Summaries of the Articles

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**Musee Galliera**

Five Canadian painters exhibited their works in a special show sponsored by the Musee Galliera in Paris from December 18 to January 5 last, providing further proof of the vitality that marks so much of this country's painting. The artists were from Montreal, Quebec, Toronto and Vancouver.

Yock Wilson, of Toronto, was given a special place in the exhibition, his luminous, well-ordered, balanced canvases being accorded display space in the Hall of Honour.

Alfred Pellan, of Montreal, who is well known in Paris, showed a number of small recent works (dated from 1956 to 1961), a selection which underlined the fact that he is a master of design and color. Pellan spent considerable time in Paris some years ago and in 1956, his works were exhibited at the Musee d'Art Moderne.

Jean McEwen, also of Montreal, brought to the exhibition some excellent examples of meditative work. These canvases appeal to European sensitivity, a sensitivity which underpins the somewhat sophisticated North America of poetry and legend.

Jean-Paul Leminoux, of Quebec, brought to Parisians a taste of the cold and stark loneliness of his "terres nouvelles" (new lands). The works, however, might have been shown to better advantage had they been displayed in a small, intimate gallery.

Joe Plaskett, of Vancouver, the fifth member of the exhibition group, offered a series of works which did little to help his viewers discover the distant land of Canada.

**El Greco**

There is no disputing the fact that El Greco emerged from the shadows of history after 300 years of comparative obscurity as a result of the influence of a group known as the Spanish Generation of 98. The works of the artist, forgotten for three centuries, were virtually rediscovered 10 years ago in an intellectual renaissance which resulted directly from the group of 98 and which produced a fresh, new appreciation of the religious, cultural and philosophical traditions of old Spain.

"It would be wrong, however, to consider the artist's life and work in terms of a Spanish spirit. In terms of time and space, El Greco is universal, his life and achievement reflecting a spirit of freedom, supreme individualism and inherent rebellion."

In many respects, El Greco was a rare individualist, an artist whose universality could never be confined to the period or the place in which he lived. He found a universal, timeless truth of artistic expression which once prompted the famous biographer, Palamini, to write, "Every one who practices an artistic profession owes an eternal debt of gratitude to Domenico Greco."

The artist was the first to fight for freedom in art, defying and finally triumphing over the established artistic order. It was because of the efforts of El Greco, wrote Antonina Vallentin, that painting finally achieved an artistic independence.

When El Greco arrived in Toledo, the city was lacking in artistic tradition and activity, and had no art school. He was admitted into the old city as a stranger, a sort of eccentric whose work was not quite understood — and a stranger he was to remain all of his life. He was a stranger not so much because he came from another land (Greece) but rather because he was the kind of man who could never feel at home no matter where he was. It is possible that by remaining an outsider, he felt he could maintain a feeling of independence.

El Greco and his work reflect a constant spiritual rebellion against any force that tends to restrain or limit the free man.

**Picasso and Man**

The genius of Picasso has been expressed in such a wide variety of ways and in so many different media that proper presentation of it becomes impossible without a large exhibition. Therefore, those organizing the current "Picasso and Man" exhibition being shown at the Art Gallery of Toronto and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts wisely decided to limit their study of the artist's achievement to the evolution of his treatment of men, women and children. The result is an exciting exhibition which is probably the most distinguished retrospective study of Picasso's life's work ever presented in Canada.

Study of his total oeuvre shows that Picasso has repeatedly used women as a point of departure for his paintings. Probably few among the small numbers of people in the world have studied so exhaustively the variations of appearance, personality and character of women. The subject usually is the most intimate person of his life at a given moment; thus there is virtually never the casual, if appreciative observation found in works dependent upon the passing model. Given the absorption of Picasso as an artist to the women in his work? A conclusion on this matter may in turn present a generalization pertaining to his total oeuvre.

A comparison of the 1906 composite portrait (page 30) with the startling 1959 "Femme Assise" (page 37) is illuminating since both, painted with the earth tones so characteristic of the Spanish landscape, were done when he was experiencing particularly the influence of his homeland. His influence, as his homeland, is seen in a comparison of the two works, a study of various details. With its abstraction of planes and because of its astonishing distortions the late work has a power and clarity of tactile form which could only be realized by a mature and understanding person. The early picture becomes in compression a touching, even naive, study. This kind of treatment characterizes the late work becomes increasingly, one realizes with study, the foundation of its power. One marvels at such freedom in these late works, a freedom which is based upon great perception and total understanding of his media, which in
As opposed to the presentation of the figure, has fundamentally changed.

painting and yet it becomes one of the most stimulating factors in

extreme is indeed a considerable departure from the tradition of Western

6. "Demoselies d'Avignon", done when he was 27 years old, is almost more important as a great document of

aesthetic exploration than as an integrated composition. Yet one of the most fruitful areas of this work is that even as each figure is
differently treated each holds her own in the larger composition.

