

Early Winter, 1937

AXIS

A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY
ABSTRACT PAINTING & SCULPTURE

Editor: Myfanwy Evans

2 Reproductions in colour

25 in black and white

Artists

Paul Nash

Joan Miró

Alexander Calder

Fernand Léger

Barbara Hepworth

Ceri Richards, etc.

Writers

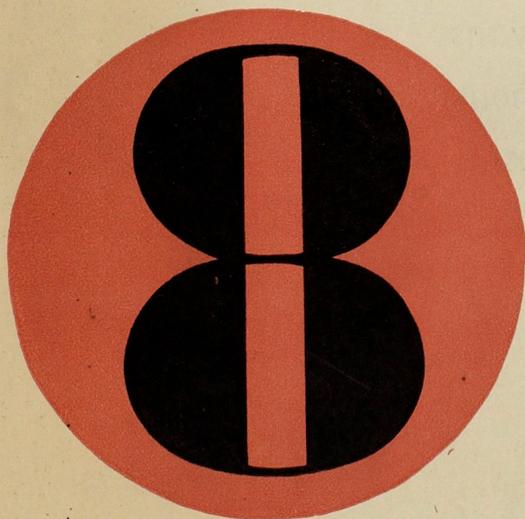
Myfanwy Evans

Anthony West

Robert Medley

Kenneth R. Walsh

John Piper, etc.



two shillings and sixpence

This number of *AXIS* completes the second volume. No. 9 will appear early in 1938. *AXIS* will then appear at regular quarterly intervals.

Distribution has been taken over by :

A. Zwemmer

English & Foreign Bookseller

78, Charing Cross Road

London, W.C.2

(Telephone : Temple Bar 1793)

and all orders and enquiries should be addressed to him.

Editor : Myfanwy Evans

Fawley Bottom Farmhouse

Nr. Henley-on-Thames

Oxon.

● **AXIS No. 8**
Early Winter
1937

Printed in Great Britain

CONTENTS

Prehistory from the Air JOHN PIPER Page 3

ORDER FORM

Price : 2s. 6d. per copy (postage 3d.).
 5s. half yearly, 2 copies (postage 6d.).
 10s. yearly, 4 copies (post free).

Please send me AXIS : { one quarter.
 for one half year.
 for one year.

I enclose { cheque.
 P.O.

Signed

Address

.....

.....

Cheques should be made payable to A. Zwemmer, and all orders and enquiries sent to A. Zwemmer, English and Foreign Bookseller, 78, Charing Cross, Road, W.C.2. (Telephone : Temple Bar 1793.)

7
10
15
17
27

2
4
4
5
6
6
6
9
10
11
12
13
14
16
19
19
20
21

BARBARA HEPWORTH. *Single form in plane wood* 22

PETER MACINTYRE. *Composition* 23

JESSICA DISMORR. *Related Forms* 23

F. E. McWILLIAM. *Wood Carving* 24

ROLAND PENROSE. *Either was the other's name* 25

JOY WILLIAMS. *Painting* 25

Illustration from "Circle" 28



83

CONTENTS

	Page
Prehistory from the Air JOHN PIPER	3
Background KENNETH R. WALSH	7
Paul Nash, 1937 MYFANWY EVANS ...	10
No Revolution... .. ANTHONY WEST ...	15
The Paris Exhibition, 1937 HERBERT TAYLER ...	17
Hitler's Art in Munich ROBERT MEDLEY ...	27

ILLUSTRATIONS

Beacon Hill, Hampshire, from the air	2
White Sheet Castle (Plan from "Ancient Wiltshire")	4
White Sheet Castle (Air photo)	4
White Horse Hill, Uffington, Berks (Air photo)... ..	5
Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire (Wm. Stukeley)	6
Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire (Air photo)	6
JOAN MIRÓ. Painting (in Colour). Courtesy Zwemmer ... facing	6
PAUL NASH. Swan Song. Oil	9
PAUL NASH. Poised Objects. Water-Colour (in Colour) ... facing	10
PAUL NASH. Hill Architecture. Water-Colour	11
PAUL NASH. Portrait of Lunar Hornet. Collage	12
PAUL NASH. Burnt Offering. Object	13
CERI RICHARDS. Painting, 1937	14
JOAN MIRÓ. Decoration. Paris Exhibition	16
CALDER. Mercury Fountain. Paris Exhibition	19
CALDER. Mercury Fountain. Paris Exhibition	19
LÉGER. Decoration. Paris Exhibition	20
LÉGER. Painting	21
BARBARA HEPWORTH. Single form in plane wood	22
PETER MACINTYRE. Composition	23
JESSICA DISMORR. Related Forms	23
F. E. McWILLIAM. Wood Carving	24
ROLAND PENROSE. Either was the other's name	25
JOY WILLIAMS. Painting	25
Illustration from "Circle"	28

12. 1. 53
11. 2. 54
19. 4. 29. 1100
K. 6. 1. 000



PREHISTORY FROM THE AIR By John Piper

Flying (whether we do it ourselves or not) has changed our sense of spaces and forms and vistas enormously. From the air, hills flatten out and towns are seen at a glance in the sense or nonsense of their planning. The sea from the air has become something new to the senses: it is like nothing we have ever known—quite unlike any map, or Admiralty chart, or sailor's tale, or any writing or painting about waves or cliffs or ships that was ever thought of. The significant thing being that from the air *horizons vanish*.

Flying was a necessity for the twentieth century. It was not an accidental discovery or series of discoveries. Its development may have depended, as it happened, on the internal-combustion engine, but if that had not been invented something else would; some other way would have been found. We might all have taken to ballooning.

Because flying has not *created* any new consciousness about spaces or vistas or anything else, it has simply served the new consciousness, and has been forced on in its development by it. It has grown up with it in fact, which is the only reasonable way for an invention to work.

So the horizon line vanishes, from the air. It has also vanished (nearly) from painting. Instead of being the end-all of landscape, it is now there on sufferance. It is not really strange that air photography began in the '80's, and that about the '80's the horizon in landscapes (with Courbet or Cézanne) was getting much less conscious of itself—no more self-conscious than the foreground, or the background, or the middle distance, all of which were becoming parts of the same consistent parcel. For contrast, think of Claude's skyline castles in the scenery of his wonderful natural theatre. At its simplest, the change is one from elevation to plan. The picture has tipped over backwards on to the floor, and in being raised again it has brought part of the floor with it. Picasso, Braque, Klee, Matisse have

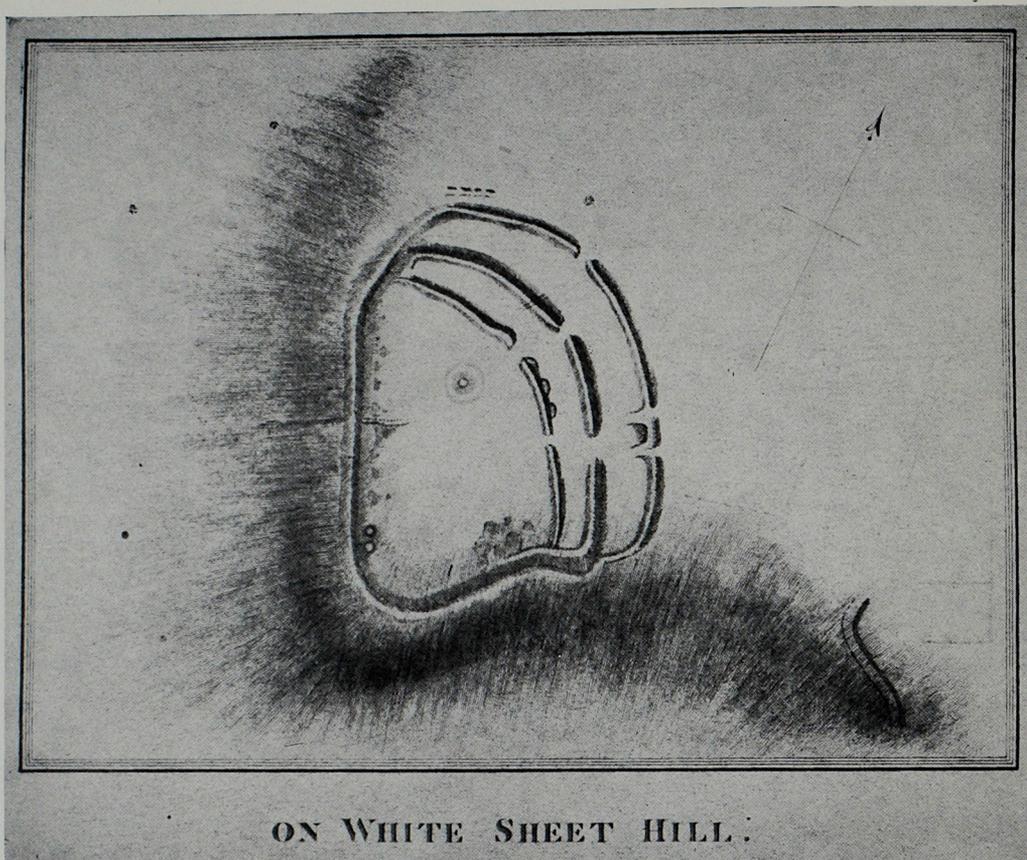
painted elevations of wineglasses, gardens and windows at Nice which have the added richness and meaning of plan-patterns.

Years ago, one or two acute archæologists thought how wonderful might be the results of making air-photography help them in their researches, and experiments were carried out. But it was after the war that the business really began. O. G. S. Crawford and Alexander Keiller took it right beyond experiment, and their photographs have had an immense influence on archæological theory and practice. These photographs have elucidated known sites of earthworks and have shown the sites of many that were previously unknown. (Barrows that were ploughed up years ago, depressions in the ground that were the sites of dwellings or stone or wood circles, and so on). The first really remarkable discovery by this means was the course of the "avenue" across the downs from Stonehenge, which is invisible from the ground. In general, there have been two productive methods of archæological discovery and photography from the air. One, by recording cast-shadows from mounds or banks, however slight, when the sun is fairly low in the sky; the other, by noticing the variations, chiefly colour variations, in the crops growing on ground that was disturbed, however long ago.

These photographs and the ones that have followed them (in particular Major W. G. Allen's oblique views of earthworks) have been extremely productive to archæologists. Apart from that (but not at all by chance) they are among the most beautiful photographs ever taken. They have the advantage in the first place of being completely un-art-conscious. They are purely archæological-scientific, therefore they are photographs and not art-photographs. That is, they show in each case a site, not a composition. Secondly, unless they were very good photographs they would have to be scrapped as useless for their job; so they all are very good indeed; sharp and detailed.

Something of the change in consciousness

Opposite: Beacon Hill, Hampshire, from the air. (Photo: Crown Copyright Reserved).



ON WHITE SHEET HILL.

