1913

FOR AND AGAINST

Views on the International Exhibition held in New York and Chicago

EDITED BY
FREDERICK JAMES GREGG

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Published by the
Association of American Painters and Sculptors Inc.
New York

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International Exhibition of Modern Art
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Respectfully Dedicated to
Ourselves

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THE STATEMENT

The following official statement as to the attitude of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors was given out by Mr. Arthur B. Davies, the President, on the last day of December, 1912:

"On behalf of the Executive Committee I desire to explain the general attitude of the Association, and especially in regard to the International Exhibition.

"This is not an institution but an association. It is composed of persons of varying tastes and predilections, who are agreed on one thing—that the time has arrived for giving the public here the opportunity to see for themselves the results of new influences at work in other countries in an art way.

"In getting together the works of the European Moderns, the Society has embarked on no propaganda. It proposes to enter on no controversy with any institution. Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures, and so on, on exhibition so that the intelligent may judge for themselves by themselves.

"Of course, controversies will arise, just as they have arisen under similar circumstances in France, Italy, Germany, and England. But they will not be the result of any stand taken by this Association as such. On the

other hand, we are perfectly willing to assume full responsibility for providing the opportunity to those who may take one side or the other.

"Any individual expression of opinion contrary to the above is at variance with the official resolutions of this Association."

THE NEW YORK EXHIBITION

When the Association of American Painters and Sculptors was formed in the early part of 1912 there was some discussion as to the sort of exhibition which it should organize. As a result of a talk of a number of men around a dinner table, it was decided that the most useful and necessary thing was to display French and American works together. The original idea was to obtain a few European paintings and sculptures, but, later on, this was changed and a real and comprehensive international exhibition was decided upon.

Mr. Davies, who had charge of the work of selecting the foreign exhibits, proposed to make the things shown indicate the line of development from the early part of the last century until the present day. All of the masters selected, big or little, represented some definite breach with accepted authority and tradition, from Ingres to the Impressionists, from the Impressionists to Cézanne, and from Cézanne to the "Cubists."

When the works had been procured, the next difficulty —a very serious one in New York—was the choice of a place to exhibit them. Several academic persons had been protesting for years that art was hampered through the failure of the city, or of the community at large, to

provide some building in which exhibitions could be held. The Association of American Painters and Sculptors knocked this grievance into a cocked hat by demonstrating that it is possible to improvise a fine exhibition hall whenever it is needed.

The big, new armory of the Sixty-ninth Regiment of Infantry, at Lexington avenue, between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth streets, New York, was taken. The floor space was divided up into groups of rooms by means of temporary walls covered with simple burlap. The whole structure was then decorated with green foliage and pine trees, representing the badge of the Association. The result was that, within less than half a week, the handsomest exhibition hall ever seen in America was brought into existence. It was said by one of the critics that, if the Association had stopped short and not hung a single picture, or put up a single piece of sculpture, it would have performed a notable work in solving what had been regarded as one of the town's great problems.

The Association, having failed, for one reason or another, to secure the co-operation of certain high public officials, who seemed to be sceptical as to the success of the enterprise, and who certainly had no idea of the fuss which it was about to produce, started the exhibition off its own bat.

The press view took place on February 16 and the opening reception was held on the following night. From

then on the attendance kept growing steadily larger, until it reached the figure of 10,000 on the closing day, March 15. It is a conservative estimate that the total attendance in the month was 100,000. Over 230 works in paintings, sculptures, etc., were sold.

Soon after the opening of the exhibition, representatives of the Art Institute of Chicago went to New York and opened negotiations with the Association with a view to securing the exhibit for their city. A contract satisfactory to both parties was drawn quickly, and within ten days of the closing of the exhibition in New York it was installed in the fine galleries of the building on Michigan avenue. Mr. Kuhn, the Secretary; Mr. Gregg and Mr. Pach were able to hang the whole exhibition in one day, owing to the wonderful skill displayed by the employes of the Art Institute, who are as intelligent as they are willing and resourceful. Mr. Robert W. Chanler came from New York to arrange his screens, which proved to be, as before, a striking feature of the exhibition.

LETTING IN THE LIGHT

Frederick James Gregg, in Harper's Weekly

The Exhibition of International Art (February 17 to March 15) was planned to introduce to this public the works of a number of foreign artists, who, though they are well known in Europe, are for the most part but names to New York and America. The method adopted, however, was not to throw our "extreme" contemporaries at the heads of the public, but to show, by a process of selection, from what they had developed. So Ingres was taken as the starting point, the line continuing with Delacroix, Courbet, Corot, Daumier, Puvis de Chavannes, Degas, Renoir, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, and so down to Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, and the "Cubists."

Until the present occasion the most that Americans knew, in America, of the "movement" abroad, outside some few examples shown at certain small exhibitions here, were the works of certain young men who had gone to France and become immediately and deliberately, perhaps, sensitive to their new environment. Many of them were but weak imitators. It seemed that it was the extravagance of the new foreign painters and sculptors that affected them, and of that extravagance they

were the feeble reflectors, all the strength of the originals having evaporated in the process.

The result was the natural one, the public looked on the productions of these disciples as a joke, and could not be convinced that it had any real or valid reason for its existence. The Association, in bringing over the work of the men so eagerly imitated wished to allow Americans to see among other things the difference between the substance and the shadow, between what had set a fashion unwittingly and what was merely fashionable. In the case of those who are now really influential there can be no difficulty about comparing a man's early with his later work. It will be found, on comparison, that the change is the result of a certain logical development. Each step has been in a definite direction and follows the one before. It was not a case of "going somebody one better," or intended to cause surprise or even astonishment. If there was an explanation offered, though it might not explain, at any rate it gave people something to think about.

It was found by Mr. Davies and Mr. Kuhn, the committee of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors which was sent abroad to select works for the New York exhibition, that most of the German Post-Impressionists were adapters, the result being that very little of what they had done had any real significance. A German of Cologne, speaking of the tendency of his

fellow-countrymen, said that they were becoming "ultra-intellectual" as distinguished from "ultra-intelligent"; that they went so far, deliberately, as to make their work "sickly." As for the English advanced men, or so-called advanced men, with certain notable exceptions, their work did not exhibit much force or show real development, which is the reason why they are not more widely represented. At the same time there are British painters and sculptors not shown here who ought to be here. But, owing to the shortness of time, all committees, foreign as well as American, found it impossible to cover the field. This is why, for instance, the Russian Modernists, who are affected by the naïve folk-art of the empire, are not shown.