To achieve this even as such revolutionary restatement of aesthetic

aims was being realized exemplifies the artist's balance of his means and

his thought. In marketing this aesthetic achievement one too rarely

appreciates the originality of the epic grandeur with which these women are

presented.

Since a characteristic of Picasso's career has been numerous studies

of the various women who have been dominant factors in his life, it is

no surprise that each picture becomes another step towards understand-

ning his attitude towards the particular subject. In comparing the

several works inspired by the appearance of Dora Maar, for example,

(page 36) and even the monumental work which complicates the subject

by introducing elements drawn from the artist's favorite Afghan hound

(page 36, upper right), the most casual viewer must be impressed by the

constancy of certain fundamental physical, if not personality, characteristics

invariant with this model. Even more interesting perhaps is comparing the

numerous works inspired by Dora Maar with those resulting from another period's friendship, for example, that with Marie-Thérèse Walter (page 35, left, up and below) one finds that a certain stringency commonly exists with this model. This is of course in large part due to the ends the artist was trying to achieve but the degree to which the appearance of his current companion inspired

the aesthetic problems the artist posed himself must be taken into

account.

The range of moods Picasso explores in his painting of women is evident in this exhibition. The emotionalism of the post-'Guernica'

weeping woman (page 35, right) contrasted with the calm grandeur of the earlier bather (page 33) a painting which measures only 7½" by 5½" if one does not have this range of the artist's abilities to achieve. In each case how significantly the differences in technique, in the character of the lines and the forms affects the realization. Or compare these with the Colin's startlingly penitent head which has a quality suggesting that Picasso's technique has been the result of his career. That the degree of abstraction has little to do with the expression within the picture is evident in comparing the already cited 'Bather' with the comparably grand 'Femme Assise' (page 34, left). Never does the artist's fundamental strength and conviction of statement vary

although from time to time, perhaps particularly in recent years, the

success of each work may be somewhat affected by its exploratory nature or by the lack of interest in developing all of the ramifications of an idea.

Yet when one compares a major work such as the cubist "Ma Jolie" representing a woman with a guitar or a zither of 1911-1912

(page 32) with a recent work such as the head of Jacqueline lent by the artist page 20, (this and the earlier cubist 'Woman with Fan' arrived in Montreal in 1959 and these have been able to achieve. In each case how significantly the differences in technique, in the character of the lines and the forms affects the realization. Or compare these with the Colin's startlingly penitent head which has a quality suggesting that Picasso's technique has been the result of his career. That the degree of abstraction has little to do with the expression within the picture is evident in comparing the already cited 'Bather' with the comparably grand 'Femme Assise' (page 34, left). Never does the artist's fundamental strength and conviction of statement vary

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CHRONICLES

MOUSEAU

Mouseau's latest creations in the world of color, displayed at the Galerie Soixante, are designs on round surfaces which move on supports. The designs are made up simply of parallel color bands of different hues and textures. Once again, Mouseau has opened up a new avenue of artistic expression. It is possible that in the future other artists may improve on this form but by the time that happens, Mouseau undoubtedly will be pioneering still another field.

BERTRAND

Painting need not always express feelings of pain and sadness. It can also express the joy and happiness of life and it is these feelings that Jean Bertrand has painted into the canvases he showed at the Galerie du Siècle in February. Bertrand has used simple techniques to express simple sentiments and the result is a bright, joyful look into an undeniably optimistic world.

CHASE

It is always a pleasure to find that an artist who has searched for something has found it. This may well be the case with Ronald Chase who introduced visitors to the Galerie Libre in January to a magical world of superb imagery. Some 20 works were displayed and of these a number showed exceptional poetic qualities. There is an anonymity about the people in Chase's work. Yet their faces stir you and you find yourself recalling some long lost friend. Chase's recent works show considerable depth and beauty.

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MUSÉE-MOUSSEAU

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ART MAGAZINES

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FOREIGN ART MUSEUMS

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MUSIC—JOSEPH COLLE

A new and promising vocal ensemble, dedicated to the old masters and the works of avant-garde composers, has appeared on the Montreal musical scene. The ensemble is called the Trio Vocal de Montréal and was organized by Joseph Colle, a one-time member of the Quebec Conservatory of Music (she studied with Martial Singer) who studied at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris and then returned to Montreal to study with Bernard Diamant. The group also includes Fernande Chiochio, alto, and Georges Morgan, tenor.

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