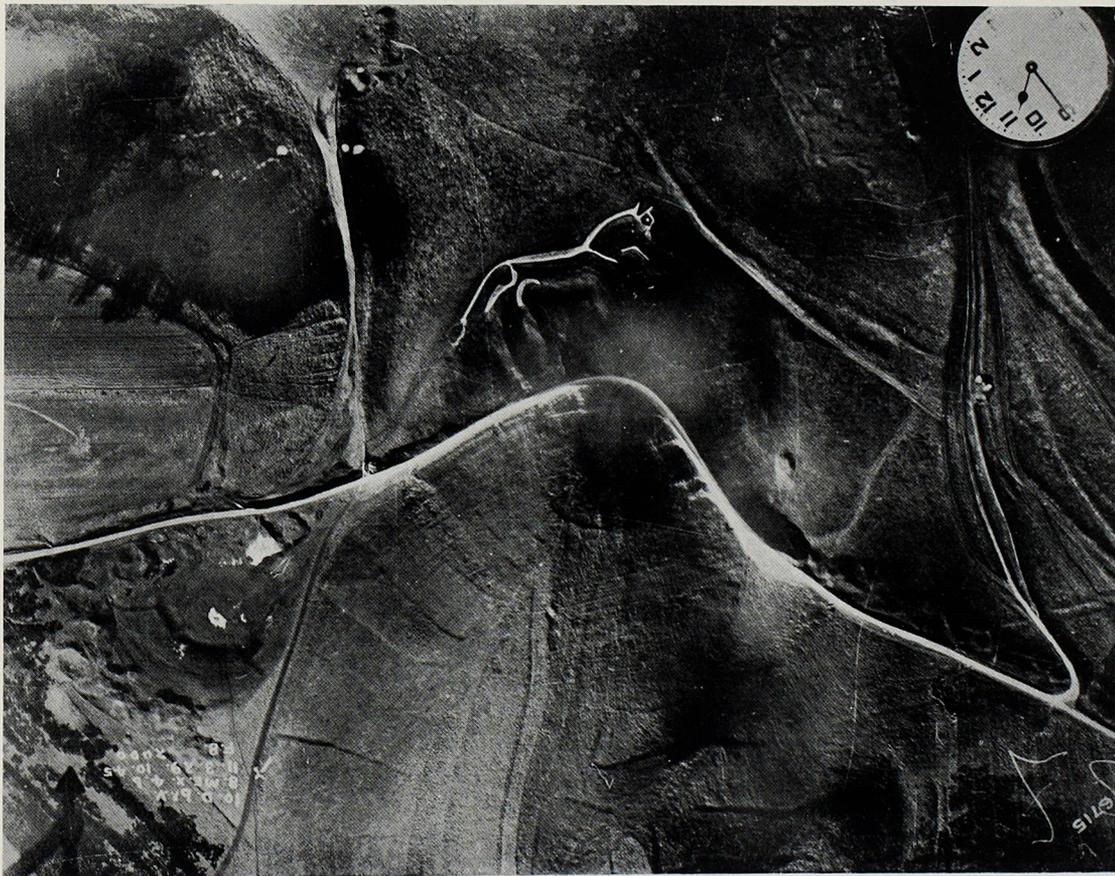


White Sheet Castle, Wiltshire. (Top) Plan in Colt Hoare's "Ancient Wiltshire." (Bottom) Air photo (Crown copyright reserved).

of spaces and vistas that we are not yet quite used to can be seen by comparing the plan of White Sheet Castle in Wiltshire, taken from Colt Hoare's hundred-year-old work, *Ancient Wiltshire*, with the air-photograph of the same camp. One of the most significant things about it to Colt Hoare, or his draughtsman, was that it was on a hill, a formidable one, that had to be toiled up and scrambled down whenever you wanted to visit the camp. (The Ordnance Survey itself is far less hill-conscious than it used to be.) From the *Ancient Wiltshire* plan one gets a strong feeling that the hill is a bastion as well as a camp site. Actually, White Sheet Hill is almost in front of Colt Hoare's house in his park of Stourhead, so he knew this hill well as a bastion, and is hardly likely to have sailed over it in a balloon. To the camera from the air, the hill is not much of a hill. Successions of rabbit-runs, and the way the grass grows on the hillside show delicate contours, but they are very delicate. Most, it looks flat, or undulating, a little wave-like, folding round the sudden sharp coruscations of the camp. Stukeley's engraving of Silbury Hill, Avebury, of 1723, shows a pretty strong contrast in consciousness with the air-photograph of the

same site. (The engraving was taken from a drawing which he did on the spot.) Stukeley, above all, wanted to record the effort and the feeling for shape of the men who built it. Size and contour are all-important. The story of the size is well told, and as to the shape to jump, run, walk, or struggle up each slope with Stukeley in his drawing is as real and as sharp an experience as to take a journey round a wineglass with Picasso. The air-photograph is flat and subtle. The effect of suddenness that the mound gives in the plain, and the sense of size that the surroundings try to contradict, is as strong as that of all Stukeley's fold-explorations. Both these representations of Silbury Hill are beautiful—and together they give a very fair idea of this large and curious mound—but so different that it is hard to realise that each gives a reasonable account of the same monument.

References : William Stukeley, *Stonehenge and Avebury*, 1724.
 Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wiltshire*, 1812.
 O. G. S. Crawford, F.S.A., and Alex. Keiller, F.S.A., F.G.S., *Wessex from the Air*.
Antiquity, Quarterly Review.
 O. G. S. Crawford, *Air Survey and Archaeology* (Ordnance Survey Professional Paper) etc.



White Horse Hill, Uffington, Berks. Air photo (Crown copyright reserved)

Silbury Hill July 11. 1723.

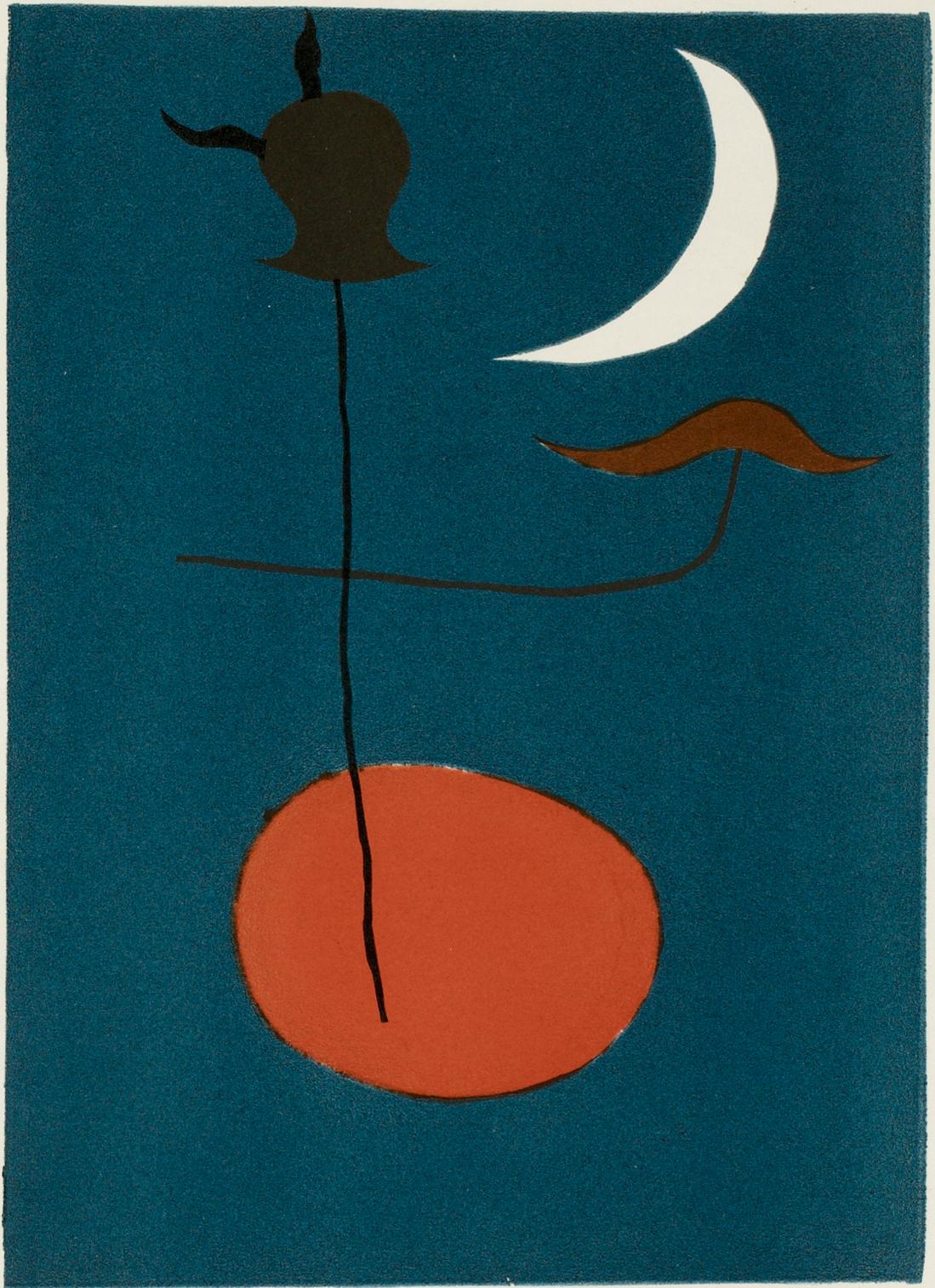


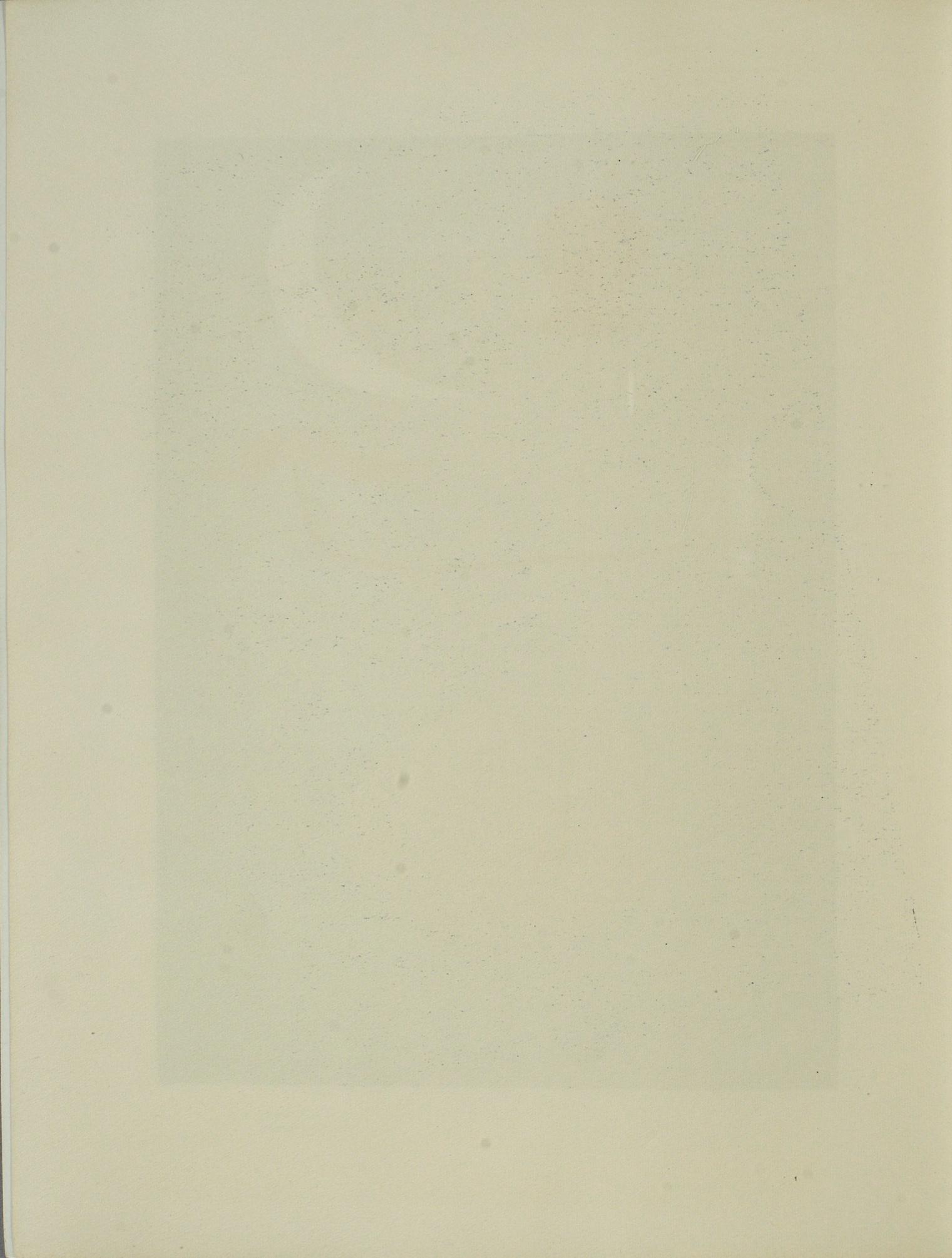
Stukeley d.

