

Views and Reviews in the World of Art



"Lady at Dressing Table," by Metzinger, in the Rosenberg Sale, Anderson Galleries.

ers, sculptors and engravers in this exhibition is a significant step in that direction."

Notes and Activities of World of Art

It is encouraging to find a Modern Art Society so far west as in Los Angeles and to note that its sponsors have such clear ideas upon the subject of freedom of expression. The second annual exhibition has just occurred and the following appears as a foreword to the catalogue:

"In common with all other mental activity creative art is susceptible to the condemnation of the satisfied. Rendered sycophantic through economical reasons or through intellectual laziness, the scoffer finds it easier to conform to the established standards than to keep his mind open to the results of modern experiment. If he were to examine his own time with the energy that he devotes to blind opposition, life would be easier for the progressive proselytizer. Being in the minority, the progressives must make up by sheer force what they lack in numbers. Happily the necessary force is usually coincident with the progressive mind and art does progress despite the weight of reactionary disapproval.

"Recognizing this situation the Modern Art Society with the limited means at its command, has gathered this collection to combat that circumstance. Each member and each invited exhibitor has chosen his own entry. The only suggestion of the jury system has been in the agreement of the members as to the suitability of the painter invited. As to the invited works from the East, the attempt has been to include only painters who are leaders of artistic freedom in their particular locality.

"Within the society itself the intention has been to allow each member absolute liberty. The basis of the organization has not been that of mannerism or style, but truth and sincerity. No claim is made to perfection or toward establishing standards, nor is the gage of battle thrown down to any institution or association. One basic principle and one only forms the foundation of this society, that of circulating the late developments of the East and comparing them with the freshest expression of the West. The avowed hope is that benefit may result from that effort."

The exhibition of mezzotints in the

Knuedler Galleries is one of the most illuminating and educational that have ever been assembled there. It is not to be missed by print lovers.

The catalogue has been carefully compiled and contains a wealth of information in regard to the individual plates. In the foreword there is the following concise description of the art of mezzotinting:

"There are many people who know what a mezzotint is, but there are a great many people who do not know what it is or how it is produced. Nearly every one speaks of the process as a 'mezzotint engraving,' when in reality there is no engraving used in its development. We give here a superficial description of how it is produced: The deepest shadow we see in a print represents the whole state of the plate before the subject is worked upon it; this tone shadow is called 'the ground' and is produced with an instrument called a 'rocker,' taking its name from the movement the artist makes when working; it is a half moon in shape and has sharp, fine teeth worked into the edge so that when held at right angles with the plate and rocked in every direction it fills the surface with holes so close together that an impression taken with ink in this condition would be almost a solid black; there would, however, be a richness and velvety quality caused by the holes which a solid black tint would not have. This is the first stage.

Now we come to the second—the drawing of the design or subject: For this the grounding is covered with a wash which allows the artist to draw plainly and freely upon it whatever he desires to translate, making it, of course, in the reverse or negative from the actual subject; then with the scraper and burnisher he smooths away the grounding with which the plate has been covered. It goes without saying that the more he burnishes and scrapes the more the holes disappear, so that if the place was entirely smoothed and polished the ink would not remain upon it when cleaned for printing; but, on the contrary, when there is less scraping and polishing and the ink is applied there would be holes in which the ink would be retained after the surface has been wiped; therefore a reproduction or translation of a subject can be more or less accurately made, according to the ability of the artist, by scraping away a little here for a deep tone, a little more there for a medium tone, and entirely scraped and polished for the high lights. One can understand by this that a mezzotint is not an engraving, but a scraping—it is

merely custom or habit that leads us to call it a mezzotint engraving instead of a scraping."

The original idea that came into the head of Ludwig von Siegen, the inventor, was to find some method whereby a painting could be translated into black and white so that the technique of the artist could be clearly and faithfully reproduced and all the values in tonality done in color should be felt when printed in black. Think for a moment what that means. Take for example two delicate colors like light blue and yellow—question: which color should be the deeper when both colors are apparently of the same value in the subject? Please to remember that when these beautiful mezzotints were done there were no orthochromatic plates, no photography nor any of the modern processes whereby one could easily obtain these results. It required a real artist, not an artisan, to accomplish it.

The French Government Loan Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, previously announced as closing on April 28, will be continued through the month of May until the date of Sunday, May 26, inclusive. Arrangements are being made for a tour of this exhibition in the autumn to include Rochester, Montreal, Boston and other places.

The American Institute of Graphic Arts announces a special exhibit of war posters by prominent American artists in the galleries of the National Arts Club, 119 East Nineteenth street. The posters are now on view from 10 to 6 o'clock and the public is invited. The exhibit is under the auspices of the division of pictorial publicity of the committee on public information.

