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My Life in The Art World

by

James Thrall Soby

Part 2

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JAMES THURBER

Of people I've known there have been few I've seen in so many widely separated places as James and Helen Thurber. Somehow if I was in New York, Paris, London or such rural places as Farmington and Canton Center, Connecticut, the Thurbers were there too, or nearby and we could get together.

I loved them both and was fascinated by Jim Thurber's ability to tell a story in almost precisely the words he would use later in writing it down for publication. I think it was this rare ability to transpose oral into written sentences which allowed him to go on creating books long after his eyesight had failed completely. Most people who have frequented literary circles know that writers usually speak haltingly or at any rate without the eloquence one might expect from reading their books. Thurber, on the other hand, used simple but impeccably chosen words, whether explaining an incident at length or making an abrupt statement, as when he assured me solemnly that making love was easy for women, "because they don't have anything to get ready."

Thurber rarely even smiled when he was making up an hilarious anecdote or commentary. This used to puzzle me until I discovered that this was true of many of his contemporaries on the New Yorker, especially the most talented of them all, E.B. White. It was emphatically not true of slightly older men like Robert

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Benchley, whose helpless guffaws at what he was saying or doing were an integral and irresistible part of his humor. But some inner compulsion or discipline made members of the Thurber-White generation tell their stories deadpan. I never knew the magazine's great editor, Harold Ross, but I am told that he tried hard to be colorless, and he may well have founded and insisted upon the quiet tradition.

One of the first times I talked at length with Jim Thurber was at a farm I had for a time in Canton Center, a small town west of Hartford. There were many people at the farm that day, and we sat around a swimming pool I had just built. Thurber didn't like either circumstance very much, and he drank quietly and got pugnacious, as sometimes happened. So he and I retired to the kitchen in the house and drank alone. Jim apologized first for the bad temper he'd been in, and then he told me how he'd learned to win any argument in his native Columbus, Ohio. First, he said, you repeat the exact words your opponent has used in his last sentence. Then you quickly add the words, "my ass." "For example," he said, "if your adversary concludes by saying, 'it's an unusually gloomy day today,' you immediately reply, 'it's an unusually gloomy day today, my ass.' Then the argument is won and you don't have to say anything else."

I've never tried out the system in Columbus, Ohio, where Jim assured me it worked without fail. But I've tried it elsewhere with good, if stunned, results. I've found it particularly

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useful if I was on the losing end of a complicated argument. I imagine the Columbus system could be classed as a dramatic exit. Thurber made an even more dramatic one when he drove out of my Canton driveway after dark with a sheared, four-inch thick maple tree clutched firmly by his bumper. The tree, waving frantic farewells on the side of his car, didn't seem to bother him at all. But it made his blessed wife nervous and I helped her remove it at the gate.

I think the second longest talk I had with James Thurber was in London. He had recently had an exhibition of his New Yorker drawings there. The show had been highly praised and had sold well. Both facts made him indignant, and he kept muttering that he was a writer, not a draftsman. I tried to assuage his irritation by telling him that some of the best art critics in England had liked his show. I also pointed out that among the buyers was the movie star, Charles Laughton whom I'd known for some years through the late Iris Barry at the Museum. From the London show Laughton had bought not one but three drawings. I told Jim this and I added that Laughton was not only at times an almost pathologically intense actor but was also a devout collector of art, so devout in fact that he once broke into uncontrollable sobs as we stood in front of Renoir's marvelous Judgment of Paris in his Hollywood house. But Jim was not to be placated. "Of course," he said, "because Laughton is a Britisher, and the English know even less about art than the

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Americans. Why, those drawings of mine are nothing. I used to throw them in the wastebasket at the New Yorker office and Andy (E.B.) White would fish them out when I wasn't looking."

We had a few more drinks, and Thurber became even more upset. "For God's sake," he said, "why don't these silly Britishers read what I write?" There was little use pointing out that his books had long been admired in England, where there was a more ample precedent for writers who were at the same time gifted graphic artists. In any case, I should have known by then that there were times when it was possible to argue profitably with James Thurber but there were more times when not. My affection for him always survived both states of mind undamaged.

One of the more memorable "when-not" times occurred one summer on Martha's Vineyard, shortly before America fell into World War II. My wife and I had rented a house at Edgartown, and the Thurbers had a house up toward the other end of the island. The John Mason Browns were also there for part of the summer, and we six got together for dinner one evening at my house. I suppose it was because Jim had two ready-made targets at hand that he got off on the subject of writers with three names. "You can't be a writer and have three names," said Thurber firmly. As I remember it, John and I tried to fend off the attack by mentioning some writers - from George Bernard Shaw down to Robert Penn Warren - who seemed to have survived

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the onus of using their middle names. "They were all lousy," said Jim implacably. He must have been well on his way to triumph in the argument, because John and I found ourselves in apologetic retreat. John said he had always wanted to drop the "Mason" from his name but that, after all, it wasn't fair to book yourself for lecture tours under the simple name of a famous Abolitionist.

My own justification for hanging on to "Thrall" was both feebler and more personal. I tried to explain that I had always felt defensive about my great-uncle, Will Thrall, who, on a farm in East Granby, Connecticut, had wanted desperately to be a poet. During the later 19th century this ambition was possible and could even be fruitful if you lived in the country in Massachusetts but not if you lived in such a place in Connecticut.

At any rate, Will Thrall in despair shot himself through the head and died instantly. This lack of stamina on his part might have been forgiven by his immediate family, including my grandmother Hazlewood, but the blunt truth is that the bullet went on through Will Thrall's head and mortally wounded the family cow. At the age of 101 my grandmother, her mentality and memory undimmed, was still carrying on about her brother's clumsiness with firearms. And long before she had reached that awesome age, she had told me over and over again that if I wanted to be a poet, as I sometimes threatened, I should read Longfellow and Percy Bysshe Shelley, not Will Thrall. I conceded that she was

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half right, but I still felt sorry for her brother, who had tried so hard and aimed so badly.

I imagine that Jim Thurber by then had won the dispute, because John and I began to say how difficult it was to drop a name after you'd used it repeatedly. I remember that one of us mentioned the case of the distinguished poet, William Carlos Williams, who once thought he could get along perfectly well as just Carlos Williams, but who had met fierce opposition from his publishers and given up the struggle. In any case, the prejudice against any three-name writer is unquenchable. Fairly recdntly Lilliam Hellman, in her spellbinding autobiogrphy, "An Unfinished Woman, declared unequivocally: "Even when I was young, when we didn't know the good word square, we knew PEN was square, and for writers with three names." Since I have a secret and rather sultry passion for Miss Hellman, whom I've never met, I was cut to the quick, remembering that I'd belonged to the association known as PEN for about thirty years, though I've never been to a meeting and find the association's reports ~~of an~~ incredibly dreary~~ness~~. Anyway, I will admit that James Branch Cabell is about the spongiest novelist our country and century have produced. But I still think Stephen Vincent Benet's John Brown's Body is a better narrative poem than Archibald MacLeish's Conquistador, though I'm on slippery ground in that I can't bear to re-read either book. Besides, even two names are no longer fashionable unless one of them is a nickname. This is especially true of

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painters. "My name is Larry Rivers," that painter once shouted on a TV quiz program, "and not Lawrence Rivers." I think Andy Warhol would turn paler than he usually is if someone addressed him as Andrew Warhol. In short, I'll go on using Will Thrall's name because I like to see it where he so feverishly wanted it - in print.

Later in the summer on Martha's Vineyard, Jim Thurber had what amounted to a nervous breakdown, a delayed reaction from a grueling and unsuccessful operation on his eyes which he'd had in New York the previous spring. He became extremely melancholy and drinking, even under his usual strict control, made things worse. He developed a strange fixation about being on an island, and it did no good for his many friends to assure him that we could get him over to the mainland any time he wanted by speedboat or plane. For several days the only time I saw him smile was when I relayed to him a story Henry Beetle Hough, the talented editor of the Martha's Vineyard Gazette, had told me. This was wartime, remember, and a local child in grammar school had been asked to give her opinion of Mussolini. "Mussolini," the girl wrote, "is an off-islander." If you had been born and grown up on the Vineyard, you couldn't be much more of a stinker than that, naturally.

I worried about Jim Thurber and drove over to see him as often as I could. I was pleased by his friendship and liked to think that it wasn't entirely based on the fact that I was the only one he trusted to guide him down his cottage's steep steps with-

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out mishap, he being a very tall man. His nervous state got worse and worse and finally a woman doctor discovered that he was suffering from a serious vitamin deficiency and gave him injections which helped enormously. He still couldn't throw off his uneasiness about being stuck on an island. I reminded him once that the British are devoted to their island, come hell or high water. "The British are devoted to their island, come hell or high water, my ass." said James Thurber. I gave up, and now I try not to argue with oracles or women. I never again argued with my cherished friend from Columbus, Ohio.

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SALVADOR DALI

It seems to me unbeliveable that of the contemporary artists whose exhibitions I directed at the Museum of Modern Art the easiest to work with was the first - Salvador Dali. I wasn't yet on the staff of the Museum when I did his show in 1941 and I knew little about the complicated mechanics of arranging a show there. I'd known Dali personally since the very early 1930s and I'd seen him again often when he came to New York in 1934. I knew that Dali, like most Catalans, was easily enraged. Indeed, in 1941, the memory of his fracas with Bonwit Teller two years before was still fresh in mind. There's been so much confusion about the latter incident that it may be worth reviewing here.

In 1939 Dali had been commissioned by Bonwit to design two of their window displays on Fifth Avenue, the themes to be "Night" and "Day." It was understood that he was to be free of censorship and have absolute control of the designs and materials used. I must say that in promising Dali total control the heads of Bonwit Teller must have been naive, since the artist had been known everywhere for his capacity to shock. Naive or not, the Bonwit people were horrified to discover that the main element in one of Dali's windows consisted of a large, fur-lined bathtub in which a dozen or more live blacksnakes squirmed and writhed and spilled over the tub's edges. Naturally important window displays were supposed to halt passersby in envious pleasure; the snakes drove them away in screaming horror.

Bonwit removed the tub and its reptiles as soon as possible and Dali, inspecting his handiwork later in the day, became so angry that he crashed through the large plate-glass window and was nearly decapitated by a falling sheet of glass. It's often been said that he had alerted the press before making his assult but I think his rage made him too impatient to summon witnesses and too innocent, than to know how.

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decapitated by ~~a falling section of~~ the fattening glass.

That afternoon or evening Dali was taken off to jail for trespassing and damaging private property. He was bailed out of jail by his New York dealer, Julien Levy, but for days he sputtered with rage at Bonwit Teller's colossal ignorance of art. Personally I think he had every right to be angry. His action was widely written off as another publicity stunt, but I tend to think that he was defending the right of artists not to have their work tampered with, when it had been agreed ~~on both sides~~ that this would not happen. It's also only fair to remember that in 1939 Dali was not yet the desperate show-off he had become in recent years. He was on the way to it but still restrained in some degree by the professional esteem ~~which~~ in he ~~held~~ was enjoyed then and soon lost completely.

Anyway, I was nervous at the thought of doing a large, retrospective exhibition of Dali's work in the Museum of Modern Art. I respected that institution greatly. But I had worked there only once and very briefly, doing some research on Daumier, an artist I admired ~~greatly~~, at the request of Alfred Barr, whom I also admired ~~greatly~~. I'd seen every exhibition held at the Museum since it opened its doors in 1929 and I knew its standards of installation were extremely high. I also knew that I'd had little experience at hanging pictures in a museum, since during my ten years at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford Chick Austin had always done the installations, while I worked on catalogs and research.

I remember that I asked Monroe Wheeler, then the Museum's Director of Exhibitions and Publications, whether I should ask Dali himself for his ideas on installation, ~~and~~ Monroe answered in obvious

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apprehension that it might be worth a <u>cautious</u> try. So I did ask Dali and was astonished by his reply. "Non, non, non," he said in his guttaral French. "C'est vous qui dirige l'exposition. Jevous verrai a la vernissage." He was true to his word. Not once while the exhibition was being put up on the walls of the Museum did he appear and not once did he object to the installation after he'd seen it on opening night. I often thought of this in later years when I was doing other exhibitions by other artists and it was sometimes difficult to keep them from underfoot at all hours of the day and night.

