News and Reviews of Art---Arthur Lee's Sculpture Suggests Maillol and Bernard

His Works Now on Exhibition Demand Especial Attention—George Biddle Returns From Tahiti and Shows His New Art.

By HENRY M'BRIDE.

AMATEURS of sculpture should not miss the exhibition of Arthur Lee's work in the galleries of Wildenstein & Co., for this sculptor appears as reasonably sure of a future as any who have appeared before us this winter asking for an opinion. Mr. Lee is practically an American. That is, he was brought here at an extremely tender age from Norway or Sweden, I forget which, and allowed to grow up in one of the breezy Western States that theoretically ought to produce so many robust sculptors but which, up to this, have produced so few.

Mr. Lee studied, of course, in Paris. The Western State could give to him vigor, but it could not supply him with the technique of sculpture. That is, the Western State could have taught Mr. Lee sculpture if it had only thought it could—for it is not really necessary to go anywhere to study sculpture in these days—but the Western State, as Christian Scientists say, didn't have the thought. So Mr. Lee went to Paris. That is why he grew to the full stature of a sculptor so quietly without any of us knowing of it. For he is a real sculptor, full grown, vigorous, robust.

The first thought you will have after a glance at the figures, if you are a vrai amateur, is, "What a swell opportunity for a patron," for Mr. Lee's work, like Mr. Gaston Lachaise's, is not the sort that can be placed at any corner of Broadway and be a perfect fit. It demands a special setting and is special enough in itself to command a setting. It would look mighty well in a formal garden against green things, or under a lofty portico like that at Florence that partly shields Benvenuto's Perseus from the storms. We haven't such a portico in New York—but that's the patron's business, not mine.

Possibly because of Mr. Lee's stay in Paris there is an indefinable something in his work that suggests a faraway kinship with the productions of Maillol and Joseph Bernard. He has not quite the remoteness from Broadway that they have, but almost. Doubtless when the patron appears and Mr. Lee is enabled to visualize his carvings against their proper backgrounds, instead of seeing them all huddled in one gallery, or packed away as is too often now the case in dingy storerooms, he will give his gods and goddesses further detachment.

It is encouraging, anyhow, that an American of this epoch could do gods and goddesses at all. We had begun to think we should have to get along without them, and, like the young Maurice in "La Revolte des Anges," who never knew he had a guardian angel until the latter forsook him, we did not like the idea. A Sevres vase, or the freedom of the city, or at least a vote of thanks, should be given Mr. Lee for restoring the relationship. The Greeks had that enormous advantage, you see, that they were on the most intimate terms with their gods and were always seeing them, or just about to see them, around the corner. Our usual young sculptors have never seen a goddess in all their lives. They see queens, they are constantly seeing queens, but queens are scarcely the same thing. Queens are apt to be anemic, with too much carmine to their lips and too much powder to their cheeks.

TAHITIANS, by GEORGE BIDDLE KINGORE GALLERIES

Mr. Biddle Back From Tahiti With New Art

George Biddle has been to Tahiti. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* One doesn't have to do all the things in Tahiti that Gauguin did there, although one may do some of them with impunity. For instance, wood block printing. Mr. Biddle does wood blocks. Never has so much black ink been spilled upon a catalogue as upon that for the exhibition of Mr. Biddle's things now on view in the Kingore Gallery, and all because of the big wood blocks that adorn the pages. Mr. Biddle also translates from Tahitian legends, and one of them, foretelling the end of the world, provides him with a subject for his best wood block.

Another thing that people who go to Tahiti do and which Mr. Biddle has not yet done is to write. It usually takes the autobiographical form, and usually it is not published until after the author's demise. There is usually a reason why the author prefers not to publish it during his lifetime. Had the Gauguin episodes been published while the artist was still alive not a single club in New York city would have opened its doors to him. But once dead, and the horrible details fully known, even the most fashionable of the women's clubs took him up with enthusiasm. Modern morality is a curious thing. Nobody understands it, least of all artists. Mr. Biddle is quite right not to publish yet a while.