A. The Roman road. B. the Snakes head or hakpen.



Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire. (Top) After Wm. Stukeley, 1723. (Bottom) Air photo (Crown copyright reserved).
Opposite : Painting by JOAN MIRO





BACKGROUND By Kenneth R. Walsh

The difficulty to-day about artistic appreciation, about criticism, about judgment, about anything, is lack of a background. One wanders in a mist, different things loom up, one has no background against which to judge the size of things, a fence post looks as big as a telegraph pole. Not only does man not know what he *ought* to think which is a good thing, he doesn't know what he *does* think which is a bad thing.

The difficulty is not peculiar to art. In one's attitude to abstract art the difficulty is only somewhat accentuated. The lack of background is general, the lack of reference point. How does this lack of background come about?

A flight of birds wheels suddenly in the air, we are told, not because the leader changes his mind and direction and is then seen and followed by the others. No, the change of direction runs instinctively through the whole flock. It is very probable that the decision comes from no one bird, that it flows instinctively through the whole group. In an earlier time man too lived in this instinctive-intuitive group connection. We can infer it from the incredible ages to which the patriarchs of the old religions live. The unit of consciousness was not the single perishable person but a series of persons with a similar inherited consciousness. Thus "Methuselah" was not an individual but a unit of consciousness expressing itself in a series of single perishable persons. Thus the importance of blood and the family. The family face, the spiritual make-up, was handed down from generation to generation. "A chip off the old block." The single persons were no more than chips off the old block, and it is the old block which is taken as the reality in the old religions and which lives to such incredible ages. A dim reflection of this is to be found in Shakespeare's version of the story of King Lear. It is significant that Lear is a Celt in whom the blood-race-family consciousness lived with especial strength, and survives to this day in the clannishness of the Scots and the nepotism of the Welsh.

At the beginning of the play Lear is still held in a patriarchal group consciousness, he does not realise his daughters as separate

entities from himself, each with her own will: therefore he divides his kingdom among them without trepidation. When Cordelia stands free of him and says she will take half her love to the man she marries, it is not the personal vanity of Lear which is wounded (though, of course, there is an element of this), it is his patriarchal pride, he cannot bear it that Cordelia will not bring her husband within the magic circle of family, he simply has no grasp at all of individual character and rights, blindly he pushes it off. The oath with which he casts off Cordelia is significant:

For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. (I. i.)

Lear still feels himself bound with the divine background of life working through all beings, the golden background of Medieval Painting, but the very fact that he can eject Cordelia implies somewhere the existence of another principle, that of the free individual, free to choose for better or for worse. The hold of the divine-patriarchal state of consciousness upon him is made manifest when the opposition of Goneril and Regan stings him to reveal in words the factors underlying his consciousness. To Goneril he says:

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my
daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. (II. iv.)

And thinking of both his daughters he says:

Filial gratitude!

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? (III. iv.)

Transferred into terms of painting, Lear has

not yet begun to see in terms of perspective. Till now he has only seen things in their common background, interrelated to each other, forming a pattern, some people, some objects bigger some smaller, but one and all woven into a common background, the golden divine background of Medieval Painting.

When the artist struggled to realise perspective he was struggling for the birth of the human individuality. Up to that time art had been anonymous, born from a common spirit, from the folk spirit, now it became the product of individual artists. The rise of Protestantism with its insistence on individual rights, the German passion for painting the lonely suffering of the cross as against the intuitive-instinctive connection of virgin and child, the discovery of perspective giving man the possibility of isolating an object from its background: these were various manifestations of the change from an intuitive-instinctive consciousness to a mental consciousness, from group-consciousness to individual-consciousness.

Man was impelled away from the divine golden background of Medieval Painting to experiment with this earthy earth. Fra Angelico still paints from a dream-consciousness, it would never have entered his head to take measurements of his models. With Michaelangelo and Leonardo are implicit engineering, study of anatomy, the physical sciences, a close study of the thing itself. It is significant that Michaelangelo sculptures the sharp-witted David, not the dreamer Saul. At the same time that Dürer is producing his exact studies Peter Vischer in the same town of Nuremberg is excelling in the craft of iron-work. Man has found the earth, he measures and manipulates it, it is the centre of all his interest, religion rapidly fades into superstition. Rapidly he forgets the old intuitive connections. He is hot in quest of the industrial revolution, mechanisation, photography.

Through bitter suffering Lear himself comes to the new consciousness. Broken across by the storm and the unkindness of his daughters he is suddenly confronted by the naked Edgar. In the nakedness of Edgar he sees the true picture of man stripped of his cosmic feathers:

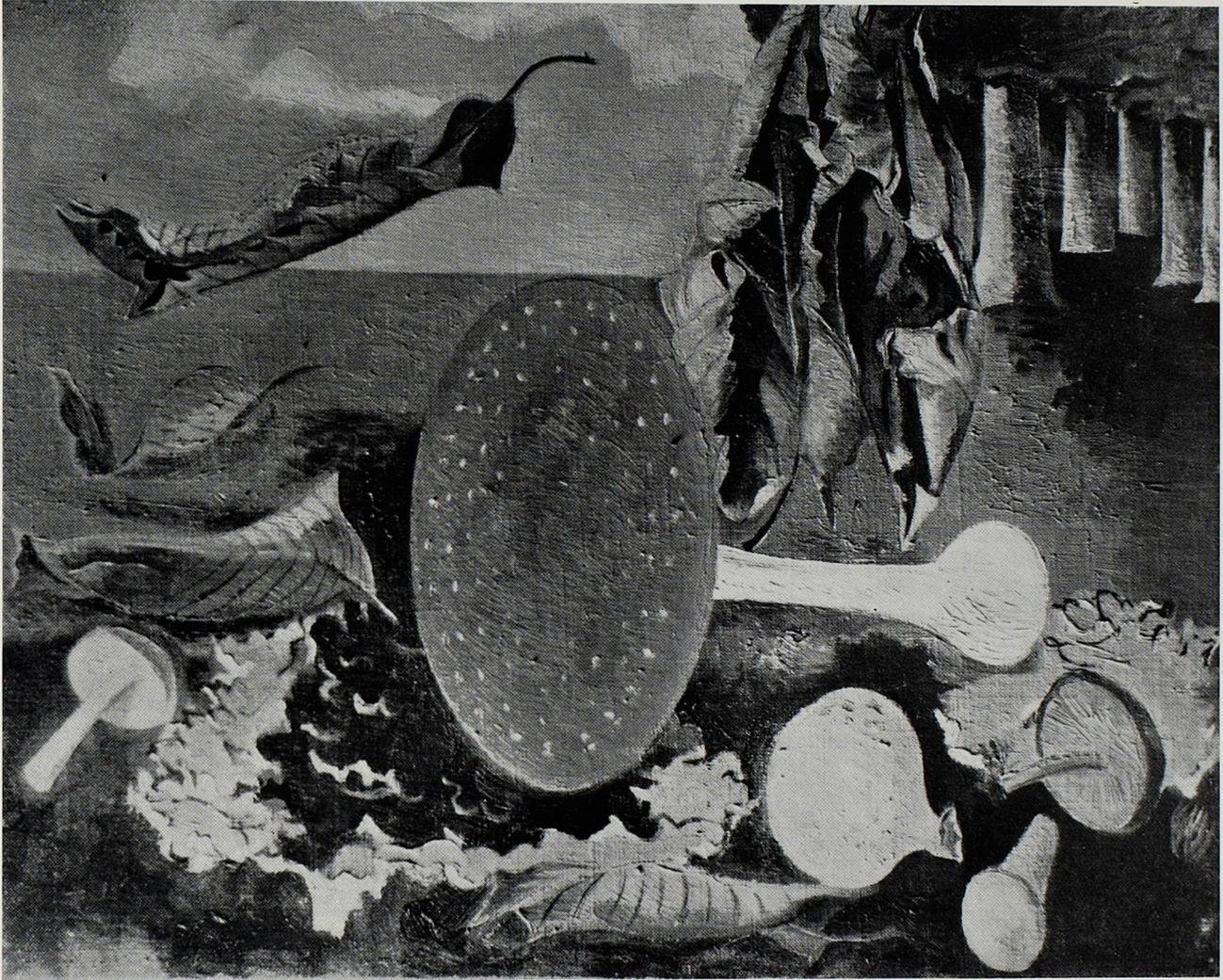
Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated

man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! come, unbutton here. (Tearing off his clothes.) (III. iv.)

Since the impulse of the Renaissance Western man has been struggling more and more earnestly to come to "the thing itself" stripped of the godhead. Thus the insistence on naturalistic art, man's ability to see and reproduce things as he thinks they are. Cézanne is then forced to go behind appearance to get at "the thing itself," he spends a life of devotion and passion and struggle trying to find the apple.

The process, however, does not stop there. Once the individual has been discovered the mortality of the individual is abruptly realised. Lear emerging from the dream of kingship begins to realise the bare facts: "They told me I was everything; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof" (IV. vi). Before proffering his hand to Gloucester to kiss he says: "Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality" (IV. vi). One becomes aware of death and the corpse. And the corpse decays and splits away into its component parts. And so is born the science of chemistry and inductive reasoning. And psychoanalysis and materialism. Man has not found the source of life, he has merely analysed the process of decay. The growth of the child in the mother's womb is not a chemical process, the decay of the body after death is.

Into this process of decay abstract art enters, dissects the body of painting into its colours and forms and attempts to build up a new synthesis. The whole consciousness of man is going through this breaking down process, will have to go through it, as a necessary consequence to the break away from the intuitive faculties. There is no going back to the instinctive faculties, one cannot reacquire instinct. The abstract painter is a sort of individualistic chemist, trying things this way and that, and hoping that a new live thing may some day jump out of the test-tube. It is much too early yet to say what new form of consciousness will emerge. And therefore it is impossible to come to any permanent conclusions about the importance of Abstract Art. One simply doesn't know whether the tall columns are fence-posts or telegraph poles because one cannot see the background. The old background was lost with the discovery of perspective and the emergence of individualism: the new background is not yet to be seen.