The truth is, I think, that in hi youth Salvador Dali was earnest, immensely gifted and full of inventive ideas. He was never modest, God knows, but his meglamania had real backing and his gestures, if always flamboyant, were seldom idle. His conversation was vivid rather than uncontrolled and incessantly boastful. I remember once at breakfast in my Farmington house around 1934, he explained to me why he was sure that Christopher Columbus had been a paranoiac and a Catalan paranoiac at that. I asked why sleepily and Dali said, "It's very simple. Being a paranoiac he had to believe that the world was round because then he could circle it forever and keep ahead of his pursuers. If he believed the world was flat, then obviously his assassins would corner him at some point." I found the theory intriguing but said I'd always assumed Columbus has been Italian. "Impossible, impossible," said Dali. The Italians dream of love and music. It is only the Catalans like Columbus and myself who have mad and impossible dreams." I gave up and went upstairs to take a very cold shower. I've never been much good at breakfast-table conversations and I was especially tired because I'd had to pile logs around Dali's bed before he would go to sleep. "J'ai une folie de bois," he

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SALVADOR DALI

It was a curious weekend in Farmington with the Dalis and Edward James, a talented Britisher whose life blood was litigation and who will probably sue me for what I'm writing here. At Gala Dali's insistence, all three of them spent most of their time crawling around the lawn in search of four-leaf clovers, in whose protective powers Gala believed implicitly.

I remember that one day I thought them bored at last with this search and took them to the Wadsworth Atheneum and then to lunch at the Hartford Club across the street. I still belong to this old and distinguished club and am fond of it. But I seem to have been in trouble there twice, neither time my fault. In the early 1930s the musical, Of Thee I Sing, with Williams Gaxton, Lois Moran and Victor Moore played the decripit Parsons theatre down the street from the Atheneum. An old friend of the Atheneum, John McAndrew, had known Lois Moran, and Chick Austin asked the three stars of the show to a party at his house. Lois Moran danced superbly in her bare feet, William Gaxton told marvelous stories about his life in the theatre, and for a long time Victor Moore was wrapped in his very real shyness. After a while he came over to me and said in a voice quite as bumbling as the one he used on stage, "This is quite a town. Last night I went into the swellest/speakeasy I've ever seen, like a palace." He had, of course, wandered into the Hartford Club, been recognized and given a drink. Since Prohibition was still in effect and I was the only member of the Atheneum's staff who belonged to the Hartford Club, I was asked the following day to tell Mr. Moore that he got a drink because one of the club members had supplied it out of his own bottle. But I never saw Victor Moore in person again, alas. He was perhaps the most endearing comedian of our time.

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With Dali I was in more conspicuous trouble with the town elders. As we walked through the door to have lunch, Dali suddenly whipped out of his pocket a Catalan Hat of Liberty and plunked it on his head. It had been a relatively ~~normal~~ tame hat to begin with but on its side Gala or someone else had embroidered a plate of friend eggs, for Dali and obsessive symbol at the moment. He wore the hat, unpreturbed, throughout lunch and then rose to make a speech. I looked around in panic at the room full of my father's friends and other dignitaries of the community and managed somehow to yank Dali back into his seat. Otherwise the town elders would have been forced to listen to a dissertation on the hidden sexual symbolism of Millet's painting, The Angelus. This was something I thought they should be spared in the middle of their ~~excellent~~ lunch. But Dali glared at me all the way home, as though Demosthenes had been stopped in mid-sentence, spitting out pebbles.

As many people know, Dali was expelled from the surrealist group or, more properly, party, in the late 1930s, since he clearly had made his peace with the Catholic Church and had become interested in money, both changes of faith being anathema to what remained of the surrealist hierarchy ~~leaders~~. Of these leaders, André Breton wrote a scalding article about his former disciple in which he transposed Dali's name into Avida Dollars, and only Paul Eluard seems to have remained on speaking terms with the painter, I assume because he was still fond of ~~his ex-wife and Dali's present wife,~~ Gala, once his wife and now Dali's, and also perhaps because Eluard was a far less dictatorial man than Breton. Still, there can be no doubt that Dali's usefulness to the surrealists was at an end and that he has long since interested only the most reactionary members of the art profession as a whole, whether artists, collectors or museum curators.

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It is a tragic fact, nevertheless, that Dali's creative span was of such short duration. It is fashionable now to say that he never was talented, and this I think completely untrue. When one thinks back on his best paintings and drawings of the later 1920s and the 1930s and on the two extraordinary films, Un Chien Andalou and L'Age d'Or which he made in 1929 and 1931 respectively with Luis Bunuel, I think no one in fairness can deny that his gifts were once first-rate and that a less scandalous artist could not have given surrealism an equivalent impetus at the time he first joined its ranks. Perhaps only revolution's raw meat could nourish him and that the broth of reaction left him weak and listless as a painter, however hard he strained for grand effect or religious profligacity. I've recounted elsewhere my last painful encounter with Dali, on the elevator at the opening of Huntington Hartford's ill-fated museum in New York. I hope for both our sakes there will be no such meeting again.

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PAVEL TCHELITCHEW

If the retrospective Dali exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1941 was the easiest for me to work on, the most difficult by far was the Tchelitchew show I did the following year. I hadn't expected it to be, since I'd known Pavel Tchelitchew for ten years, he was then living in New York City, and I could go over plans for the exhibition with him nearly every day. Perhaps that's why the exhibition was so hard to do. Pavlik, as we all called him, was easy to work with on the show when we were alone. But usually there were numerous other friends in his apartment, from Gypsy Rose Lee to Lincoln Kirstein and Cecil Beaton. Sometimes these friends were engrossed in their own problems, as when Miss Lee, a very bright and engaging woman, pondered aloud the declining state of her breasts. More often, however, they were intent on offering me advice on what to put in the show and how to hang it. Since I've almost never been able to work on an exhibition or a catalog with someone looking over my shoulder, I finally had to ask Pavlik to please clear the premises until we had the show planned.

Pavlik agreed. We settled down to work and, on my part, to helpless fits of laughter. Among his other virtues and talents, Pavlik was a clown of a very high order, with an endless repertory of stories. There are two stories in particular which I'll never forget. The first was about Pavlik's ex-

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perience in the White Russian Army. His career as a soldier was extremely brief, since his very first day he took off all his clothes, sat in the middle of a snow bank and kept bellowing up at his captain's window, "please send out some ice; it's terribly warm today." I've never experienced a Russian winter, but I can understand why the captian thought Pavlik better suited to civilian life.

I heard the second story when I drove out to see Pavlik one autumn in a house in Weston, Connecticut which Alice De Lamar had lent him. It was, I think, the first New England autumn Pavlik had seen and he was so entranced by the brilliant color of the trees that he lined his studio with their leaves and painted a number of pictures of children playing in the October fields.

We sat down to a marvelous lunch prepared by Miss De Lamar's large, black cook. I told Pavlik how expert I thought the cook was. "Yes,"he said, "but she's so monotonous. If you scare or pinch a white girl she turns pale. If you embarrass her, she turns red. If you threaten her, she turns green. But this cook is always the same color. It's very troubling." I've liked and respected Negroes all my life. Nevertheless, I'm sure this story will bring the Black Panthers to my doorstep at dawn.

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Now back to Pavlik's show. The chief difficulty was that he wanted the gallery walls painted in complicated colors which only he knew how to mix and which he decided to change every few days. Charlie Fischer, the Museum's able head painter, put up with this for a week and then said he was leaving the Museum for good. Pavlik calmed Charlie down with the gift of a fine drawing and peace reigned for a short time. Pavlik next insulted Carlos Dyer, now a painter and sculptor, but then on the Museum's staff as Monroe Wheeler's assistant. I somehow made an uneasy peace between the two men, and we got the show up on time; I'll never know how.

Presently the book to accompany the show was ready. I'd written it during the summer in Pomona, New York, in a house I'd rented from the actor, Burgess Meredith. It was a comfortable Colonial farm-house but it sizzled in the sun of a very hot summer. I thought it might be cooler writing the book out in the garden. The relief was temporary. I kept hearing a zinging sound in the trees overhead and the sound of bullets being fired. It took me some fifteen seconds to figure out that the sons of our next-door neighbor, Waldo Peirce, were shooting a 22 rifle down the hill toward our house. I beat a hasty retreat into the scorching living room.

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There was a swimming pool on Meredith's place with tiles designed by Henry Varnum Poor, the neighbor I liked most. At that time, Meredith was married to Paulette Goddard, who was living in the guest house across the road. She asked me if she could go skinny-dipping in the pool at night and naturally I said yes, though I couldn't see why she had to choose such a darkling hour.

The summer reached a miserable climax when Pavlik discovered that in the catalog for his show I'd said he'd been influenced by the color in the paintings of Matta, his junior by some years. He asked me to change the offending message, and I refused. I like to think that I did so not out of pride but because I really believe that Matta was for a time a sort of Typhoid Mary among artists in New York and not even artists older than he were immune to the virus of his color, particularly if they were his friends, as Tchelitchew was.

Even so I've always felt that the Tchelitchew catalog wasn't as good as it should have been. I blame this fact on lack of time (I was commuting to New York every day to look after the Armed Services Program), on the intense heat in Pomona, on my worries about my young son being isolated on a farm away from children his age. I suppose I blame it, too, on the gunplay from Waldo Peirce's offspring next door. It was a nervous summer all around. I was very glad when it was over.

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Pavel Tchelitchew and I remained friends until his death, though I'm sure he wrote terrible things about me in letters to other friends, just as he wrote me about them. I've scores and scores of his letters filed away, as have all those who knew him. Perhaps one day these letters will be edited and published. They may be, that is, if someone can be found who can follow his spidery handwriting. He always wrote up and down the page and back up again and around the margins in every direction. It would be worth the editor's effort, for Pavlik was a brilliantly nervous man, with a wit as sharp as a razor blade or a viper's tooth, depending on his mood. He was, I think, one of the best draftsmen of our age and some but not all of his paintings were very fine. He wanted desparately to be the Matisse or Picasso of his generation. He never quite made it and so, as Lincoln Kirstein once wrote me, "he died of rage."

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CHAPTER 14

THE ARMED SERVICES PROGRAM

Throughout the week after Pearl Harbor, I brooded day and night as to what conceivably I might do to be of some use in the war effort. During that week John E. "Dick" Abbott, then Executive Vice President of the Museum of Modern Art, called several times on the phone. He told me the Museum was deluged with requests for help in art matters by the Armed Services and could I do anything to help. I didn't see quite what help I or any other art critic could be in time of war, but he explained that the millions of soldiers, sailors and Marines being recruited naturally included a large number of artists and craftsmen for whom baseball and other sports were no answer to the problem of recreation. This made sense to me, and I told Dick Abbott that I'd try to move to New York and do whatever work needed to be done. He and I formed something called The Armed Services Program, and by mid-January, 1942, I was at work in the Museum in what certainly must have been the smallest office ever inhabited by a grown, human male.

Within a very short time, the Army's Special Services Division had set up its own art project. It was under the direction of Lieutenant (later Captain) John J. Sackas, who had been a soldier and an artist all his grown life. He and I worked together long hours every time he could get to New York or I could go to Washington, and we assembled a considerable store of artists' materials and art books, which were distributed to Army

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camps throughout the country.

It was an exhausting job, made more so by the fact that I felt obliged to entertain members of the Armed Services in my apartment whenever possible. At these small parties, the soldiers usually and the sailors always behaved well. But the Marines thought 4 A.M a proper closing time for a private bar. This made things a little difficult in that Stephen C. Clark, then Chairman of our Museum's Board of Trustees, always walked to his office on Broadway at dawn or soon thereafter, and would phone me at about 8:30 A.M. to say he'd meet me at the Museum in half an hour. I wasn't always on time for these appointments with my over-all boss, and I never got over being astonished at the number of people, presumably insane, who were out on the streets at that hour.

Mr. Clark entertained military personnel in a much more lavish way at his own house, though I think Mrs. Clark's enthusiasm for this kind of patriotism waned a little when a soldier accidentally set fire to a handsom Renoir painting in the Clarks' living room. Thereafter several parties were held in the Museum's garden. The garden party I remember most clearly was held in the evening, and Miss Gracie Fields sang for the troops, many of them her countrymen and assigned to various tasks by the British Embassy in New York. I remember that in the middle of one of her most famous songs, Miss Fields stopped abruptly, cast a baleful look at the life-size, nude bronze of St. John

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the Baptist, by Rodin, and shouted out "Such a brash young man." She then went on with her song.

