Summaries of the Articles

Numéro 38, printemps 1965

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58444ac

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)
La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN
0042-5435 (imprimé)
1923-3183 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article
anticoche

BY JEAN DES GAGNIERS

The excavation of a city like Anticoche-on-Ontome (today the Turkish city of Antakya), ancient Roman capital and meeting point of oriental and occidental civilizations, will do much to enrich our knowledge of the art and culture of ancient times.

Eight archaeological expeditions, organized by Princeton University between the years 1932 and 1939, have produced the foundations of a large number of buildings, both religious and civil, as well as many different objects. The floors of several of the buildings were decorated with mosaics. In fact the series of mosaics brought to light at Anticoche constitute an admirable record of the development of this art from the first century of the Roman Empire to the sixth century of our era.

Anticoche was particularly well endowed with public baths, nymphaeums, pools and docks the mosaic inspiration for which is frequently marine in origin. There was an abundance of water in this city and the rhetorician Libanios tells us it was so limpid that it was possible to see the bottom of a pool as clearly as if there had been no water in it.

The mosaics discovered at Anticoche are far from being of equal quality but, for the archaeologist and the historian of art, they are all interesting. In that age, the mosaic makers, like the painters, drew on subjects inspired by Greek art. The Anticoche collection is an important one, since it includes several excellent examples of an art form that got its beginnings in Greece but really flourished in the Roman period.

The beauty of the work is particularly evident in such pieces as those which adorned the House of the Buffet Supper, the House of Dionysus and Ariane and the House of Iphigenie.

canaletto

BY ANTONIO MARANZI

The city of Venice knew its greatest political and artistic glory during the 16th and 17th centuries but the 18th century was to go down as one of opulence for the city. The spirit of this era, reflected in the physical ambience of the city, comes to realistic life in the canvasses of a Venetian artist who always felt a deep feeling of pride for his native city.

The artist was Antonio Canale, known as Canaletto (1697-1768), a realist who faithfully recorded Venice's life of refinement in the years before the treaty of Campo Formio imposed by Napoleon in 1797. Canaletto was an attentive observer, impartial and at times almost detached, who managed to be precise in his work without being overmeticulous. He had a remarkable awareness of his environment and, above all, had a deep pride in his city. In his canvasses, Venice is a queen city.

Canaletto is a classicist and the source of this faithful adherence to classicism, this love for landscapes bathed in light, may be traced to the works of Gentile Bellini and to the Carpaccios dedicated to the story of Saint Ursule. There are influences, too, emanating from Sebastien and Marco Ricci and later Carlevaris.

It is interesting to note that Canaletto was probably the first landscape painter to work at the actual location of his scenes. It is as though he indulged at precision in all that he recorded. Because this, his work are historic documents. Among these should be noted Retour du Bucentaure (Crespi collection, Milan) and La Fete de la Scuola di San Rocco (National Gallery, London).

The latter is a masterpiece that shows Canaletto at his best as the painstaking observer. The perfection evident in every detail underlines a rare sensibility and here, too, the artist reaches a point of perfection in the field of perspective. The remarkable L'Arc de Triomphe de Constantin (about 1741), in the Bragalia collection in New York does not have the inspiration of the San Rocco work but the architectural realism and the lively expressions on the people gives the painting a feeling of warmth.

italian architecture

BY MARIO PROFUMO

When one speaks of Italy and its architecture, one thinks instinctively of the marvellous works of other days. One recalls, for example, that the painter Rubens who went to Genoa in 1607 was quite taken by the charm of the palaces of the "gentiluomini particularly."

The Flemish painter displayed a keen understanding not only of the aesthetic values but also of the social problems which are at the base of architectural work and the development of modern architecture has confirmed his intuition: the international style of architecture is the result of a complete generalization of the way of life brought about by an industrial civilization. From this point of view, however, Italian architecture has a special position. For one thing, in Italy, there are few of the limitations of a highly industrialized society. There is an originality of form and a new kind of expression.