Mr. Biddle returns to Tahiti in about two months. Once that country casts a spell upon you it appears to be all up with you. Mr. Biddle was there nine months the other time. He seems to have got rather well acquainted. To have learned the language well enough in nine months to translate from classic legend and to have learned the customs well enough to do betrothal scenes—a betrothal scene is one of Mr. Biddle's principal bids—is swift. But nine months is not enough in which to acquire a new technique. Mr. Biddle employs his old one, which is a very good and impressionistic one.

I liked best several smallish canvases, landscapes with small figures, because they gave the charm of the tropical scene, without troubling one too deeply about the savages. Mr. Biddle's style will change later on, indeed in the picture called "Amat" there are signs that something is happening to it now, and he will forget about impressionism, and then probably will trouble us deeply with the psychologies of the ingratiating brown race.

In the meantime his friend, Hunt Diedrich, thinks he has accomplished a great deal already and has written a smashing foreword for the catalogue in which he comes into direct collision with some of the advanced French thinkers of the time upon the subject of "Taste." Hear Mr. Diedrich:

"Taste is the choice of the individual imposed upon the many. It is lucidity, courage and conviction. Few people have taste. All cannot be leaders. Many have appreciation and devotion to the beautiful. They are the disciples who fulfill the inspirations of the prophets.

"The monuments of old stand for the taste of the artists who imposed themselves upon statesmen and soldiers. The latter are of oblivion, and their actions are the echo of the poets and artists whose ideas they immortalized.

"It is hard to escape tradition. Biddle owes his plastic training to France. The war brought to him disillusions, for it made him realize that the time has come when we can no longer follow in the footsteps of European art. Unable to find stimulus in aching Europe, he turned directly to nature. To avoid tradition, to plant upon the ruins of the classics a new style, to find a new expression is the pleasure of American youth.

"There are many painters and colorists. Biddle has added perfume and intuition. Fascinated by the aroma and weight of tropical color and form, he painted for a year in the West Indies, and has recently returned from a nine months' stay in Tahiti.

"It is hard to escape tradition, the pitfall of blind obedience to old prophets and heroes. Art is a living evolution, a receipt for life. To taste is to live, to feel, to enjoy. Thank God, the artist need not render account."

Mr. Diedrich doesn't say so in so many words, but he appears to think that taste precedes action, that men of action generate taste. How horrified M. Paul Iribe will be when he reads such a dictum. M. Iribe holds that in a creative period there is no such thing as taste. Taste arrives to the dilettantes who separate the good from the bad long after the husky creatures have flung their successes and failures upon the pliant world.

New Dada Review Appears in New York

It was inevitable that some manifestation of the dadaists would occur in New York, and at last a magazine appears, issued by the New York group. It proves to be cleverer than the pessimists had anticipated, though why the pessimists should have anticipated flatness from any venture in which Marcel Duchamp takes part remains to be explained. Marcel Duchamp is never flat. He has the essential attribute of an artist in being interesting in all of his phases. Besides, he's a genuine dadaist, if not the first and original one. He's acknowledged by Paris and his name has been printed in the list of veritable dadaists ever since the sect was named. So anything dadaistic from him has as much authority as anything from any one else.

M. Duchamp did the cover for the magazine and Tristan Tzara supplies a wonderful letter. An equally wonderful and needlessly anonymous poem is by Marsden Hartley. It is called "Yours with Devotion, Trumpets and Drums," and celebrates heavenly saltinbanques, who in spite of the dadaism are easily recognized as Ella Shields, Ethel Levy, Minnie Maddern Fiske, &c. There also is an almost life-sized photograph of a lady's leg which will be easily recognized by those who attended a recent sensational exhibition of photographs, a poem by Miss Stettheimer, a drawing by R. Goldberg (his first appearance as a dadaist) and a few anonymous contributions.

