

BE

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

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In cooperation with the Museum of Modern Art, the American Federation of Arts announces the third of its new series of "Art in America" programs, to be broadcast over Station WJZ and National Network Saturday, October 20, from 8:00 to 8:20 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. The program will be in dialogue, from material prepared by Mr. Holger Cahill, art critic and director of note. The subject will be "The Grand Style, and Portrait Painters Fashionable and Unfashionable."

Before the Civil War, art in this country that was not strictly local was chiefly influenced by the English style, particularly in portrait painting. About the middle of the nineteenth century American artists and collectors began turning to Paris and Munich as centers of painting. For twenty years, from 1850 to 1870, there was a continuous stream of American artists going to Europe to study and paint. In the seventies many of these artists returned to teach in this country. Among the most important of them were William Morris Hunt and John La Farge, of the Paris-trained artists, and Frank Duveneck and William Merritt Chase, who had studied in Munich.

WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT was the earliest of the artist-teachers to bring European culture to America in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. With George Inness and John La Farge he was responsible for the growth of the French influence here. It was beneficial at that time, for American artists had fallen under the spell of the German school of Dusseldorf which produced crowded, tightly painted pictures.

Hunt was one of the best portrait painters in this country in the sixties and seventies. He was a pioneer in American mural painting. In his landscape work he was, like Inness, a painter of moods. His greatest contribution to the art of America was his influence upon collectors and artists, particularly John La Farge. The two met when they were students in Paris. Later La Farge studied with Hunt in Newport, Rhode Island.

JOHN LA FARGE was not only an artist but a genuine student of art in many fields. After studying in Paris, he traveled over Europe copying old masters and meeting artists of various traditions and styles of painting. He became intensely interested in the art of making and coloring glass. As a result of his study and experiment he invented opaline glass, and he is famous for the beautiful coloring and design of his stained glass windows. His finest work, however, was in mural painting. His murals in Trinity Church, Boston, and in the Church of the Ascension, New York, have never been surpassed in this country. He was also a portrait and landscape painter. In addition to all his other artistic pursuits, he wrote and lectured on painting and decorative art. La Farge always painted in the grand style, influenced by the old masters he so much admired. His work is thoughtful, decorative and richly colored, but somewhat lacking in power and freshness.

THOMAS EAKINS was one of the really great artists of his period. He was independent and original at a time when American artists were allowing the European influence to dominate them too completely. Eakins studied for five years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then went to Paris in 1866 where he studied more than two years. Later he went to Spain and after nearly four years in Europe returned to this country and taught painting at the Pennsylvania Academy. He had abandoned the methods of his teachers and worked out one of his own, drawing directly with the brush, then building up the picture with several applications of paint. He was a thorough workman, digging down to underlying principles and developing them with strength and originality. He felt it so necessary for an artist to know the basic structure of the human body that he took a physician's course in anatomy. He laid such stress on anatomy that he was compelled to resign from his teaching position at the Academy.

Eakins' artistic honesty and thoroughness were serious stumbling blocks in the way of financial success. People were afraid to let him paint their portraits. When he did get a commission frequently his sitter either left the portrait in Eakins' studio or took it home and hid it. Even other painters feared his perception of character. Asked why he wouldn't sit

for Eakins, Edwin A. Abbey replied: "Because he would bring out all the traits of my character I have been trying to hide from the public for years." One fashionable lady, dismayed at the way Eakins' portrait of her was taking shape, asked him if her maid might not complete the sittings. But Walt Whitman said of his portrait: "Eakins' picture grows on you. It is not all seen at once. It dawns on you only gradually.....the more I get to realize it the profounder seems its insight. Eakins is not a painter; he is a force." Unfortunately, few people were as willing to be seen honestly as Walt Whitman. Although Eakins was the soundest and most distinguished figure painter of his generation, he spent his last years in obscurity and isolation.

In direct contrast to Eakins, JOHN SINGER SARGENT won great fame and fortune by painting wealthy people --no others could afford his portraits--as they wanted to be painted. His contemporaries claimed that Sargent was a cold and cruel analyst of character--but his portraits had dash and glitter and the style of the moment.

Sargent was born of American parents in Florence, Italy. After some study in that city, he entered the studio of Carolus-Duran in Paris. He was taught to block in masses with a full brush, drawing, modeling and painting all in one stroke. Sargent mastered this technique with ease and became extraordinarily expert in it. Before he was twenty he was considered a brilliant portrait painter. In all the years that followed he added nothing except increased facility. Late in life he tried to paint landscapes but was unsuccessful. It had never been necessary for him to dig down to fundamentals either in art or in character. His quick talent proved in the end his worst enemy. Great art must be honest art, with roots beneath the surface. Cézanne has said: "Art must be incorruptible. It cannot be incorruptible part of the time."

The "Art in America" programs broadcast every Saturday night from October 6 to January 26 are a continuation of the series initiated by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and made possible through the cooperation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The American Federation of Arts, the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, The National Broadcasting Company, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago and The Museum of Modern Art.