 and 1964.


19 Ibid. The names of galleries that Steinberg patronized in Paris are found in the Weil Family Archives; my thanks to John Weil for sharing this material.


21 In 1957, when MoMA organized German Art of the 20th Century, a major exhibition at the City Art Museum (later the Saint Louis Art Museum) that opened in early 1958, the only German works from St. Louis private collections came from Morton D. May (six works) and from Florence and Richard K. Weil (one work). A later sales catalogue confirms that Steinberg at her death owned a sculpture by Georg Kolbe and a few drawings by Otto Dix and George Grosz. Modern Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture (New York: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977), nos. 631, 632–635A.

22 A letter from Rathbone to Steinberg dated February 19, 1955, confirms his work with Fritz Nathan to acquire a Cézanne watercolor. Rathbone files. Rathbone even helped her purchase decorative Florentine terra-cotta pots. Rathbone to Steinberg, September 11, 1954, Rathbone files. Eisendrath facilitated the two major Monet purchases Steinberg made: Agapanthus in 1956 and La barque rose in 1958. Only the former was a gift to the Saint Louis Art Museum (134.56).

23 For comparison, consider how Marion and Henry Bloch, distinguished collectors in Kansas City, furnished the spaces of their home devoted to a similar collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. See Richard R. Brettell, “Domestic Artifice: Art Collecting and Modern Bourgeois Life,” in Manet to Matisse: Impressionist Masters from the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection, by Brettell and Joachim Pissarro (Kansas City, MO: Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, 2007), 19–27. Examples of Steinberg’s eighteenth-century Chinese export plates were once in the Washington University’s collection (former nos. WU 4289 A–B).

24 Rathbone to Steinberg, July 16, 1953, Rathbone files.


26 Etta Steinberg to William Eisendrath, received September 3, 1958; Eisendrath to Steinberg, September 4, 1958. Eisendrath files, Saint Louis Art Museum Archives.
27 For example, she asked him to look out for “a fine Gauguin” for her. Steinberg to Rathbone, received February 26, 1955, Rathbone files.


29 Claude Monet: A Loan Exhibition (St. Louis: City Art Museum; Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1957).

30 Eugene A. Carroll, e-mail correspondence with the author, October 17, 2007.

31 Steinberg to Charles Nagel, director of the Saint Louis Art Museum [1957], Nagel files, Saint Louis Art Museum Archives.


33 Degas, Little Dancer of Fourteen Years (135:1956); Cézanne, Bathers (2:1956); and Gauguin, Madame Roulin (5:1959).

34 In 1959 she bought Picasso’s Mandoline et compotier avec pommes devant une fenêtre (c. 1926) from Knoedler and Co., New York; in 1964 she bought Picasso’s Pierrot et arlequin from Georges Bernier, Paris; and in 1965 she added Picasso’s Déjeuner sur l’herbe (1960) from the Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris. All these she kept throughout her lifetime. Notes on Etta Steinberg’s collection by Florence Weil, Weil Family Archives.

35 Mark Weil, interview with the author, February 27, 2014; and John Weil, interview with the author, May 14, 2014.

36 Hartt to Steinberg, April 8, 1959, Lassaw object files, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum.