But to go back to M. Duchamp's cover. A photograph of a bottle of a popular French eau de violette is placed squarely in the middle of the large page, and as a background to it the entire sheet is covered with the reiterated words in small type, "new york dada april 1921," and the words are upside down. At first glance the printing of this forest of words appears artless, but M. Duchamp requires you to take the second glance, and then it can be seen that there is a variety in the spacing, that certain words at one side form into parallel columns, and that the others melt into the mass. In other words, there's texture to this apparently innocuous bit of printing, a texture that must have represented a real triumph of the artist over the particular printer's union that did the job. It probably violates all hitherto known laws of printing, but achieves a pleasing result.

As for the symbolism of it—h'mm—every one may interpret it for himself. They say in Europe, you know, that we are all dadas over here, and the countless repetition of the word upon the title page may be M. Duchamp's sly allusion to that fact. And then, the eau de violette! Why that particular make of eau de violette? M. Duchamp compels jade art lovers, surfeited at the end of an especially full season, to scan the photograph of a simple little bottle of Parisian toilet water as though their fates depended upon solving the mystery of his choice of that particular eau de violette. Other artists might attempt to dazzle you with the entire contents of the chemist's shop and fail, but Marcel Duchamp always obtains his effect.

Miss Dorothea Dreier Has a 'One Man Show'

The current exhibition in the galleries of the Societe Anonyme is devoted to the work of Dorothea A. Dreier, who was born in Brooklyn in 1870, studied at the Art Students League, the Brooklyn Art School and in Europe, but has never had a "one-man show" before.

REMARKABLE TANG CARVING
On View, Parrish Watson Galleries.

Miss Dreier's work is not in the least like the reachings out into the future that the walls of the Societe Anonyme have supported all winter, but is a straightforward, understandable-by-all, passionate expression of love for New York as it is. The constant tearing down and building up doesn't in the least distress her, and if the towering skyscrapers around certain small parks make the trees in that park feel as though they were growing at the bottom of a well, it is so much the worse for the trees, Miss Dreier thinks, but no reflection at all upon New York. New York always has been perfect and always will be perfect. New York is IT.

With such a doctrine to preach Miss Dreier could think little about technique. One way to have a technique is to forget about technique. Miss Dreier certainly says distinctly what she has to say, therefore she may be allowed to have technique. She has not a delicate touch. Delicate touches might be out of place upon such a subject. But there is life in her vigorous work and distinct decorative qualities as well.

A chapter of her history, supplied by the Societe Anonyme, gives a curious glimpse into the way art is taught, or used to be taught, here. It seems that Miss Dreier and a group of fellow students who wished to learn to draw were kept three solid years in Mr. Twachtman's class at the Art Students League, drawing from casts of hands, feet, heads and figures. After that they were supposed to study another year under Mr. Beckwith before being allowed a chance at the living model.

In the third year of this course Miss Dreier and her friends sent to Mr. Twachtman the following poem by way of a valentine:

A mass of love we send you,
A well proportioned heart,
Where every tone of light and shade
Has each an equal part.

O high and mighty Twachtman,
We wring and tear our locks,
For life seems very dreary
If we are stuck on blocks.

We on the "rounds" would tell you
How long we have had to wait,
How cynical old Voltaire's smile
Looks like the smile of fate.

How Cicero, Augustus,
And Cupids all pell-mell,
We think of them, we dream of them,
We know them all too well.

For nigh a year we have waited,
In trembling silence meek,
To hear those magic accents,
"You can go to the antique!"

The result of the poem was that Mr. Twachtman himself rebelled at the system. How many pupils perished because of this incredible method cannot be told, but Miss Dreier had the advantage of frequent summer trips to Europe with her parents and while in Europe gained access to a life class and eschewed the block forever after.