In retrospect I think the most useful function of the Armed Services Program was that it existed and was sometimes able to intervene cautiously when artists in uniform were being treated badly because of their supposedly useless professions in civil life. I remember that one of the best Black painters had been assigned to picking up cigarette butts night and day by his Colonel from the Deep South, and that we were able finally to have him assigned to another camp.

Other soldiers seemed to have a built-in immunity to military authority and rank. Such a one was Private Lincoln Kirstein. He and I were assembling for the Museum an exhibition entitled American Battle Painting. The show began with paintings of the Revolution and ended with works relating to the First World War; it was held in the autumn of 1944. Lincoln was doing most of the research late at night in the Special Services office at an Army Camp near Washington, where he was stationed. One day a dejected young lieutenant arrived at my office, and asked me if I could get back the key to the office from Private Kirstein, who had borrowed it weeks before. "But Kirstein is a Private and you're a Lieutenant," I said. "Can't you make him return the key?" "I don't think so," said the Lieutenant. I assume that Lincoln turned the key in when he was sent overseas or when he was good and ready, whichever event took place first.

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In February and March, 1943, I was asked to organize an exhibition entitled The Arts in Therapy, designed to show the use of various arts and crafts in the rehabilitation of wounded servicemen. The show was at first restricted to what is known as occupational therapy, a subject in which Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of the founders of the Museum, was deeply interested (she had worked actively to help the American Occupational Therapy Association, run in New York by friends of hers). After a month or so, however, it became apparent that occupational therapy stood in almost total opposition to the theories, aims and practices of a newer group, called psychotherapists, which had found the art of troubled patients, children and adults extremely useful in diagnosis and cure.

I thought that since there were two sides to the therapeutic coin, we should in fairness try to illustrate both in our exhibition. But I knew how deeply Mrs. Rockefeller was committed to the occupational therapists and I wasn't at all sure how she would like the idea of exhibiting their work with that of a rival faction. I asked her for tea in the Museum's garden, and began to explain that I proposed to give gallery space to the psychotherapists as well as to her friends in the Occupational Therapy Association. I could tell from the expression on her face that she disapproved completely of my proposal, and I listened carefully to her objections. Then suddenly she broke into one of her magic grins and said: "Young man, I think we understand each other perfectly, because you haven't heard

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a word I've said." We both knew this wasn't true. And we both knew this was her polite way of telling me to go ahead with my dual plans, whatever her opinion. I should have been prepared for this incredible tolerance, since at one point she'd given the Museum a fund for acquisitions, "to be used to purchase paintings which Mrs. Rockefeller does not like." She was a very great lady indeed.

As a start in organizing the psychotherapy section, I phoned the only psychiatrist I knew at all personally. This was the late Dr. Charles Burlingame, Director of what used to be called The Hartford Retreat and later was more euphemistically called The Institute for Living. When I was working in the Wadsworth Atheneum, I'd given several lectures on art at the Institute, including one on the surrealists in which I used a slide of a Dali painting showing a woman turning into a horse. A very beautiful young woman came up to me after the lecture and asked if I could get her a photograph of the Dali. I told her I could, but on my way out the door one of the head nurses stopped me and said, "For God's sake, don't send that patient a photograph of the Dali painting. She's in this place because half the time she thinks she's a horse."

I never got up my courage to lecture at the Institute again, especially since surrealism was much on my mind at that moment, and I knew that its theories had destroyed or made ill several members of its inner circle, especially the women. But Dr. Burlingame thanked me for the talks I'd already given and, since

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we had Hartford in common, I naturally turned to him.

A week later a famous Mid-Western psychiatrist, having heard of our therapy exhibition, turned up in the Museum. At first he offered his help. But when I told him I'd already consulted Dr. Burlingame, he flew into a rage and screamed the most abusive statements I've ever heard one professional man make about another. I gave up in disgust and asked Victor D'Amico, the Museum's extremely able head of educational projects, to take over. Victor knew the psychiatric field as it related to education and the arts extremely well, he was firm and competent while all was beyond my depth, and he took over the psychotherapy section with amazing success. How he was able to manage all those swords-point temperaments, I'll never know. I'll always know how grateful I feel to him.

Before turning the psychotherapy section of our exhibition over to Victor D'Amico, I must have somehow soothed the Mid-Western psychiatrist's harsh feelings toward Hartford's Dr. Burlingame, since an article entitled "The Use of Art in Psychotherapy" by the latter appears in the special number of the Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art for February, 1943. That issue of the Bulletin also contains letters of praise from the Surgeons General of the Army and Navy and also a rather despairing attempt by me to explain the purpose and scope of the exhibition and to record the national competition held by the Museum for new designs and objects to be used in occupational therapy.

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There are also short statements by officials of the American Occupational Therapy Association and notes on the value of psychotherapy by Victor D'Amico and his two principal advisors, Dr. Edward Liss and the artist Bernard Sanders, who had worked for several years as an art instructor in the psychiatric wards of Bellevue Hospital in New York.

I assume the exhibition was of some practical help in that Mrs. Meta Cobb, Executive Secretary of the Occupational Therapy Association, told me it had been a major factor in persuading volunteers to join her as therapists. I remember no such word of praise from the psychotherapists, though all commendation should have gone to Victor D'Amico. I remember only that the Mid-Western psychiatrist, between tirades against his colleagues, gave me his professional opinion that I should be more aggressive in my thoughts and actions. This advice naturally made me unbearable to my co-workers in the Museum, I hope for only the brief time it took me to realize that I was too old to change.

I worked on the Armed Services Program until a few months after the war was over. But I was able to spend less and less time on the Program as I became more and more involved in the Museum's normal functions.

From March 17 to April 18, 1943, The Armed Services Program held an exhibition, entitled Yank Illustrates the War, in which the quality of some of the cartoons published in the Army's humorous magazine was surprizingly good for its editorial staff

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included men with long experience in civilian life. But the show which intrigued me most was called, Bali, Background for War and was directed by Margaret Mead's husband, a brilliant and highly intellectual Britisher named Gregory Bateson. Through photographs and other visual material, Bateson pointed out than any American soldier who held his hand higher than the head of a Balinese was more than likely to be stuck in the ribs with a long knife. The other practical guides to survival in the South Pacific were too complicated for me to follow, involving all sorts of exotic taboos, not easily understood by the Western mind. But I liked Bateson very much, and it was a pleasure to work with him, whether or not I always followed the gymnastics of his super-intellectual mind. And finally, John I.H. Baur, now director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, joined me in judging a competition among artists in the Armed Services. An exhibition of the winners was held in New York and elsewhere, the quality was in no way distinguished except for some drawings by Henry Varnum Poor's daughter, Anne, then in the WAACS or WAVES, I forget which. But it was a pleasure traveling around to the various Army camps with Jack Baur, long one of my favorite people in the art world.

In retrospect, I think that my greatest difficulty in trying to run the Armed Services Program was that I was frequently being asked to direct exhibitions of work by artists whose connection with the war effort was nil. I'll talk about these exhibitions at more length later: they included a large retrospective

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Tchelitchew show in the fall of 1942; an exhibition entitled Romantic Painting in America which I did in 1944 in collaboration with a cherished colleague, Dorothy C. Miller; the Museum's 15th Anniversary Exhibition, Art in Progress, for which Dorothy did the American section, I the European; a retrospective exhibition of the works of Georges Rouault from April 4-June 3, 1945, which I directed.

I think the years 1943-45 were the most exhausting I've ever experienced. I know I could never have gotten through them without the efficient and amiable help of a pretty and cheerful secretary, Mimi Catlin, now Mrs. Mortimer Levitt. She was a jewel of the finest quality and I miss her bitterly to this day.

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AND A DUTCHMAN

It's impossible for me to think back on the exciting afternoons at Peggy Guggenheim's "Art of this Century" Gallery without remembering another artist with whom I served on Peggy's admission juries. This artist was Piet Mondrian, who had left his native Holland for Paris before World War II and, when Paris was threatened by the Luftwaffe, had gone on to London, then to New York where he lived when I knew him in a small apartment on the top floor of a brownstone at 15 East 59th Street.

I had first begun to take Mondrian's art seriously in the early 1930s, when Chick Austin came back from Paris with one of the Dutch painter's pictures which he'd bought for the Wadsworth Atheneum. I think Chick was as startled by his purchase as I was, since neither of us at that point was especially interested in non-objective painting. But Chick had been impressed by his visit to Mondrian's Paris studio kept saying, "It was all very solemn and completely believable. There's something there the other abstract painters haven't got". He added: "God knows what our Art Committee (as the Atheneum's acquisitions committee was then called) will say". For once this was a rather idle remark on Chick's part, because both of us knew what the elder members of the committee would say, and they did so, with a vengeance. It was then, or soon afterwards, that the committee decided to allocate a few thousand dollars a year to Chick and to me to buy anything on the art market we wanted

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so long as the other members didn't have to look at our purchases. I can't remember precisely what we bought, though I know there were pictures by Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy and Tchelichew in the lot. I do remember that we both spent the money very quickly, before our elders had a chance to repent their folly. I also think that by giving us identical but separate funds to spend, they thought they could drive a wedge between Chick's taste and mine. If this was their stratagem, it was doomed to ~~instant~~ failure, as either of us could have told them a long time before.

It must be, however, that I did have some lingering reservations about Mondrian's importance. I know that when I attended one of my first meetings of the Museum of Modern Art's Acquisitions Committee in 1940, Alfred Barr presented a Mondrian painting for the committee's approval. I remember blurting out that the picture seemed "too antiseptic". There are few words I've uttered before or since which I regret more deeply or have thought more completely misplaced.

A year or so later I clambered up the endless stairs to Mondrian's apartment on East 59th Street. The apartment was very small, consisting of a living-room-studio, a bedroom, a bath and a kitchenette. There was almost no furniture and nearly all of it had been made by the artist himself out of orange-crates and other discards materials. But the main wall in the living-room told an unforgettable story. On it were stuck

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little cardboard squares and rectangles, painted in primary colors - black, white, red, blue and yellow. The cardboard pieces had clearly been moved about a great deal, though sometimes only a fraction of an inch, while Mondrian made up his mind slowly what the forms' eventual disposition on a painted canvas would be. The process of choice and placing suddenly seemed to me like alchemy of an intensely personal and committed kind. Rightly or wrongly I came to believe, and I've believed ever since, that Mondrian's vision had a metaphysical as well as a formal basis. I realize, of course, that alchemy is an easy subject to romanticize. Nevertheless, I ~~believe~~ think that what made Mondrian's art superior to that of his colleagues and successors is the ~~very~~ philosophical (convulsion) this art masks so completely. I think Mondrian had the kind of transcendental persuasion which Edna St. Vincent Millay tried to express in her famous poem: "Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare."

~~As a personal matter,~~ I got to know Mondrian best as we sat together on Peggy Guggenheim's admission juries for her gallery. Mondrian was not an ironic man, as Marcel Duchamp was to the core of his being, and his preferences as a juror were fairly easy to predict. He shifted uneasily in his chair whenever paintings by people who were openly or indirectly his disciples were shown. He liked very much the abstract-expressionist works of men like the then-young Jackson Pollock. I don't think for a moment that pretense of any kind was involved in

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his choices and I often wondered whether somewhere in his temperament there was a duality of emotion, though God knows it never surfaced in his mature art. And I'm forever puzzled by the fact that while the two greatest painters modern Holland has produced are almost certainly van Gogh and Mondrian, the one was psychotically savage, the other cool and restrained.

It may be that we can find equivalent extremes of emotional polarity in earlier Dutch artists such as Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Jerome Bosch: the first a master of formal juxtapositions of form; the second the inventor of a ruthless demonology. I should add that this is not the time or place, nor am I in any sense qualified, to probe the depths of Dutch artists' consciousness or their subconscious longings. Nevertheless, their bland, supposedly placid temper has a rough as well as an even side which it would take a very great art historian like the late Erwin Panofsky to clarify.