As for the "system" followed in selecting the work, it is to be kept in mind that the entire exhibition is the result of a plan of the committee. It decided to go out and find American and foreign art that it considered suitable to its purpose. This it did. But it also had to consider American work that it had not invited, in cases where artists asked to have their paintings and sculptures inspected. It is to be observed that this is a very different matter from sending out a general invitation for works which would have to be dealt with by a regular jury. In fact, the association might put it this way: "This is our show—we have had a special purpose in view in arranging it. We did not try to put so many pictures on view, or wish to give an opportunity to exhibit to this, that, or

the other person. We desired to give our public the chance to see what has been going on abroad, as it is important for us to know to what extent we have not come under the influences of the period, whatever they may be."

It is natural that the artists should take most interest in the notable group made up of Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. The first, the old man of Aix, "wild, candid, irascible, and good," whom his friend Zola did not understand, though he drew the painter's portrait as a young man in "L'Œuvre," has come into his own after a life of neglect and even contempt. Impressionism saved him from Scholasticism, and the need of finding himself saved him from Impressionism. Cézanne did not believe in despising his predecessors, or that "the old masters exist to teach us what to avoid," as was said recently. He used to haunt the Louvre galleries as Van Gogh used to haunt the Dutch galleries. He became a hermit not through hatred of humanity, but through sensitiveness at neglect. As he fled from the anecdote in painting, so the anecdote fled from his life. His determination to let no one "get his grappling-irons" on him but showed his determination to work out his own development on his own lines. Refused at the Salon with Pissarro, Claude Monet, and Sisley, he and Renoir went beyond Impressionism, while Courbet and Daumier were among the men whose work helped his progress.

Gauguin, no more than Cézanne, despised his art

ancestors. But whether in Tahiti or in Brittany—he left an assured career on the stock exchange to make painting his profession—he sought after simplicity, a simplicity bordering on the archaic—simplicity and strength. If his drawing is false, it is voluntarily so. Whatever "fault" he has has its purpose. That is why he puzzles the vulgar.

Van Gogh, the third of the Titans, is revealed, not only in his paintings, but in his wonderful letters to his brother and Emile Bernard, letters that have a deep sanity. Although he gave painting his whole attention only when he was twenty-nine, and died by his own hand at thirty-seven years of age, a great career was crowded into the interval. A leader in new paths, he, too, believed that "as long as there are those who are living, the dead will live." His theory was "the chief thing is to strengthen one's self entirely through reality, without any preconceived plan and without any watchword hailing from Paris." He showed his belief in the inter-relationship of art when he pointed out on one occasion that the early Italians, the German Primitives, the Dutch School, and the later Italians quite involuntarily constitute a group, a series.

Next to the big masters of the Modernist movement, Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh, come a lot of men whose names even have not been known to the general run of American artists. There is a group of sculptors, of various nationalities, including Manolo, Bran-

cusi, Lehmbruck, Maillol, and Archipenko. Manolo, who is no longer young, is a Spaniard who came to the front only recently. Although his work was thought highly of by even conservative sculptors for years, he had difficulty in getting it shown. His portrait of his friend and admirer, Mr. Kahnweiler, is one of his most notable performances.

Brancusi in his youth used to be a conservative, exhibiting at the Salon. He disappeared from view some years ago and emerged from his hiding place with a new manner. He now describes his five years at a trade school, five at the art school in Bucharest, and five at the Beaux Arts in Paris as "fifteen years of waste," and the early work from the sale of which he still makes a living as "raw beefsteak." He goes further than Manolo in the direction of making his sculpture "subjective." That is to say, he tries to express personality with as little objective likeness as possible. A portrait with him is intended to show how the subject affects him, not to suggest reproduction. He is a great believer in the use of the chisel by the artist himself, finding modeling in clay "too easy." His example in this respect has been followed by a lot of the younger men. Of Brancusi's sincerity there can be no doubt. His enthusiasm for the work of other artists whom he admires is, like his love for music, a sort of passion. He does not believe in the finality of any artist's style, and believes that he will keep on changing indefinitely.

Archipenko is a native of Kieff. He used to be an adherent of the Cubists, but is such no longer. It is said that he thoroughly disapproves of the recent influence of Picasso in the direction of extravagance.

Matisse is better known here as a painter than a sculptor. He is a graduate of the Beaux Arts, but came early under the influence of Cézanne and Renoir. He has a wide following and his work is in great demand in Russia and Germany.

The name of Matisse naturally suggests that of Picasso, a Spaniard who arrived in Paris at the age of seventeen, and has been active ever since. From the first his paintings had a market, every fresh change in his manner gaining new adherents and puzzling those who had bought his earlier work. He has hosts of imitators, against whom the charge is made that they do not express their own emotions or conceptions, but are concerned only in suggesting the method of their idolized master.

One of the most interesting of the moderns is the late Henri Rousseau. He was a custom-house officer who took to art in middle life, working on Sundays. His friends used to consider it a good joke to tell him that he was a great man and well on the way to becoming famous. The students, descendants of the students who jeered at Cézanne, would howl before his canvases at the Independents. But the fun-makers were unconscious prophets. Henri Rousseau, whose funeral even was half

a joke with some, is now recognized as a true master by the men whose judgment has authority.

Bonnard, formerly the pride of Julian's, became through the influence of Serusier, a follower of Gauguin and Redon. He paints big pictures, and has done decorations in collaboration with Roussel and Vuillard. One of his pet theories is that artists ought not to accept official honors of any sort.

Denis is the philosopher of the moderns, and is noted as a teacher. Some say that his work goes to prove that a man cannot be a great theorist and a great original artist at the same time. One of Denis's notable works is a series of water-colors illustrating the "Little Flowers" of St. Francis of Assisi. Dufy, like Brancusi, has hidden himself from the world for the purpose of growth. He uses decorative work for pot-boiling purposes. Gleizes used to be an Impressionist, but now strives to conceal any signs of that influence in his work.

