

INTRODUCTION.

109

The Exhibition of German painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art has been a great success. Over 27,000 visitors attended the exhibition during its six weeks, almost as many as attended the Daumier-Corot exhibition of last autumn and considerably more than to either the exhibition of Toulouse-Lautrec and Redon or the American Painting and Sculpture exhibition held earlier in the season. Great controversy was aroused. There was intense enthusiasm on the part of the open minded and alert students of modern art and many of those who disliked the exhibition as a whole felt that it was very valuable as a stimulant to American artists and collectors. As is the case in Germany, French painting has too long dominated the native art. The German exhibition proved to the American public that there was a very powerful and individual national expression in Europe outside of Paris.

On the whole the sculptors were more admired than the painters probably because their work was more conventional and more international in character. Kolbe, has long been popular in America and the work of Fiori and Sintenis also well known. Barlach, Belling and Marcks are comparatively new and each has a group of strong adherents. General reaction to the painters was interesting and rather unexpected. Beckmann who was superbly represented came with a greatly enhanced reputation. Unfortunately it was possible to obtain only three good examples of Kokoschka's work so that he drew comparatively little comment although several of the more discerning amateurs felt that his "Woman with a Parrot" from the Bernard Koehler Collection was perhaps the finest painting in the Exhibition. Marc's reputation was not augmented although several of his most famous paintings including the "Red Horses" and the "Manirill" and the "Apes" were included in the Exhibition and won great popular esteem. In the contemporary eye Marc's work now seems a little decorative and superficial. The paintings of the Brücke group met with comparatively little success. Many felt them to be moded and crude but again a few discerning critics felt the power of Schmidt-Rottluff and the great brilliance and traculence of Kirchner.

Unfortunately Baumeister and Schlemmer were not well represented (the former being usually dismissed as an imitator of Leger). Hofer won much admiration especially among those whose eyes are trained exclusively by French paintings. On the other hand many who looked to the German exhibition for originality tended to dismiss Hofer too abruptly as an amateur of the French.

The success of the so-called Neue Sachlichkeit group was very considerable. Grosz's study for the portrait of "Doctor Neise" was admired while the Dix "Widow" from Mannheim and the "Doctor Meyer Hermann" were a revelation to the American public who had thought of German painting in terms of French Marc and Kokoschka.

Writing as one familiar with reputations in Germany of German artists I was much surprised at the lack of interest in Nolde whose superb work of the "Death of Ste. Mary of Egypt" from the Folkwang Museum in Essen passed almost unnoticed. The Brücke group seemed by far the most difficult for the American public to grasp. Klee, however, is now firmly fixed in the minds of American collectors as an artist of great interest. Scores of visitors who had been enraged by the Klee exhibition in the Museum last year now found Klee absorbingly interesting and were especially moved by the "Ma" from the Koehler Collection and the two fine watercolors lent by the National Galerie.

I did see that American painters found Kokoschka, Beckmann, Dix and Grosz the most interesting in the exhibition.

It is too early to state definitely how many works have been purchased from the exhibition but it is by no means assured that German painting now has an established position on the American art market. However, the fashion for German books, plays, moving pictures, moving picture actors and actresses, scientists, the increasing number of Americans who visit Germany and the great sympathy for Germany which increases as Americans realize the injustice of the Versailles Treaty, may support the interest in German painting and sculpture generated by the exhibition at the Museum.

Mr. Cary Ross of the Museum's staff has collected much material upon the recent exhibition of German Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It might be interesting for German museum directors as well as others interested in art to hear how the German exhibition was received and to read quotations from criticisms both favorable and unfavorable.

These quotations have been divided into three groups. First of all, general criticisms of a favorable character; second, of an unfavorable character; third, criticisms of individual artists.

In Vanity Fair appeared a reproduction of the Head of Marlene Dietrich by Ernesto de Fiori with an interesting comment upon German sculpture:

"It is probably true that German sculptors are better known beyond the limits of their own country than are the painters. As examples Lehmbruck, Kolbe and Ernesto de Fiori, all of them German sculptors, have long been figures of international importance."