Mondrian died in February, 1944, in his 59th Street apartment. He died needlessly, as we all thought, since if he had called for help the doctors might have cured the influenza which turned into pneumonia and killed him, alone in his flat. In that year I was Director of the Painting and Sculpture Department at the Museum of Modern Art and it became my sad duty to ask Jim Sweeney, Harry Holzmann and other closer friends of Mondrian to my office to make funeral arrangements. We all thought the Museum's prestige would be of help in alerting the

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Dutch Embassy's staff to the fact that their leading contemporary painter had just died and that some gesture should be made to show that the Embassy was aware of this. As I remember it, I had a long and increasingly angry phone conversation before I was connected with an official who claimed to know how important Mondrian had been as a key figure in the evolution of contemporary design, whether in art, architecture, typography or other kinds of visual expression.

At last one of the top men at the Dutch Embassy came to the phone, assured me that he knew all about Mondrian and promised to pay tribute at the latter's funeral. He kept his word, and I wish only that he had kept his silence. He seemed to have Mondrian confused with an academic marine painter by the same or comparable name, and what he said had little to do with Piet Mondrian's extraordinary achievement. I remember that Jim Sweeney, Alfred Barr and I walked away from the funeral services disgruntled but at least relieved that the death of a major figure in the long, distinguished history of Dutch art had attracted offical notice, however misplaced.

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COLUMN IN THE SATURDAY REVIEW, 1946-57

One evening in 1946, I was sitting in the apartment of two of my favorite friends, John Mason Brown and his charming wife, Cassie. Suddenly John turned to me, and asked me whether I'd like to do a column on art for the Saturday Review, the magazine of which he was one of the most influential editors. I said I'd like to try, but that I couldn't possibly turn out a column each week, since I was still acting as chairman of the Museum of Modern Art's Painting and Sculpture Department and very much involved with other chores for that Museum. John told me that he would discuss the matter with the Saturday Review's editor in chief, Norman Cousins, but that he was sure I could work at my own pace, the magazine being eager to cover fields other than literature and music. He promised me a free hand in choosing the artists I felt like writing about, and he and Norman Cousins stuck to this agreement during the eleven years I worked for them.

There were only two drawbacks to my new job. The Saturday Review in those days was printed on soft stock, so that I usually had to work without accompanying illustrations or with rather fuzzy ones. I got used to this limitation fairly quickly, but the second drawback took me much longer to overcome. The proof readers on the magazine staff were primarily literary people, and the correct spelling of artists' names eluded them. I remember, for example, that every time I mentioned the late

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Paul Klee, his name came out in the SR as "Paul Keel," a circumstance which made me feel more than a little silly in that I'd just written for Curt Valentin an entire book on Klee's prints (the book was later republished by the Museum of Modern Art and I was ready with a large bomb to destroy the Museum's building if Klee's name was even once transposed into a boatbuilder's word for the bottom of a ship. It wasn't, naturally.)

Once I got used to the column's fixed length, I enjoyed writing it, and I was greatly cheered by the approval of the dean of the American art world, the late Paul Sachs, who most kindly wrote a foreword for the collected pieces when the University of Oklahoma Press published them in 1957 in a book called Modern Art and the New Past. I'd chosen the title to point up the immense re-evaluation of previous artists which our century's attainments in painting and sculpture had brought about.

I hope the opening chapter in my Oklahoma University Press book of my pieces for the Saturday Review will make my meaning obvious. I wrote: "Whatever may be posterity's verdict on the art created during the first half of our century, there can be no doubt that the period has been extraordinarily rich in reappraisal of the artistic achievements of the past. Our score in this regard is staggering. When one considers the vast amount of material now considered to be of esthetic, as well as ethnographic, value (the tribal sculpture of Africa and the South Pacific, for instance), when one remembers how many painters are today

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given top rank instead of their once negligible place, then it becomes clear that the twentieth century has effected a profound and successful revolution in ways of seeing. Indeed, one of the reasons why some people find modern art difficult, is that they apply to it standards of taste which in many cases art historians, no less than living artists, have drastically revised. And the truth is that historians and practising artists are usually allies, if somewhat unaware, in a common quest."

I went on to mention what still seems to me the most glaring error in earlier art-historical research. I'm referring to the fact that Georges de la Tour of Lorraine was for so long confused with a minor and rather slick predecessor of the previous century, Quentin de la Tour. It's hard to understand how the mistake could have been made, since the two artists' styles have almost nothing in common. Today Georges de la Tour ranks with Poussin and Claude as one of the three giants of French 17th century art, whereas Quentin's place in Rococo painting seems more flimsy each year. Perhaps it took the advent of cubism to make us understand how important and original Georges de la Tour's angular elisions were. Nevertheless, an art historian made the discovery first. This man was Herman Voss, a German whose brilliant deduction about Georges de la Tour was spoiled by the fact that he later became one of the principal agents in Hitler's seizure and occasional purchase of capital works of art.

An almost equivalent blunder on the part of earlier art

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historians was that they relegated Gruenwald to a secondary place in German art for a very long time. In this case, however, modern artists and critics saw Gruenwald's virtues almost simultaneously. The way the former did so should be a lesson to those who put all their faith in the volumes of scholars. A book of plates of Gruenwald's altarpiece at Colmar appeared in a bookshop window on the Boulevard St. Germain, and suddenly a number of artists from Picasso down to the then-young Matta were afire with an enthusiasm which hasn't yet died down. I think that Albrecht Dürer will never again stand alone at the peak of his period's art in Germany. Now he must share the honors with Gruenwald, the one a magnificent colorist, as the ~~other~~ former was a great draftsman. This fact convinces me that an intelligent artist can contribute quite as much to art's changing stream as the most eminent compiler of encyclopedias. In our time, Picasso has spread Gruenwald's fame quite as widely as Erwin Panofsky has spread that of Dürer by his superb monograph.

The remainder of the Oklahoma University Press' collection of my Saturdat Review articles dealt with 19th and 20th century artists whom I particularly admired, including several photographers. None of the articles was about artists I didn't like because, as I once explained to Geoffrey Hellman of the New Yorker, art criticism for me has always been an art of affection. I understand, of course, that someone must help the public separate good art from bad. But this is a task which has

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never interested me in the slightest, my theory being that talented painters and sculptors need praise far more than bad artists need blame. Perhaps this is defaulting on the critic's basic responsibility. If so, I plead guilty. I probably wouldn't feel the same way if I were writing about the performing arts, where people need guidance before spending their money for tickets. But painting and sculpture are a more private matter, and I think people should make up their own minds what is or isn't worth their attention. We've all made fun of the old statement about art - "I know what I like." I'm not sure it's as idle a phrase as "I like what someone tells me to like." And I don't think the latter is often a lasting experience. There is, after all, no way to learn one's true emotions about art except by staring at it constantly until Miss Gertrude Stein's bell rings in the presence of genius. ~~Or until one's personal computer becomes and stays silent~~.

Once in a while I now pick up a copy of Modern Art and the New Past and look at a few pages warily, as critics often do when confronted with an article written long ago. Many of the pieces I'd like to re-write. But I don't think I would change much the pieces on Ingres ~~and~~ or on Alfred Bruyas, the extraordinary man who was the patron of artists as different in temperament and approach as Delacroix and Courbet. Bruyas' superb collection is now in the Fabre Museum at Montellier. The collection is at last attracting public attention, though for years it

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was empty of visitors, and no catalog or photographs were available in the Fabre Museum itself. During that long time, however, two Courbet paintings which M. Bruyas had bought from the artist helped keep the collection's fame from total obscurity. The first was called The Bathers, and its nude ladies were so mammoth that they inspired the Empress Eugenie to inquire if one of Courbet's bathers was another Percheronne, like the ones she had just seen in one of Rosa Bonheur's pictures of horses. The Empress approved enough to make her forego a wifely blush. The second Bruyas Courbet is the famous Bonjour M. Courbet which shows the artist being met on the road outside Montpellier by Bruyas and a servant. This is surely one of the masterworks of the entire 19th century, and its uncanny luminosity dominated the exhibition in Paris of the greatest works of that century in France which the authorities in Paris had been able to assemble in 19 .

I'm glad I had sense enough to write in my column articles of appreciation of Francis Bacon, Balthus and Giacometti, who seem to me more and more secure as the giants of the generation which followed that of Picasso and Matisse. I would gamble on them and on Miró to hold their exalted place as the stars of their period in art, a period which began around 1920 for Miró and Giacometti, slightly later for the much younger Francis Bacon I would gamble, that is, if gambling were not a sin of which I have a deep horror, not inherited that I know of, but anyway

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deeply rooted. I don't know why this is so, though I know it applied to gambling for money rather than on works of art, on almost none of which I've ever made cash gains.

From the very beginning, I wanted to write in my column for the Saturday Review occasional pieces about photographers. However outstanding they are, photographers are usually written about in journals for other photographers or in infrequent museum monographs. Since the Museum of Modern Art had insisted since it opened in 1929 that photography was a valid art medium, I became more and more interested in writing about the subject. The Director of Museum's Department of Photography was Beaumont Newhall, whose scholarship and high standards of taste were inspirational. I worked with Beaumont on his photography Committee from the day I joined the staff. After he went off to the war, I worked with his wife, Nancy, whose large exhibition of Paul Strand's photographs remains to this day the finest one-man exhibition of a photographer's work I've ever seen. I wrote about it for the Saturday Review.

I'd long been interested in photography's possibilities and as early as 1933, through Lincoln Kirstein's good offices, I was able to take private technical instruction from Walker Evans, whose importance becomes larger every year. Walker was a perfectionist to the core, and I always wonder how he escaped insanity when he and I were working together developing negatives in a dark-room I had in my Farmington garage. Walker then made

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large contact prints, and the least speck of dust on a negative would drive him to distraction. I, on the other hand, persisted in smoking cigarettes and dropping ashes all over the place. The expression on Evans' face was formidable to behold when I did so. But after a while he gave up the struggle to reform me, we have remained friends all these years, and together we made some good prints, all from negatives Walker had made during the day, with me peering over his shoulder to learn how his process of selecting and placing images evolved (I never did learn, and now I know that no one can teach anyone how to be a great photographer, just as no one can teach another how to be a great painter). I've never ceased being interested in Walker Evans' work, and naturally I wrote about it for the Saturday Review, too. And quite as naturally I wrote about Alfred Stieglitz, the dean of modern American photographers, whose brilliant example can't be left out of any discussion of photography as a serious medium. I include European as well as American photographers in this statement, since Stieglitz was an international figure in his difficult and still much-underrated art. His lessons to those who followed in his wake were too numerous and varied to enumerate here. Perhaps it's enough to say he was a master in a medium which has produced surprisingly few giants in its relatively brief existence, though exceptionally gifted photographers of our own and the previous century are being discovered at frequent intervals, thanks to people like Beaumont and Nancy Newhall and the present Director of the

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Museum of Modern Art's Photography Department, John Szarkowski. There are other authorities in the field, of course, but I haven't been able to keep track of them or their work.

There is one admirable modern photographer whom I'd like to mention and whom I also wrote about in the Saturday Review. This is the Frenchman, Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose many albums of his prints have made him famous long since. His first one-man show in New York was held in 1933 at Julien Levy's gallery, and I remember vividly the excitement many of us felt at the time. Unlike his elders, especially Stieglitz and Paul Strand, Cartier-Bresson was indifferent to the problem of enriching photography's technique. He was, to put it bluntly, a wretched technician, making poor enlargements from small Leica negatives. He seemed intent only on recording scenes which caught his gifted, unorthodox eye. In recent years his prints have become much better in quality, I'm told because he no longer bothers to develop or print his pictures, but turns his negatives over to experts. In a Saturday Review piece on his work I wrote of him: "Walking the streets with a tiny Leica camera, he learned to click the shutter with phenomenally acute timing, when scenes which interested him reached their psychological climax...Thus if he photographed a child running along a wall in a game of pelota, he did not release the shutter at the instant of most gracious balance, but at the precise second when the child's straining effort and imaginative effort were so intense as to have an uncanny emotive power..."

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I went on to compare Cartier-Bresson's interest in asymmetric patterns to those of Degas, obviously inspired by Japanese prints. Cartier-Bresson corrected me sternly the next time I met him in the Museum of Modern Art. "Degas doesn't interest me at all," he said. "It's Poussin whom I adore and study." I chalked the conversation up to one more lesson in first-hand art history, though I'm not sure I believe its warning even now. For Poussin was a master of classical composition, whereas Cartier-Bresson's images abound in wry distortions and a cryptic defiance of what is generally accepted as plastic order.