The first personality encountered in the history of modern Italian architecture is Antonio Sant'Elia (1888-1914), a man whose foresight and intuitiveness put him well ahead of his time. Sant'Elia, however, did not launch an expressionist architecture in Italy and up until 1930 there was little in the way of original production. Starting in 1930, Italy went into a rationalist period, a situation that already existed in France. Some of the famous names are Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943), Pietro Lingeri, Giuseppe Pagano and Cesare Cataneo.

The most important works are those constructed after the end of the war and such names as Gardela, Franco Albini, Gio Ponti and Giovanni Michelucci are among a prominent list of people. Organic architecture in Italy has been emphasized by Bruno Zevi and to this school belong such people as L. Samonetti who directs the Venetian school of architecture.

The new trends in Italian art have put an end to the quarrel which for several years has divided the idealistic and the abstract artists on the question of the presence of man and natural realism in the field of artistic creativity.

The young Italian artists have drawn inspiration from at least three fundamental sources in which the informal influence and a return to the dadaist sources is more or less evident: that of Afro, decidedly pictural and with an exceptional element of expression; that of Burri, who opened horizons perhaps wider than any seen in art since the days of cubism; and finally that of Fontana, who provided a whole new concept of space.

It is to be noted that the present trends in Italian painting have most unexpectedly taken account of these three schools. This is evident even among the most rebellious of the young artists. Each of the three great Italian artists of the postwar period, who were the only true protagonists of a really dramatic adventure (in which such people as Guttuso and Vedova in painting and Consagra and Cilia in sculpture were also prominent) was in the early sixties in an avant-garde position.

Italian art had for 30 years been marked by a certain chauvinism, despite the works of such people as Morandi, Bonetti and Marini. The artists who started working again after the war, making use of European and American experiences, made a clean sweep of everything they considered had no raison d'être in Italian art. The young artists of today perhaps do not realize the debt they owe to the artists of the two preceding generations.

The young artists in Italy have a choice between a purely idealistic opposition to the informal influence and a return to the dadaist sources which gave rise to pop art, betweenguralism and neo-constructionism and the Gattuso groups. Modern Italian art freed itself from the humanism which characterized it even in recent periods by adapting itself to the demands of a modern civilization which wants its art to reflect the fears and concerns of the present day. There is much promise among some of the young Italian artists.

italian art objects

BY L. J. BEAULIEU

The aesthetics of articles of practical use were in focus at two exhibitions of Italian products. One was at the Milan triennial, held some months ago, where the accent was on a number of industrial objects of very current style. The second, now showing, is sponsored by the Italian National Office of Handicrafts and Small Industries. This latter, sponsored with the collaboration of Italy's Department of Tourism, displays a number of objects in the field of the decorative arts. The objects reflect a number of Italian forms in ceramics, glassware, basket-making, brasswares, enamels and rugs.

The aesthetics in both exhibitions are appreciable, though from two different points of view. The new concept put forward at the triennial are highly satisfactory for the rational mind which is sensitive to the balance of material and color, form and function, and are excellent.

The artisan works at Place Ville Marie provoke a different reaction. They arouse a wonderful aesthetic curiosity with their mixture of deep sensitivity of matter and form and a delightful lyricism which is peculiarly Italian.
Jeannot Y. R.

Pierre Haevart, a young Canadian of Belgian origin who has made his home in the country since 1957, showed his works in Brussels. Unable to dedicate himself entirely to sculpture until his arrival in Canada, he joined forces with Dinel and Ruet with whom he shares a workshop. These first works indicate an influence from Roland Dinel but at the same time, there is a feeling of greater freedom.

Bernard Dorival

The works of a great many artists inevitably fall into discredit after their deaths and only the truly important artists manage to survive the test of time. That period of time during which artists either rise to fame or fall into oblivion has been called an artistic purgatory. Georges Rouault appears to have bypassed this state of purgatory altogether. Rouault, who was born in 1871, has apparently achieved permanence now. The worth of this artist has never been more definitely established than since his death in 1958. Exhibitions of Rouault’s works have been staged all over the world. One of his best shows, however, was held recently at Montreal’s Museum of Contemporary Art. The show was, in fact, a striking example of the esteem in which he is held by the people of Montreal. The Rouault family released a number of the artist’s major works for showing internationally.

