The ART of TODAY

A MAGAZINE DEALING WITH VITAL AND LIVING ART

WORKERS by Thomas Benton "Power in form relationship" *Courtesy The Weyhe Gallery*

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WHERE WE STAND

"It seems to me one of the errors made by those who renounce and denounce 'modern art' is that of venturing myopic inclusive statements and of nursing judgments as indiscriminate as they are, in so many cases, premature. This practice of lumping, which is not to be confused with an intelligent effort to classify for convenience and the sake of clarity in one's approach to the whole vast study of art, will get us nowhere in the end. Wholesale fulmination, like wholesale adulation, merely befuddles the main issue and leaves us skating on the surface."

EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

- We are primarily interested in honest, creative and living art.
- We shall sponsor no one group of artists, and we shall favor no one school of art.
- We shall indulge no racial, religious, nor political prejudices.
- We shall accord recognition to ability and accomplishment wherever it is found.
- We believe that it is immaterial whether a painting be realistic or abstract, providing it be artistically valid.
- We frankly dislike and discourage pretense, foxiness, or superficial cleverness.
- We are interested in stimulating thought, not in persuading people to agree with us.
- We shall not allow advertising, friendships or diplomacy to influence in any way our editorial policy.
- We shall publish articles with which we are not altogether in agreement.
- We believe in good art – regardless of whether it be American or foreign.

***The* ART *of* TODAY**

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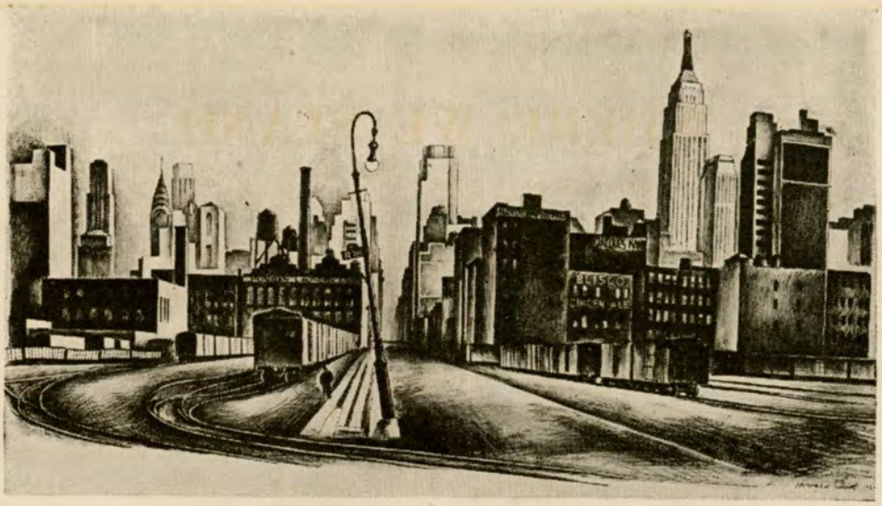


WEST SIDE NEW YORK by Howard Cook
Courtesy the Weyhe Gallery
"An uncompromising vision"

ALFRED STEIGLITZ
Speaks and Is Overheard

by Dorothy Norman

Woman: But why do you question my devotion to my work? I am ready, as you know, to live on very little in order to do what I am doing.

Stieglitz: But I do not question your devotion. It was you who mentioned the word devotion, not I. What I am trying to find out is what people actually mean when they speak; if they really know what they are saying. For so far as I can see, unless you are actually ready to starve for what you think you are fighting for, then I don't understand what you mean when you say you are devoted to what you are doing, or think that you are doing. I question nothing. I stand in judgment on no one. I merely say that unless a man is ready to die for the thing he claims to care about, then I just don't know on what basis he tests his caring. Do you know what it means to starve?

Woman: What a ridiculous question. Of course.

Stieglitz: Well, what does it mean? To go hungry?

Woman: Why of course.

Stieglitz: Well I beg to differ with you. To starve means not only to go hungry yourself, but to see your children, in whatever form they may exist, in need, to see *them* starving and to be unable to lift a finger in order to give them food so that they may continue to function. Had that ever occured to you?

Woman: No, it had not. But what is one to do? Life is difficult, complicated. There are many demands. Everyone cannot be a martyr. What is one to do?

Stieglitz: You must do exactly what you are doing. There is no choice. I can only repeat that all I am trying to find out is what people mean when they speak – not to judge you or anyone else.

* * *

A man comes in to An American Place, quite excited: Have you seen the violently dishonest attack that Thomas Benton has written in *Common Sense,* about you?

Stieglitz, (calmly): Yes.

Man: But it is outrageous. He says things about you that are absolutely untrue; that are not a matter of opinion, but of misstated fact. He says you wear your black cape "conspicuously" and that you make yourself consciously picturesque, and have a mania for self-aggrandizement. He says that you . . .

Stieglitz (interrupts): But my dear man. Do you think that all that really matters?

Man: But aren't you going to protest publicly against his using your name in the way he does? Isn't anyone going to protest?