After eleven years of writing the column, I thought it time for someone else to take over. I'd written all the short pieces I felt a compulsion to write, and I thought the Saturday Review needed a new viewpoint. I nevertheless felt a pang at leaving the job, and I have only the kindest feelings for Jack Cominsky, the publisher, Amy Lovemen, who was gracious to me, and naturally for John Mason Brown, a dear friend and one of the wittiest men I've ever known. All these people have passed on, alas. I think the world should mourn them all; I know that I do still. Norman Cousins, the editor, I need not mourn, thank God, since he is very much alive and flourishing, and so is the magazine he still edits ~~still~~ with flair and sensitivity.

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BRANCUSI

I'd never met Constantin Brancusi on my many visits to Paris before World War II, but after the war I went to see him in his studio on the Impasse Ronsin every time I got to the French capitol##. In good part this was because the Museum of Modern Art, like every leading museum in the world, was eager to have a retrospective Brancusi show. Brancusi had seemed the finest sculptor of the post-Rodin generation to most professionals in the art world. He had, that is if one excepts Maillol, his elder by fifteen years, as belonging among the impressionists rather than the "moderns." There was an intense rivalry among American museum directors in particular to see who could persuade Brancusi to have a show first. As things turned out, James Johnson Sweeney, then Director of the Guggenheim Museum in New York, won the race and held a large and impressive Brancusi exhibition in 1955. It must have taken a lot of doing, since Brancusi was notoriously reluctant to part with his sculptures for any length of time and indeed puttered even with his early works to the very end of his life.

The Impasse Ronsin was as its name implies a short alleyway off the Rue de Vaugirard on the Left Bank. One entered Brancusi's studio by passing through a small courtyard strewn with fragments of sculpture, most of them abandoned by Brancusi himself, a few relics of sculpture from earlier times. Brancusi always opened the studio door to visitors and stood in the doorway, half suspicious half delighted, and dressed in white from head to foot, with an absurdly small hat perched on his head. And then, when he recognized the visitor as a friend, he would break into a maniacal little jig, waving his arms and saying "come in, come in." Then he would say, "I know what you're here for. Yes, I would like to come to America. But only if I can travel like King Farouk, with concubines, servants and music and many staterooms. Otherwise I won't come. But sit down, and we will have something to eat and drink. You must be tired standing." "As for me," he added fiercely, "I never get tired. I haven't time to get tired." He thereupon danced another little jig, disappeared for a moment and came back with some cookies and a bottle of very dark liquid. I ate one of the cookies but looked at the drink Brancusi poured for several minuted before I dared take a sip. I knew that Brancusi "cooked" his own brandy over a stove in his studio. I also knew that its strength was lethal and that a few weeks

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to visitors and stood in the doorway, half suspicious, half delighted, and dressed in white from head to foot, with an absurdly small hat perched on his head. And then, when he recognized the visitor as a friend, he would break into a maniacal little jig, waving his arms and saying "come in, come in." Then he would say, "I know what you're here for. Yes, I would like to come to America. But only if I can travel like King Farouk, with concubines, servants and music and many staterooms. Otherwise I won't come. But sit down and we will have something to eat and drink. You must be tired standing." "As for me," he added fiercely, "I never get tired. I haven't time to get tired." He thereupon danced another little jig, disappeared for a moment and came back with some cookies and a bottle of very dark liquid. I ate one of the cookies but looked at the drink Brancusi poured for several minutes before I dared take a sip. I knew that Brancusi "cooked" his own brandy over a stove in his studio. I also knew that its strength was lethal. A few weeks before Brancusi had drunk too much of it, fallen helplessly into a gutter and been carried home by friends who happened to pass by.

I'm afraid Brancusi was in no mood to discuss an American exhibition of his life work the next to last time I saw him. He had recently been approached by a young American woman who wanted to write a monograph about him. He was obviously shaken by the experience. "Can you imagine a virgin from the New World writing about me?" he asked

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incredulously. I happened to know the lady in question but I saw it was useless to assure him that her chastity was not quite as complete as he seemed to think. Nothing could calm him at the moment. "She even wanted to take away with her all the photographs of my work which I've taken myself, since all other photographers are hopeless liars and distort everything." Then, to my astonishment, he added, "But I'll get all my photographs together for you to look at when you come back from your trip."

The trip he referred to was one to Italy I had planned. But the prospect of borrowing Brancusi's own photographs of his work as a basis for a Museum of Modern Art album was too exciting to postpone. Instead of going to Italy I hung around Paris and in a week or so made another appointment to see Brancusi. He had kept his word and assembled a deep pile of his photographs in chronological order. I knew they would constitute an extremely important document in that the dates of Brancusi's many versions of a given subject are often nearly impossible to determine exactly. Brancusi saw that I was pleased and, since we were friends, hurried on to disillusion me. "Of course I can't lend you the photographs even for a short time. I need them here to keep track of my progress. You see there is still so much to finish. I have no time for anything but work. And since the photographs, too, are my own, they help me decide what remains to be done or done over again." I said I understood and despite my disappointment, I really did. Indeed no one could watch

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Brancusi pull the protective cloths from his highly polished bronzes without realizing how profound an awe of the creative process had gone into their making. He had created a world entirely his own, its opposite boundaries marked by pristine shapes in marble or stone and rough-hewn columns in wood. It was the only world in which he could breathe and nothing must be allowed to disturb it.

Brancusi's loathing of other people's photographs of his work was equaled by his dislike of pedestals made by anyone but himself. Some twenty or more years before he had had a one-man exhibition at Joseph Brummer's gallery in New York. I'd seen that show and thought it handsomely installed, as Brummer's exhbitions usually were. But Brancusi was still fuming because one of the plates in the catalog showed one of his sculptures placed on a simple, low plinth. "Brummer was an exceptional man," Brancusi told me, "but he should have known better than to change the heigth of a work of mine even by an inch." I remembered his strong feelings on the subject when in 1955 Jim Sweeney was holding his retrospective Brancusi exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum and told me that the artist had repeated over and over again, "no pedestals or no show." As a result no pedestals except those made by Brancusi himself were used in the fine Guggenheim show.

Brancusi's temperament as an artist had two boundaries. For convenience they might be called North and South. His pieces in carved wood were as aggressive as the North Sea

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in a gale; his stone and metal pieces were as pristine and calm as a becalmed Meditteranean harbor. Of the words in the latter category he talked most about a small piece in polished stone. "This," he said, "is a portrait of a woman so vain that she took a mirror with her even to dinner parties. Her head is bent to catch her reflection as she eats." The thought seemed to delight him and he began again to dance one of his inexplicable little jigs. He ended up standing beside one of four versions in wood of one of his most famous projects - the Endless Column. The tallest of these columns is in metal and stands ninety-eight feet high in the Rumanian town of Targujiu, near Brancusi's birthplace. But even the smallest of the "endless columns" is a tour de force of ingenious balance which an engineer like Buckminster Fuller might well envy. They look as though they might topple and they never do; they are as strong and immovable as the version Brancusi once carved from a live poplar on the estate of a friend. They are rooted not only in a non-existent earth but in a profound philosophical conviction which nothing can sway. "You see," Brancusi said by way of explanation, "even the Pyramids end somehwere in a point. My columns need not end anywhere but can go on and on." He amplified this point in a statement to Time magazine some years ago: "I think a true form ought to suggest infinity. The surfaces ought to look as though they went on forever, as though they proceeded out from the mass into some perfect and complete existence." This is precisely what one imagined them doing as one stared

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upward at the columns in Brancusi's studio on the Impasse Ronsin.

However much I admired the endless columns, I think the strongest impression I had on my last visit to his studio was the incredibly subtle variety Brancusi was able to give his few preferred subjects - the egg, the bird, the fish, the human head. I realized that this variety had little to do with the basic material he used, whether marble, polished bronze or wood. It was managed by nearly invisible shifts in emphasis on a given form, by changes in scale which many could see but also by alterations of contour and balance which even an expert would find hard to trace or define. I came to the conclusion in the end that Brancusi was one of the last of the true mystics, a fact which his worldliness and rough humor did their best to conceal. More than any artist I've ever known he had an inner life immune to penetration by the outer world. Now he is dead. But he is alive in his sculpture to a degree beyond the reach of esthetic awareness. I think if I could have only one work of art to live with to comfort my declining years, I would choose his large marble Fish which belongs to the Museum of Modern Art but which swims free in its own otherworldly light.

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Tanguy + Marcel Duchamp Chapt.

TWO FRENCH-AMERICANS

In 1948, after living in this country for nine years, Yves Tanguy became an American citizen. Even though he had been happy during his 9 years in America it had been an anguished decision for him to make, since he was a Frenchman to the core of his being. He had been born in 1900 in the heart of Paris, at his family's apartment on the Place de la Concorde, near the Ministry of the Marine in which his father was an administrative official. The lifelong inspiration of his career as an artist had been absorbed during childhood vacations on the Brittany Coast, where he had been equally fascinated by the menhirs and dolmens standing ancient and silent on the fields and by the stones tumbling helplessly on the shore. ~~He had been happy during his nine years in America but~~, his incredibly steadfast style as a painter had been formed before he left France in 1939. He was then too old for active military service and indeed had been released from army training in youth because, like Charlie Chaplin in ~~the~~ immortal film, The Gold Rush, he had persisted in the unmilitary habit of eating his socks.

Unlike surrealism's overlord, André Breton, Tanguy had no prejudice against the American people or the language they spoke. Whereas Breton, during his wartime years in New York, insisted that no member of his group speak English, which he described as a vulgar and inaccurate tongue, Tanguy made an effort to converse with his neighbors in Woodbury, Connecticut, where he and his beautiful American wife, the painter, Kay Sage, had bought

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a small house in the village and, later on, a larger one on a farm four or five miles north of the town. I puzzle to this day, as to how the Tanguys found the farm, which obviously had been hand-made for them. Behind the house a hillside rose with ambiguous abruptness, just as space rises in many of Tanguy's paintings. One never knew really at which precise point the earth stopped and the sky began; one can never be sure in looking at many of Yves' pictures whether certain objects float in the sky or have come to rest on the ground.

Yves was fond of shooting small game on the mysterious hillside behind the house and in his living room kept highly polished rifles with telescopic sights in a rack on the wall. He took the guns often to a gunsmith neighbor for the most precise possible adjustments. After his tragic death the guns remained in the rack and I suppose Pierre Matisse and I, perhaps his closest friends in America, couldn't help looking concerned, knowing that after his death, Kay Sage Tanguy had unsuccessfully attempted suicide ~~once~~ with sleeping pills. Kay always caught us looking at the guns, no matter how stealthy we thought we had been, and once she said angrily, "I know what you're thinking and I have no intention of using those guns on myself. So stop staring at them." She was true to her word, as always. But as the months ran on and her loneliness got worse, she wrote precise notes to a few of us, put her house in its usual immaculate order and went upstairs to kill herself with a small, pearl-

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handled revolver no one of us knew she had.

I describe Tanguy's death as "tragic" because a year or so before his death of a brain hemorrhage, he had gone to get relief from the stomach ulcers from which, he said, he had suffered since youth. His tests all came out negative, including those for ulcers. When I got the good news from Kay Tanguy, I phoned Yves at once in the Boston Hospital to say how glad we all were. His reply was typical. "But this is terrible," he said. "Now I am only a malade imaginaire. What is there to live for?" Gradually he recovered from the shock of good health and then, as if in anger at fortune's caprice, his eyes suddenly blurred, and he died on the way to the Waterbury Hospital. His ashes were later intermingled with those of his wife and scattered on the waves off the Brittany coast, as both the Tanguys had requested.

In 1948, as I've said, Yves had become an American citizen. He had done so chiefly, I think, because Kay wanted him to. She had been born and raised in Albany, New York, where her father was a State Senator and a man of considerable prominence. But Kay herself had spent most of her adult life in Europe, having been married very young to a most elegant man, Prince Ranieri San Faustino. Kay always told me that she had fallen in love with her first husband because he played the piano so beautifully. I tend to think this was true, because once Ranieri played the piano for us at my house in ~~Farmington~~ New Canaan and

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Kay cried ~~softly~~ and then abruptly was angry at everyone, especially Prince Ranieri San Faustino.