Several private individuals were moved by the Exhibition to write public letters mostly of protest. Among them was Henry Rankin Poore, a second rate academician who writes:

"What is at present on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art is the natural seepage from the Nietzschean (the-rest-of-you-be-damned) philosophy which in its madness destroyed the German state and which the gods now permit for the destruction of German national art. The Museum of Modern Art is playing into the hands of ultra-modernism and is giving countenance to a bold attempt to substitute a foreign product for a national art."

GENERAL: FAVORABLE

Edward Alden Jewell, art critic of the New York Times, travelled last summer through Germany and came to the present exhibition with considerable prejudice in its favor. In the Times of March 13th he announced the opening of the exhibition with great enthusiasm:

"This is a brilliantly successful affair. Selection brings into play, for the most part, representative examples of the various artists included. The mass impact of the show is quite terrific, nor does more detailed inspection tend to let the observer down. The present group from Germany rushes its vibrant and romantic personality out to meet the observer. Some visitors may find themselves a trifle appalled at first if they be not up to this sort of thing but perseverance is urgently recommended.

"The Director of the Museum of Modern Art says in the catalogue: 'Many believe that German painting is second only to the school of Paris.' If we restrict comparisons to the field of living painters and sculptors the reviewer is ready to assert that Germany does not stand second even to the renowned school of Paris. It isn't quite fashionable to make such extreme statements as yet but it is going to be some day. Meanwhile, New Yorkers may well be grateful to the Museum of Modern Art for providing so excellent an opportunity to study the general trend of modern German art."

Mr. Jewell of the New York Times writes:

"The sculptural showing is especially good. Georg Kolbe's beautiful, slender Assunta occupies a position of honor. It stands just where the magnificent figure by another German sculptor, Lehmbruck, stood in a previous show. There are eight Kolbes in all. Gerhard Marcks' Adam is notable for its primitive power; Ernst Barlach's Singing Man for its superbly plastic declamation. There are six of Rudolf Belling's sophisticated abstractions and several of Renée Sintenis' gay little animals."

MISSIONS

Mr. Jewell of the New York Times remarks:

"One cannot but regret that Liebermann, Slevogt, and Corinth were not included. The Museum wanted to place full emphasis upon the word contemporary, but do not these three great figures 'belong'? Surely Liebermann does. He is eighty or ninety years old but still one of the most chipper of the daring young radicals who have done so much to bring German art to a position of prominence today."

Mr. Jewell writes:

"Here is Max Beckmann whose Balloon Acrobats and Carnival are strong if rather coarse designs, whose Loge and Self Portrait employ the most confident and effective accents, whose Family Picture constantly entertains the eye with its bewildering gayety of mosaic, whose Old Actress so full of marvelously lighted color evokes mood and personality."

Mr. Jewell speaks of Dix's Widow "in which an astounding effect is created by means of a veil's transparency. Dix's Portrait of the Artist's Parents makes an emphatic appeal as does the more sensational Doctor Meyer Hermann. This artist's babies are also superb."

Of Kirchner Mr. Jewell writes:

"You will want to meet this artist again, if you do not already know his work. The present canvases do not reveal him at his best though Street Scene is a very good picture. Modern Bohemia smacks rather too much of Matisse."

Mr. Jewell remarks that "Kokoschka is inexhaustible in his capacity to surprise. You think you have him definitely fixed in your mind when, lo! he submits a Woman with Parrot or a Girl with Doll (radically dissimilar) to upset all your calculations."

Mr. Jewell finds that "Georg Schrimpf's Sleeping Girls is an expert piece of Neue Sachlichkeit painting, but for sheer loveliness of form and texture nothing in the show equals, perhaps, his Still Life with a Jug."

GENERAL: FAVORABLE

Henry McBride, the avant garde critic of the New York Sun had been hitherto exclusively interested in Parisian art. In his review (March 14th) he confesses to conversion and writes:

"The German show at the Museum of Modern Art is a difficult task well done. No one who has not tried to send a typical collection of American art to Europe will quite realize what the Modern Museum and the Germans have now accomplished in reversing the process. What the living Germans take seriously in their current production is here intelligently put before us. It is up to us to take it or leave it.

"My advice, founded upon an experience of only two or three years, to those who would 'leave it' is - not to leave it too abruptly. If your first impulse is to reject it - forbear. There really is matter here for your consideration and which you will be obliged to consider sooner or later. So why not begin the study now, open mindedly? You will, for one thing, almost instantly discover that this new effort of the Germans to secure a place in the sun is only our own problem all over again for we too have been barred from world recognition.