Stieglitz: But my job is to be here at the Place. Again I repeat that I am here single handed, that this is not an institution, nor a center for propaganda. I am fighting for an idea, a liberating idea. I must spend what energy I have sticking to my job, seeing through what I have undertaken; letting the thousands who seem to be seeking what is here, see what has been done that they seem to wish to see; answering those who ask questions and leaving those alone who do not. I am not in business nor am I interested in the increasing gangsterism in what is called the art world, nor in its politics in any form whatsoever. I have been on the firing line too long to be affected by such incredibly stupid and unfounded attacks. And if Mr. Benton thinks that I have no sense of humour, I wonder what he thinks I have meant all these years by saying that there is only one joke in life, and that joke is on oneself. No, I am not interested in protecting myself from such things. My fifty year's record

shows what I am interested in. Anything else about me is empty talk, often vicious or malicious. And if all the people who come in and tell me how important it is to protect me from all the unfounded onslaughts that go on about me, in the name of art or purity or God knows what, really care, they will find some means whereby to protect what they claim to care about. As for myself I am seeking no protection. I wouldn't lift a finger to help anyone protect me. And all the protesting that anyone wants to do, if it can't be followed up; if they're not ready to back up what they say, and fight to a finish, then it all becomes a matter of so many words, and there are many too many words floating about the world already. It is acts that interest me, not words. As I've said before, most people seem to think that the word came first and then the act, but it was quite the contrary; that much I know. But the real joke of the matter is, that these people who are so cock-sure that I am dead, don't even come up here to see what is actually taking place. After all, I am still a pretty live corpse.

* * *

A Woman: I have been here several times now looking at that picture, and I have decided I must have it.

Stieglitz: And what is it about the picture that makes you feel you must have it?

Woman: Because I am sure that if I could hang that picture in our room, my husband would understand something through seeing it that I have been trying to tell him for years, and have been unable to make him understand. It says exactly what I have been trying to say but have been unable to communicate to him.

Stieglitz: But, my dear woman, don't you realize what you are trying to do? Don't you realize that whenever one tries to force something through some external means, that doesn't happen of its own inner volition, one invariably does the reverse of what one sets out to do? Don't you see that what you will do will be to drive him further from what you wish to accomplish, if you hang this picture before your husband with any such wish in mind? Let me ask you this: have you, yourself, ever tried to understand what it is in him that has made it impossible for him to understand what you were trying to tell him, that *you* wanted *him* to hear? Have you ever tried to concentrate on trying to understand the thing that perhaps he has been trying to tell you, when apparently he was not understanding what it is that you have been trying to tell him?

Sometime later the woman returned to tell Stieglitz that what he had told her had changed the whole course of her life.

* * *

A Painter: I am thoroughly disgusted by all these crooked business men and decadent people in the cities; in fact everywhere one goes. I have just come from a little New England fishing village. The fishermen there were the only honest people I have ever found.

Stieglitz: I wonder what the fish they catch would have to say about that?

* * *

A Museum Director: I think that all the work that is being done might just as well be left undone in art. Nothing of any consequence has been done, really, since Albrecht Dürer.

Stieglitz: But if that is the way you feel about the art of the present, then how do you know that there is really any place on the face of the earth for yourself? Where do you fit in in such a picture, if you really prefer to live with the dead as your sole companions? As for myself, I prefer to live with the living. And I only pray that when I die they'll bury me once and for all, and not use anything I may ever have done whereby to destroy the living.

WE HONOR

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT: Because he is the first American president who seems to realize that art is one of the most important things in the life of the people.

MAYOR LA GUARDIA: Because as a public official he has placed his stamp of approval on creative work whether it be in the field of painting, music, or drama.

DUNCAN PHILLIPS: Because he has used his fine intelligence in assembling the famous collection of art at the Phillips Memorial Gallery and because of his inspired work in bringing out the publication "Art & Understanding."

EDWARD BRUCE: Because of his distinguished service as Secretary of Public Works of Art Projects, and because he has made an enviable reputation for himself as a painter while, at the same time, carrying on important projects in several other fields.

THE MIRROR by Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Courtesy The Downtown Gallery
"Taste epitomized in form"

A NEW DEAL FOR THE ARTIST

PATRONAGE . . . *Democratic or Snobbish?*

by Thomas Donnelly

THE American people and the world have been fighting a depression for five years and have been bombarded with facts, figures and economic theories about the situation and its cause. Some experts prove that the whole trouble arises from over-production in the machine age after the speeding up during the war; others, with more reason, are convinced that the concentration of wealth in a few persons' hands and the resulting under-consumption by one man with a million dollar income as opposed to the natural demands of two hundred men with five thousand dollar incomes causes the slowing up of business and factories. We are all familiar with these theories and probably, by this time, are convinced that no one seems to have the answer, and that despite all of the reassuring words of government and business men that we are now on the road to "Recovery" and that a "New Deal" for all is on the horizon, look in bewilderment at the latest income tax figures which prove that the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer! One does not have to be a Republican, Democrat, Nazi or Communist to know that something is wrong with the distribution of products of the farm and factory when, faced with the fact that, just at the time when we have machinery and natural resources which, if intelligently used, would assure everyone a decent living, we have a handful of people with plenty, – too much, – and millions with nothing.