PAUL NASH. *Swan song* (Oil)

PAUL NASH, 1937 By Myfanwy Evans

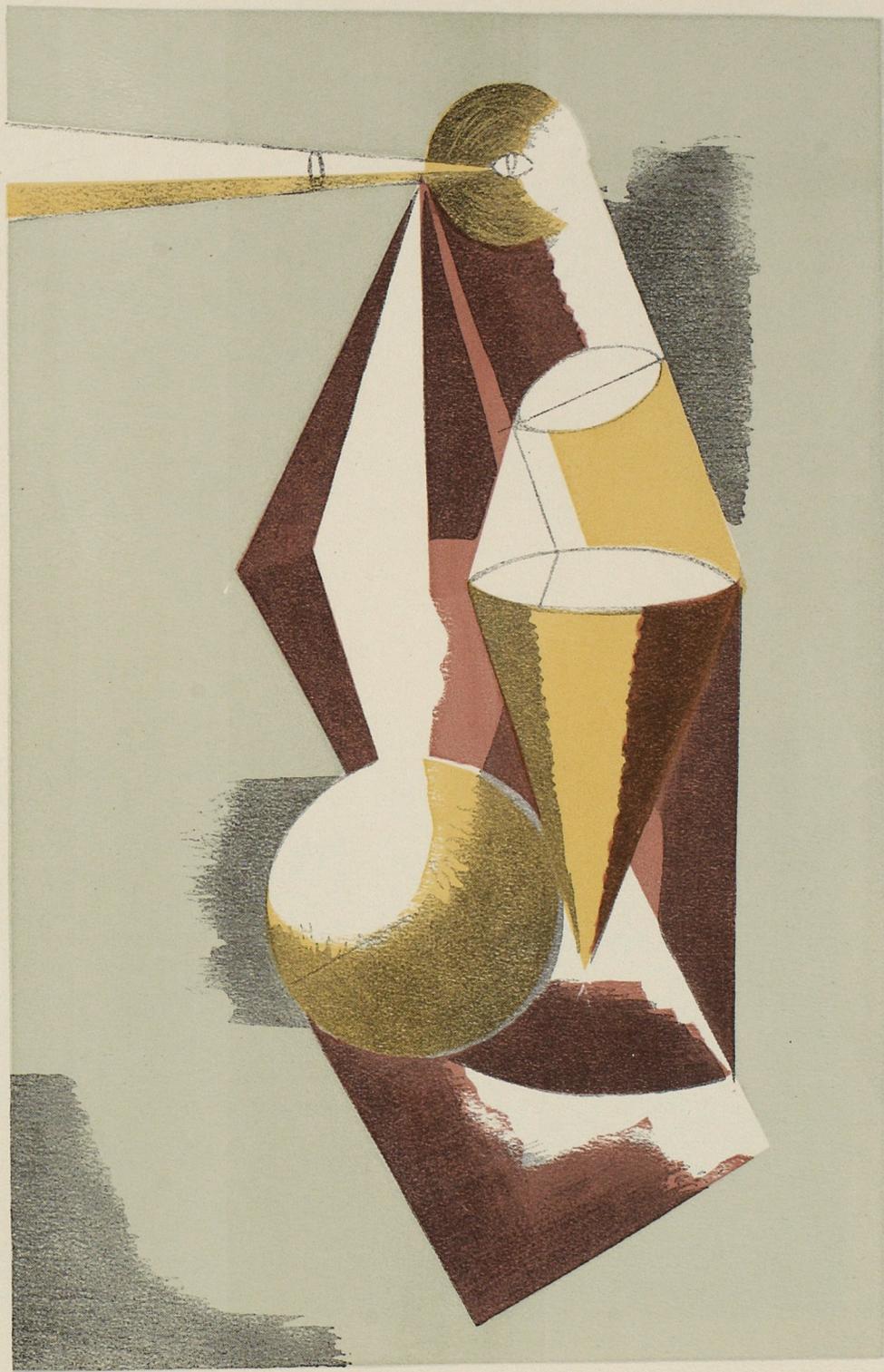
Paul Nash has absorbed the English climate. By some piece of remarkable magic he has almost *become* it; the pearly mornings and the fine pale afternoons and the irresistible charm of winter twilight. And through this hyper-sensitive medium he absorbs, to give out again, painting to-day. Abstraction in his hands becomes a weather-gauge, surrealism the hailstones like pigeon's eggs that startle the midlands' summer sleep—or the infinite caprices of the moon in its first quarter. Everything is translated into weather. However far from representation his work is, his violence is always the violence of an English storm, his clarity that of the Purbeck hills before rain, his brilliance the intermingled contrast of frost and sun and the whiteness of wet stones on ploughland. The English climate is his universaliser, through it there is nothing new he dare not touch, and nothing old he need renounce. It gives him both worlds. And when people turn half-relieved, half-apprehensive to the contemporary heir of Cotman, Cox and Turner, they find that he has enclosed the morning mist in a birdcage, given the solid form of hill architecture to the winter twilight and ruthlessly stuck a pin through the summer afternoon. Something else he has succeeded in making his own, too, and that is time. He paints three thousand years without turning a hair, and time is no longer that irritating thing that divides our morning coffee from our afternoon tea, discards this patina as a mere twentieth-century pretender to a rich, ripe, age-in-years, admires that as a genuine seventeen-fiftier and puts everything in its place, the motor car after the cart after the horse. It is no longer a measure beginning from yesterday, or preferably the day before, and going backwards through the centuries, but an indefinable sense of scarcely-shifting permanence, that includes then and now and sometime and after.

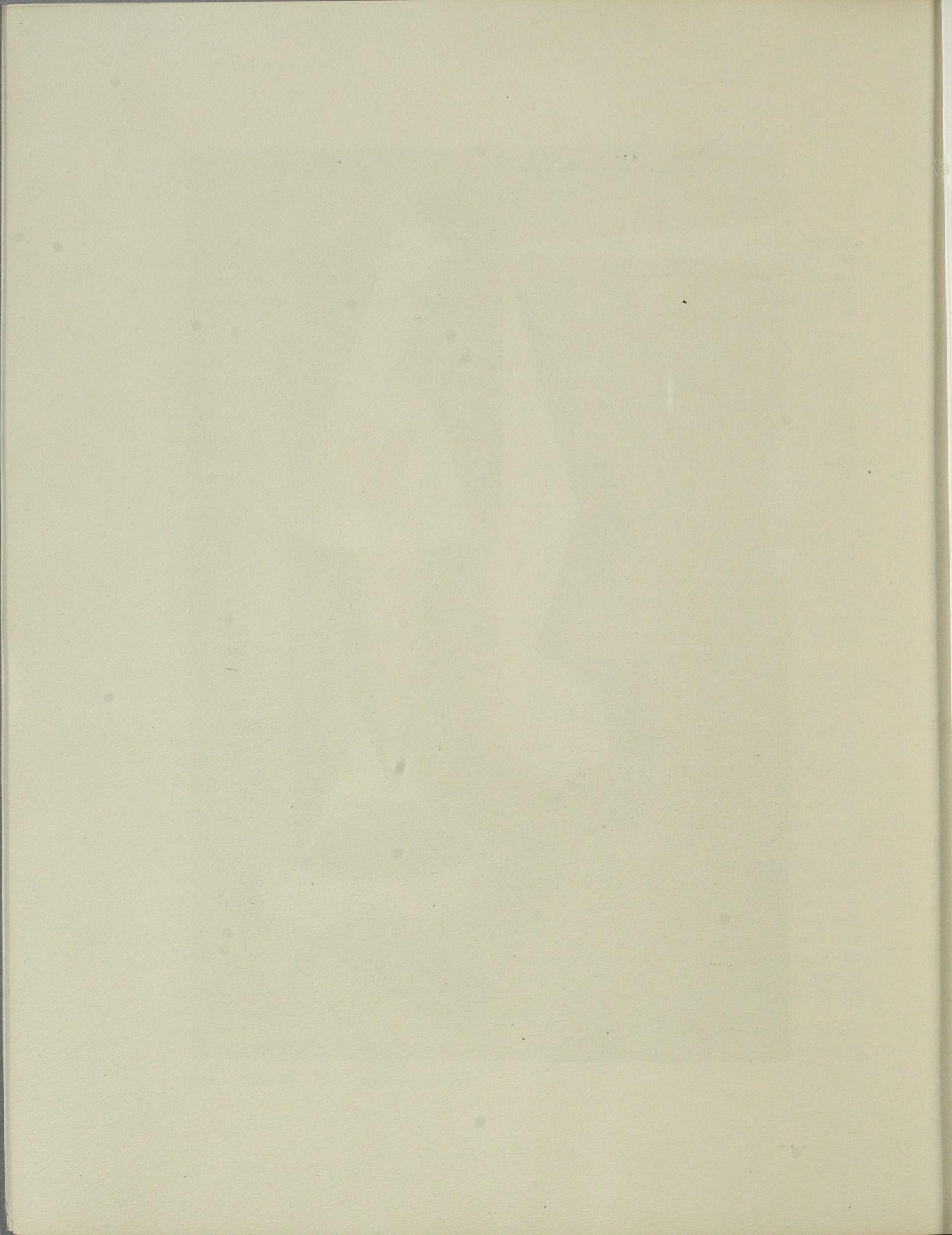
In no way does Paul Nash limit time, or

try to reconstruct the past, when, for instance, he paints Maiden Castle or Ballard Down. He has no interest in the past as *past*, but the accumulated intensesness of the past as *present* is his special concern and joy. The contour of things past is given the aura of things present, so the reality *and* the romanticism of both is intensified. More than most other English painters Paul Nash has developed a personal idiom. He will neither proselytise nor be converted. Blindfold before the pig with pencil grasped ready to put the eye in, he doesn't peep and cheat for the conventional place, nor put it in anywhere and boldly say that that is the eye-place to-day, instead he spreads his hands and declares, "This pig is all eye"—and if you dare to challenge him, he will be bound to win in the end by explaining that it has been to a specialist and learnt to see through its skin. It is the unique inclusiveness of his gesture that makes him able in these sectarian days to hold an apparently middle course without suffering for it.

To-day we are conditioned more and more into being not so much individuals as parts of something else; of a school, a movement, a mass, a class. The individual is subjected to the class every time. This fact has to be reckoned with before anything else. And it is true of painters as well as civil servants and schoolmasters and engine drivers and typists. For those with a herd instinct it is a grand thing; for the others there are only two possible courses; to become a leader (if necessary start a group of their own to be leader of) or, to fight for individuality and justify it. It is a very curious fight, because it is an ethical one between two kinds of individualists and all the morals have been cleverly acquired by the movement side: the other side has either to redefine morality or be content to be labelled anti-social and therefore vicious.

In the work of almost all painters to-day who have any pretensions to being contemporary

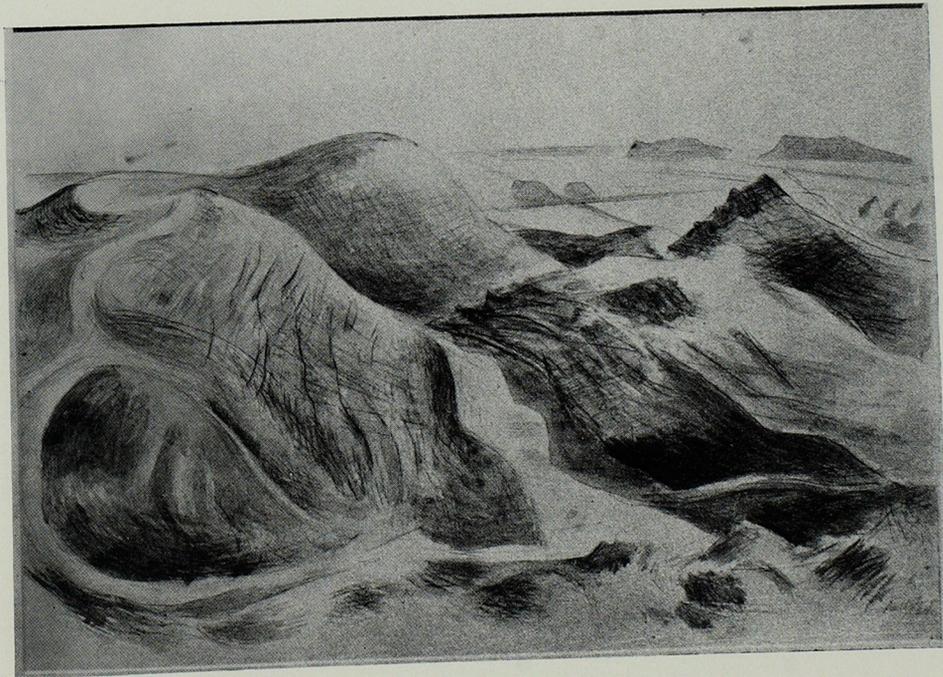




there are signs of this struggle, in a few the signs are purely negative—that it has not been faced. Paul Nash is a vigorous and rather special exception. He seems at once entirely innocent of the predicament *and* to belong very definitely to things as they are to-day. He has escaped the conditioning, never been subjected to the group morality—a born, untroubled individualist. Without question he accepts history and time and accident, and with a conjurer's flourish produces, like a coin from his neighbour's elbow, the personal present—but he is careful to make it a current coin from a near neighbour's elbow, so that it has some validity for all of us.