"I say 'forbear' because I did not do it myself at first. Until quite recently I had a distaste for German art that was quite too much for me. There was a certain grossness and hardness that I instinctively sidestepped. Then I began making exceptions. I fell in love with the work of Paul Klee. Later I began to see things in Campendonk that I had not seen at first. Then I began acknowledging, perhaps a little reluctantly, the undoubted power of Max Beckmann, Karl Hofer and Oskar Kokoschka. On the present occasion I am distinctly tempted by George Grosz and to a lesser degree by Ernst Kirchner. Of course, all along, I have accepted Georg Kolbe as a conspicuously successful sculptor.

"And so, when an American who started out with a prejudice against Teutonic art accepts Paul Klee, Campendonk, Beckmann and Kolbe, it begins to be apparent that the Germans are in a position to engage in international talk. I wish that Germans would as frankly accept four living American artists. I do not, however, hold this remark over them as a threat. If they don't see us it's their loss."

Mr. McBride of the Sun says:

"Beckmann's paintings are the most dominant in the present collection and there will be many new people to concede that his style is sharply distinct. There is still, however, a suspicion that he is more concerned in making a noise than in saying something. He does, however, unquestionably make a noise."

Sculpture.

Mr. McBride of the Sun says:

"The impressiveness of the sculpture leads one to believe that this is an art that lies well within the German grasp. Kolbe, de Fiori, Barlach, Sintenis, Belling, Marcks - all are able. The thing to be noticed by our struggling younger sculptors is the way these Germans define their basic ideas before starting to work. There is no fumbling; it is all definite and in the end easily read.

GENERAL: UNFAVORABLE

Royal Cortissoz of the New York Herald Tribune is by far the most reactionary of New York critics. He still considers Cézanne clumsy, second-rate, Impressionistic. He writes (March 15th):

"It was once said of the German that while he had the keenest scent in the world for a metaphysical distinction he was woefully indisposed to notice the thickness of the cup from which he drank his coffee. In other words, he had ideas but little taste. To some such conclusion as this we are driven by the exhibition of German painting and sculpture. It is made up of modernistic types, gentlemen uttering presumably the last word in Teutonic 'expressionism' and similarly recondite ideas but capable, as a matter of fact, of painting only very crude and dull pictures. In general the collection of paintings is the crudest, most raucous and least interesting of modernistic gropings we have seen in a long time."

Sculpture.

Royal Cortissoz of the Herald Tribune writes:

"The sculpture is a little better than the painting. Some of it such as the abstract

pieces by Belling, is simply bizarre but Ernst Barlach has some really impressive heads and figures. There is a good bust by Gernard Marcks Head of Crodel and the animals of Sintenis are capital bits of observation and swift, nervous modelling. The hero of the sculpture group is Georg Kolbe. ~~Two~~ ^{Two or} three of his pieces like the Head of a Dancer possess something like charm."

Royal Cortissoz of the Herald Tribune writes:

"Paul Klee is no doubt driving at ~~something~~ in his Angler or his Twittering Machine but what he has to say is obscured by the childish method in which he has attempted to say it."

"Marc's animal forms are lost in a welter of vaguely cubistic swirls.

"Beckmann's designs are overwhelmed in ugliness."

"There is some plausible drawing in the paintings of Otto Dix and at a few other points we escape momentarily."

"Just one of these Germans seems to have any consideration for form. Georg Schrimpf is smoothly accurate in his Still Life and in his Sleeping Girls."

GENERAL: FAVORABLE

Margaret Breuning, the robust critic of the New York Evening Post, writes (March 21st):

"German art never appeared more a laboratory product, the result of a vast scrupulousness in weighing and measuring, an indefatigable pursuit of experimentation for itself rather than any avowed end, than in its present exhibition at the Modern Museum. It is a remarkably comprehensive and representative showing. Much of this exhibition, its expressionism particularly, is a movement of yesterday rather than today. It is, as far as contemporary German art goes, 'old hat' (out of style).

"German art has a tendency to go sentimental and symbolic, even under cover of the most brutal color, the most abstract expression, or the most literal fidelity to objective facts.