What has all of this to do with art and artists? Just this – that artists have not been in an ivory tower the last five years, and they have experienced the ravages of the depression as much as anyone else and more than most. We have listened to the endless talk about the badly distributed wealth, etc., and have heard the same arguments applied to the artist, his product, and its distribution. The depression for the artist did not start in 1929, however – it began around the Sixteenth Century when the patrons of art ceased to commission artists to do specific orders and started the present haphazard system of an artist painting a canvas and trusting to luck that someone would buy it, if he manages to get it exhibited. That "some one" naturally had to be wealthy enough to pay a modest price, and also with enough knowledge of painting or culture or whatever you want to call it to want to own the painting. It was not very often that these two qualifications for a collector of paintings went together. Either the rich man or woman did not care for art or the poor man who really desired the painting could not purchase it. This led to the cry of "snobbism" in art. This is true to a great extent but nevertheless some collectors have gathered fine paintings and left them to public museums for the enjoyment and education of everyone. The busy bodies who are forever telling artists how to live their lives are now saying that artists must face the situation and realize that the wealthy can no longer be expeced to patronize art in these times, and that art must be democratic and within the reach of everybody's pocketbook. This may be fine in theory but does not work out in practice. Even in 1929, according to Senator Borah, we had 80,000,000 people who had an income of less than $700.00. You can be sure that those 80,000,000 people were concerned only with food and shelter and would have laughed at anyone suggesting that they become patrons of art. We did have, in that same top year of 1929, 600,000 families with an income of $10,000.00 or more a year. Here would naturally be your patrons of art and sources of endowment of museums, etc. But it happens that the world awards a lot of this wealth to people, with special ability of some kind, who may have no interest in art. We therefore have the movie star, the gangster, the pugilist, the soap manufacturer, the politician, etc., with sudden riches and very little idea of how to use his wealth for the benefit of anyone other than himself. So the artist as well as the scientist, the hospital, and the college is forced to look to the families of the second and third generation, to whom wealth is commonplace, and who have had time for leisure and education, to realize that art is important, for support or endowment. But these families are very scarce indeed as this nation is only one hundred and fifty-nine years old and most of us are just a little beyond the pioneering stage of our development. Our whole trouble is and has been that these families have never interested themselves in art in sufficient numbers. That is the problem – how to create that interest and thereby gain support for the healthy and normal patronage of art in America. If and when the re-distribution of wealth takes place, plans for a more really democratic sponsor-

STORM IN THE MOUNTAINS by Harry Wickey

Courtesy The Leonard Clayton Gallery

"There is greatness in his needle"

ship of art can be made, but it is foolish to kid ourselves that it can happen at this time.

The government P.W.A.P. was the truly democratic form of art patronage — everybody was a patron of art for four months whether they wanted to be or not — just as everybody is a patron of battleships and bullets whether they want to be or not. There was much talk of the government "challenging" the artist to prove his mettle. Well, the artists answered the challenge and it may be that, in future years, the only thing left of the C. W. A. will be the paintings and murals done in that four months. This was a "New Deal" for the artist but too short in duration.

PRIZES OR PURCHASES OF PAINTINGS?

The Carnegie Institute each year awards $5,500.00 in meaningless prizes and honorable mentions; the Corcoran Gallery of Art awards $5,000.00 every two years, in equally meaningless prizes which are passed around in rotation to the boys; other exhibitions and museums do the same thing. How much better it would be if this out-moded custom could be changed to the Whitney Museum's practice of no prizes, but purchases of paintings! The Whitney Museum also has shown the way in its method of inviting paintings to its exhibitions. There is no "stuffed shirt" jury with all of the inevitable compromises — because the Whitney Museum has a director who is willing to take the responsibility, praise or blame for the invitation list. This also is a "New Deal" for the artist.

KANSAS CORNFIELD
by John Steuart Curry
Courtesy Ferargil Galleries
"Created through understanding"

THE PRODIGAL SON
by John Steuart Curry
Courtesy Ferargil Galleries
"Remembered nature is best"

JOHN STEUART CURRY

A Kansas Painter Who Is Typically American

by Nathaniel Pousette-Dart

BECAUSE I am interested in the relationship between handwriting and drawing I am offering this brief analysis of Mr. Curry's handwriting:

His handwriting shows very little balance. Whatever balance he has comes from his versatility. Although his emotions dominate he is able to swing back quickly to a mental control. His versatility I should say is phenomenal; – it is easy for him to see many angles and phases of a subject in a very short period of time.

His written words show a terrific nervous force with very little patience. His nature forces him to continual activity. He is prolific in ideas, so he finds it hard to complete things. His nervous system is so high strung and sensitive that it could easily go to pieces.

Ambition, strong will power and determination fly over the pages of this imaginative writing. Although craftsmanship is not shown the will to do can hold the mind to a set purpose.

Organization in a large way is strongly indicated – but attention to routine detail is an irksome task. He is frank, honest, kind and generous, with a flare for diplomacy in the handling of situations.

JOHN STEUART CURRY is still growing. It is only four years ago that he started his interesting career as a painter. One of his earliest paintings, "The Tornado," still remains his tour de force and heralds all that is to follow. Here we see the poetry of dramatic realism, imaginatively and honestly expressed. We see also Curry's love for old wood, worn and earth-stained, the correlated rhythm of his figures, animals, fowls and farm objects, the handsome play of white through the whole canvas, balanced by a symphony of blues, browns and greens. It is a canvas filled with tenderness and man's elemental terror of nature.

Although Curry as a farmer springs from the earth, he has a hard time keeping his feet on the ground because of his active and many-faceted imagination. He is not satisfied to show one phase only of man's reaction to his environment; he is interested in them all, or will be, before he lays his brushes down. He paints sections of corn fields, sunflowers, symbols of Van Gogh, blossoms in side fields, corn heavers, pigs killing snakes, burials, baptisms, portraits of farm men and women, glorious isolated trees, sunsets, thunder and lightning, medicine men, side shows, clowns, trapeze-performers gliding through the air in flames, elephants and horses. The whole kaleidoscope of elemental and humorously-conceived life is captured in his restless paintings.