A struggle always breaks the continuity and existence is interrupted by sudden gaping holes and barbed-wire fences, and so to the

original struggle is added the problem of keeping some kind of thread going, some kind of continuity. Paul Nash is outside the struggle, and specially gifted with the capacity to see things in their full time-and-space context. So he is able to break his personal continuity on purpose, and by taking full advantage of this and exercising his sense of fantasy, putting canaries into factories or prehistory, boats in drawing-rooms, maps in the air and solid mathematics into sands or green fields, he subtly builds up a relation with the present from the other end as it were. It was this sense of continuity and capacity to break it arbitrarily that made his war paintings such permanent independent works as well as such valid records.



PAUL NASH. *Hill Architecture* (Water-colour)

PAUL NASH. *Portrait of Lunar Hornet* (Collage)



PAUL NASH. *Burnt Offering* (Object)





CERI RICHARDS. *Painting, 1937 (London Group Exhibition)*

NO REVOLUTION by Anthony West

Though it is impossible to say when classical painting fell into its coma, the genesis of the present situation can be given as taking place in the period between 1816 and 1839. The classical school was then so corrupt that it defended itself from the romantic attack with such fatuities as: "It is impossible to produce a fine work with the subject in trousers." The term had come to mean pictures of people in togas. Moreover, in addition to bankruptcy of ideas, the school suffered from political identifications. In 1816 David was exiled as a regicide and classical painting received a revolutionary tag, at the same time Napoleon's visit to the studio of David during the hundred days raised mistrust of a different kind. Finally, under the monarchy of July, by an inexplicable process it became identified with extreme conservatism in politics. A position which its decadent exponents welcomed, without understanding that they had embarked for a spot where classicism and academism would be indistinguishable and where Meissonier would be found painting the "Retreat from Moscow" from toy soldiers placed upon a plain of salt. And in 1839 Cezanne was born as Daguerre perfected his invention.

The nineteenth-century carnival began, and hundreds of thousands of acres were covered with special cases or attempts at complete realism. The impressionists chatted away about the light while academic painting flexed its muscles against the camera. However, as the debauch went on Cézanne discovered through Delacroix what Rubens had extracted from the Italians of the Renaissance. It was the enormous vitality of their huge groups of people that excited Rubens, but Cézanne found the order that gave them reason and meaning buried beneath their appearance. The history of his painting is the history of the retreat of the appearance before the growing importance of design. His picture of his sister playing the piano while his mother knits tells one everything about the situation, but "Les Grandes Baigneuses," is a geometrical design which does not bother to say why or how all those

naked people came to be together. By restoring the importance of design Cézanne had recreated the classical school of painting.

Academism imagined that it had done the same thing by increasing the size of its pictures until an area parity with the great Italians was reached. (Elephantiasis set in and a picture exhibited at the salon had as a detail a full sized field gun). Impressionism was concerned with other matters; it is sufficient to quote an American critic who is under the impression that he is praising Manet: "... he seizes one by his intellectual vivacity. 'This is something,' he seems to say, 'that you have never felt sharply before. Look quickly—from here—now—or it will vanish!'" You slap yourself down in front of the subject and plaster it on to the canvas, quickly, before the light changes. It is art because it is hand done, and it is better than a photograph because it takes longer. The number of these gobbets of undigested vision, how that haystack at Wherenot looked at ten that morning, how divinely the light fell on the little breasts of Bonnyboots, doesn't stand thinking about. The enormous output alone would justify abstract painting, as a nice change, if nothing else.

But there are more elaborate reasons, representational pictures must be stiff with literary matter or visual special cases that are irrelevant to a classical work of art. The modern eye is conditioned by the camera. "Les Grandes Baigneuses" is a shocking photograph, it is as improbable a group to-day as it was in 1895, and the moral questions it stirs up as well as its archaic language divert attention from the picture. So, too, "The Origin of the Milky Way" is an obscene photograph, and the possible photograph and quite modern standard of taste hang like a blind before the picture. And the great occasion offers no refuge; the battle pictured is a lie about scattered ugliness, royalty puts up an umbrella when it rains, and the cliché is present at the banquet. In modern terms the great architectural larks of Veronese boil down to a glittering company dressed in sumptuous costumes and shining armour who



MIRÓ. Decoration. Paris Exhibition, 1937

have met in marble halls to eat from gold plate upon snowy napery, while they quaff wine from goblets their fiery steeds may be seen pawing the ground through archways. A painter using this idiom naturally did not consider these vulgarities, just as Giotto did not think of "The light of the world" when he pictured Christ, but the slop and journalese cannot be forgotten. They are in people's minds, and if the artist allows things that suggest them to remain about he will be guilty of allowing an ambiguity.

It is in order to avoid such ambiguity that the abstract painter repudiates the romantic special case and produces digested works. He produces not the picture of a thing, but a symbol for mature consideration of it; objects stripped of personality and eroticism are synthesised to produce expressions applicable to all such objects and are placed in formal disciplined designs that share proportion of the kind that makes good architecture and the precision of good music.

On the other hand synthesis can be made in representational art. The prostitutes of Rouault are all women who sell themselves. But he stops short at the drama and mystery of human relations just as Renoir stops close beneath the skin of his glowing young women. Rowlandson, Daumier, Goya, Michael Angelo, all produced pictures whose greatness is not diminished by the fact that they are great literature. However, although you find dignified ideas, or stirring ones, in this painting you find that it is filled with turbulent matter which escapes into your mind when your eye falls upon it. "The Martyrdom of St. Maurice and the Theban legion" clamours with a divided voice, El Greco's mind and the Roman Catholic Church

appeal from it through streams of free association which it evokes.

This free association is the product of the same ambiguity that renders the Italian idiom useless to the modern classical painters, and it mars literary painting as completely. The Cornaro Titian was painted as an austere and formal family portrait to tell you about the greatness, power and religious fervour of the Cornaro Family. But a nineteenth-century conception of charm has made the thing an enormous setting for an incident about a coy little boy and a dog.

Hemingway writes about Miró's picture, "The Farm," "It has in it all that you feel about Spain when you are there and all that you feel when you are away and cannot go there." Perhaps it was possible to give this reading to the picture and to think about happy days in the sun instead of looking at the picture. Perhaps Miró thought so too, for his paintings are no longer like postcards to hold in your hand while you think about the days when you were younger. It is the design in his mind not the memory in yours which he wants to express.

So that in abstract painting the formal order and mental discipline of the great Italians is cherished although their idiom is rejected. It is no longer adequate to place a design in terms of a man, a woman and an object, it must be expressed in terms applicable to all men and all women, and all objects. Such expression of mature thought has always been the aim of classical painting, and it is by following this great tradition that the dignity and beauty of art will be handed on as a heritage to the future which in its turn will preserve, reject and add.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION By Herbert Tayler

"Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques," is the full title, and after this in a whisper or a scream according to your nationality—"et des Sentiments Politiques." What is it like? The French are a logical race, have great enthusiasms and great sensibility. The spirit of this exhibition is right. We here

would never be so wholehearted, so in-for-a-penny-in-for-a-pound. The public would probably never be endangered or inconvenienced as in the Palace of Aviation, where a spiral ramp hanging from the steel roof members encircles the exhibited planes, the daylight falling through pleated celluloid, the building's

outer skin. And the fire regulations of the L.C.C.? At night when the fountains rise coloured from the river they soak the Pont D'Iena at the crossing of the two main plan axes. Inconvenient, but *magnifique*! And so is the spirit.

The plan is traditional and forms a well-known Beaux-arts composition; it lies over the streets and bridges and along the river, being bound to take the classic axial plan-form of the Napoleons. All the approaching avenues were there, ready, tree-lined, matured, binding the exhibition to the plan of the city. The nine entrances exploit the great charm already exercised by the Arc de Triomphe; the quality of the light, the length of the approach, the trees, and then the large scale feature mysteriously seen at the end. It would have been possible to visit London at the time of the Wembley exhibition and to have ignored it. But in Paris you may be quite far from the Champs de Mars and yet be drawn in: by some pylons constructed of tiny mirrors in one case, a wall of grey granite in another, inscribed with words (they do not matter at a distance) which prove to be the Mussolini oracle—the Italian pavilion. Where a traffic artery is to be maintained through the fair ground bridges span the road, like a Hiroshige with the people crossing. One of these brilliantly uses layers of wood like car springs to achieve its span.

Schooled by these approaches one is prepared for symmetry. But not for this effete classicism of great flights of steps, a terrace, steps dividing round the *bassins* with their seventy-six *jets d'eau* all worked out to the tired Versailles formula, finished off with a weak, white, stony embrace from the two arms of the Trocadero. This grandeur is not even rugged, as in the Hitler classic at Nurnberg, or the Berlin Olympic Stadium. Here, then, is the official keynote to architecture: the real modern to be eschewed, the Corbusier scheme for the Bastion Kellerman to be suppressed, the watchword to be compromise—Beaux Arts but not too too. Sculpture and painting suffer too. Look at the carving on the Musée de L'Art Moderne. At any rate this will cost you nothing, whereas entry costs a whole lot, the two symmetrical wings of the building

are not joined and you pay which ever side you choose. Science is cheap compared to art. The Grand Palais, in the worst of nineteenth-century baroque, has within its walls a complete history of modern science perfectly described. Mendel's theory is told, dramatically, with as much art as we should expect from the hand of Cézanne.

Apparently the foreign exhibitors might do more as they pleased. Now there are three courses open in the theory of design on this occasion. One can put up what will be easy to take down, and enjoy the impermanence of life by looking like it. Or one can sacrifice a spot of ease in building and demolishing by only looking nice and solid (like a *real* building). "A jolly good idea," said an English lady tapping the surprisingly hollow sounding walls of her country's concrete-looking pavilion. Lastly one can look solid and be solid and damn the expense. Deutschland uber alles! The first technique is doubtful nowadays, even for non-exhibition building. The German Pavilion, of actual masonry, is supported over the river embankment (a road being maintained in spite of the exhibition) by girders which form a noble spectacle. But, read an account of the Crystal Palace: ". . . the transparent definition of space, the total elimination of mass and the sense of tensile, almost live strength as opposed to the solidity and gravitational quality of previous masonry architecture." That goes for the Eiffel Tower too, strangely honoured in this exhibition, but not apparently quite understood by the officials of its country. The beauties of nice calculation, the delights of a debauch, as it were, with no hang-over, were appreciated in the Stockholm exhibition of 1930, an affair of glass, wire, canvas and flags. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Holland all have this enchanting sense of evanescence. To be normal, one must be neutral or nordic. Spain is a brilliant exception to this rule and produces the most vivid of all the pavilions. Perhaps having no "name" to lose at the moment, she can be as bold as she pleases and flaunt Picasso and abstraction in the face of countries who cannot afford to be thought so queer. Compare the sculptures at the entrances of this and the German pavilion.