"It is a showing that should be vastly popular with those Americans who like their artistic food well spiced, color that hits you hard between the eyes and violent, vehement expression rather than subtlety. No word of commendation seem exaggerated for the excellent selection and presentation of this extremely complicated and far flung exhibition."

Miss Breuning writes of Campendonk:

"His work has always had great fascination for the writer both in its color and its curious remnant of old Gothic fantasy in modern forms."

Miss Breuning writes of Beckmann:

"Beckmann would be/acknowledged artist in any country or school. His work is of course authoritative and an impressive."

GENERAL: UNFAVORABLE

W. G. Bowdoin, the somewhat uninformed critic of the New York World Telegram, writes:

"The German exhibition is simply amazing. Here and there a coherent work of art is shown but most of the exhibition is repellent. It is hard to believe that many of the paintings and sculptures have been loaned for this showing by American and foreign museums but the catalogue so states."

COMMISSIONS

Miss Breuning writes:

"Kokoschka in whatever phase of work one considers him must be reckoned with. The gay, sparkling landscape shown here is typical of the large showing he held two years ago in London. It is startling to those who had associated him with his powerful, if morbid portraits and figure work"

Mr. McBride of the Sun writes; of Campendonk:

"I see things in Campendonk that I had not seen at first. I now think him an excellent artist and the White Tree lent to the present show by Miss Dreier is certainly a prize."

GENERAL: UNFAVORABLE

Malcolm Vaughan, the conservative critic of the New York American, writes (March 22nd):

"Had the present show been held in Germany it might have been hailed a magnificent collection. In America, where ignorance of modern German art is well-nigh universal, it becomes too quintessential. It flies over the heads of the public. As a result the visitor to the Museum must leap at one jump from familiar planes to the peak of an unfamiliar Parnassus, - a curious, bizarre and esoteric Parnassus at that.

"Briefly to characterize the paintings on view is to describe them as restless expressions of extravagant, northern individuality. Despite the fact that the works are sincere, earnest, cultured, disciplined, and usually skilled, they often appear sensational, capricious, barbarous, wild and rude. Many of the pictures may be compared to trumpet calls from this or that cult. What fervid solemnity! It is as if Germany sought among her painters a Messiah."

Mr. Vaughan praises especially the brilliant color of Marc's Red Horses:

"The luxuried impression of a Russian amazon by the sensuous Paul Kleinschmidt, the mysticism of the Prodigal Son by the monumental Rohlf's, and the epic decoration "Gypsies with a Sunflower" by a master of rhythm, Otto Müller."

Mr. Vaughan writes of Nolde:

"Poetry breaks through the prose in several examples from the brush of the greatest artist of them all, Emil Nolde."

Sculpture.

Mr. Vaughan writes:

"The sculpture on display is better, purer and more vital than the painting. Unfortunately the number of sculptures on view is inadequate and there is not enough variety of subject to indicate the true state of affairs: that in modern German sculpture a renaissance is presaged. Several of the naturalistic bronze portraits such as Kolbe's delicate, lyrical Head of a Dancer and Gernard Marcks' intimate, authoritative Head of Crodel are wonderfully sensitive and superbly skilled. So are several expertly modelled full-length figures in bronze by Kolbe.

"But none of these pieces has the originality of Barlach's Head from a War Monument an extraordinary modernization of the Gothic ideal. In such originality lies the hope now entertained for the future of German sculpture. Would that the exhibition had given us more such conspicuous treasures of the spirit!"

GENERAL FAVORABLE.

Mrs. Helen Appleton Read of the Brooklyn Eagle is perhaps the most favorably inclined toward Germany among all the New York critics. She has been in Germany many times and has written most intelligently about German art. She begins her review of the exhibition:

"The Graf Zeppelin, Bremen, Einstein, Remarque, and Marlene Dietrich stir the imagination not only for what each one offers but also for their suggestion of the vital and many faceted intellectual activities that are taking place beyond the Rhine. The (American) public thinks of German art in terms of massive bronze Germanias and Brunhildes or the heavy sentimentalities of the Booklin school. This point of view is understandable since the majority of Americans formed their opinion of German art in the pre-war days when the Kaiser's bad taste was a blight on German cultural expression and when needless to say the art he favored was in the foreground.