Seurat's work is very scarce, and since his death has fetched big prices. He is akin as an artist to Signac. They became friends when they discovered that they had been going along parallel lines without knowing it. Vallotton is best known for his black-and-white work and his vigorous use of the line. He is noted, among other things, as a fine portraitist. The lithographs of Toulouse Lautrec were exhibited in this city some years ago. Sousa-Cardozo is a Portuguese whose paintings have a great vogue in Moscow and Berlin.

Here are some remarks made recently which are worthy of the attention of those who go to the exhibition at the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory:

A man prominent in art and literature in Berlin said: "The amateur always searches among the imitators for the 'new greatness;' the independent searcher he passes by; the collector of the imitators of the French moderns, are the very men who formerly bought pictures by Kiesel and Defregger."

The robust Munch said, "What have I to say about my present style of painting? It is as I feel at present. Maybe the worst thing I do will be soft and delicate, or dark and gloomy. My work of to-day represents a period only."

Leo Stein said, "Van Gogh is a great personality, but not a great artist. Cézanne and Matisse began to paint where he left off."

The moral is that there is nothing final in art, no last word, and that the main thing is not to be taken in on one hand, and not to be blind on the other.

HINDSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

"Wir sind's gewöhnt:—die Leut'
verhöhnen was sie nicht verstehen."
—Act I, Goethe's "Faust."

The facts about the world's reception of its great men have often been stated, but frequently a false conclusion has been drawn from them, or, at least, many have attributed to those who have rehearsed these facts the intention to draw a misleading conclusion. Let us look once more at the page of history and give its true meaning.

The exhibition of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors starts, chronologically, with Ingres, born in 1785, and carries the spectator through to Marcel Duchamp, born almost exactly a century later. Beginning with Ingres, we have one of the greatest centuries of painting, a succession of glorious creators, every one of whom has been misunderstood and attacked, until appreciated and canonized. If you can think of an exception to this rule (I cannot, as I write these lines), be sure that it only proves the rule.

I will come at once to the interpretation of this phenomenon. Is it that every artist who is attacked will

turn out to be a genius? No, a thousand times, no. That is the bad logic that (often in equally bad faith) certain persons have tried to attribute to those who cite the example of the past. In the words of Goethe we may read the true lesson of this century—and of other ones: "The people contemns what it does not understand." Wait and see, be sure you know the thing you speak of before you blame—or praise. The text is a simple one and if I take the risk of seeming to "whack the platitudes" and to tell people a thing they have known all their lives, it is because the following chapter of a possible Dunciad affords abundant proof that the obvious truth is what we overlook. Had the Nineteenth Century, and these early years of the Twentieth, taken more time and care in judging, we should all have a better record than the one I give now.

About the time that Ingres made the beautiful drawing that bears the earliest date in our Exhibition, he was leaving Paris for many years—an embittered man. The genius that showed itself, personal and pure, in a drawing that he made in his eighth year, was not sufficient to protect him at this time, over twenty years later, from the attacks that warped and hardened him in his relations with his contemporaries. It is painful for us to think of him in his antagonism to the great art of Delacroix. Why could not this seer of beauty, who had himself been misunderstood, have waited for a better judgment before giving to posterity that pitiful record of the

Ingres who drew his coat tightly about him so as to save it from the pollution of Delacroix's touch when he passed?

And as to the latter glorious master, I would refer you to Paul Signac's book, "De Delacroix au Néo-Impressionnisme." The author has collected articles on the Salons at which Delacroix exhibited and points out very aptly their similarity to the criticism (?) of to-day. I quote at random the following example:

"It is this display of ignorant brutality that M. Delacroix has probably concocted in morgues and charnel-houses, and that he asks us to place beside the beautiful art of the past!"

One other specimen of newspaper writing of the early Thirties may go without comment, "There are two kinds of nature: one, that we all see,—save one man,—the other one that is seen by this lone individual, whose name is Corot." (It is reported that this thrust was considered the final one in disposing of the new landscapist's claim to consideration.).

And what of Manet, the great lover of Paris, who was literally driven from his native city by the contempt and humiliations that were heaped upon him? (See Théodore Duret's "History of Edouard Manet".) And what of his great contemporaries, Renoir and Monet, whose sales for twenty years were insufficient to pay for their daily bread? I repeat that it is not with the intention of proving that our exhibition of to-day contains a Degas

or a Whistler that I cite their case. It is that those who see the work of the younger generation may ask themselves whether they can afford to let the blunders of the past be repeated once more. Is it necessary that recognition come so late to the great men, that Degas should say of those who, finally, offered him honors in his old age: "I refuse to be escorted to my place by the policemen of art?" Must we always repay such a bringer of joy with the bitterness that made him say last December, when a picture he had sold for $100 brought $100,000 at auction, "I am the horse that wins the long race, but some one else is given the prize?" And could not a public more aware of the truth of Goethe's lines have prevented the misunderstanding which wrung from Whistler that blighting hope "that when I die, I shall not have one friend in the world?"

It is wrong that a great matter like art be treated with a lightness that has put up barriers between the masters and the people—whom they love in spite of all, and for whom they do a profounder service than any other class of men.

The spirit of art is the same throughout the ages, the forms of art forever change as the needs of the new eras succeed one another. What seems a total break with the past may be only a readjustment to accord with what Elie Faure, in his splendid essay on Cézanne, speaks of as "the unknown well-springs that the incessant evolution of the world opens up each day in adventurous brains."

Once more I will quote the words of Mr. Davies concerning the Association:

"Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures, and so on, on exhibition so that the intelligent may judge for themselves, by themselves." And the hundred thousand people who visited the exhibition in New York gave proof that in this new country, the "new spirit" of appealing to "the intelligent" will find the justification that was to be looked for and hoped for. W. P.

THE NEW ART

Kenyon Cox on "Futurism" and "Cubism"

"Will you give a straight-from-the shoulder opinion on the Cubists and the Futurists? Do they mean something in art, or do they mean nothing?" asked a "N. Y. Times" representative of Kenyon Cox.

"The Cubists and the Futurists simply abolish the art of painting," replied the artist. "They deny not only any representation of nature, but also any known or traditional form of decoration.