CALDER. Mercury Fountain. Paris Exhibition

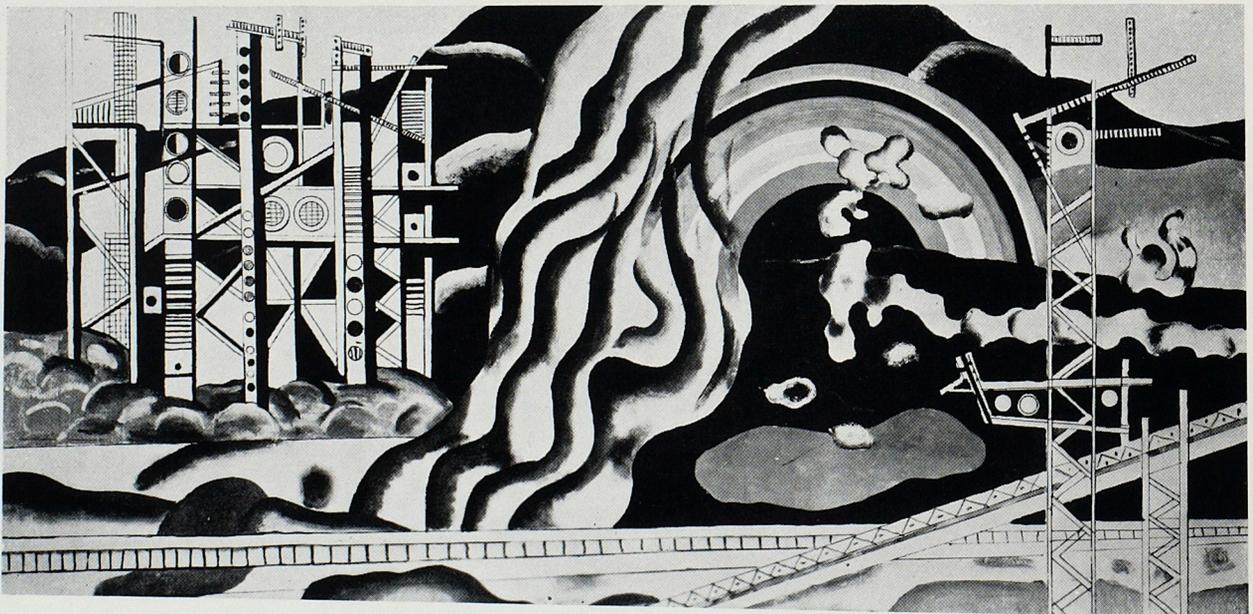
They are both phallic, both have one purpose of propaganda, but the stronger urges along the subconscious and firmly achieves its purpose; the other fails, except to make small boys laugh and virgins wonder as before the tomb of Oscar Wilde in Père Lachaise. The large Picasso at the entrance to the Spanish Pavilion continues the subtle persuasion, beautifully related to its time and place opposite Calder's mercury fountain. The painting is so impressive that it is impossible to imagine Picasso working to better purpose. Clear thinking and hard passionate work have solved the problem.

The official *arts* then are compensated for by the official *techniques*—the artificial lightning under the darkened dome of the *Grand Palais* is better than the *fêtes lumières* on the Seine with special music (shades of Handel). Of the visiting

nation's art there is something for everyone, and a very small special bit for you, reader.

Of *Les Sentiments Politiques*? These give the nervous thrill lacking in the art as a whole. It is the uncivilised thrill of modern Europe. The great Czechoslovakian pavilion is made of armament materials and probably paid for by the makers of these things. The German eagle, Mickey-Mouse-like, taps its foot impatiently at the brandished sickle opposite. In dark corners of the Italian pavilion, dusky sculpture suggests petrified Ethiopia.

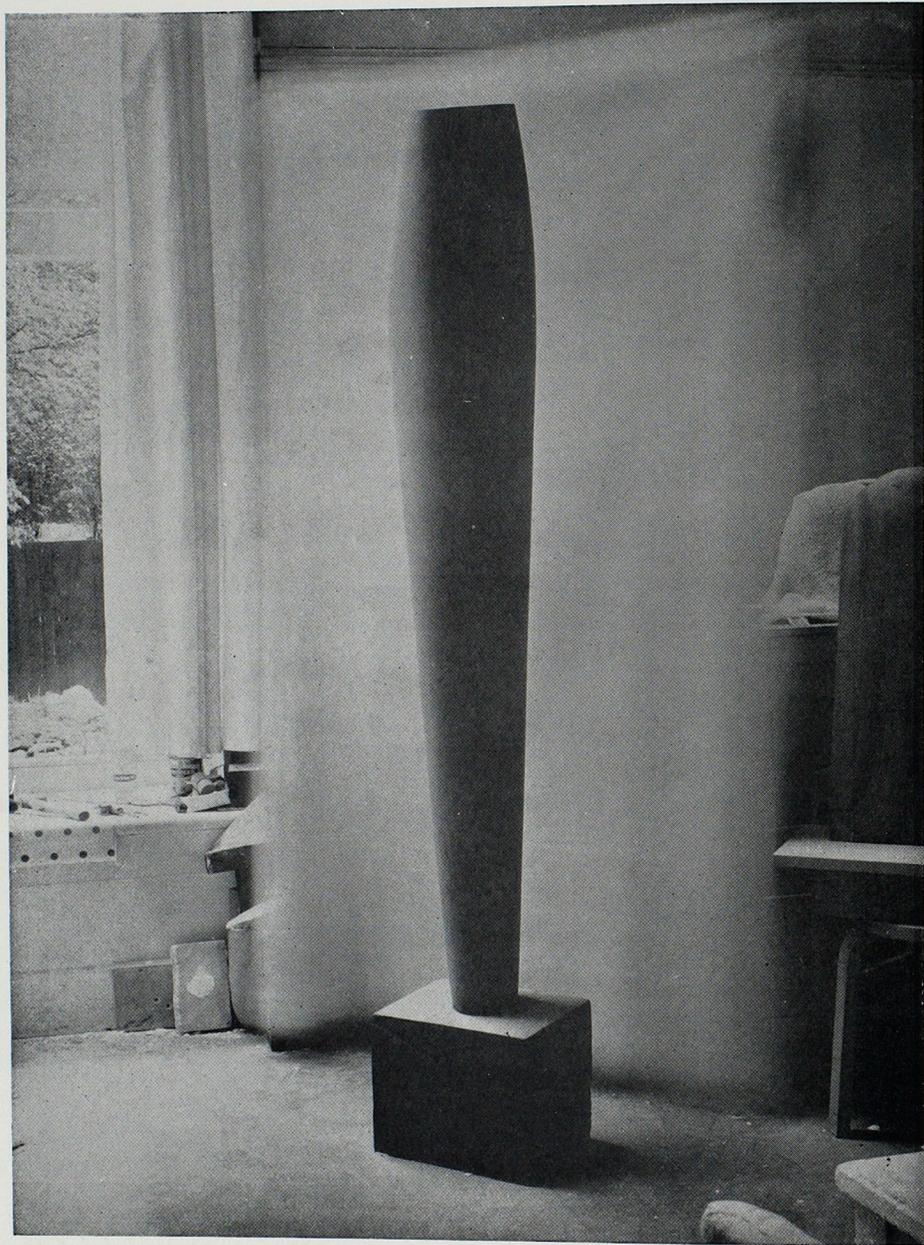
Fly over the cathedrals at Beauvais and Canterbury, and you may wonder whether art and technique are indeed divisible at all, so little is the difference made here by temperament, ideas, climate. It is, or should be, a very quaint idea, an international exhibition of arts and techniques. But there it is.



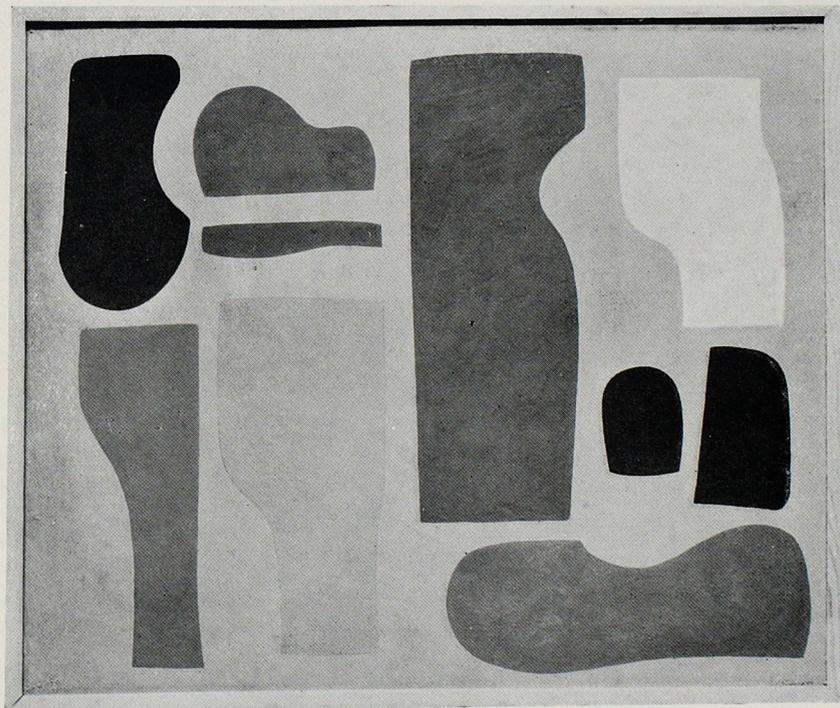
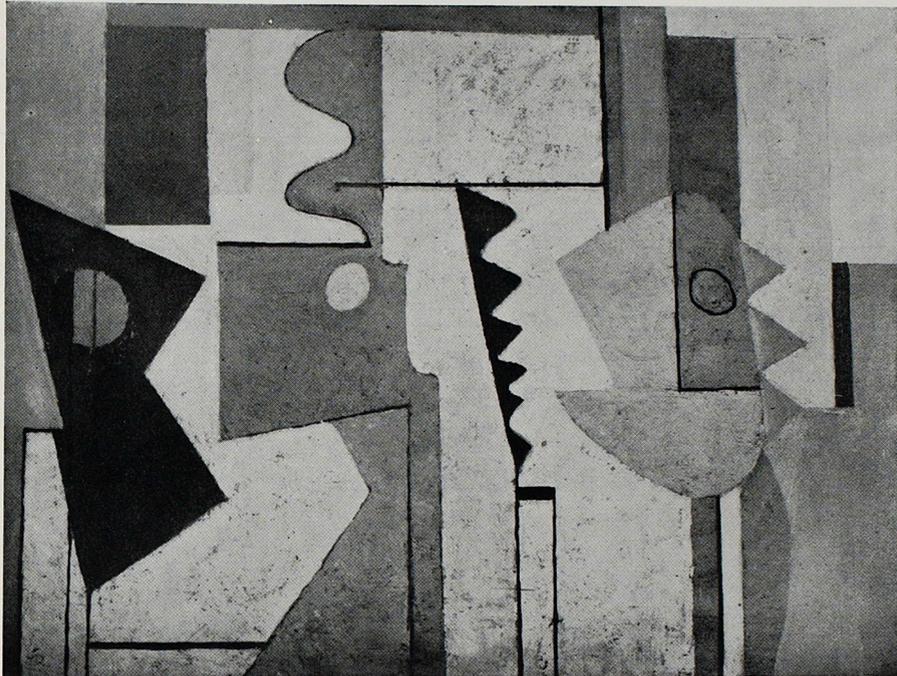
LÉGER. Decoration. Paris Exhibition.