This driving force is not merely experimentalism with Curry. It springs from an aliveness, an awareness of fundamental feeling. He does things that are half-baked, badly organized, and badly constructed, but he never tries to hide these faults with tricks of technique as do many of our foxy painters. He faces every problem squarely, seeing the subject with his own vision. This does not mean that he is not influenced by the work of other artists. I think Curry takes more from the work of other men than any other modern painter, but he always makes his borrowings his own. When one looks at his paintings one thinks of Curry and of his own individual out-look. Craven says that Curry has left Europe behind. Like hell he has! He has admittedly been inspired by Rubens; a canvas like "The Roadmender's Camp" gets it conceptual urge from the landscapes of Rubens. Curry himself has remarked that he started to find himself when he saw the work of Rubens. And in his studio last Sunday I saw some canvases that were inspired by Daumier, and Rousseau. There is a lot of rot written about influence and being modern. All artists are influenced, if they have any intellectual activity or emotional reactions. I believe that the greater an artist the more he is influenced by the work of other artists. Shakespeare, Bach and Michelangelo borrowed enormously. John Steuart Curry is nobody's fool. He has a fine intellect as well as unusually sensitive feelings. It is my contention that no great art is ever created except where there is great intelligence – but intelligence must never get in the way of emotion. Emotion creates art and intellect analyzes it. Every work of art is the product of alternate periods of emotional creation and intellectual analysis.

Curry, in his painting, "Baptism in Kansas," which first brought him to the attention of the public, shows, how he is able to absorb many influences and still produce a painting that is the result of a naive and sensitive observation and rendering. He is a translator of life having a fundamental understanding of the relation of human beings to the world they live in. When one looks at this painting one feels that it has sprung from living. In it we find none of the cold sneering and aloofness of Sinclair Lewis. Curry not only understands these people; he loves them; he is one of them. Very likely many of these people are definite individuals that have printed their portraits on his subconscious mind. A beauty floats over the whole scene that is hard to describe. It is both a human and a pastoral beauty. This is Kansas – but a Kansas of Curry's creating and imagining. The tone and color rhythm of this painting is delightful. One great charm springs from the swirling composition of lights in the clouds and the light color of the girls' dresses. Although this painting is very different from the

canvases of Peter Breughel, the way in which both of these artists approach peasant subjects has a basis of similarity. Breughel was interested in common life but he was also interested in compositional orchestration. His paintings had the contrapuntal rhythms of the great music of his time. He took his subjects from life but they were always subdued to inspirational conception.

In a painting like "Man Hunt" we get a more boisterous handling of form. The form becomes sculpturesque in its deep space organization; in it "orderliness comes out of disorderliness." This composition ties up with some of those interesting paintings made in the nineties for Currier and Ives.

When Curry treats nature in some of its dramatic moods his work has poetic overtones that Richard Miller, a Kansas City writer, has beautifully expressed in one of his articles; "A beauty floats about these earth scenes, a kind of pastoral beauty. The cattle are feeding in the pastures. That might be a theme. There are special qualities in this pastoral theme. Among them are the color of the grass and the color of the cattle. The color of the grass is green, a harder, a plainer green than that of the grass you see every day. The color of the cattle is red, or brown, or neither, yet it is almost the same as that of the white-face cattle you have seen, or do see, almost, but with the difference favorable to that pastoral beauty which, perhaps, you had not before realized could come from Kansas and America."

In one canvas Curry has painted a gorgeous portrait of a sunflower. It is retained in the beholder's memory and assumes a magical importance. He paints cornstalks with an intense feeling that comes from unconsciously experiencing the corn growing up from the earth year after year to its final stage of glory.

From these rustlings and goings on of nature in its growing stages Curry takes to the road with The Ringling Circus to paint the doings of people in this world of make-believe. Although this life on the road is hard, with its continual movings, its uncertainties, its exposure, we gather from his paintings that he had a glorious time. This movement, change, excitement are in accord with his temperament. Life following the tents was hard but filled with aesthetic excitement. The circus had an amazing number of things that appealed to the eye of the painter.

In his painting "Entrance to the Circus," he has caught the moment of excitement when one act goes off and another one comes on. Here is pathos, intermingled with tinsel display and glamor. Compositionally it is complex and interwoven back and forth like a crazy shuttle operating in a loom. It has a few bad spots in design. One is a tie-up in design around the horses' heads that keeps the eye from freely playing over its areas of color and form.

Again, in these paintings of circus life we find that Curry has really become acclimated; he is absorbed in it, he feels the intenseness of it, he loves the people, the animals, the tents, the trapezes, the very tent poles. The clowns especially appeal to him with their drolleries and grotesqueness.

Curry's range of sympathy and feeling is very great. He runs the gamut from the delicate to the powerful, from the sweet to the grotesque; all is grist that comes to his mill. He paints Alfredo Cadona, the greatest of the aerialists, in beautiful swings through the air with other performers, mathematically calculated. He is fascinated by Clyde Beatty, who makes the lions cry the minute he enters the cage, and again, by the Wallendas, who do shoulder pyramids on a tight wire, with no net beneath. In Zacchini, the human projectile, he finds a genuine response because this circus performer was an artist before he made his income by living dangerously.

In a canvas showing an aerial beauty poised to take her flight, the light is creatively handled, the color is shot through with mystery, a robe has been beautifully seen and rendered.

Curry is not satisfied with painting the amazing and conglomerate beauties of a circus with its life and trappings — he now wants to paint the sun. He says Turner and Claude Lorrain tried to paint it, but without success. He is experimenting along new lines, and feels that he will succeed.

One of Curry's latest adventures has been in the field of decoration. He has painted a large canvas called, "Labor's Co-operation in the Revolution," which is hung in the National Gallery in Washington. In the last year he has completed two frescos on the walls of the Westport High School.

Who knows where this stalwart boy from a Kansas farm is going? In a few short years he has covered a great deal of ground. John Steuart Curry will never be satisfied. When he exhausts the possibilities of this world he will go to hell and paint the damned.

ALONG THE LOING by Dunoyer de Segonzac

Courtesy The Brummer Gallery Inc.