Marin's Watercolors Shown at Daniel's

John Marin, for whom the claim is sometimes made—and there's reason in it—that he is the greatest painter in watercolor living to-day, is having an exhibition of his latest things in the Daniel Gallery. It is likely that there will be considerable wailing and gnashing of teeth due to this fact.

For Marin is one of those artists who disdains to stand still. He never holds the pose long enough for the populace to catch up with it. He sheds styles as some men do their overcoats, but is always Marin in each new garment he assumes.

This was the accusation, it will be remembered, that used to be made against Manet. Manet was always changing. Each new manner was awful, his enemies said. They had got used to the former innovations and would have been prepared to love him, they said, if he had been content to continue doing the things they had just learned to appreciate; but no, Manet would not stand still; it must be sinful to be so restless and dissatisfied with old forms, &c. In short, Manet was disapproved of until the day of his death, after which final change the army of Philistines finally caught up with him and he became classic.

So it will be with Marin. For instance, they've just got a Marin up at the Metropolitan Museum. Mr. Albert E. Gallatin gave it. Marin has been a long time knocking at the door, but the museum didn't hear until Mr. Gallatin knocked too.

It's a time in which an ordinary artist would be good. "Success at last," "At last I'm recognized," and all that sort of thing. But Mr. Marin is not an ordinary artist. Life goes swinging along and with age comes deeper vision and greater certainty as to what is true. There are such things as disillusionments too. Some things wither and are discarded. On the whole there's the tendency to say it simply. Even with ordinary people there comes the emancipation from the terror of the mob opinion. With a genius this is carried so far that there remains no consciousness of the used ideas of the day. But the people in general have to study him a long time—ten years is the average time—in order to decide whether he is shamming or not.

You can't blame the people, can you? We are the way God made us. But it is particularly hard upon collectors. Collectors of Manet, they say, used to get into a panic each time they saw their man expose some new evidence of his wilful genius. "Heavens," said they, "we'll never get the buying public to stand for that—and if they don't, we're dished. All we've already invested will be lost unless this succeeds, too." &c. Collectors deserve the Croix de Guerre. They are heroes. Especially in times like this, when every one is timid and no one knows which way to turn, are they heroes. But Marin is probably unaware that the times are delicate. Your first rate genius is seldom aware of the contagious troubles. At any rate, Marin has changed his style again.

"And for the worst," speedily chime in all the Philistines. I won't say so. I am not a Philistine. Not a complete one, at least. Some of the Marins I am not enraptured with. But in all of them I see the increased severity—the developed seriousness of an artist who is approaching the "later Beethoven" period of his career. Three or four of the water colors I already accept as great. I think that's pretty good for me upon such a slight acquaintance. Wait until you see them yourself. They really are difficult.

The pictures have no titles. That is why I have to refere to them cautiously. The artist has labelled the series, "Pertaining to the Sea" and we know that he lived during the summer at Stonington, Me., and must have conceived them there—although it will also be said that some of the new things with their great brown divisions across the skies must have been seen from an aeroplane.

HERCULES, by ARTHUR LEE
at the WILDENSTEIN GALLERIES.

Museum Pieces In Needlework Display

Museum pieces by unknown artists and others from private collections have been added to the attractive display of needle and bobbin craftsmanship in the Arden Gallery, 599 Fifth avenue. The exhibition, which is to close Thursday, is free. The needlework, collected from all the European and Asiatic countries and representative of the American Colonial period, has been brought together and artistically hung to illustrate "the New World's debt to the Old World's needlework." The exhibition shows a richness of detail and effect and excellent design. It presents a rare opportunity to see the intricate fineness of stitchery from the refinement of early American work to the gaudy Oriental peasant caps, where there is a striking blending of colors and harmonious discords that would make Greenwich Village creators envious.

The various designs, with their quaintness, balance and proportion, show spontaneous growth of design among the peasant needleworkers and a rich imagination influenced by the birds, animals, flowers and everyday things in the barnyard and about the home.