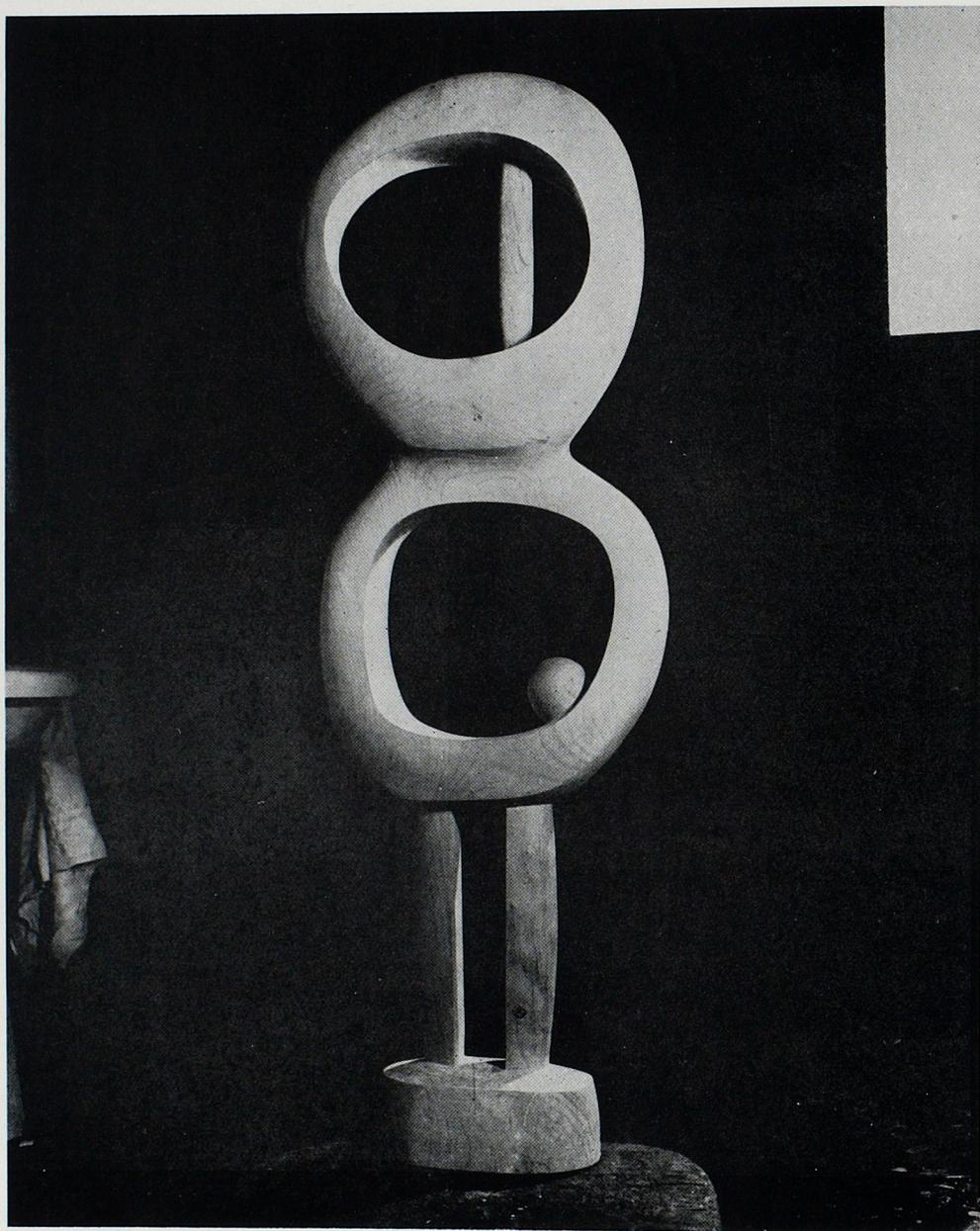
LÉGER. Painting. (Courtesy London Gallery)



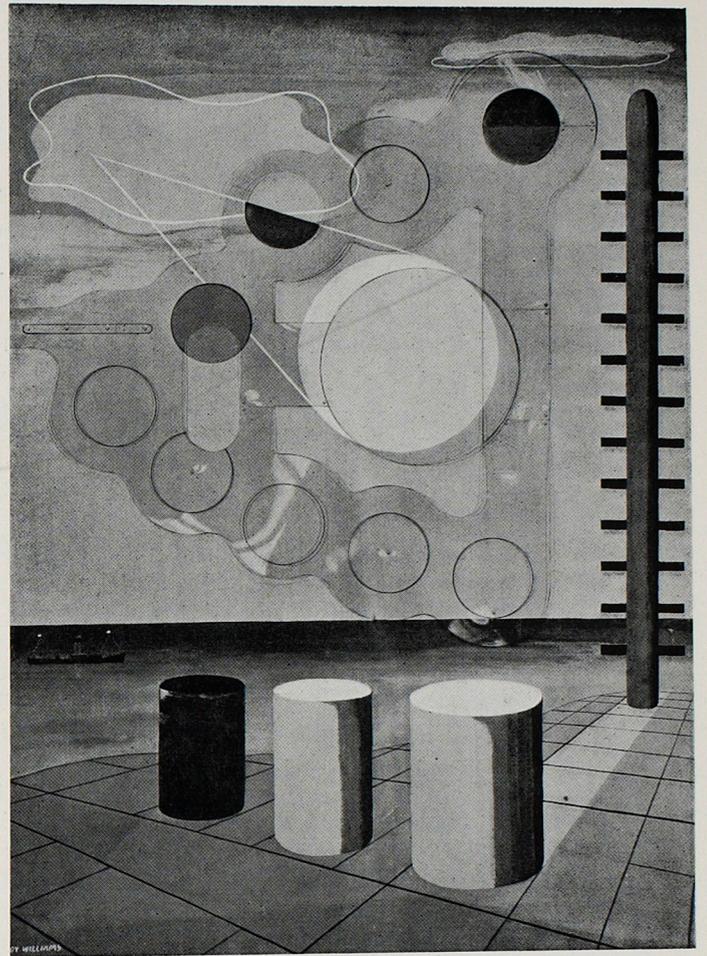
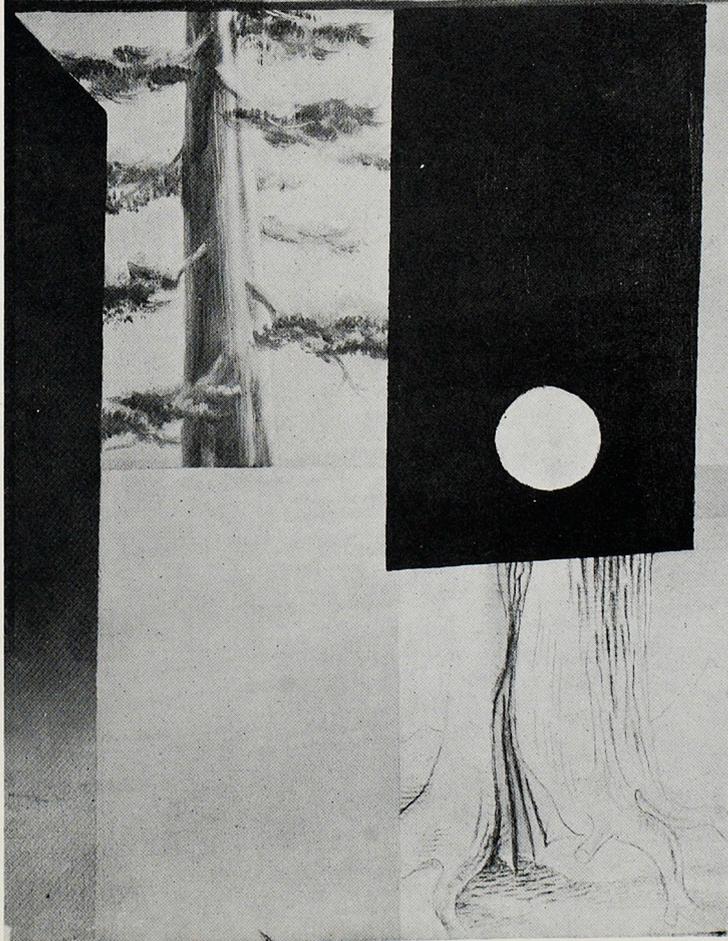
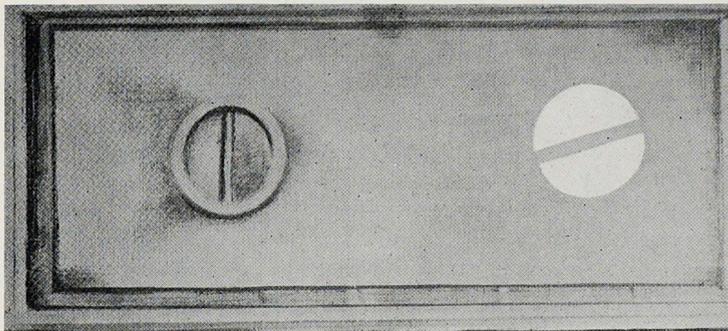
*BARBARA HEPWORTH. Single form in plane wood
(From her recent exhibition at Alex Reid & Lefevre Ltd.)*



(Above) PETER MACINTYRE. *Painting*
(Below) JESSICA DISMORR. *Related Forms*



(Above). F. E. McWILLIAM. Carving
(Right, above). JOY WILLIAMS. Painting
(Right, below). ROLAND PENROSE. *Either was the other's name*



HITLER'S ART IN MUNICH By Robert Medley

It happened by chance that I was forced to stay in Munich for twenty-four hours, but I reconciled myself to the delay when I remembered as I left the station that I should be able to see the exhibition of Approved German Art at the new House of German Culture just opened by Hitler, and also the exhibition of Decadent Art; the art Hitler hates.

For the sake of the walk I went there by way of the Brown House and the tombs of the Nazi Martyrs. "Above all I must try to be fair," I thought, as I looked down on the bronze coffins and did my best not to think of all Nazis in too facile a way, as fools and ruffians who had placed a *manqué* artist at the head of the German nation.

Anyway Hitler the artist had had his fun choosing the work for his great exhibition. I wondered how many famous old masters he would have flung out if they had been carried in by mistake from the Alte Pinatotecke over the way.

As I turned into the Prinzregentstrasse and saw the new building I recognised the new German style. Impressive rows of simple columns repetitively asserting "Noble Simplicity and Iron Discipline." It had a modern air and was certainly preferable to the I.C.I. building or Unilever house. A lot of people were crowding in; the exhibition was obviously well attended. It has been said that the crowds at the decadent art exhibition were greater than those at the approved art, but when I went I should doubt if it were so. The decadent art galleries are much smaller and look more crowded therefore; so far as I could see there was no gate or way of checking the numbers who went there. Of course the approved art cost fifty pfenigs, while you could see decadence for nothing, which may have sent the numbers up a bit.

It would be foolish to deny the popularity of the New House of Culture, for there was nothing in it to shock Mother, and some things that were pleasant by ordinary standards; at its best it was pleasant but dull.

The decadent art shown was most of it bad art and no one could make it out to be anything else, but it was much more interesting and vital than the approved art. The interest of the exhibitions was in the comparison. The decadent art shown was all German. Those who thought they would see Picassos and Matisses there were mistaken. It was strictly German and for the major part was the product of the post-war period and a very interesting document of the times. The works were hysterical, but attempted to say something. The worst and most lurid examples had obviously been chosen. Religious pictures executed in violent colours, negroid crucifixions, imitations of Picasso and Matisse that could never have been good. Pictures of the horrors of war, stark, and probably rather good. Prostitutes with yellow faces, puce cheeks and thighs. Pictures of joy boys and girl friends. By the side of the pictures remarks were written telling you if it was by a Jew, or how much public money had been wasted on its purchase and any remarks made by the artist, which showed what a nasty chap he was, were quoted, or "Look what they did to German womanhood," or such. It was difficult to sort the pictures out or to see them fairly because they were so badly hung. Out of this muddle in which appreciation was impossible, I found the "Twittering Machine" by Paul Klee, which I know to be charming, but which left me cold in these insulting surroundings. I found George Grosz, Kandinsky and Max Ernst. The pictures were hung without frames.