"Essentials dominate"

TWO TREES
by Bernard Karfiol
Courtesy
The Downtown
Gallery
"Poetic power"

SEGONZAC IN NEW YORK

by Martha Candler

THE opening of André Dunoyer de Segonzac's exhibition at the Brummer gallery (where it will remain through February) was a towering interest point in a season already epochal for the number, scope and consequences of its art events, and in a week when fifty-odd new showings clamored for public attention. This is America's first opportunity to trace the quarter century of evolution through which this artist has finally arrived close to the forefront among French contemporary painters.

Simplicity, vigor, and a distinctive use of color as an element of design, are the essentials of a style which emerges from the fifty-odd pictures shown, and gives promise of still completer development. This style, for one observer, comes to its fullest-rounded expression in such canvases as "Along the Loing," and "Winter Landscape."

The world of M. de Segonzac is a small everyday place, never far from nature, but his artist sensitivity to its truths is intense. Occasionally his fragment of earth, water and sky is operated upon so powerfully by creative vision that it is impelled into a new vitality, vibrant with three-dimension verity and beauty, within its two-dimension world of canvas. His method is that of shearing his subject free from all its circumstantial and extraneous complications.

Cezanne's influence appears most notably in the artist's massing of volumes and superposition of tones. Segonzac, too, has a gigantic Cezannish range of color weight. His earlier canvases are thick plasterings of opaque pigment out of which forms suddenly emerge with sculpture-like solidity, while some of his more recent water colors are of almost ethereal transparency. His "Skaters in Savoy," for instance, is a notable study, in which delicate, bluish-white ice and snow and sky tones prevail. Its quality of Oriental exquisiteness has been achieved without sacrifice of animation and rich plastic vitality. He could turn out the powerful, sombre "Still Life with Glass of Wine," (which does, incidentally, appear to excel only as a nice balancing of compositional forms when set beside Cezanne's luminous and economically realized "Nature Morte et Verre de Vin") and go on to experiments in color fluidity such as appear in the long series of flower and parasol pieces. Such experiments were occasionally pressed to the point of virtuosity as in the "Still Life" from the collection of Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill, and often eventuated in such rich decorative harmonies as the fruit pieces and the "Red Fish" in which cadmium tones predominate.

M. de Segonzac is a modern of the moderns. He ably reenforces his power of expression within his own peculiar field by use of every sound and appropriate device from the modernist's equipment kit. His technical competence, however, is subordinate. He creates by revelation. His appeal is personal and to the emotions, and one's first awareness of him as artist is of a man on easy terms with his world. There is a pleasant thrill of surprise in many canvases, like the thrill of encountering grass of green emerald greenness suddenly in an overdreary winter world; like the pleasure of coming close on a warmly glowing house after the rigors of a walk against icy wind. In some canvases, there is to be glimpsed that which is of the essential reality of all landscapes, which passes into the beholder's experience and becomes a part of the abiding order of existence for him.

Review of

EXPRESSIONISM in ART

by Sheldon Cheney

THOMAS CRAVEN, in his flippant, patronizing and essentially unfair review of "Expressionism in Art" (in the Herald Tribune, Sunday, Jan. 13th) says it "reads like the maunderings of a young student intoxicated by the discovery of the simple fact that works of art have an abstract basis of design" – and that, "if he proves anything at all . . . it is a fact which nobody denies: pictures do have plasticity and they do have formal relationships." Unfortunately this "simple fact," however well-known it may be to artists, is neither known nor understoood by the great majority of potential art lovers. Art appreciation lags behind music appreciation in this country simply because our people have been afforded fewer contacts with good pictures than with good music.

"Modern" pictures bewilder and repell them, and they find it easier to ridicule and dismiss than to understand and appreciate them.

Now, one cannot form a complete and satisfying impression of a painting from a black and white reproduction, any more than one can judge a symphony by hearing it over the radio. But the repeated "exposure" to masterpieces, at one remove, results invariably in a desire to see and hear them at first hand.

Mr. Cheney, in his generously illustrated book, does very much the same thing for art-lovers that Dr. Damrosch in his radio music-appreciation hours, does for music-lovers. "Listen!" says Dr. Damrosch, "this is what you are about to hear." "Look!" says Mr. Cheney, "this is what you are about to see."

To furnish representative reproductions of modern paintings to the casual reader, and induce him to look at them with interest, is in itself an important accomplishment.

Starting with a simple definition "Art is the formal expression of a conceived image," Mr. Cheney goes on to explain that "the whole book is, in a sense, an elucidation . . . of this definition;" and that "any treatment of a serious phase of art practice, any analysis of a newly expressive or revelatory accomplishment, upon the upward scale, must be shown to come within a definition that embraces Chinese, Greek, Byzantine and other still valid manifestations."

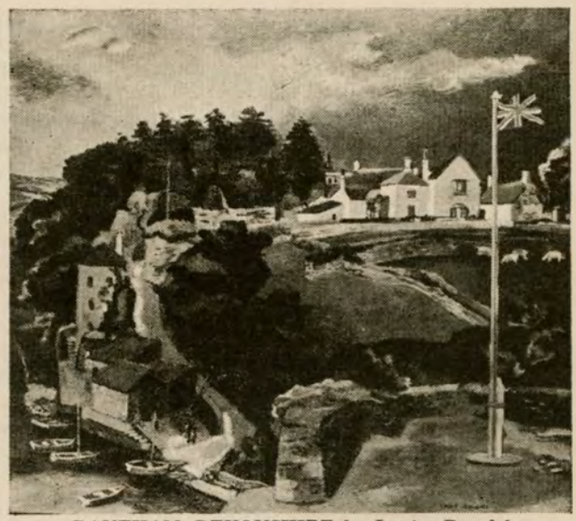
Mr. Cheney's book is engagingly unpretentious. Despite the extent of his researches and the soundness of his information, his attitude throughout is that of an enthusiatic student. He is interested to the point of excitement, in the emergence of Expressionism, from the realistic, imitative art which immediately preceded it; and he succeeds in communicating this excitement.