"They maintain that they have invented a symbolism which expresses their individuality, or as they say, their souls. If they have really expressed their souls in the things they show us, God help their souls!

"Talk to these people and they say: 'Here is a new language of art. You have no right to criticize until you learn it.'

"My answer is: 'What would you think of a poet or literary man suddenly inventing a new language and saying something that sounds like pure gibberish?' 'Ah,' he remarks in answer to your objections, 'you don't understand the language.'

"If this supposititious poet or literary man were to say, 'Wigglety-wagglety-wigglety,' and then tell you that

that combination of letters gives the sentiment of dawn, how are you going to prove that it doesn't?

"Though I can't prove it as one can prove a sum in simple arithmetic, it is my conviction that the 'Cubists' and 'Futurists' are giving us a wigglety-waggletty-wigglety variety of art.

"Expression, no matter whether the medium be a painting, a sculpture, a novel, or a poem, must either be in a language that has been learned, or it is a pure assumption on the artist's part that he has expressed anything at all.

"These 'Cubists' and 'Futurists' are doing in painting what the Symbolists did in literature ten years ago. That school of writers said that it didn't make any difference what words were used; that the vowels had color, and that the desired impression could be conveyed by these.

"As you'll remember, they succeeded in making quite a few people believe that what they said was in their verse was really there.

"That movement is now as dead as a door nail, and the literary men of Paris have gone back to writing French.

"I don't think these 'Cubists' and 'Futurists' will last much longer than did the Symbolists," continued Mr. Cox. Then artists will go back to writing the universal language of art. The only question in my mind is: 'Are these men the victims of auto-suggestion or are they charlatans fooling the public?'

"There is one point, and one on which I feel strongly,"

asserted the artist. "This is not a sudden disruption or eruption in the history of art. It is the inevitable result of a tendency which has grown stronger and stronger during the last fifty years, namely, to abandon all discipline, all respect for tradition, and to insist that art shall be nothing but an expression of the individual."

"It began with the Impressionists, denying the necessity of any knowledge of form or structure; indeed, preaching that one should not know what things are, that he should only see how they look. Even this preachment, however, implied a training of the eye and a certain scientific discipline."

"The next step was for the Post-Impressionists to revolt against such discipline, to maintain that it does not matter how things look, the only point of importance being how you feel about them."

"With the Post-Impressionists, the personality of the artist became the only matter of moment. It ended in the deification of Whim."

"As I have said, the Cubists and the Futurists simply abolish the art of painting. They deny not only any representation of nature, but also any known or traditional form of decoration. They talk of their symbolism and their soul-expression! The thing is pathological! It's hideous!"

"There is another element that comes into it," continued the artist. "Up to the time of Matisse, the revolutionaries, I believe, were for the most part sincere

enough. They paid for their beliefs with their lives; they made no money out of their beliefs; they committed suicide or died in madhouses.

"But with Matisse, with the later work of Rodin, and, above all, with the Cubists and the Futurists, it is no longer a matter of sincere fanaticism. These men have seized upon the modern engine of publicity and are making insanity pay.

"I should perhaps interpolate here that a number of the men who are responsible for the present movement have done some beautiful work, but that does not prevent me thinking that they are headed in the wrong direction."

"But, getting back to Matisse—if I wanted to mention names I could add others to the list—many of his paintings are simply the exaltation to the walls of a gallery of the drawings of a nasty boy.

"I have always championed the nude. I am not squeamish on that side of the question; but I feel that in the drawings of some of these men there is a professed indecency which is absolutely shocking."

"Do you believe that there is any sincerity in this present development?"

"No, none. Of course that is only my belief: one cannot get data on such a matter. It is my conviction, though that Matisse has his tongue in his cheek and his eye on his pocket.

"Of course, there will be many who will discount all that I have said as being the remarks of an elderly

Academic painter. But if I am to speak of myself I can frankly say that I am not the type of man who is a conservative that cannot change the point of view that he had at twenty or thirty years of age.

"Apart from what I have done in painting, I have been a student of art and criticism all my life. I have materially changed from the views I held as a young man. What I have said to you is not the opinion of a conservative. It is founded on a lifetime given to the study of art and criticism, in the belief that painting means something.

"I might say that the traditions of art, like the laws of social existence, are the outcome of human effort extending over countless centuries.

"The great traditions of the world are not here by accident. They exist because humanity found them to be for its own good.

"Art has a social function. In all the great periods of art it has spoken to the people in a language that they understood and expressed what they would have it express.

"The men who would make art merely expressive of their personal whim, make it speak in a special language only understood by themselves, are as truly anarchists as are those who would overthrow all social laws.

"But the modern tendency is to exalt individualism at the expense of law. The Cubists and the Futurists simply exhibit a very extreme and savage form of this

individualism, an individualism exaggerated and made absurd for the sake of advertising.

"What it finally means is, either there will be a reaction toward the classic and the traditional or art will cease to exist. Naturally, I prefer to believe in the reaction, to think that some of us who are now considered belated classicists may turn out to be the real precursors."

"A few moments ago," suggested the interviewer, "you mentioned the great Rodin as having been an influence in the present movement."

"Yes," said Mr. Cox, earnestly, "and a very big one. That row of drawings in the Rodin gallery in the Metropolitan Museum is a calamity. They have made people try to see what does not exist."

"How did they get into the Museum?"

"Simply enough. The management is trying to be broad and let them in. There are some of the directors who see nothing in these drawings; there are some others who think they do—and there you are."

This brought the talk around to the critics.

"There are two things to be said of the critics. Either" (here Mr. Cox spoke very emphatically) "they are themselves hypnotized into a belief in qualities that do not exist, or they are so frightened by what are thought to be the critical blunders of the last few generations that they dare not say any eccentric is bad for fear the eccentricity should turn out to be genius.

"We've been carefully educated to believe that genius

is always misunderstood. The result is that some of us are ready to think that anything unintelligible must be full of genius.

"With some of the critics their state of mind seems to be the result of long occupation with primitive art, which has so accustomed them to finding beauty of line or mass where there is little naturalism that they cannot see these qualities where they are combined with a knowledge of nature.

"They imagine that Matisse and his followers have rediscovered the line because there is evidently nothing else in their work; forgetting that the great and really difficult task is to draw beautifully and expressively without drawing falsely, and that it is no advantage to the abstract beauty of a figure that its joints should bend the wrong way, or that it should have no joints at all, but resemble something, between a block of wood and a jelly-fish."