At the approved art the pictures were hung in a single line. There were the flashy superficial portraits of generals and S.A. leaders: portrait society stuff that can be seen in any society salon. Hitler in uniform. Hitler in mufti. All either slick and slovenly or elaborately careful and sentimental. Here again, amongst the official artists was the hysterical note, but this time inhibited and sinister. Boys and maidens beating drums and waving banners. Gigantic sculptures of nude men striding forward, the

artist taking so much care that they should not look pansy that they ceased to be men at all—symbolism had made them inhuman. Pictures telling you what a fine thing war is. A picture of the bombardment of Almeria ; there was Hitler in mediaeval armour riding a white horse, pretending to be the white knight (that is how you are supposed to think of him next time you see him being driven through the streets in his Mercedes-Benz). There were one or two large historical pictures ; Hindenburg receiving Hitler as chancellor ; Hitler in his early days addressing a meeting. Is it possible to be a good official artist nowadays—like David in the Napoleonic era? Good official art is only possible when the artist is left to himself to

make his own choice, and not imposed upon from above. The hideous perverted failure of all this is because European art is essentially individual.

I went upstairs, and there saw many unassuming little pictures by what I suppose must be the majority of painters. In the traditional technique of representation some of these were very well done. I had the impression of a number of artists pleased to work quietly, with their minds relieved from having to cope with modern aesthetic or social problems. But it was very monotonous. The unexpected illumination of feeling was gone from them. I was pleased to leave.

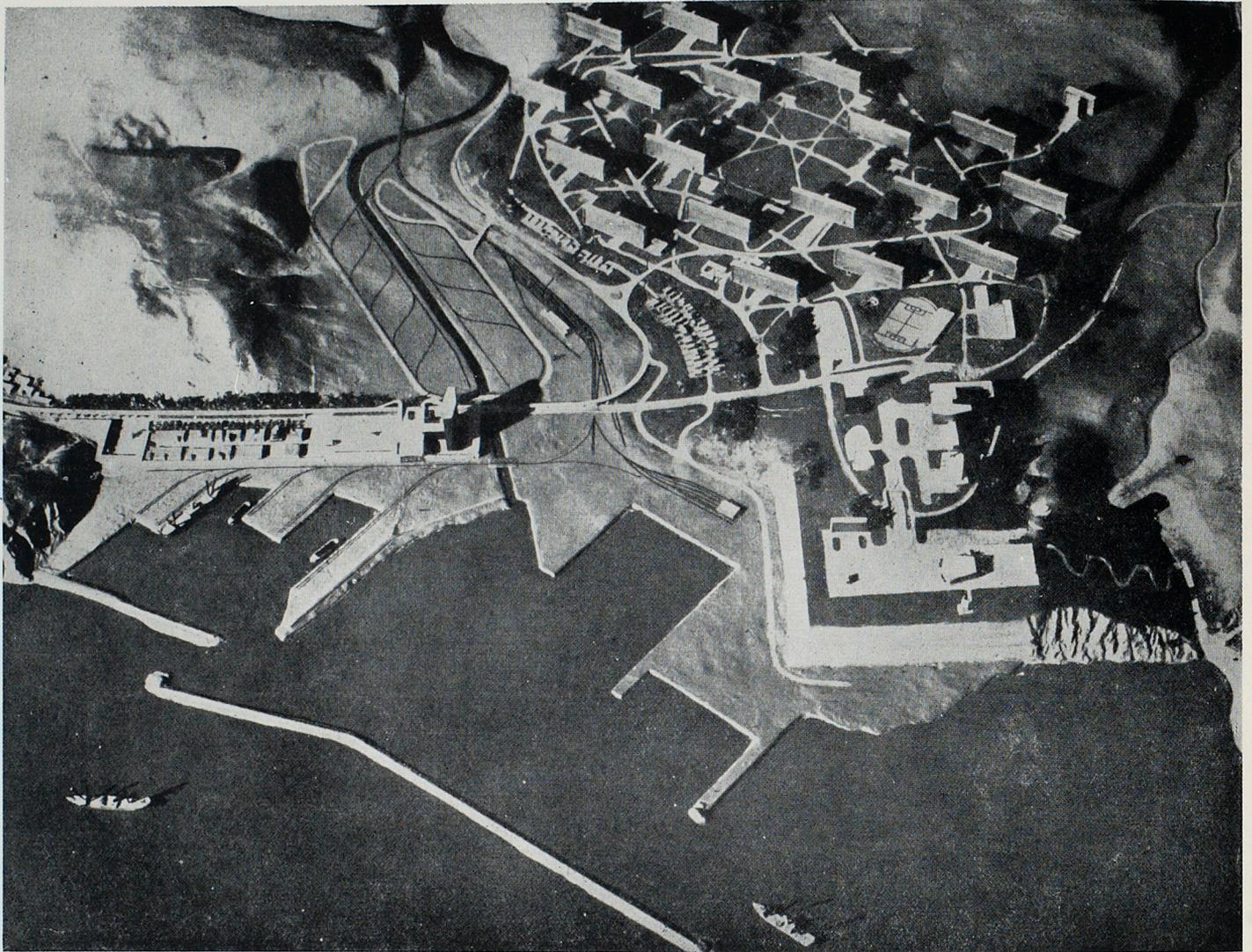
NOTES

The Association of Arts and Industries of Chicago has founded an American School of Design. It is to be called *The New Bauhaus* and Moholy-Nagy has gone to be its director. It embodies the principles of the famous Bauhaus at Dessau founded in 1919 by Professor Gropius. Gropius, who is now Professor of Architecture at Harvard University, will be chief adviser to the new school. The lecturing staff includes James Johnson Sweeney, known to readers of *Axis*.

From the prospectus : “ After long years of experiment it has been found that a successful art education can be built up only through a training that faces reality : that the machine, the new scientific and technical devices, must be incorporated in any new teaching programme. Such a school has the practical task of serving its graduates and the community by equipping its students for well-trained designers, and reintegrating the artist into the daily work of the nation.”

Alexander Calder, American sculptor, maker of mobiles constructed in wire, is having a show in London (his first one here) at the Mayor Gallery in December.

The English Surrealist group has arranged a show of surrealist-found objects, to be seen at the London Gallery now.



LE CORBUSIER AND JEANNERET

THE TOWN PLAN FOR NEMOURS, NORTH AFRICA, 1934.

The scheme controls the entire development of the new town for a population of 38,000 European inhabitants and ensures rational and healthy future extension.

This is an illustration from *Circle*, "an International Survey of Constructive Art," edited by J. L. Martin, Ben Nicholson and N. Gabo, recently published by Faber & Faber Ltd. It illustrates admirably many works of contemporary painting, sculpture and architecture, and its articles are grouped under four headings: (1) Painting; (2) Sculpture; (3) Architecture; (4) Art and Life. The *Editorial* says: "By placing this work side by side we hope to make clear a common basis and to demonstrate, not only the relationship of one work to the other but of this form of art to the whole social order."

CATALAN ART

from the IXth to the XVth centuries

"A companion volume to those which M. Zervos has already published on Greek and Mesopotamian art, though in this case a completely English edition has been prepared . . . It is not necessary to say more than that this volume is as well done as its predecessors. The 330 plates are worthy of the highest praise . . . brilliant detail photographs."
SPECTATOR

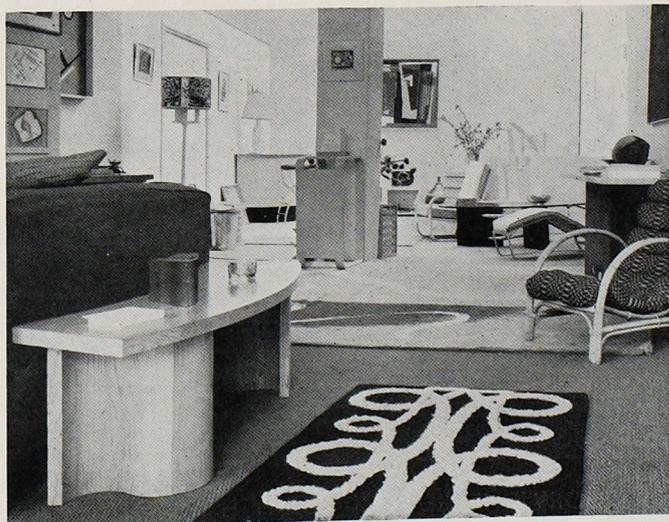
"A glorious record of an important and unique section of medieval art."
DAILY TELEGRAPH

"The documentary value of this survey of Catalan art, which is carried out on a scale and with a thoroughness never before attempted, is immense."
MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

"Considering the quality and the quantity of the illustrations the price is extremely moderate."
TIME AND TIDE

With 330 plates. Heinemann. 42s. net.

DUNCAN MILLER LIMITED FURNITURE DECORATION



A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN OUR SHOWROOM
DURING AN EXHIBITION OF ABSTRACT ART.

10, LOWER GROSVENOR PLACE, S.W.1. - VICTORIA 3626.

GROUP THEATRE

Directors :

Production : Rupert Doone.
Literature : Stephen Spender.

Music : Benjamin Britten, Brian Easdale.
Decor : Robert Medley, John Piper.

Their Productions for 1937-8 include :

"OUT OF THE PICTURE," a Tragi-comedy written by Louis MacNeice, Decor by Robert Medley and Geoffrey Monk, Music by Benjamin Britten.

"TRIAL OF A JUDGE," a play in verse by Stephen Spender.

"ON THE FRONTIER," a Melodrama, with verse and music, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood.

All these Plays to be produced by Rupert Doone.

Subscription :

One Guinea a year, for which Members receive :

- (1) A free half-guinea seat for each of the three Productions.
- (2) Privileges concerning tickets, including buying Guest Tickets.
- (3) Free admission to Group Theatre Lectures and Exhibitions.

Further particulars from :

The Secretary,

Group Theatre Rooms, 9 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2.

Temple Bar 6382.

THE PAINTER'S OBJECT

BY

MAX ERNST	PAUL NASH
JOHN PIPER	JEAN HÉLION
HENRY MOORE	MOHOLY-NAGY
PABLO PICASSO	AMEDÉE OZENFANT
FERNAND LÉGER	JULIAN TREVELYAN
ALEXANDER CALDER	GIORGIO DE CHIRICO
GRAHAM SUTHERLAND	WASSILY KANDINSKY

Edited and with an Introduction

by

MYFANWY EVANS

With 45 full-page plates, and frontispiece in colour

Crown quarto. 10s 6d net

GERALD HOWE LTD 30 GERRARD STREET LONDON W.1

Published by Myfanwy Evans, Fawley Bottom Farmhouse, nr. Henley-on-Thames, and printed for the Proprietors by Hunt, Barnard & Co., Ltd., London and Aylesbury.



NOW READY

**CATALOGUE
OF THE
MUSEUM OF LIVING ART**

(New York University)

A Bound Volume, containing an essay on the Plan of the Museum, by Mr. Gallatin, and articles by G. L. K. Morris "On America and a Living Art," by James Johnson Sweeney on "Painting," and by Jean Héliou on "The Evolution of Abstract Art as shown in the Museum of Living Art." In addition there are 45 fine whole-page reproductions of works of art by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Matisse, Miro, Gris, Arp, Klee, Mondrian, etc.

FIVE SHILLINGS
Postage 6d.

ONE DOLLAR
Postage 10 cents

A striking record of this well-known American collection, founded by A. E. Gallatin, with the object of helping the public to understand and appreciate the many phases of the newer influences at work in progressive 20th-century painting.

LONDON
A. ZWEMMER
76-78, Charing Cross Road
W.C.2

NEW YORK
New York University Bookstore
18, Washington Place

ALEX. REID & LEFEVRE, LTD.

FINE PAINTINGS

BY CONTEMPORARY

BRITISH & FRENCH

ARTISTS

1^A, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S, LONDON, S.W.1

TELEPHONE: WHITEHALL 1646

CABLES: "DRAWINGS, LONDON"