The illustrations alone – two hundred of them – would make the book well worth owning. One may disagree with Mr. Cheney's estimate of some of the artists represented, but one cannot but applaud the appreciative spirit in which he shows their work. The most apathetic reader would be roused to interest, so vital and varied are these reproductions. Mr. Cheney is himself a true art-lover, and because of this, he awakens a desire on the part of his readers for a more comprehensive and intensive first-hand knowledge of modern art.

Flora Louise Poussete-Dart

LANDSCAPE by Dorothy Varian
Courtesy The Downtown Gallery
"Sensitive plasticity"

ALDRICH FARM by Edward Bruce
Courtesy the Milch Galleries
"Achieving the decorative essentials"



BANTHAM, DEVONSHIRE by Louise Bouché
Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art
"Design and form unit"

EDWARD HOPPER OBJECTS

3 Washington Square North, New York.

Jan. 4, 1935.

"Dear Pousette-Dart:

"I have the first copy of the 'Art of Today' that you sent me and must take exception to your saying, in your article on Thomas Craven, that I found my direction and bent, when I saw the work of Burchfield.

"It is not quite clear in my mind as to what you mean exactly by direction and bent, but you probably mean choice of subject matter.

"It is known by the painters that have known me well for a long time, that from that point of view, my bent was established long ago. Twenty-five years ago or perhaps more, before Burchfield had been heard of and perhaps before he had painted at all, I had used the kind of subjects, that to some, seem to predominate in the American scene: houses of the Garfield era, railroad trains, telegraph poles, factories, small town streets, etc.

"If this early subject matter of mine did not come to the public's attention, it was because I had very little opportunity in those days to exhibit my pictures: Burchfield being younger came before the public at a later date, when it was ready to accept these subjects without aversion or laughter as it did at an earlier period.

"You must not forget that I was for some time a student of Henri's who encouraged all his students to try to depict the familiar life about them. The work of Bellows, Coleman, du Bois and others was the result of the impetus he gave us in this direction many years before Burchfield came upon the scene.

"If by direction and bent you mean the kind of vision or method of working, it is obvious that I am unlike him in almost every respect.

"In every artist's development the germ of the later work is always found in the earlier. The nucleus around which the artist's intellect builds his work is himself; the central ego, personality, or whatever it may be called, and this changes little from birth to death. What he was once, he always is, with slight modifications. Changing fashions in methods or subject matter alter him little or not at all.

"The interplay of influences between contemporaries is often hidden and mysterious and perhaps we do not completely understand its workings.

"I feel a great response to the work of Burchfield and always have, but your belief that it gave me my bent and direction, I think, comes from your being unfamiliar with certain phases of my early work.

"The alternative is to believe that you are doing some rather casual thinking on the subject.

"You can see by my letter that I am peeved and I know that Burchfield has felt the same about loose and unjust criticisms of a similar kind that have accused his work of a too great likeness to mine.

"Think it over.

"Most sincerely,

(signed) "Edward Hopper."

Editorial Comment

Despite Mr. Hopper's protests, I still feel that he was at one time strongly influenced by Burchfield's work. If, in the following paragraphs, I cite my reasons for so thinking at some length, it is by way of protesting that my thinking, although possibly mistaken, is, at any rate, not casual.

Personally, I see two major influences in Edward Hopper's work. The first one is Winslow Homer's, which is basic; the second one is Charles Burchfield's, which is directional.

My acquaintance with Mr. Hopper's work began in St. Paul, Minnesota, when I was art director of a publication called "The Farmer's Wife," for which he made drawings. In 1922, Hopper made some illustrations for the George L. Dyer Company, of which I was then art director. He showed me several etchings at that time. Seven of these plates appeared in The Museum of Art Catalogue at the time of his outstanding one-man exhibition in 1933. In the same year (1922), Hopper invited me to his studio. At this date he had not started to paint his water colors. He showed me a few oil paintings, but he was not satisfied with them. As I remember them they were not at all like his later paintings. These canvases were frankly in the Henri tradition. Yes, I knew Hopper had studied with Henri because we had talked about it since, I also had come under his influence in the old Fifty-Seventh Street Chase School.

Charles Burchfield's first New York exhibition was held in 1923 at The Sunwise Turn Bookshop, under the patronage of Mrs. Mowray Clark. Mr. Barr said, in his foreword to the Modern Museum's Hopper Exhibition; "He won prizes, which encouraged him in the summer of 1923 to try some water colors." "Haskell's House," a water color, painted in 1923, shows a decided trend toward the special kind of subject matter that Burchfield first painted, and "Libby's House," reproduced below, painted in 1927, according to my receptivity, shows both in the subject and the technique, an awareness of the former artist's work.

All this is "much ado about nothing," of course, because it doesn't really matter about influences; every artist at some time or other has been inspired by the work of another artist. The important thing is that he make these borrowings his own. Edward Hopper, I think, has done this as successfully as any living artist.

LIBBY'S HOUSE by Edward Hopper
Courtesy The Rehn Gallery **"Rock bottom stability"**

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON

A page devoted to the work of

THE gallery world is now settling down in good earnest to making the most of the season. The prospects of sales for the artists are, according to our last year's averages, five times greater than they were then, but it is entirely a buyer's market. The requirements asked and the money offered seem unreconcilable at first sight, but, gulping down old notions, the painter usually decides that sending a painting out to form friends is better than having it stay at home and grumble in an overcrowded studio, — and the money at least takes care of paint bills.