"Has the public been fooled?"

"No, I think the bulk of the public is usually found to be sane. There are always a few 'suggestible' people, always a certain number of ready dupes for any loudly advertised quack.

"You know it is possible, just possible" (there was a sardonic emphasis put on the word "just") "it is just possible that the present activity of this movement may merely be a campaign of the dealers. I have been told that the dealers in Paris have found the home market for Cubist and Futurist pictures worked out, and that they

are now passing their wares hopefully on to the American market."

Mr. Cox then read from his own book, "The Classic Point of View," the well-known story of Hans Christian Anderson, of the monarch supposed to be possessed of a suit of clothes of extraordinary richness and beauty but quite invisible to all unintelligent and stupid people and how the people all rubbed their eyes when the King walked in a procession and each one said to himself, "Dear me! Am I so stupid? I really can't see anything;" and then they all shouted, "Long live the King and his incomparable clothes!" and how the procession passed by a place where there stood a tiny boy in the street; and the boy spoke out in a loud voice, saying, "But he hasn't got anything on!· And then—well, then every one suddenly saw that his Majesty was walking through the streets in his shirt."

"Now it may be my own lack of intelligence," concluded Mr. Cox, "that prevents my seeing the wonderful garment of art worn by some of the latest exponents of modernism. The rich stuff and the splendid embroidery, which others assure me they see, may really be there, and I may be too blind or too stupid to perceive it. But if the gods made me stupid it rests with myself to be honest; and so I can only cry, with the little boy in the street: 'They have nothing on! They have nothing on!'"

THE GREAT CONFUSION

From the Chicago Evening Post

"Let us be the last of our kind," exclaimed Sainte-Beuve years ago, "before the great confusion."

In literature the "great confusion" which Sainte-Beuve foresaw has long been upon us. The "classic" standards or criticism have broken down and been wholly abandoned. People have long ceased to measure books by any well-established canons, to judge them by their conformity to rule. The critic now talks about a book "impressionistically," relating the "adventures of a soul among masterpieces," or he talks about it "scientifically," as George Brandes does, placing it in its proper "movement," relating it to the social environment which produced it, comparing it with other books from the same source.

But in neither case is there any appeal to rules once laid down by the mandarins.

It must have occurred to some of the hundreds who thronged the Art Institute yesterday at the opening of the International Exhibition of Modern Art that the "great confusion" which Sainte-Beuve predicted had spread at last over the fields of sculpture and painting. Here were the works of scores of men who deliberately

rejected, in varying degree and with individual emphasis, the well-established canons of representative Art. Every man Jack of them had nailed his own flag to the mast-head, issued to himself his own sailing orders and was out on the high seas, doing precisely as he pleased.

In the old days when the critics had the high seas well policed and nobody could even get out into the broad main without a pilot's license and the proper papers, this sort of thing was quite unheard of. But we might as well face the fact that the high seas are no longer well policed and that the times rather favor a certain degree of lawlessness and recklessness and sporadic individual endeavor.

The main thing, as we suggested yesterday, is not to be too quickly insulted by the rampant individualism of the pictures. It may be true, as Kenyon Cox would tell us, that some of them were actually painted in our despite, to cast insults upon our intelligence. But Kenyon Cox's solicitude on our behalf is rather new and may be taken *cum grano salis.* He and his sort have not been especially careful of the feelings of the laity when they have been fiddling away on the refinements and attenuated nonsense of academic art. May it not be, fellow citizens and citizenesses, that the academicians exhibit this solicitude for our feelings simply and solely because in this controversy they want our votes? Moreover, it seems difficult for Kenyon Cox to point out with any assurance just what pictures were intended to revive us and to say

all manner of mean things about us, and which were painted in passionate sincerity. And the man or woman who saunters along, refusing to be insulted, is likely to conclude when he is through that perhaps none of them was painted in his despite.

The exhibition is certainly a terrible leveler. With all the established canons abandoned, the layman is as good as the critic and the critic is no better than a king. The women who attached themselves to that young curate yesterday afternoon pleased the curate and heard just as sound doctrine as though they had gone around with the bewildered James William Pattison.

But in the floods of talk about the new pictures, two fallacies have already emerged and begun to dominate. One of them is the argument that because the Impressionists years ago were badly received at first and are now masterpieces, therefore it follows that the pictures in the present exhibition will some day be accounted masterpieces. This is like saying that because Ibsen was slow in securing recognition in the '80s, therefore Percy Mackaye and Charles Rann Kennedy will be canonized in the next half century. The "fun" of the new exhibition lies in trying to determine which of these new men will live, and why.

The second fallacy is the "infant fallacy," a curious variation of Tolstoy's long-rejected "humanitarian fallacy." Tolstoy, it will be recalled, contended in "What Is Art?" that the only real test of Art was the fresh,

untutored instinct of the Russian peasant. What the peasant found to his taste, Tolstoy was ready to pronounce good. But the world decided that it could not go back to the simple state of the Russian peasant and rejected Tolstoy's theory as reactionary and perverse. But in the Exhibition of Modern Art men with seductive voices are saying again that "children, with their fresh, unspoiled vision of things, testify to the validity of the post-impressionist and even of the cubist vision of things." This will not do. This is an adult world, milords, and it demands an adult art.

But out of the flux of things will come doubtless, some general agreements, some new values which men will learn to recognize. To guess at those new values, to forecast them, is an immensely stimulating occupation, and one which will deepen in Everyman his interest in Art. To dismiss it all as charlatanry is to miss the best fun of the year.

CUBISM BY A CUBIST

Francis Picabia in the Preface to the Catalogue of his New York Exhibition

Art is one of the means by which men communicate with each other and objectivise the deepest contact of their personality with nature. This expression is necessarily related to the needs of the civilisation of the time. It has its conventions as has any means of expression. Its conventions are the limitation of the personality of the artist, a limitation which man tends to extend, as he tends to remove all limitations to his perception. Just as the simple and direct perception of the outside world does not satisfy us any longer, and we try to go deeper into the essence and quality of this simple perception, so have our feelings towards nature become more complicated, and similarly the expression of these feelings.