Exhibitions of Week In Various Galleries

Recent portraits by Ellen Emmet Rand are on view in the Durand Ruel Galleries. It is difficult to think of a better portrait painter than Mrs. Rand among the American group. Particularly with men does she succeed. Portraits such as that of Ex-Gov. Edward Curtis Smith are documentary. The particular quality that brought Gov. Smith distinction is there in the portrait. There is a portrait of a little child in a red jacket that has all the elfilike charm of the best works of George Fuller and George Luks. Occasionally there is a sign of fatigue in the work, but this occurs, oddly enough, in the feminine accessories. There is one portrait in which all the difficult things have been easily and delightfully handled, but in the long yellow skirt of the sitter, a thing of no difficulty to the average painter, Mrs. Rand became perfunctory.

Miss Maud Mason has placed a group of flower paintings and also some of her recent ceramics on view in the Little Gallery. Miss Mason's flower pieces are strong in color and ably designed, and will doubtless meet with the general approval that it is now rather the fashion to bestow upon flower paintings.

The Howard Young Galleries feature the work of Charles C. Curran. Mr. Curran, who was born in 1861, is a veteran academician. He studied first in Cincinnati and afterward at the Academie Julian under Constant, Lefebvre and Doucet. It was doubtless Lefebvre who inspired him with the desire for high finish, for Mr. Curran has always been an exponent of the principle of putting everything in. One of his pictures in the present exhibition, called "The White Pine," shows a young woman posing in the sunlight between some pine branches, and all the needles of the pine and the shadows that the pine needles make upon the young woman's white skirt are carefully indicated. Such a method is bound to be popular, and the artist has been plentifully rewarded with prizes, taking among others the Altman figure prize of $1,000 in the Academy of 1919.

Percival Rousseau, who is the most eminent of our painters of dogs, is exhibiting his latest productions in the John Levy Galleries. Mr. Rousseau, presumably loves all dogs, but he happens to paint the aristocrats among them. He has made portraits of some of the most celebrated hunting dogs in the country, notably those of Mr. Harry Kirkover of Buffalo, and has not only done them to the life but has placed them in the scenes of their triumphs, on the hunting fields of North Carolina and other places. The sportsman ought to take intense satisfaction in these paintings, for it is evident at the first glance that they have been painted by one who is himself a hunter and that everything is true to hunting form.

Miss Eliza Buffington, who studied design with Arthur Dow and later on in Japan, is exhibiting the special applications of her principles of art in an exhibition in the Willow Brook Company's Galleries. Miss Buffington holds that life is imparted to a drawn line by the timed applications of force, so that the brush "moves rhythmically just as one's feet move rhythmically in dancing, and one enjoys writing as one enjoys dancing." To show that the method is not inhumanly difficult Miss Buffington also exhibits the work of a young child who has been practising it but a year and who yet expresses herself freely in design.

The new Mesnard Galleries have just placed on view a collection of works by masters that are very much appreciated by Americans. There is a charmingly free figure piece by Whistler in his familiar grays, a large and dramatic panel by Albert P. Ryder, called "Nourmahal"; a clever and attractive still life by the late William M. Chase, a thoughtful and serious landscape by William Sartain, a still life by Emil Carlsen and a figure piece by Childe Hassam. The Mesnard Galleries aims to show paintings with lighting arrangements suitable to the individual pictures, the effort being to give the effect that the works have when hanging in residences.

Ever since the extraordinary sale of the Lawrence collection of mediæval stained glass, at which one of the specimens brought more than $70,000, interest has been spurred in this branch of ancient art. The firm of Kipps, Ltd., which assisted Mr. Lawrence in forming part of his collection, is holding an exhibition of more than 400 specimens that has rare æsthetic as well as educational interest.

The destruction of old stained glass in the war had much to do with the quickening of interest in this country, not only among collectors but among home builders, who find it suitable for decorating windows. There has also grown up a demand for it for use as memorials in churches.