Martha Simpson's "Member's Invitation" exhibition entitled "Paintings of Personalities" proved most successful. The attendance was excellent and the criticisms most favorable, Lewis Mumford of the *New Yorker* being especially complimentary. Miss Simpson was introduced in New York by Contemporary Arts in 1933, shortly after the 1933 "Independent" exhibition where her work was first seen. Charles Logasa, introduced in 1931, (Member's Invitation in 1934) was also first seen in the 1931 Independent. We feel that this annual exhibition is a most valuable institution and expect to contact through it many more painters ready to be presented individually as really meriting the serious interest of the public, — for, as enthusiasts for paint, we ask what can be more interesting than watching the career of a painter in whom one believes, as Contemporary Arts most certainly does in both these mentioned.

Kenneth Bates, of Mystic, Conn., whose work is well-known in Connecticut and Philadelphia but hitherto unknown in New York, was introduced in the main gallery of Contemporary Arts in January. His rhythmically patterned "Bathers" was most enthusiastically received by the press and reproduced in the February "Parnassus."

The first one-man exhibition of Edith Branson opening January 28th will still be current when this issue comes out. This painter has been delving for twelve years into the study of color in order to be able to express in color the depth of emotion a musician expresses through sound. Her paintings are pure abstractions, — conveying the joy of living in color and form but entirely divorced from subject matter.

Our "extra-mural" activities increase. A new exhibition was hung in the Dubonnet Restaurant, 5 East 45th Street from which we joyfully report a sale of Beulah Bettersworth's "Zinnias" to Samuel Halpern of Pelham, N. Y. No sooner had the group exhibition returned from Montclair Club than the Upper Montclair Woman's Club came asking for a group showing of those sponsored by Contemporary Arts. We feel very strongly that these suburban activities are most important to the painters, for there is much more possibility of happily introducing modern painting into the more spacious country homes. Also people have more leisure to appreciate, and being less satiated in every way, they are often more keenly aware of real merit.

RETURN OF THE WILDERNESS by Kenneth Bates

Contemporary Arts January Painting-of-the-month Club Reception held at the Roosevelt on the ninth was a memorable evening. The musical program given by Leslie Frick, mezzo-soprano, and Lucy Lewis, harpist, was outstandingly fine. John C. Pellew's "Clear Cold," (reproduced in the Art Digest of Jan. 15) was the choice of the January jury; Leon Kroll, Louise Edey and Phyllis Manger. It was awarded by the guests of honor, Caresse Crosby and Jean Lurcat, to Miss M. London, 455 Madison Avenue, N. Y. "Clear Cold" was also invited by W. H. Siple to the Cincinnati Museum Exhibition of 1934, but in spite of all these authoritative voices in its favor, Miss London has effected an exchange for another of Mr. Pellew's paintings more harmonious with the setting of her home, — so that "Clear Cold" is still available to its other admirers.

Taking the cue from this incident, it has been decided that the aim of the organizers being to "inculcate and foster the desire to own," it might be well to leave some element of choice to the prospective owner. Therefore the February jury, Ernest Lawson, Diane Tate, Marian Hall and Gertrude Lamont, unanimously chose

as the Painting of the Month, "Two Tree Tavern" by Fred Gardner, and as alternatives A. Harriton's "Stone Vase," Martha Simpson's "Still Life," and Michael Rosenthal's "Court Scene."

For the regular Monday evening receptions at Contemporary Arts recent guests of honor have been Madeleine Boyd, author and literary agent, Joan Lowell of "The Cradle of the Deep"; George Seldes, "You Can't Print That!" who is in private life a painter who "loves to squeeze out a whole tube of sky"; Suzanne Silvercruys Farnam, sculptress and playwright; Walter Pach, painter, lecturer, and for many years Treasurer of the N. Y. "Independents."

Scheduled for future Mondays are: February 18, Jerome Klein, Art Department of Columbia University; February 25, Mrs. Frank Day Tuttle, Delegate to the 1932 Disarmament Conference, author of "Alternatives to War"; March 4, Alfred Kreymborg, pioneer in modern poetry, drama and criticism, author of fifteen books, editor of modern magazines and several anthologies of poetry; March 11, Louis Marcoussis, now holding an exhibition of his etchings in the Knoedler galleries.

STUDIO NEWS

by Clayton Spicer

Maurice Becker

It is one of our reoccurring surprises when we study Maurice Becker's paintings that recognition of his fine accomplishments does not place him by reputation in the thin front rank of American painters of today who are certain to survive. We came away from his show at the Eighth Street Gallery puzzled by this and we have been thinking it over since then.

One of the very strong affectations in painting during the recent past has been, what we name to ourselves as, "The Fall of the House of Usher" trend. Poe's romantic melodramatics seem to live again in all these dark, heavy, soul-sick pigmentations. There is, of course, the opposite to this, represented by such painters as Hopper, Burchfield, Marsh and Curry who are out working in the open air, but are they not afraid or unable to make any courageous color orchestrations?

Cezanne froze color on form and Monet divorced color from form. Becker places his brush between these two and first paints form and then bathes it with color. It is in the air, about and over his finely organized designs of line and form and so rich and varied and subtle is his color that its influence on sensitive eyes is one of the richest experiences in painting. He has given himself entirely to his canvases. His technical ability is so complete that no brush or difficult pigment seems to come between his vision and the canvas — it can be said that he paints with his eyes and mind alone.

Peggy Bacon

Off With Their Heads! by Peggy Bacon. Published by Robert M. McBride & Co. $3.00.