Visitors to the Montreal exhibition were given the opportunity of seeing a number of works which the artist was unable to finish and which were taken from his atelier after his death. These works, perhaps even more so than the ones which he had completed, allowed the viewer a chance for an intimate look into the genius of Rouault.

Rouault’s works covered a wide range of things. He loved the waters and the trees, the cities and the villages and every living being. His feeling for man was always present but it was particularly noticeable where man had need. The painter’s great affection for living things stemmed from charity rather than curiosity.

Aldo Carpi

Aldo Carpi is an Italian artist who at 78 still seeks a poetic expression of truth. The artist, who never left Milan, still paints the seasons, flowers, birds, beaches, mornings and children. But in the panorama of contemporary Italian painting, Carpi appears to be one of the most significant and one of the most original painters of the first half of the twentieth century. This is a man who has dedicated his life to artistic poetry.
italian sculpture

Three contemporary Italian sculptors, Berto Lardera, Pietro Consagra, and Francesco Somma are the subjects of a remarkable new publication from the Éditions du Griffon at Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Each is accorded a volume of his own. The text for the book on Lardera is by Michel Sebor; the text for Consagra by Giulio Carlo Argan; the text for Somma by Michel Tapie. There are excellent photographs of the artists at work, important bibliographies and a list of exhibitions and a list indicating where the works concerned are located. No one interested in sculpture should miss this series.

le soleil sous la mort

The latest collection of poems by Fernand Ouellette, published by the Éditions de l'Hexagone under the title, Soleil Sous La Mort, merits attention for its excellent presentation and for the simplicity and goodness of the material between its covers. This is a return to a "figurative" kind of poetry in which the musical element regains its position of importance.

l'art abstrait

L'Art Abstrait dans L'Art Sacré by Georges Mercier is an important study in line with the current trend toward renewed inspiration in the field of sacred art. The book, published by Éditions de Bessard (Paris), with the cooperation of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France), makes the point that since the last war there has been more and more call for the services of artists unspecialized in religious art. The book contains 251 pages and 52 plates of black and white photos.

Canada 20e siècle

In 1959, Italy went into a period of economic boom and new life was breathed into the Italian cinema. The neo-realism which, in the films of De Sica, Lattuada, Lazari, and de Santis and in the later works of de Sica, had lost much of the rustic, primitive poetry, comes to the fore in the most important works of the last six years. And there are signs of the cinema verité in the studied and profound efforts of Fellini, Ross, and Antonioni.

The film adaptations of important works of literature, quite diligent generally speaking, have been as valuable as the works which inspired them. Critical films of the war in Italy and on fascism are two more important aspects of the contemporary Italian cinema. In effect, the Renaissance has produced a series of excellent films based on episodes in the war and in the fight against fascism. The film versions of literary works reach close to perfection.

Film adaptations of important works of literature, quite diligent generally speaking, have been as valuable as the works which inspired them. Critical films of the war in Italy and on fascism are two more important aspects of the contemporary Italian cinema. In effect, the Renaissance has produced a series of excellent films based on episodes in the war and in the fight against fascism. The film versions of literary works reach close to perfection.

The typical Italian comedy, which is achieving more and more technical refinement, touched a veritable summit in such productions as Boccaccio 70, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and Marriage Italian Style.

D. de Laurentis is now working on a film adaptation of the Bible, one of the most gigantic enterprises in the history of the international cinema. Since most of the Italians are young and have proven themselves in a variety of situations, it is to be hoped that they will not let us down.

two agendas

Two particularly remarkable illustrated memorandum-books have been compiled for 1965. They both contain excellent and representative reproductions of paintings and water colors from public and private collections. The first is from the National Gallery of Canada and includes 12 watercolors by as many artists. They were chosen by Kathleen M. Fenwick. The second is the happy product of a commercial firm, Morgana et Robert Gic., which decided to promote the art of French Canada. This edition, made up entirely of Quebec works, was handled by Guy Robert, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Montreal.