"In pursuance of its policy to show exhibitions which shall be links in the story of modern art as well as having a concrete aesthetic interest, the present exhibition includes the fathers of the movement - Emil Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff, Kirchner, and Heckel who are now considered more in the light of pioneers than as having made a lasting, aesthetic contribution."

Mrs. Read then proceeds to describe the exhibition, pointing out that even third rate French painters are likely to be more appreciated in America than first rate Germans because of the superstition attached to the French label. She feels also as did all critics that the German sculpture was more easily understood by the American public than German painting. She emphasizes especially the amazing progressiveness of German museums in their attitude towards modern art.

Lillian Semons of the Brooklyn Times (March 22nd) observes that "the current show reveals German artists as romanticists, inasmuch as they are interested in social, philosophical and emotional values, much less than they are in style and form. There is much to be lauded in the honest and even brilliant ideas of the expressionists and the post-expressionists, that is, if one can overlook storm and strife of crude form and wild style. Ugliness in this exhibition has a fascination of its own.

"The show provokes many and mixed feelings, but you can't deny that it leaves you with a limp and worn feeling, even while it arouses your curses and your huzzahs."

James J. Sweeney who has contributed valuable criticisms to the Chicago Evening Post, the New York Times and other periodicals makes an important point when he observes that "the present exhibition represents the most individual and probably the most valuable presentation the Museum has yet made. The two other outstanding selections - the inaugural exhibition of Seurat, Cézanne, Gauguin and van Gogh, and last fall's Daumier-Corot show - were more in the nature of comfortable, luxurious retrospects. Controversy could only hinge on degrees of approval but here an unfamiliar field is disclosed; and by the very fact of the exhibition a critical judgment is asserted and critical valuations are affixed, neither of which has yet won the acceptance of the mode."

Beckmann. James J. Sweeney in the Chicago Evening Post considers Beckmann "the most commanding figure. His work is not so well known in America as that of Klee, Grosz or Kokoschka but in the eight pieces hung here the power and fertility evidenced places him definitely in the front rank of contemporary painters. In such a work as the Family Picture of 1922 we see the compositional genius displayed almost to virtuosity in the seemingly inexhaustible echoes, re-echoes and variations of his plastic theme. He exploits constructive distortion to the verge of caricature, and is Teuton par excellence in his obsession with bending every line, contour and volume of his representational content to fit his formal demands."

Mr. Sweeney admires Beckmann especially but also praises Dix's Portrait of the Artist's Parents from the Cologne Museum, and his Doctor Meyer Hermann. He considers Klee's Ma

from the Bernard Koehler Collection related to coptic textiles and one of the best Klees ever shown in New York. Of all the sculpture he considers Belling's abstract sculpture (1923) "definitely the highest point."

Mr. Sweeney then compares the Family Picture to paintings of Grunewald, Bosch and Bruegel and adds that "In his Portrait of an Old Actress Beckmann achieves a tour de force in the employment of broad color areas and in his large Balloon Acrobats a masterly treatment of volumes."

Many out of town newspaper critics wrote on the exhibition, including the Boston Herald, Buffalo News, Detroit Free Press, Christian Science Monitor, Springfield Republican, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Seattle Post, Cincinnati Enquirer, and many smaller papers. Of special interest are the comments of Milton S. Fox, critic of the Cleveland Sunday News:

"The Museum of Modern Art has apparently scored the greatest art scoop (sensation) in recent years with its big show of contemporary German painting and sculpture. The Germans might almost as well have been painting in an airtight box up in the attic for all we Americans have been able to see of it in this country, yet Kokoschka is ranked by many as only slightly lower than Picasso among the world's greatest but it is around Klee that most controversy rages."

In the art periodicals more cautious attitude was observed on the part of critics who were neither so enthusiastic nor so antagonistic as in the daily press. In The Arts, Lloyd Goodrich writes:

"The German paintings shown at the Museum of Modern Art form a boisterous, lively collection. The chief criticism that could be made of the show was that it was over historical. Many of the artists seemingly having been selected for the parts they played in past movements rather than for their intrinsic value. For example, the paintings of the early expressionists dating back in many cases ten or twenty years ago, occupied an amount of space out of proportion to their present day position or their merit. These early expressionists concerned themselves too little with form, painting great shouting canvases with bold outlines and primary color - works overflowing with energy but entirely without depth or substance. They have little enduring aesthetic value and belong today distinctly in the past of 'old fashioned modernism.'"