The *Burlington Magazine* keeps up its valiant service in endeavoring to bring the English connoisseurs into a comprehension of contemporary art. In the current number the frontispiece is a decoration by Gauguin called "Que sommes nous? D'ou venons nous, Ou sommes nous." For it Roger Fry has written the following appreciation:

"The greatest and certainly the profoundest artists are those who arrive at a vision so universalized that they become almost indifferent to what material lies to their hand. One kind of object, one type of human being, serves as well as another; whatever is presented to their eyes becomes the springboard for their leap into infinity. But Gauguin was not one of these. He needed for his inspiration a certain kind of life, a certain type of natural forms. He had passionate tastes and preferences and in these he was original—to some extent his pictures express these views about life, and to that extent at least they have a literary content.

"They are not purely expressions of feelings about form, but also, even if indirectly, about life. It is pretty clear, for instance, that in finding his way out of European civilization into the primitive life of Tahiti, Gauguin was finding himself. And it was not only Tahitian civilization that revealed Gauguin to himself, it was also Tahitian art. So that Gauguin became the first of the many modern artists who have since found the best part of their inspiration in the art of so-called savages. The extraordinary thing is that this intensely self-conscious and intellectual Frenchman did manage to create an art which fused perfectly the naïveté of savage art with the most accomplished European tradition. Gauguin was never naïve; the wonder is that an artist so sophisticated, so nearly an academic (in the best sense of the word) did manage this feat without becoming affected or acquiring a false naïveté.

"The picture here reproduced is one of the most important and the most ambitious he ever attempted. It is said to be a symbolical expression of his own life. The very fact that he found in such a symbolic presentation the inspiration for a great design shows how much even in his painting he remained a critic of life. Gauguin's *Noa Noa* proves how readily a literary form of expression came to him, how much of a poet he was as well as a painter, so that one need not wonder at finding him toward the end of his life trying also to make his extraordinary powers of design serve the same ends.

"Fortunately he never forgot the limitations of pictorial art, so that in the great composition here in question we are really

ON VIEW

Important Collection

OF

Rare XVIII Century

English Mezzotints

AT THE GALLERIES OF

M. Knoedler & Co.

556 Fifth Avenue

not in the least concerned with the meaning of the symbolism. I must, in fact, confess that I have never even tried to discover in what way it expresses Gauguin's life, unless indeed that one would suppose his whole life to have been occupied with Tahitian idols and Tahitian women, which was certainly not the case. Nor do I imagine that one's pleasure in the picture would anyway be heightened by an elucidation of the symbolism. That indeed was Gauguin's own affair—it led him to this splendid coordination of forms, and in that it served all its purpose.

"It remains like Giorgione's *Tempest*, a magnificent design the origin of which was symbolical, but the effect of which on the spectator is purely and quite satisfyingly pictorial. It is a work which summarizes the whole development of Gauguin's art, his learned simplification and amplification of form, his intricate and yet lucid rhythmic design—which is here called upon to hold together a whole panorama—his development of flat, scarcely varied, masses of color in frank opposition and yet harmonized by a peculiar

PAINTINGS

of

The Valley of the Marne

by

A. L. BOUCHÉ

1848-1911

C. W. KRAUSHAAR

ART GALLERIES

260 Fifth Avenue

subtlety of tone and a splendid lacquer-like quality of the surface. In all of these personal characteristics it would be hard to say whether he had learned more from his native Latin tradition or from Polynesian handicrafts and sculpture, so perfectly are the characteristics of each fused by the fire of Gauguin's imaginative spirit."

Burlington gives a review to the life and work of Isidre Nonell, which will be read with interest by those who study the trend of art abroad:

"The newer generation of Catalan artists looks upon Nonell as an apostle, and certain of his compatriots—Alexandre Plana, Francesc Pujols, Casellas, Vayreda, Joan Saes, &c.—have combined to pay their tribute of respect and admiration in the volume under review. In Paris, which has welcomed so many Spanish painters, from Zuloaga and Sorolla to Picasso, Nonell is naturally better known than in England. He exhibited annually at the *Indépendants* toward the close of his short life, and had aroused interest by exhibitions of his works at Le Brac de Bouville and Volland galleries."

To Artists, Art Teachers and Students

F. W. Devoe & Co's

ARTISTS MATERIALS

For Studio, School & Outdoor Use are

World Standard

SKETCHING From NATURE

REQUISITES

Ask for DEVOE brands at all well equipped retail Art Supply Stores.

Fulton & William Streets, N. Y.