Anyway, the process of becoming an American citizen was rather complicated then (even for a Frenchman). It was arranged that I should meet the two Tanguys at the Immigration Office in Waterbury at the unreasonable hour of 8:30 A.M., and be a witness as to Tanguy's general fitness for citizenship and his long residence in this country. All of us arrived promptly, only to be told by the ~~rather~~ morose official in charge that we were in the wrong office and should have been in Hartford.

I thought Yves would slump to the floor then and there. He had been up all night studying the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other key documents of American History on which he knew he would be questioned. He looked extremely haggard, and as we walked sadly out the door, he sighed and said, "Eh bien, c'est fini."

I drove back to Farmington, and kept thinking all the way home that never again would Yves be able to memorize the documents he was supposed to know by heart. Back in my former house, I decided in despair that I'd phone my lawyer and lifelong friend, Arthur Shipman, to find out whether Yves could appear at the Hartford Immigration Office soon, before he forgot all he had memorized with such difficulty. "By "soon", of course, I meant a week or two, but to my astonishment and relief, Arthur said, "See if you can get the Tanguys up here by late this afternoon, not later than 4 P.M." Yves and Kay arrived in an hour, having

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driven up on two wheels, with Yves as white as a sheet and Kay exuding confidence.

The first questions Yves was asked had to do with a physical description of himself. "What color is your hair?" the official asked. "Blue" Tanguy replied confidently, thinking he'd been asked the color of his eyes. "How tall are you?" was the next question, and Yves, to whom the relationship between metres and inches remained a dubious mystery, replied in a low voice, "Nine feet approximately." I think it was the use of the adverb "approximately" which won the day, for suddenly the official turned to me with a grin and said, "I think your friend will make a very good citizen, I'll O.K. the papers right away." So off we went to my Farmington house, where friends had gathered, and all of us except Kay, who had to drive home, got gloriously tipsy and forgot about supper until a late hour.

In 1955 the metamorphosis of Marcel Duchamp from Frenchman into American was a much less harrowing matter. Marcel had spent several years in New York during World War I, knew English perfectly, and was in any case thoroughly imperturbable and worldly-wise. This time the American witnesses were Alfred Barr and myself, the official's questions were answered quickly and accurately by Duchamp, a man of such enigmatic calm that he could have survived the Spanish Inquisition without batting an eye. I remember that Alfred, Marcel, his American wife, Teeny, and I had to wait a very long time in the Immigration Office's

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bare and gloomy quarters before our turn came. And then it was over as quickly as if Marcel had bought dessert in an automat, and we all walked away, jabbering as if nothing of importance had happened. The transfer of national allegiance can have meant little to Marcel, who had been a citizen of the world for forty years or more and to whom nationality was an accident rather than a religion.

Even so, I often wonder whether the Immigration Officials didn't know that in dealing with Marcel, they were dealing with a man of extraordinary philosophical profundity. Until the last years of his life, he lived in a state of semi-poverty and in New York during World War II supported himself mainly by selling copies of a handsomely-made valise which contained written and illustrated documents leading up to the creation of his masterwork, The Bride Stripped Nude by her Bachelors Even. This very large and heavy work had been painted on glass. The glass had been cracked years ago while ~~in transit to~~ being returned from a show at the Brooklyn Museum (1926). Marcel never wavered in his conviction that the resultant cracks had greatly embellished the panel as a work of art. Nevertheless, I was shaking with nerves when I borrowed The Big Glass, as it is commonly called, for the Museum of Modern Art's 15th Anniversary Exhibition, entitled Art in Progress, in 1944.

I phoned Marcel on the morning we were to move the picture into its allotted place in the Museum galleries, and asked him if he could please come over and supervise the installation of

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his work. He came at once and sat calmly in a chair smoking his pipe, while the excellent Museum workmen moved the piece into place with dollies and slings. I remember that I was dripping with sweat, thinking that the first accident might have been helpful according to surrealist thinking, but that a second one would be a disaster. As the slings lifted the Big Glass off its dollies, I heard Marcel grunt quietly and I thought, "Oh My God, something's happened." My eyes were closed tight but I clutched Marcel's arm and managed to say "What's the matter?" "Nothing," he answered firmly, "I thought for a second it might drop on the workman's foot. It's very heavy you know, and might have broken his toes." All I could say in reply, and I said it more loudly than I had before or have done since, was "Jesus Christ, is that all?"

I waited until The Big Glass was safely attached to the wall, waved goodbye to Marcel and went down the street to the nearest bar. I knew the bartender and he promptly asked, "What's the matter with you? You look as if you'd just been shot." I've always had a nervous system as unreliable as Leon Errol's trick knee, and it goes out from under me at unpredictable times. I kept erect only by clutching the bar-rail, and managed to mutter through cotton-dry lips, "I have been shot. But only with blanks, thank God."

I had other memorable meetings with Duchamp, whom I admired as one of the central figures in the development of modern art and liked personally very much. I think my most vivid

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memories of him were of the days we were fellow-jurors of admission on the shows of younger artists held at Peggy Guggenheim's "Art of This Century" Gallery on West 57th Street. As usually happens on juries, the members sneaked glances at each other to try to discover what their fellows were thinking. With Marcel it was an uphill, if not impossible, subterfuge. To this day I've no distinct impression as to Marcel's taste and preferences, except that he tended to like pictures which were crudely but convincingly executed - a fact that helps explain his early championship of the American "primitive", Louis Eilshemius. Quite often while we were judging, Marcel would whisper to me "We must not be too harsh or dogmatic." I'm afraid this advice had an opposite effect and made me sternly selective. At least it must have done so, because the gallery manager, Howard Putzel, once reproached Jim Sweeney and myself for having reduced the size of Peggy's shows to an embarrassingly small number of works. Thinking back on Peggy's shows in New York, it seems to me rather a wonder that any paintings at all were exhibited, for the jovial Howard Putzel was a born assassin of works of art, and his progress from the storeroom to the gallery, where we jurors sat, was often accompanied by the sound of breaking glass. Howard's heart was definitely in the right place; I can't make the same claim for his hands and feet.

As I think back on those exciting occasions at Peggy Guggenheim's Gallery, I realize more and more how much she did for

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the so-called "abstract-expressionist" generation of American painters, especially Jackson Pollock, whom she kept alive and who once painted an entire wall in the foyer of her apartment when he was drunk but nevertheless knew precisely what he was doing and how it should be done. And I think that somehow and quite mysteriously, Marcel Duchamp was one of the central forces behind the extraordinary uprising of American painting during the 1940's and 1950's. He was, in fact, an eminence grise but kindly and fertile, rather than vicious.

Despite the casual and sometimes almost threadbare way in which he dressed, Marcel Duchamp was, I think, perhaps the last of the truly creative dandies. His conversation, no less than the titles of some of his pictures, was often interspersed with cryptic metaphors and puns, he delighted in reversals of meaning and irrelevant facts which popped up from the deepest and darkest whirlpool of his extraordinary mind. He was a gentle man, but even André Breton dared not give him orders, as he so often did the other members of the surrealist group. Breton was not even able to persuade Marcel to become an official member of the surrealist party which otherwise he had been able to organize like a dictator. Duchamp stood alone, impeturbable and wise, and everyone listened when he spoke. His influence on younger artists has not yet been measured accurately. Much of the time he sat quietly while others argued. He had rejected painting when he was a young man, at the height of his creative

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powers, and spent much of his time playing chess, a difficult game in which the ~~immense~~ proceeds of his intelligence could be obliterated by a sweep of his hand. Nevertheless, he created many more pictures than generally supposed, as I realized in 1940 when studying Walter Arensberg's superb collection in the Hollywood, California, house in which Arensberg had left no inch of wall space uncovered by great 20th Century works of art and pre-Columbian sculptures. It was inevitable that Arensberg should have become Duchamp's great friend and chief patron, since he had devoted his mature life to proving the unprovable -- that Shakespeare's plays and poems had been written by Francis Bacon. Once at lunch in Hollywood, I asked Walter whether he didn't occasionally tire of his uphill research. "Of course not," he replied, "I proved my case years ago, and now I'm playing with it, only seriously." I often wonder whether this was true, just as I wonder whether Marcel abdicated his profession or simply let it take another equally generative form.

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THE SAGA OF THE SWISS SWIFTS

Of leaders in the art world of our country, surprisingly few have been able to converse in any language except their own. They've been able to read French, German, Italian and Spanish slowly but accurately because many indispensable documents in their profession are available only in these alien tongues. But speaking another language or two is a different matter and few have had time to learn pronunciation and other essentials of the spoken word.

Take, for example the case of my colleague, Alfred Barr. He could never learn to converse easily in French, though he has spent many years of his life traveling abroad, where in most countries English and French will get you around. He does take pride in the fact that he knows some German. I've wondered how much of that difficult language he can speak fluently ever since an evening when the late Curt Valentin took us and our wives to dinner with a newly arrived friend from Germany. I think the friend was the painter, Max Beckmann, but I can no longer be sure. In any case, Alfred sat next to the German friend, and the two men seemed to be jabbering ceaselessly in those harsh sentences which the Germans use to express even the simplest things. He asked no help from his wife, Margaret Scolari Barr, a fluent linguist, and I could have given him none. Besides, he didn't seem to need help. At least I'd thought he didn't until I was walking home with Curt Valentin and told him how impressed I was with the fluency of Alfred's conversation at dinner with Max Beckmann or whoever it was. "Fluency?" said

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Curt, "My God, my friend just told me he liked Alfred Barr very much but understood only about one in every ten German words he said."

Alfred's difficulty in speaking foreign languages once caused a near-panic in Milan in 1948, when our host, Sig. R. Toninelli, invited to his superb apartment in the old Palazzo Serbelloni all the lenders to the exhibition, Twentieth Century Italian Art, which Alfred and I were assembling. All the guests were Italian, of course, and as a matter of courtesy Alfred felt impelled to ask them in their native tongue why there were so many swifts flying around outside the windows and on the terrace. He asked his Italian wife what the word for swifts was, Marga Barr told him, and somehow on his way to speak to the guests he got the word mixed up with the Italian word for Swiss. Since the Swiss haven't attacked anyone for a very long time, I don't know why his announcement that the Swiss were swarming all over the place caused such pandemonium. But pandemonium it was of a very real kind, and I remember one of the guests coming up to me and saying in an alarmed voice, "les Suisses sont partout. Pourquoi?" It took a long time for the party to calm down and Marga told her husband that if he had to speak a foreign tongue, would he please, for God's sake, stick to German.

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CHAPTER 16

ALFRED BARR

My wife once reported to me that an old friend of hers from Indianapolis, knowing that Alfred Barr and I had been colleagues and close friends for years, asked whether I hadn't been in awe of Alfred at first. Since I liked Melissa's friend, I pondered the question carefully before answering. I then said, "Tell your friend I don't think so. I respected him very much, but that's not the same thing as awe." The friend wouldn't give up. She said she knew that Alfred had a very strong character and hadn't I been afraid of being dominated? This time I blew up and said: "It makes me mad when people say or imply that Alfred is domineering or difficult to work with. The truth is that he listens to those he trusts far, far more often than he tells them what to do. Years ago when Alfred was the Museum of Modern Art's Director and I his assistant, he never once gave me an order, though he was certainly entitled to."

~~I know that~~ I went on to say, "The truth about Alfred is that he's not at all austere except with those who are taking up his time uselessly. It's true, as a New Yorker profile said of him once, that he's capable of answering the rhetorical question, 'have you got a moment?' by answering bluntly 'no, I haven't.' But that applies only to visitors who are wasting his time. With those who really need his help, he is warm, considerate and helpful. I ought to know better than anyone else, since more than anyone I've had to ask him for advice and assistance. It never occurred to me that he'd turn me down for either;

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I knew he wouldn't.