The objective representation of nature through which the painter used to express the mysterious feelings of his ego in front of his subject "motive" no longer suffice for the fulness of his new consciousness of nature. This representation bears no longer a relationship to his new conception of life, and has become not only a limitation but a deformation. "The objective representation of

nature is a deformation of our present conception of nature."

Reality imposes itself upon us not only under a special form but even more under a qualitative form.

For example: When we look at a tree we are conscious not only of its outside appearance but also of some of its properties, its qualities and its evolution. Our feelings before this tree are the result of this knowledge acquired by experience through analysis; hence the complexity of this feeling cannot be expressed simply by objective and mechanical representation.

The qualitative conception of reality can no longer be expressed in a purely visual or optical manner; and in consequence pictorial expression has had to eliminate more objective formulae from its convention in order to relate itself to the qualitative conception.

The resulting manifestations of this state of mind which is more and more approaching abstraction, can themselves not be anything but abstraction. They separate themselves from the sensorial pleasure which man may derive from man or nature (impressionism) to enter the domain of the pure joy of the idea and consciousness.

But expression means objectivity. Otherwise contact between beings would become impossible, language would lose all meaning. This new expression in painting is "the objectivity of a subjectivity." We can make ourselves better understood by comparing it to music.

If we grasp without difficulty the meaning and the logic

of a musical work it is because this work is based on the laws of harmony and composition of which we have either the acquired knowledge or the inherited knowledge. These laws are the objectivity of painting up to the present time. The new form of painting puzzles the public only because it does not find in it the old objectivity and does not yet grasp the new objectivity. The laws of this new convention have as yet been hardly formulated but they will become gradually more defined just as musical laws have become more defined and they will very rapidly become as understandable as were the objective representations of nature. Therefore, in my paintings the public is not to look for a "photographic" recollection of a visual impression or a sensation, but to look at them as but an attempt to express the purest part of the abstract reality of form and color in itself.

New York, March, 1913. FRANCIS PICABIA.

Extract from Plato's Dialogues—Philebus.*

Socrates: What I am saying is not, indeed, directly obvious. I must therefore try to make it clear. For I will endeavor to speak of the beauty of figures, not as the majority of persons understand them such as those of animals, and some paintings to the life; but as reason says, I allude to something straight and round, and the figures formed from them by the turner's lathe, both superficial and solid and those by the plumb-line and the angle-rule, if you understand me. For these, I say, are not beautiful

for a particular purpose, as other things are; but are by nature ever beautiful by themselves, and possess certain peculiar pleasures, not at all similar to those from scratching; and colors possessing this character are beautiful and have similar pleasures.

* Published in "Camera Work," No. 36.

AS TO FUTURISTS

To correct a natural misapprehension which we have found to be general, we wish to give a word of explanation as to the absence of the Futurists from the Exhibition.

The Futurist artists were personally seen last Fall by Mr. Davies, Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Pach in Paris, and had the most cordial invitation which could possibly be extended to any individual or group of men. Indeed, an entire room at the Exhibition was offered them, so that their artistic individuality might be preserved intact, if they so desired. While absolutely disposed to exhibit with us, the circumstances of their engagements with European Exhibitions prevented their being able to send the pictures to America.

Even amongst well informed persons in Europe, considerable confusion reigns as to the nomenclature of the new schools. It was, therefore, not a matter of surprise that the American papers, knowing that the Cubists were really in the Exhibition, should have included the Futurists with them. No work shown in New York or Chicago can be attributed to the followers of the futurist theories.

THE CUBIST ROOM.

By Walter Pach.

It cannot be too often stated that the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, as such, takes no stand whatsoever as to the merits or demerits of the works that it has exhibited. The members of the Association, speaking as individuals, are still at liberty, however, to express their opinions without regard to the divergences, seeming or real, that may occur amongst them.

The writer of these lines, through his position, first, as European representative of the organization and, second, as the one who has probably come into most direct touch with the visitors to the Exhibition, has been so often requested to explain the cubist movement that he feels it advisable to put down in this place a few elementary ideas on the subject.

The impression most frequently produced upon the mind of even the intelligent artist or layman who enters the Cubist Room is, that the work here displayed is not only a radical departure from the art of the past, but entirely subversive of the art that the wisdom of the centuries has pronounced great. That it is a radical departure from preceding forms is most certain, but, as to its

being in any way "subversive," I can only state, personally, my earnest conviction that it is not.

I would liken the great art movements of the present day to the great movement of the Abolitionists, which culminated in the Emancipation Proclamation. Do we, who take the deliverance from slavery as one of the pillars of the temple of modern thought, respect Washington the slave holder, any less than our grandfathers did? surely not. The greatness of the individual, whatever the philosophy of his epoch, remains unchanged in the minds of thinking men—no matter how far their views have departed from his—and it seems to me that with this parallel in mind, no one can justly accuse us of inconsistency when we say, in the same breath, that we admire and revere the works of the great old masters and give our approbation to the work of the adventurous pioneers who are with us to-day.

Let the reader but consider the import to mankind that "subversive" theories have had in the knowledge of the world (Columbus), in the knowledge of science (Darwin), and in the knowledge of ourselves (Socrates), and I think he will view with tolerance, at least, the efforts of these men who seem to many to be pointing the way to a new epoch in art. Briefly, my understanding of Cubism is as follows:

The Cubists are the men who propose to bring the graphic arts to the level which the race long ago attained in music most of all, and in architecture. Perhaps be-

cause we have within us the means of producing music (the voice), the art of music developed so long since from its rudimentary stage of imitation that we need to be reminded that it had such an origin. Nevertheless, we have sure testimony that the art which is to-day the purest and most abstract, was, in a distant era, nothing more than the call of the hunter imitating birds and animals, the shout of triumph of the warrior, the cry of pain of the wounded man, and the inarticulate crooning of the mother as she rocked her child. Little by little, these primitive sounds became organized into a simple form of music which we call melody. After the lapse of centuries once more, different variations of these melodies were combined into harmonies, and, again, successions of harmonies were built up into the complex structures that we know to-day as sonatas and symphonies. In these highest developments of the art, the original elements have become totally unrecognizable, and yet the force with which they moved our primitive ancestors has only increased, never diminished. By rhythms, harmonies, dissonances, sudden silences, and the movement of the crescendo and decrescendo, the composer evokes in us a mood absolutely like his own and we have the privilege of sharing in the life of a master of life.