The specimens in the present exhibition cover the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in heraldic and religious subjects, and comprehends English, French, Italian, Flemish and Swiss examples. One of the outstanding features is a panel dated 1490, which commemorates the marriage of Anne of Brittany, then 14 years old, with Charles VIII. of France, and is the work of the famous Nicolas Desangives (1462-1541). It bears the arms of the capitals of six French provinces, and bears the royal motto, "Mont joye Saint Denis."

A rare Swiss specimen, robust in style, represents the arms of Kybourg, the oldest castle in Helvetia. Another extraordinarily beautiful Swiss piece is "The Meal in the Open," a Renaissance work by Mueller, dated 1671.

FIRST EXHIBITION OF JUNIOR ART PATRONS

The Junior Art Patrons of America—an organization of several hundred members pledged to encourage contemporary artists by investing at least $25 in American art during the year through the organization—announces a retrospective exhibition of American art, which will open at the Fine Arts Building on Friday, May 8, and continue through to May 21. This is the first exhibition of the association and the entire Fine Arts Building will be used.

Three hundred modern artists will be represented by etchings, oils, water colors, monotypes, lithographs and sculptures. This is made possible through the cooperation of the artists, dealers and individuals owning some of the exhibits, including Mrs. Harold Pratt, Adolph Lewisohn, Robert Treat Paine 2d, Mrs. George Pratt, Miss Lizzie Bliss, John Spaulding and Mrs. Willard Straight. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Charles Munn, Mrs. Henry Fairfield Osborn, Thomas B. Clark, Herbert L. Pratt, D. H. Carstairs and Mrs. Straight the works of the early American masters will be on view, including those of West, Trumbull, Sully, Stuart, Rowse, Page, Peale, Hunt, Jarvis, Badger, Chamberlain, Copley, Coleman, Doughty, Dunlap, Eicholtz, Durand, Earle and Healy.

The modern artists, including among others, Childe Hassam, Robert Henri, John Sloan, Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, George Bellows, Rockwell Kent, Randall Davey, Albert Sterner, Harold Sterner, Eugene Higgins, Gifford Beal, Theresa Bernstein, William C. Chase, Robert Chanler, Bernard Gussow, Samuel Halpert, Marsden Hartley, George Luks, Leon Kroll, La Farge, Ernest Lawson, Gaston Lachaise, Jonas Lie, George Innes, Willard Metcalf, Diederich, Davidson, Laurent, Joseph Stella, Sargent, Whistler and others equally well known. All schools will be represented.

There will be one room known as the black and white room, where drawings, etchings, lithographs, water colors, monotypes, &c., will be sold for $25 and less. This room might be known as the opportunity room, when one considers that these works may double and triple in monetary value to their purchasers say ten or twenty years from now.

Mrs. Albert Sterner, to whom the organization owes its inception, has selected the exhibits and will supervise the hanging.

The Junior Art Patrons of America is an organization of men and women of all ages (despite the "junior") pledged to invest at least $25 in American art during the year through its association. The "junior" has been included in the name because the organization is primarily intended for the receptive young girl and boy who will be induced through live exhibitions and brief lectures illustrating the aims of distinct schools of painting to appreciate American art and to foster in them the collecting instinct.

There have been adults who have acknowledged frankly that their art education has been neglected and who, therefore, have asked to be admitted to the association. For the youngsters it is hoped that the opportunity for comparisons that the exhibitions, to be given in the various cities, will foster in them a natural discrimination. The young collector, innocent of market values and ephemeral cults, will exercise an unbiased choice. In order that the education shall be as broad and general as possible, exhibitions of the best contemporary art of other countries will be arranged, that the child may judge the works of American artists by standards of international achievements.

The entire net profits from the activities of the society will revert to the artists exhibiting. Some of the sponsors of the Junior Art Patrons of America are Robert Perkins, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. Egerton L. Winthrop, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fairfield Osborn, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Satterlee and Adolph Lewisohn.

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