The myth about Alfred's inapproachability and aloofness had made me so angry that I couldn't get to sleep. So I told my wife about the first time I'd ever worked for Alfred on a curatorial matter. This must have been in the late 1930s, when I was a member of the Museum's Advisory Committee. Alfred asked me to do some research for him on Daumier, I can't remember why, since he'd directed the Corot-Daumier show in the Museum as early as 1930. In any case, I looked up the things he wanted to know, and we walked out of the Museum together for lunch. A young woman with an incredibly active walk (to put it mildly) passed us on the street, and Alfred turned to me and asked, "Wasn't that Georgia Southern?" It was indeed, and I understood why I should have known this pleasurable fact, having gone to a number of burlesque shows in youth. I couldn't understand why a great scholar like Alfred would know. Ever since I've accused him of having spent his time at Harvard ensconced in a front row seat at the Old Howard Burlesque Theatre in Boston when he was supposed to be attending graduate classes in the fine arts at the Fogg Museum. A few years ago the Old Howard was torn down, and I sent Alfred suggestions on how to commit suicide painlessly. For years he and I have referred to the Museum as the Old Howard. That estimable theatre's slogan used to be "Always something Going on at the Old Howard," though Alfred had mistakenly transposed the slogan into "Never a Dull Moment at the Old Howard." This is the only matter on which I question his scholarship.

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The partnership of Alfred and myself as Director and Assistant Director of the Museum of Modern Art began in 1943 and was of short duration, since late in that year both offices were abolished. I've always thought it was a great mistake to have Alfred step down from a job he'd held since the Museum was founded and in which he could easily have served with great distinction for another twenty years. I remember vividly an afternoon in his apartment when Marga Barr and I tried to persuade him to resign and let me resign along with him. To paraphrase Ernest Hemingway's concluding words in A Farewell to Arms, it was like talking to a statue. He listened to us but didn't hear, not even when I tried to explain how his temporary demise had come about. I told him that two leading staff members, on the executive rather than the curatorial side, had been undermining him for years with Stephen Clark, then Chairman of the Museum's Board of Trustees. Alfred refused to believe me, though I had plenty of first-hand evidence. He liked one of the two very much personally, and thought the other an able staff member and that was that; his loyalty to them was unshakeable and to the Museum, absolute, to the point of self-immolation.

So we went on as best we could, he relegated to a tiny office after I'd spent a week convincing Mr. Clark that Alfred must remain in the building so that important visitors from all over the world would know he was still there.

After a short time, it became apparent that if the Museum no longer had an over-all Director, it must have a Department

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of Painting and Sculpture to deal with its major field in the visual arts. I was appointed Director of this new department, and as such was responsible for acquisitions and loan exhibitions which fell within the department's field. Since I was chairman of the Acquisitions Committee on and off (depending on Mr. Clark's willingness or unwillingness to serve in that capacity) from 1941 to 1946, I was often supposed to present the works of art to be considered and at the same time to get the committee's vote. I've never been comfortable wearing one hat, let alone two, and I began what turned out to be a long campaign to make the Museum Collections a separate entity within the curatorial complex, with Alfred Barr as its director. In 1950 I settled happily into being Chairman of what then became known as the Collections Committee. I worked in that capacity until 1967, when I became Honorary Chairman.

It was a long, long game of musical chairs. The fact is, however, that during those years, except for James Johnson Sweeney's brief term as Director of the Painting and Sculpture Department, Alfred and I worked closely together on acquisitions, with incalculable help in the American field from Dorothy Miller. He and I or all three of us lunched together nearly every day, and we combed the market as well as we could, though the number of New York galleries was already beginning to multiply at an amazing rate and there was never time to cover all the exhibitions on view at any given time. Today, of course, there are commercial art galleries from one end of Manhattan to the other,

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or nearly so, and it would take a staff of at least six highly trained scouts to keep track of new shows on display at any given time during the autumn, winter and spring months. When you compound this situation with visits to the studios of artists who don't have dealers, or to shows held in other cities or towns, the task of keeping abreast of the art market becomes impossible and the tempers of neglected living artists very short indeed.

I've said repeatedly, and I'd like to say once more, that any museum whose principal field is contemporary art faces a grave problem. Such a museum must deal with artists who are often not only still alive and vociferous, but whose wives, children, aunts and third cousins, not to mention friends, are, too. The wives are usually the worst offenders in this respect, since it is preferable for any one of them to think her bedfellow is Michelangelo rather than merely a competent artist. I've often wondered how Alfred Barr dealt with these ladies almost singlehanded for so many years. There is no use arguing with artists' wives; they have all married geniuses and that is that; anyone would understand this except some stupid and callous museum director.

The third exhibition I did for the Museum was entitled Romantic Painting in America, and was co-directed by Dorothy Miller. It was held in 1943, and Alfred Barr had suggested it to me because he knew I had been working for a number of years on European painting from the late 18th century to the advent of Courbet's Realism around 1850. As I've related elsewhere, I'd been commis-

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sioned to do a book on European Romantic painting, and I'd worked long hours each day on the subject. But I knew scandalously little about Romantic painting in America, though Dorothy knew a great deal and chose the pictures for the show, while I busied myself with the text for the accompanying book. My task was made easier by the fact that I found at E. Weyhe's bookshop a formidable cache of books on American art in the first half of the 19th century. Mr. Weyhe told me he had so many books on that period available because no one would buy them. I did buy them, and read them far into many nights, and finally got the text done on time for the opening.

The book and the show got a mixed reception, to say the least. On the one hand a number of scholars were offended because we hadn't used Romanticism as a circumscribed, chronological term, but as a definition of a spirit underlying the work of a number of earlier and modern painters. There were letters of protest from museum people as eminent as Grace McCann Morley, whom both Dorothy and I knew, respected, and liked, and many less well-informed people thought we had stretched the meaning of Romanticism too far. Alfred Barr defended us, as he always did, and I remember with gratitude that John I.H. Baur, now the Whitney Museum's Director, did, too. I thought it was a handsome, admittedly provocative show, and was pleasantly surprised that almost no modern artists objected to being included. I think what cheered me most was when one of the Fogg Museum's top staff members told me he thought the show was a milestone in American art history. I could

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only answer gloomily that I'd been led to believe it was a millstone. The ironic thing about the whole episode was that a number of museum people said the show would never have happened if Alfred had still been in charge of the Museum. It seemed useless to protest that a) the exhibition was Alfred's idea and b) that Dorothy and I were the two staff members who felt most bitterly about Alfred's "resignation". But in the end even Dr. Morley reversed her opinion and peace reigned - temporarily, which is, alas, par for the course at the Old Howard.

One occasion on which Alfred and I struggled with an unwelcome and difficult problem took place in the spring of 1944. We were then ordered by the officers of the Museum to sell at auction a number of works from the Museum's collection, including a few which were bequests from Miss Lillie P. Bliss, one of the Museum's founders. The auction itself was to be conducted by Parke-Bernet; its catalog was to be prepared by Alfred and myself. I'd seen innumerable auction catalogs, of course. I'd never prepared one, and I had no precise idea as to what should be used to make the auction's items appealing. The brunt of the work therefore fell on Alfred's shoulders, and all I could do was to help round up relevant information and collect photographs of works in the sale.

The auction itself was held at Parke-Bernet. Before it even began Frank Crowninshield, sitting next to me, said he thought it was a mistake. I respected Mr. Crowninshield's acumen in such matters, and I began to worry before the first item was sold. I

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was right to do so. The prices were low even for the dismal spring of 1944, and some fine paintings were lost to the Museum forever, among them a few which should never have been sold at any price, certainly not publicly.

I've never stopped believing that the auction was a serious mistake. I think it cost us some important collections because the owners couldn't see why they should leave or give works to the Museum of Modern Art, only to have them hocked a few years later. Many collectors I've known are akin in spirit to the ancient Egyptians, who took elaborate precautions to see that their possessions remained in the place they had chosen before death. Oddly enough, one of the finest collections we lost because of the auction belonged to a lawyer. Even he looked at me blankly when I tried to explain that he could stipulate in his will that his collection should be offered to other institutions of his choice if the Museum of Modern Art no longer needed it. I quoted my own lawyer on this point. But since my lawyer practised in Hartford and the collector in New York, it was a fruitless argument.

I think, too, that it was a mistake to include in the auction works of art owned by Trustees of the Museum. In a week or so, I was bitterly reproached for letting this happen by Virgil Thomson and Carl Van Vechten. I could only reply that as a hired hand I couldn't control the situation. I felt obliged to add that I myself had put several paintings in the auction, but that I'd turned all proceeds from their sale over to the Museum, to be used for

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new acquistions. Virgil Thomson was mollified, Carl Van Vechten, I think, was not. Anyway it was a disagreeable encounter. I was rescued from it by the sudden appearance at my side of Constance Askew, a very dear friend. She told the two avenging men in no uncertain terms that the auction was none of their business. Bless her for this and many other kindnesses to me over a long period of years.

I think this is as good a place as any to repeat a fact which many people never seem able to understand: that the Museum of Modern Art has never had an annual fund for the purchase of works of art except for Mrs. Simon Guggenheim's large and yearly contribution, which was restricted to the acquisition of major paintings and sculptures by the giants in the art of our time. Mrs. Guggenheim was a wonderfully generous and lovable woman, but the only time I can remember her relaxing the rule (which allowed the Museum to acquire a majority of its masterpeices) was when she let us buy a painting of a Cape Cod gas station at night, painted in 1940 by the late Edward Hopper. The purchase was made in 1943, and at that time Hopper's position was nowhere near as exalted as it is today and his prices were astonishingly low, or at least seem so now. But she took the word of Alfred Barr, Dorothy Miller and myself that Hopper was one of America's best 20th century painters, and she liked the picture whose title, quite typical of of Hopper's love of bluntness and understatement, was <u>Gas</u>. We never tried Mrs. Guggenheim's patience again that I can remember, and today I think everyone is glad we didn't.

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The task of assembling the Museum's 15th anniversary exhibition, called Art in Progress, was a complicated one in that all the curatorial departments were represented by separate shows, including the Film Library. As usual every department except the last-named asked Alfred's advice, and we department heads acted as though he were still Director of the Museum. Most of us profoundly wished he were. His counsel in assembling so complicated an exhibition was indispensable, and all of us remembered that he had been the one in the beginning to insist that the Museum should study and display all the visual fields in art - painting and sculpture, architecture, photography, the films and design in all its manifestations, from spoons to posters, from furniture to typography and glassware. The resultant exhibition was a strain on everyone involved, the more so in that the Director of the Photography Department had gone off to war, as had the Director of the Department of Design. In retrospect it seems to me a miracle that the show opened on time. Without Alfred Barr's over-all guidance, I doubt that it would have. For contrary to a rumor which certain uninformed people listened to, Alfred was a born adminstrator of an art museum because he knew all its problems by heart. This is not the same thing as being a good business administrator, but is a far more complicated job except at the highest levels of finance. It requires scholarship in a number of fields and, above all, an unshakeable sense of quality. Since Alfred Barr stepped down as Director, the Museum has had its troubles, as everyone knows. An old friend of mine asked me a few years ago, "Why can't you find

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another Alfred Barr?" And I said, "Yeah, you tell me where."

Anyone reading this chapter will know, I'm sure, that Alfred and I have been close friends for thirty years or so. The powers-that-be used to try to break up our alliance by the same technique used long ago by the Trustees of the Wadsworth Atheneum. They accused me, in brief, of acting as Alfred's stooge. It was a clumsily inadequate technique, and it made me feel angry instead of inferior. I believe firmly that some people work better in tandem than they do alone, and I'm not at all ashamed of being among their number. I know I've worked better with Alfred Barr as a trusted cohort. This is a fact which has given me great pride and some, I hope, to him.

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MODERN ITALIAN SCULPTURE: THE THREE M'S

When the Museum of Modern Art sent Alfred Barr and myself to Italy in 1948 to assemble the exhibition, Twentieth Century Italian Art, the three most famous contemporary Italian sculptors were known as "the three M's." Their names were Arturo Martini, Marino Marini and Giacomo Manzù, and I doubt that the latter two have been supplanted in reputation even today, though Martini is now almost everywhere considered a minor figure compared to his great predecessor, the Futurist, Umberto Boccioni, who was killed in an accident in 1916, when out riding horseback with his lady-love. Martini was the eldest of the "three M's" and had died in 1947 after writing a despairing treatise about sculpture, his own included. But he was given a memorial exhibition at the Venice Biennial in 1948, and Alfred and I were able to see it. His best works had an expressive strength though they often paid open tribute to earlier Italian traditions in sculpture from the Etruscan to the Mannerist and Baroque periods. There were not many of his sculptures to choose from in planning our show at the Museum since Martini had apparently destroyed his works during the fits of depression which plagued his life.