After a century which showed, by the very perfection to which it brought realism in painting, the futility of that realism alone, it can be understood that the men in search of the great essentials should demand anew an art

which should be not an imitation, but what it has eternally been—expression. If with sounds, certainly as efficacious in imitating as lines and colors are, men can render their most important thoughts without representation of the object, why should not the same be attained in the graphic arts? It seems to me that the pictures and sculptures in our Exhibition show that, in a short period of time, the men badly named "Cubists," have followed an exactly similar direction to that which was found in the art of music, and as, in the latter art, the possibilities of expression, were infinitely increased with the change from the representation of the actual to the use of the abstract, I think that the men conferring a similar increase in freedom in the graphic arts, would be entitled to our profoundest gratitude.

I would say but one word more, in connection with a phrase which I have used above,—and that is as to the shortness of time in which this development has taken place. A considerable residence in Paris and exceptional opportunities to become acquainted with the glorious life and growth of the French people to-day makes me feel that the present age in France is the equivalent, for that country, of the Renaissance in Italy.

We know that in the Italian Renaissance the changes in all matters of thought, and perhaps especially in art, were so rapid that to the men of one generation, those who immediately followed them must have seemed to bear no relation to what had gone before.

I would cite the single example of the relation between Piero della Francesca and his pupil, Signorelli. The former master, whom I will permit myself to call the last of the primitives, brought their art, with its flat planes of pale, harmonious color and its supreme mastery of contour, to what is, for me, its perfection. And from this man's studio comes Signorelli, who abandons the flat planes of color to introduce brutal (?) modelling with light and shade, and harsh contrasts of almost unrelated colors. Discontent with even his master's sublime use of contour, he studies anatomy and turns into a question of bones and muscles the picture his long and grand line of artistic ancestors had considered first of all from this standpoint of design and color. The change came with such abruptness that the work of the man who, a few years later, was to give to Michael Angelo his greatest inspiration, must have seemed, to Signorelli's elders, as subversive and anarchic as the work of the cubists to-day, but we see that the reverse was true, and to relate this case with the one I started out to discuss, I should say that those who can learn from the example of the past will judge the works of the present day Frenchmen not by the distance they have travelled from their predecessors, but by what they will mean to the men who will come after them.

OLD AND NEW ART

F. J. Mather, Jr., in The Nation

Topically, the Post-Impressionists and Cubists are the important feature of the show, yet I wish it were possible to ignore urgent tendencies and merely discuss good art. If that agreeable course were open to me, I should give much space to the gallery in which Odilon Redon's work is shown. Redon is a purposeful dreamer. His territory is that of the older gods and recent symbol. His color shifts from dense and hot through diaphanóus iridescences to monochrome. All is conceived in the mood of the ivory tower. Apollo does not control his skyey horses; they drag him through mid-air. There is a study of shimmering butterflies hovering in a light that is a refinement on the illumination of some exotic opera. It is a fantastically beautiful art, very far from life, admirably true to its own vision. Ryder and Davies represent a similar mood with equal ability and perhaps with greater freedom from literary implication. I much regret that Mr. Davies's self-renouncing conception of his office as president of the Association has deprived us of a one-man show that would have furnished an excellent complement for the Redon gallery.

On all hands I hear in the show the statement,

"At any rate, this new art is very living and interesting." So much may be said for much of the Post-Impressionist and Cubist work; and something like that might be one's feeling on first visiting a lunatic asylum. The inmates might well seem more vivid and fascinating than the every-day companions of home and office. Unquestionably, Matisse is more exciting than, say, George de Forest Brush; it doesn't at all follow that Matisse is the better artist. So is a vitriol-throwing suffragette more exciting than a lady. Yet feeling as I do that Post-Impressionism is mostly ignorant splurge, and Cubism merely an occult and curious pedantry, I feel also that the Association has done a valuable service in bringing over a full representation of this latest eccentric work. It was reaching us piecemeal in unimportant examples, or, worse, at second hand, in the deceptions of programmes and the sophistries of critical special pleading. Now we have the pictures and sculpture and may test ourselves by them. Indeed, if one's æsthetic reaction be slow or doubtful, he may have the aid of the Association's courteous and eloquent interpreters.

The platform of Post-Impressionism is a simple one—complete spontaneity independent of all images of outer nature; swift, succinct, and powerful execution of symbolic color—these are the chief tenets of the movement. Certain of William Blake's maxims prefigure this tendency: "Mere enthusiasm is the all in all," or, again, "Knowledge of ideal beauty is not to be acquired. It is

born with us. The man who says we have no innate ideas must be a fool or a knave." At some risk, then, of falling into an undesirable category, I must approach the spontaneity of Matisse and Segonzac. Matisse is an original and powerful draughtsman. One has only to see his crayon drawings from the nude to be convinced of that. They are of quite extraordinary potency and simplicity. His pictorial ideas, innate ones perhaps, we may grant, are either trivial, monstrous, or totally lacking. The Portrait in Madras Red illustrates his power. The torso is swung in with a quite magnificent gesture that ignores all details; for the rest, a coarse emphasis of the intentness of the face, raw color, mean surfaces—a prodigal expenditure of violent means to achieve a passing and negligible effect. In Segonzac's big barnyard there is a similar brutality of assertion, though with some lingering regard for harmony of color. The more perverse expressions of Matisse's mode as expressed in bulbous nudes, empty schematic decoration, and blatantly inept still-life will merely reinforce a first impression based on the work that is relatively normal. Upon the ugliness of the surfaces I must insist at the risk of repetition. Everything tells of a studied brusqueness and violence. It is an art essentially epileptic. Sincere it may be, but its sincerity simply doesn't matter, except as it is pitiful to find a really talented draughtsman the organizer of a teapot tempest.