"As examples of this category are the Dresden Brücke group - Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Heckel, Pechstein, Nolde, Otto Müller. Twenty years ago these were the wild men of Germany corresponding to the French fauves with the difference that while Matisse, Derain and Braque have gone on developing and are still among the leaders of French art most of the Brücke have remained stationary. Such works as those of Nolde and Kirchner, whatever their value as historical documents, seem today little more than extremely childish, crude and weak paintings."

"The strength of the present showing lay chiefly in the work of younger men such as Grosz and Dix and in the few older ones such as Beckmann who have continued to develop."

"On the whole the exhibition though uneven was stimulating and a welcome change from the usual Parisian affair. One would like to see it followed by similar shows - for example, by larger representations of certain individual artists - Beckmann, Grosz and Dix to mention only three are figures in the front rank of contemporary art whose work we should like to see more often."

GROSZ.

"Grosz, a superb graphic artist, does not show to the best advantage in his paintings, which will all their mordancy are essentially colored drawings."

Dix.

"Dix was more adequately represented; the group of pictures by him stood out for their relentless realism, their piercing caricature, their microscopically fine detail, and their meticulous craftsmanship, reminiscent of Cranach or Dürer. In spite of an element of self-consciousness, Dix shows himself an artist of great intensity and force, and one of the most interesting figures in present-day painting."

Lloyd Goodrich in The Arts writes of Hofer:

"It was noticeable that the show as a whole revealed little Parisian influence. The outstanding exception was Karl Hofer, whose smooth sophistication contrasted with the more raucous native notes of the others."

Lloyd Goodrich in The Arts writes of Beckmann:

"Of all the older figures Max Beckmann who has always stayed out of groups stood up the best. Even in his wildest moments Beckmann retains something of an objective attitude. He creates a world of his own - a mad world but a compelling one. He differs from most of his contemporaries in possessing a sense of humor, clownish, grotesque, and sardonic. His forms have some of the rude vitality of the German primitives and his color, strident as it is, is more sensitive than that of almost any of his compatriots. There is more than a hint of sensationalism and exhibitionism in his work but also an undeniable power."

In Creative Art, Angela Hagen misses "the finer, aesthetic qualities in this German art" but is "compensated by its thoughtful trend, its sincere endeavor to solve with some purely aesthetic problem an intellectual, a social, a human one."

She writes of Dix:

"In the paintings of Otto Dix it is not the result of love for an object or the feeling for its value as with the old Flemish masters, but rather the outcome of cold, bitter pedantry. His analysis of character was determined by his own cold and humorless traits."

She writes of Grosz:

"George Grosz, at first sight even more satirical, is less biting than Dix and he reveals the coarse in coarse types where Dix submerges the normal in his personal bitterness."

Of Kokoschka Mrs. Hagen writes:

"Kokoschka has emerged from his earlier ecstatic expressionism to a happier but less significant style."

Of Schmidt-Rottluff:

"Schmidt-Rottluff follows the method of the Norwegian Munch, permitting mental conditions to dominate and determine actual vision. Evening on the Sea is the revelation of a silent drama."

Of Karl Hofer:

"Behind the structural simplicity of Karl Hofer's paintings we feel still the idyllic quality of his early work. The composition of Night Club reminds one of Seurat and Muzzano of Derain. He possesses a gift rare among Germans - taste."

Otto Müller:

"Otto Müller uses the Zigeunerin as Gauguin used the Polynesian."

Lloyd Goodrich in The Arts writes of Franz Marc:

"A conspicuous example of old-fashioned modernism was Franz Marc. One of the leaders of the Munich Blaue Reiter group until his death in the War, he was the typical expressionist, embodying generous but vague emotions in vague forms - exuberant, empty decorations, and conscientious abstractions with all the proper dynamic curves and angles, but without a spark of genuine plastic sense. His big Red Horses, which occupied the place of honor in the large gallery, is one of the softest and most obvious pictures of a school which produced many such paintings."

In Vanity Fair appeared a reproduction of the Head of Marlene Dietrich by Ernesto de Fiori.