Thirty-nine characters place their heads on the block, beginning with Fiorello La Guardia, the art conscious mayor, and Miss Bacon's keen charcoal blade falls but no heads drop into the basket except in the last instance when the artist, perhaps in despair, neatly beheads herself. All her other intended victims appear to enjoy the show too much and we fear that she has made no serious enemies.

Miss Bacon's best wounds, which draw the most blood, are on the necks of La Guardia, Sinclair Lewis, Juliana Force, Heywood Broun and Alexander Brook. In a "headnote" about Brook she observes, "Small, hard continentally backless head, coated with a short thatch of light brown hair like a piece of beaver fur. Big hooked nose like a weapon. Fierce blue eyes beneath a cliff of brow, with the black look of an animal glaring from its lair, a vacant stare compound of rage and gaiety, slightly berserk. Bull neck, broad shoulders and an air of force and energy. Mercurial, over-bearing and intense. A stiff proposition."

The book is a handsome job of designing by Daniel Bradley.

Frank Vincent DuMond

The teaching of art is one of the most chaotic branches of the instructing profession. There are not many valuable books on the subject. It is necessary to get understanding by word of mouth and by concrete demonstration. Let a painter gain some name for himself through his own work and it is possible and generally necessary for him to gain some sort of a livelihood teaching the young aspirant. The horrible thing about this is that the student invariably learns to paint exactly like his instructor. There seems to be no broad basis of understanding imparted upon which a pupil can raise his own structure.

We must have studied under a dozen teachers of art in our time and among these there was only one, or two, who had the intelligence to show us any broad truths which we could call our own when we had mastered them. One of these teachers was Frank Vincent DuMond. He could and did impart a knowledge of light and form and color as related to that seen and he did it in a simple understandable way. He was able to show most of the possibilities of paint. He did not venture beyond the fundamentals, it is true, and this to me is what makes him an outsanding teacher; he prepares the soil and lets the plant or weed grow up to its possibilities.

GLOUCESTER STREET by Maurice Freedman
Courtesy The Midtown Galleries "A painter is here"

WHERE TO SEE THE ART OF TODAY

A. C. A. GALLERY, 52 West 8th Street — *February 10 to March 2:* Exhibition of work by Japanese artists.

AN AMERICAN PLACE, 509 Madison Avenue — *Until March 11:* Paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe.

ARDEN GALLERY, 460 Park Avenue — *Until February 23:* Portraits by Charles Hopkinson.

ARGENT GALLERIES, 42 West 57th Street — *March 4-16:* Original drawings in all mediums. *March 18-30:* Landscapes by Fern Cunningham.

ARTHUR U. NEWTON GALLERY, 11 East 57th Street — *Until March 9:* Portraits by Rembski. *March 11-30:* Drawings and water colors by Danedo.

BRAXTON GALLERY, 353 East 58th Street — *During February:* Paintings and drawings by Emanuele Romano.

BRUMMER GALLERY, 53 East 57th Street — *During February:* Paintings by Segonzac.

CONTEMPORARY ARTS, 41 West 54th Street — *February 18 to March 9:* Oils and water colors by Tekla Hoffman. *February 18 to March 9:* Water colors — Mostly Mallorca by Mary Drake Coles.

DELPHIC STUDIOS, 724 Fifth Avenue — Paintings by Hugh McKean. Water colors by Dora Abrahams.

DURAND-RUEL GALLERY, 12 East 57th Street — *February 11 to March 2:* Paintings and pastels by Mary Cassatt.

EIGHTH STREET GALLERY, 61 West 8th Street — *February 11 to March 9:* Paintings by Joseph De Martini. *March 11-30:* Paintings by Harold Weston.

EIGHTH STREET PLAYHOUSE GALLERY, 52 West 8th Street — *Until February 28:* Paintings by John Johnson.

ERICH-NEWHOUSE GALLERY, 578 Madison Avenue — *February 11-23:* Paintings by Kopman.

FRANK K. M. REHN GALLERY, 683 Fifth Avenue — *Until March 9:* Paintings by Arnold Blanch. *March 11-30:* Paintings by Georgina Klitgaard.

GALLERY SECESSION, 49 West 12th Street — *During February:* Paintings by Vincent Spagna.

GRAND CENTRAL ART GALLERIES, 15 Vanderbilt Avenue — *March 5-16:* Sketches by Putnam Binley. *March 1-16:* Monotypes by Seth Hoffman.
1 East 51st Street — *March 11-21:* Paintings by Frank Tenny Johnson. *March 25 to April 6:* Paintings by Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Murphy.

LEONARD CLAYTON GALLERY, 108 East 57th Street — *March 4-15:* Paintings and water colors by Victor DePauw.

MACBETH GALLERY, 15 East 57th Street — *February 19-25:* Portraits by Leonable Jacobs.

MACY GALLERIES, 34th Street and Sixth Avenue — *During February:* Caricatures of Dogs by A. Birnbaum.

MARIE STERNER GALLERY, 9 East 57th Street — *March 4-16:* Water colors by Mary Piexotto. *March 18-30:* Flower paintings and garden sculpture.

MILCH GALLERIES, 108 West 57th Street — *March 4-23:* Paintings by Stephen Etnier.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 West 53rd Street — *Until March 3:* Retrospective exhibition of the works of Gaston Lachaise. Paintings by George Caleb Bingham.

PIERRE MATISSE GALLERY, 51 East 57th Street — *During March:* French paintings.

VALENTINE GALLERY, 69 East 57th Street — *March 9-26:* Paintings by Milton Avery.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, 10 West 8th Street — *February 12 to March 22:* Abstract painting in America.

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