For this anti-realistic movement, of which so much is

said, is merely the tardy coming into art of a tendency that has long since spent its literary force, namely, neurotic symbolism. The present revolutionaries are no more going to make art over than Mallarmé and Regnier made all things new in letters. And even as a revolt, Post-Impressionism has the fatal defect of misunderstanding its foe. Ostensibly, it is an escape into the imagination from the appalling dullness of recent painting, and this dullness is laid to a too servile following of nature. Now, nature is perhaps the most ambiguous word in all language; and right here it may be asked if it is possible for the art of painting to sin from too much naturalness. It seems to me not. Since the pigment scale is far shorter than that of light, and since a plane surface must be made to give the sense of depth, any painting, however good or bad it be, is highly symbolic. It is no record of a thing seen, but a token to the intelligence. Moreover, no painting can possibly give seriously what is seen at a particular moment, just that and nothing more. Manet and Zorn may seem to approximate to this, but they only seem. And nature, in any accurate sense, can merely mean what is seen at a particular instant. As soon as memory comes in, and more or less it does inevitably, nature is becoming, not an external fact, but a composite and shifting personal creation. All painters are symbolists; some dull, some sublime, more mediocre. Such symbolism may be conducted along lines of relative inhibition of the artist's personal and emotional attitude; such men we loosely call

realists; or along lines of enhancement of the artist's emotional attitude, and such with almost equal looseness we call Romanticists, Post-Impressionists, Expressionists, or what not. But all alike are seeking symbols for an emotional or observational experience, and the fundamental division of artists is into capable symbolists, incapable symbolists, or mere pretenders, who lack equally fundamental emotion and derived symbol. The trouble with pictorial art never has been and never can be too great devotion to nature; the trouble with art has been merely weak or undisciplined or dull personalities. The utmost degree of naturalistic representation possible to painting will always be, however limited, wholesome. It will at least celebrate the lovely variety of the world and the joy of the seeing eye, and it will ever serve as the firm base from which imagination may take its flights. For dull or faltering painters, and their feeble symbolism, it is no remedy to throw nature out of the window; public neglect may hasten reform, but the death of the dull artist is the only real remedy. One well-managed St. Bartholomew's would do more to set things right than a century of hothouse spontaneity.

Post-Impressionism, then, is the feeblest imaginable reform for real artistic evils deeply based in the hesitancy of the present social order. Whenever, out of the clash of democracy with socialism and anarchy, a central social tradition is attained, the artist will readily find his place. Especially the minor artist will then cease to be a

dullard or a pretender, and will find a useful and respectable function in devotedly sustaining the central tradition. Because the minor artists of the past almost invariably did this, they are amiable and charming. Because the minor artist of the present is urged to cultivate that originality which is only the prerogative of the great, he is often a woful apparition. And so far as Post-Impressionism is setting hundreds of young painters to coddling their sacred impulses, so far as it accentuates an already exaggerated cult of the individual, it will work nothing but harm.

But some one will say, At least technical good must result from this feverish experimenting, at least we shall relearn the lost art of the great contour and of audacious decorative color. Here some advantage may be conceded, but most backhandedly and uneconomically attained. More may be learned about great contour by consulting any good Rembrandt sketch, and more about audacious decorative color from studying a fine Persian rug or Buddhist scroll, than can be gleaned from all the progressive painting of the past decade.

Upon the Cubist work of Picasso, Picabia, and Marcel Duchamp I cannot dwell. We seem to have to do either with a clever hoax or a negligible pedantry. I am told that these experimenters are working at the problem of mass, weight and spatiality. Finding that these third-dimensional qualities are most vividly conveyed by the simpler geometric solids, they adopt these as units of ex-

pression. Picasso conceives a head as so many facets, leaving the junctures sharp. Frans Hals or Chase or Sargent would make much the same synthesis, but would soften the junctures as nature does. Picasso shows a bronze bust in conical forms. It has a sinister impressiveness, and looks like a badly carved Gothic thing. Picasso's early painting had much grim power and decorative balance; only a portrait represents him in this phase; his latest work, in which geometry dominates, is singularly dreary in color and morbid in expression. From this charnal suggestion Picabia is free. He has recently passed from a kind of Post-Impressionism to Cubism. He frames his figures and landscapes from cubes, hexagonal crystals, and the like. His color is interesting in a rather obvious and garish way. Both Picasso and Picabia mineralize their world and present it in terms of crystallography. The transposition is often ingenious; both men are evidently accomplished mechanical draughtsmen, but none of their work reveals to an eye that has honestly waited either spatial quality, mass, or handsome decorative effect. Marcel Duchamp, whose units of expression are slabs and shavings, is said to have out-geometrized the Cubists themselves. His pictures are monochromes in brown, with the general look of an elevation of a volcanic cliff. In the stratifications we are told by the catalogue to look for nudes, faces and groups; but I advise no one to make the attempt. If any images there be, these are mental and symbolic. These paintings, so far as genuine,

are merely expressions of anti-naturalism reduced to the absurd along ratiocinative lines, just as Post-Impressionism is merely the emotional reduction to the absurd of the same anti-naturalistic fallacy. The Futurists were invited to the exhibition, and declined. Their absence need not greatly be regretted. Their origins reek with charlatanry and shameless puffery, and this genesis their work has done nothing to belie.

And here the question of taste comes in. The trouble with the newest art and its critical champions is that fundamentally they have no real breadth of taste. These people are devoted to fanaticisms, catchwords, all manner of taking themselves too seriously. Where something like taste exists, the new brusque procedures are readily assimilated. The studies of Othon Friesz, for example, are tense and nervous, fine in color, discreetly exaggerated. Augustus John, who is very fully represented by paintings, silver-point drawings, and aquarelles, can go some way with Matisse because he never forgets Manet and Botticelli. John's drawings are exquisite, a sublimation of the familiar method of the Slade School. His water-color sketches achieve remarkable character and mass with the slightest means. His larger works tend to fall into affectations which are atoned for by austere and distinguished workmanship. It is as if Puvis and Degas had joined forces not quite amicably. John makes the high attempt to achieve fine decorative effect without the usual waiver of the characteristic and individual.

The ambition marks him a remarkable personality. He may achieve where Besnard has rather splendidly failed. A glance at the coquettish sensual designs of the late Charles Conder, at the delightfully intimate landscapes with figures by George W. Russell, and at Jack Yeats's keen visions of Irish political humors will tend to efface the irresponsible nightmares of Matisse, and the calculated discomforts of the Cubists.