In The Arts, Angela Hagen praises the sculpture section of the Exhibition:

"Both possibilities and limitations of sculpture as an art seem to wisely school and restrict the creative German mind, inclined as it is to speculation, philosophizing and abstraction. Modern German sculpture moves between Gothic and classic ideals.

"In Ernst Barlach we have the most nationalistic of German sculptors, drawings principally on Romanesque, Gothic (and related) Russian peasant sources. To be sure his art contains sufficient poignant human material to lift it above local significance. Gernard Mareks is near Barlach in Germanic qualities. The others, Kolbe, Fiori, Sintenis have less local color..... From Barlach's reticent, slow moving human beings, dwellers in an unlovely and unyielding countryside rises great and deep emotion. Barlach seems rooted in this northern country, the qualities of which he carries over into his own work..... Kolbe, for purely sculptural qualities, is more accomplished but also more superficial. In Young Girl we feel the presence of the actual model. As so often with Kolbe when he works in this more realistic style the modelling of the torso about the hips and ribs is finer than the modelling of the limbs. Arms and legs easily turn into dead weights. Fiori like Kolbe is interested in the single human figure. His interpretation is more nervous, more hesitant, more psychological, more sensitive and less monumental than Kolbe's.

"German sculpture today we feel is a contribution to the art of all time, finding its place more easily than German painting in the traditions, developing in the main stream of these traditions, contributing to this main stream the thought and aspiration peculiar to our own today."

In the catalogue to the Exhibition attention was drawn to modern art in German museums in the following paragraph:

"However much modern German art is admired or misunderstood abroad it is certainly supported publicly and privately in Germany with extraordinary generosity. Museum directors have the courage, foresight and knowledge to buy works by the most advanced artists long before public opinion forces them to do so. Some fifty German museums, as the lists in this catalogue suggest, are a most positive factor both in supporting artists and in educating the public to an understanding of their work."

An editorial in the Art News (March 21st) praises the German museums and bewails the neglect of modern art on the part of American museums, observing that while "our official neglect of contemporary achievements in the fine arts is rectified to a great extent by the constructive activities of the Museum of Modern Art and the forthcoming Whitney Museum of American Art, we are still so far behind the Germans in the matter of patronage of living artists as to be completely outdistanced. Surely there is no other country that can boast of such a record either in museums of art or in backing of local artists whose reputations are still in the making. In too many cases the American museum is a decade or two behind the band wagon because of their over-cautious policies.

"Not only are the German museums courageous enough to take the initiative and buy contemporary works but collectors, critics, publishers and scholars are equally forward in advancing the cause of modern art by their industrious buying and writings.

"Here is a page in the story of modern art that bears close scrutiny particularly in America where the need of a more intensive cultural development is an immediate necessity."

APPENDIX TO MR. BARRS COLLECTION OF NEWS. 118
PAPER CLIPPINGS FOR MUSEUM DER GEGENWART

BERLIN, National Gallery.

Loans: Dix, Baby; Kirchner, Street Scene; Kirchner, Rhine Bridge; Klee, Angler (watercolor); Klee, Twittering Machine (watercolor); Pechstein, Life Boat.

BRESLAU, Silesian Museum of Pictorial Arts.

Loans: Müller, Gipsies with a Sunflower; Müller, Village Street with Brook and two Bathers.

COLOGNE, Wallraf-Richartz Museum.

Loans: Dix, Portrait of the Artist's Parents; Hofer, Muzzano.

ESSEN, Folkwang Museum.

Loans: Beckmann, The Prodigal Son Among Swine (gouache); Beckmann, The Prodigal Son Among Courtesans (gouache); Beckmann, The Return of the Prodigal (gouache); Beckmann, The Feast of the Prodigal (gouache); Kirchner, Modern Bohemia; Marc, Red Horses; Modersohn-Becker, Self Portrait; Modersohn-Becker, Self Portrait in a Straw Hat; Nolde, Masks; Nolde, Death of Mary of Egypt; Rohlf, Prodigal Son.

HAMBURG, Art Gallery,

Loan: Marc, Mandrill.

MANHEIM, Art Gallery.

Loan: Dix, The Widow.

MUNICH, Municipal Museum.

Loan: Schrimpf, Sleeping Girls.