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musee galliera by CLAUDE BEAULIEU

Five Canadian painters exhibited their works in a special show sponsored by the Musee Galliera in Paris from December 18 to January 3 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 canvasses 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 1955, 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 canvasses appeal to Toronto and Vancouver.

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, an awareness of the religious, cultural and philosophical traditions of old Spain.

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 by FRANCISCO JOSÉ TORRES

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, 'Everyone 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 never 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 (Crete) 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 by JACQUES FOLCH-RIBAS

"Do not talk to the pilot." I believe this is perhaps the most significant remark that Picasso ever made about himself. He made the comment in answer to a barrage of questions once put to him by a group of journalists, painter-friends and collectors who were trying to get him to explain the purpose of analytic cubism.

The "pilot", however, never wanted to explain himself to others. When someone tried to get an explanation, he would make such remarks as, "I don't search, I find," or "I am copying what I have done to find out what I wanted to do."

It would be an error, however, to conclude from these remarks that Picasso was indifferent to his public's understanding of his work. I have known him to be furious, for example, over a detail he had overlooked, or when some particular thing had gone unnoticed by a viewer. Very much annoyed, he once turned to his friend Sabartés and said, "You don't see that red stain there — the arms, the body, the head of the baby? You must surely see that this woman is pregnant. You see it now?"

Picasso, of course, is a dual personality. He is the pilot, the lonely navigator plotting his course. But he is also very much a part of the passive complement. The real-life Picasso can never close the door on his passengers, the public which views his works. He is an integral part of their lives, a part of their loves.

Genius can be a tiresome thing. And yet, it should be possible for an artist to gain recognition and still be liked. Poor Picasso! Picasso, a lonely navigator, a stranger not so much because he came from another land (Crete) but 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’ by EVAN H. TURNER

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 Museum of Fine Arts 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 show in years.

Picasso is among the most prolific artists of the history of European art. A characteristic factor of his evolution has been the creation at irregular intervals of major works containing several figures which have been the apogee of his achievement. The current exhibition has fortunately been able to obtain such key works as "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" or the 1921 "La Source" but inevitably other major works are missing because of various practical reasons. Dr. Jean Boggs, thoughtful selection, has nevertheless successfully presented the evolution of Picasso's treatment of mankind.

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 artists of his stature 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. 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 have been realized by a mature and understanding person. The early picture becomes in comparison a touching, even naive, study.

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...turn permits the most telling expression of his thoughts. Although the work of recent years is unsatisfactorily presented in the exhibition because of insurmountable obstacles, those works that are shown prove that the master is achieving his most definitive statements in his old age.

Picasso's control of technical means to convey his ideas has always been impressive. The early "Demoiselles 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 in the years following this work he was 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 this field. In marketing this aesthetic achievement one too rare to appreciate 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 understanding 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 associated 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 style of personality can exist within this model. This is perhaps the most profound, a spiritual growth 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" to a range that has been both hard to achieve. In each case the significant differences in technique, in the character of the lines and the forms affect the realization. Or compare these with the Colin's startlingly petulant head which has a quality as separated radically from the artist's previous works and as far removed from Picasso's 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 New York early this month), one must speculate whether the attitude towards the subject, as opposed to the presentation of the figure, has fundamentally changed. In these two works as in all of the subjects illustrated here Picasso uses the visual attributes of a figure as an expression of his own thoughts and feelings. These feelings may be related to the person represented or they may as well be a broader statement of his emotions of the moment but fundamentally these pictures remain a statement of Picasso and not an interpretation of the represented person. To carry this to such an extreme is indeed a considerable departure from the tradition of Western painting and yet it becomes one of the most stimulating factors in studying the works presented in "Picasso and Man:"

amlache

by JACQUES DE ROUSSAN

Eight hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Medes, nomads living in the isolated valleys of Iran to the southwest of the Caspian Sea, had developed a school of potters and sirmersmiths so talented that their work seems today as being of late period. This school is rich in its treasures. The work of these people is something of a mystery to archaeologists, however, since it is peculiarly their own without any indication of it being influenced by an earlier civilization.

About five years ago, a French dealer in art, Mr. Rolland, brought to the attention of the author a group of Amlache objects which are now in private collections. These objects are not only very rare but also very interesting from the artistic and technical points of view.

The author has been able to examine a large number of objects and to study the techniques used by the Amlache potters. He has also been able to compare these objects with other materials which have been found in the area. This comparison has revealed that the Amlache objects are closely related to the pottery and metalwork of the neighboring tribes.

The Amlache objects are characterized by their use of geometric patterns and by their use of a particular type of glaze. The glaze is a mix of copper and lead and it gives the objects a distinctive appearance.

The Amlache objects are not only artistic, but they also serve as important clues to the history and culture of the people who lived in the area. They provide insight into the daily life of these people and the way they interacted with their environment.

The author has written this book to share his findings with others who are interested in the study of these objects. He hopes that this book will encourage further research and lead to a better understanding of the Amlache culture.
CHASE

Charles Gagnon's exhibition at the Galerie Camille Hébert turned out to be quite as important as a previous showing of his works at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The works shown in the more recent exhibition are alive with ideas and are perhaps more interesting because they are more personal. Gagnon is a poet with the brush and his technique is solid and strong. He says this is the first exhibition with which he is satisfied. He has reason to feel this way.

BERTRAND

Bertrand's recent works show 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 a lyrical sense.

MUSEUMS

Mousseau undoubtedly will be pioneering still another field. The designs are made up simply of parallel color bands of different hues and textures. Once again, Mousseau 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, Mousseau undoubtedly will be pioneering still another field.

CHASE

It is always a pleasure to find that an artist who has something 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.

ART MUSEUMS

The current issue (actually the third) is devoted to sculpture and in it is an open letter from the Association des Sculpteurs du Quebec which protest the desfiguration of Vaillancourt's sculptures at Arbestos. Among other features in the issue are 12 pages of black and white reproductions of various works of art.

The issue of Gimaizes for November-December, 1963, with an original cover by Bertini, features an article about Riopelle by Jean Cathelin. The article is an enthusiastic analysis of the artist and his work and is illustrated with nine black and white reproductions and two in color. Gimaize is an excellent source of information on the arts which will now appear in two instead of four languages—French and English.

CONFRONTATION

Every year, the Salon Confrontation in France invites foreign artists to participate in its exhibition. This year the salon, held in the temporary exhibition halls of the Musee de Dijon, presented works by eight North American painters, five of them from Canada and the others from the United States. In addition to York Wilson, of Toronto, there were four Quebec artists represented. They were Jean McEwen, Alleyn, Paul Beaulieu and Arsenault. The U.S. artists were Norman Bluhm, John Hultberg and Frank Roth.

ART MAGAZINES

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