The youngest of the three M'S was Giacomo Manzù, whose leading rival was Marino Marini, his elder by seven years. In 1948 Manzù was working a great deal on religious figures. Alfred and I were able to visit his studio only once and then with difficulty. Manzù was in a secretive and suspicious mood as to

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visitors, having just been notified by the Vatican that it was high time he learned the difference between the sacred and the profane nude in art. Since one of Manzù's favorite subjects in sculpture was the traditional one of nude figures, he was obviously upset by the edict from Rome, the more so in that he was then a devout man and yet had no idea what the difference between sacred and profane nudes was. Nor did anyone else, for that matter, except in the case of obvious pornography of which Manzù was never guilty. He had been working since the late 1930s on figures of Cardinals and these figures naturally posed no problem as to nudity. It must have been when he moved on to the subjects of the Crucifixion and the Deposition that he got into trouble with the Vatican, though the Church can hardly have objected to the figure of Christ being shown nearly naked, as almost always in Western art. Perhaps he once included the figure of Mary Magdalene improperly dressed but, if so, I never saw the sculpture either in fact or reproduction . What seems ironic about the whole matter is that Manzù showed the soldiers at the foot of the cross as naked, pot-bellied Germans, wearing only their metal helmets and gunbelts. It must have taken courage to do so in the year 1942, when Italy was virtually a prisoner of the Third Reich.

Though Manzù's central interest was then in religious subjects (he was soon to complete an entire door in bas-relief for St. Peter's in Rome, dedicated in 1964) he sometimes turned to

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more mundane subjects. In 1946, for example, he had produced a full-length sculpture of a Milanese lady, Alice Lampugnani, seated on a chair. This portrait-sculpture haunted Alfred Barr and me long after we'd left Italy and we finally persuaded the subject and the artist to have a second cast made for the Museum. This took some doing in that Manzu, unlike many sculptors I've known, disliked having additional casts of his sculptures made.

There is a second Manzù sculpture of a figure in a chair which I've never been able to forget. It is called Girl Seated on a Chair, was completed in 1949, and for some reason I saw it first in a show at the Philadelphia Museum in a group show. The chair must have been a casting in bronze of an actual, wooden chair. I've few Lolita instincts that I know of but the figure of the adolescent girl is marvelous in its simple sincerity and truth. What always seems odd and reassuring to me is that an old friend, Herbert Bayer, a high apostle of abstract art, had the same reaction to the sculpture as I did and was even more at a loss for words to explain why.

Part of the difficulty in seeing Manzù on other occasions was that in 1948 the rivalry between him and Marino Marini had been made more intense by Manzu's award of the Grand Prize for the best native sculpture at the Venice Biennale in that year, largely, I'm told, because of Lionello Venturi's enthusiasm. But the award to Manzù had infuriated the more progressive art critics in Italy and elsewhere and had put the final spark to

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Martini's dislike of his younger rival's work. In any case, I regret very much that Alfred Barr and I didn't see Manzù again nor did we have time to acquire some of his truly superb drawings. I don't intend to get into this war between two artists, both estimable, but I can't resist saying that I think Marini is the greater artist of the two, not because his is more "modern" (whatever that means) but because he is more original and strong. Both Alfred and I must have been convinced of this fact in 1948, for we bought a largish sculpture from Marini for the Museum and I bought a piece, identical in size but different in pose, for myself.

Marino Marini and his wife Marina (her real name is Stella but this was obviously a nuisance) were marvelous company and always a pleasure to be with. They lived in a handsome apartment in a new building on the Piazza Mirabello in Milan and Marini had a separate studio in the courtyard out back. He was then working on a series of horsemen in plaster and he told Alfred Barr and me that the series had begun to interest him when he had seen the Lombard peasants trying to flee on their horses to escape the Royal Air Force's frequent bombings of Milan and its suburbs. He added that he had started the series as long ago as 1936 but that the horrors of war had intensified his vision.

Born in Pistoia in 1901, Marini studied painting and sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. He was invariably accompanied to the Academy by his twin sister and both youngsters were extremely precocious, though the sister soon gave up her career

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to marry. Marini has remained unmistakably Tuscan in temperament and I remember that he once said to me, "To surmount the great accomplishments of the earlier twentieth century, temperament is possibly more necessary than intelligence." But his closest affinities in Tuscan sculpture are with the artists of the 13th century rather than the 16th. It is not Cellini of whom he makes one think but of Giovanni Pisano, now generally acknowledged as the creator of the marvelous evangelical bull in the museum at Siena. His emphasis has always been on the control of massive form rather than linear elegance. He prefers the huge wooden model for Donatello's Gattamelata to the final sculpture itself. He often speaks, or used to, of the medieval sculptor, Tino da Camaino, of the superb horses in the paintings of Paolo Uccello. I remember, too, his reply to the charge that his horsemen owed much in style to the sculpture of ancient China. He said: "To be an artist is simple. It is simplicity which is difficult. In Italy so much is truly simple - the land, the people. Our discipline is not like that of the North; it is far less intellectual. Yet I suppose I am myself Nordic, a little. At any rate, I believe in cultivation as a protection against confusion. It is impossible to pretend to be a primitive. You asked me, for instance, about the sculpture of China. It is one of the great sources, like the art of Egypt, and of course I admire it."

I think it was in 1950, in a foreword to Marini's first one-man show in America at Curt Valentin's gallery (called the Buchholz

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Gallery until some of us persuaded Curt to re-name the gallery after himself) that I quoted these words of Marini's. It must have been that same winter when Marini and his wife came to New York. They came by boat, as everyone did in those days, and the winter seas were unusually rough. Curt Valentin and I went to meet them at the boat. Marina was calm and composed after the trip but Marino was still trembling and assured us that the boat had been on the verge of sinking at least three times. Apparently he had always had the same fear of crossing the water which all these years has prevented Picasso from taking a long trip by boat.

Marini knew that Edgar Kaufman, whose father at his urging had built the greatest private house I've ever seen, had also bought one of the larger versions of Marino's horseman series. The house was the world-famous "Falling-Water" by Frank Lloyd Wright and Marino wanted very much to see the house and his sculpture <u>in situ</u>. Since Edgar Kaufman had been an admired friend of mine and a member of the Museum of Modern Art's staff for many years, I felt free to ask him whether I could drive the Marinis down to see the house and Marino's big sculpture. He said he would be delighted.

The drive from New York to the Kaufman's house seemed very long, despite and perhaps because of the new turnpike, with its absurdly high speed limits. And we hadn't been in the Wright house more than a few hours when Marino said he was coming down

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with a bad cold because of the waterfall which was part of the magnificent landscaping directly around the house. He had no sooner made this statment when the Kaufman dog began sneezing violently and Marino said, "I told you so. Even the dog is coming down with pneumonia." Nevertheless, we were awakened at dawn by the sound of hammering and the thought crossed my mind instantly that it was probably Marino banging on his bronze horseman outside the house. I had good reason to think so because the horseman in bronze I'd bought from Marino in 1948 had arrived at my house in Farmington with a wide cleft in the skull of the rider. I'd spent months trying to find out for the insurance company what had happened to damage the sculpture in transit from Milan. But one day at my house Marino admitted sheepishly that he had banged the bronze sculpture too hard with a hammer and that the rider's skull had split open. "I'm very afraid of refinement in my sculptures," he had said, "so I like to roughen up the bronzes a bit after they've been cast." I yelled for Edgar Kaufman, and he and I managed to lure Marini back into the house.

The sculpture was saved. But only temporarily. A few years later the stream over which it was placed overflowed and the horseman, alas, was carried downstream and damaged beyond repair. It seems astonishing that so massive a bronze could have been swept away by a small body of water. Luckily, however, a second cast of the same sculpture stands on the terrace in

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front of Peggy Guggenheim's palazzo at Venice. The two casts are identical except that the Venetian one is equipped with a detachable penis, much to the horror of the Grand Canal's more sober-minded inhabitants. A third and final cast exists somewhere in Latin America, but I don't know its owner's name.

The return drive from the Pittsburgh area seemed much shorter, as return trips always do. Still, we were all relieved when we drove onto the George Washington Bridge at last. As we crossed the bridge, a young couple kept holding up a very young baby to wave at us and Marini said to his wife, "The baby was born in the car, of course. After all, this is America."

In 1949 I was in Milan once more and I bought from Marini a bronze of a very large standing woman, nude. I asked Marino about the derivation of the piece and he replied: "It is necessary to preserve the emotion which generates an image. You cannot do so by posing a model, for then you get lost in details that weaken or discolor the original emotion. My sculpture starts with the impression, often instantaneous, whose impact I try to preserve. I include details only if they confirm the impact, as in the case of the rings on the fingers of this woman in bronze [you've bought] - very Italian. I saw the woman herself in the fields, a large woman with powerful legs. She stood like this, and I remembered her, and now here is her sculpture." I didn't quite have the nerve to tell Marino that one reason I'd bought this particular sculpture was that I

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thought it was high enough so that its head would be out of reach of a skull fracture from Marino's vengeful hammer. Even so, I've had my troubles with Marino's lady of the fields, now more euphemistically known as Dancer. She has resented bitterly another Amazonian character in bronze which I bought from the English sculptor, Reg Butler, seven or eight years later. These vast ladies share my side yard and ~~two vast ladies~~ hurl insults at each other far into the night. I hear them clearly. It seems a pity no one else can.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS -- RENE MAGRITTE

It's not very often on completing an exhibition such as the one Bill Seitz and I did on Magritte in 1965 that one wished to see a catalogue raisonne. I'm convinced that in Magritte's case such a book would establish him as a central, rather than a peripheral, figure in surrealist art as a whole. He was a conservative man personally and disliked fanfare. I'd bet that a far more decisive force - the judgment of time - will work on his side.

GIORGIO MORANDI

In 1948 the Museum of Modern Art sent Alfred Barr and me to Italy to assemble an exhibition called Twentieth-Century Italian Art. Before leaving New York we naturally did as much research as possible, since he had theretofore worked seriously only on Futurism, I on the scuola metafisica of de Chirico and Carlo Carra. What astonished us most as we looked over the available material was that so many Italian critics considered Giorgio Morandi to be their finest living artist. It was hard to believe that a painter of such limited iconography could be given that eminence, though we were not unmindful that Mondrian's abstractions followed an equally restricted path and that Yves Tanguy had reduced the surrealist esthetic or anti-esthetic to a single, central vision, experienced over and over again. We tended to think that the Italians over-rated Morandi because of the isolation imposed on Italian art by Mussolini's regime.

In Italy a curious thing happened to us. We made separate lists each day of works of art seen in Milan, Rome and Venice.

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We found that most of the important collections of contemporary Italian art had been formed in affluent Milan, sometimes by men of inherited wealth but more often by professional and business people who had exchanged their services or goods for paintings and sculptures by living artists. We compared our lists each evening and were astonished to see how often Morandi's name appeared. We began to realize that Morandi was not simply a painter of bottles and occasional landscapes but a man intent on exploring subtle equations of forms, placing and atmospheric effects. It was as though he, like Chardin, had found the external world hopelessly convoluted and had preferred to stare endlessly at simple objects on a studio table, separating their volumes and color and then interlocking them again through an alchemy he alone understood.

It was soon obvious that Morandi's art was totally unlike that of his academic colleagues who tried to get a head start in their quest for beauty by painting rare and valuable bric-a-brac such as chinaware and Spanish shawls. Morandi carried home with him whatever container pleased his wary eye, whether it was a gas-station funnel or oil can or a commonplace pitcher seen in the streets of his native Bologna. Morandi left Bologna only a few times in his life and then only to visit Venice or some other Italian city. His home town is meant for walking. There is a book which outlines how to tour Bologna on foot, even in bad weather, without once leaving the protection of the city's endless arcades.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS - GIORGIO MORANDI

I went to see Morandi with an Italian friend in 1949. He lived in a comfortable, bourgeois apartment near the center of the city and a sister kept house for him. There was no sign anywhere that it was an artist's home until one walked into the small room Morandi used as a studio. There bottles and containers of every kind and substance were lined up on shelves or placed on tables. The surfaces of these objects had often been re-painted by Morandi with simple geometric forms - squares, circles and rectangles, always in soft colors. One sensed the intense meditative and philosophical process through which these objects were arranged in Morandi's paintings. One knew that the slightest shifts in scale, light, color, balance and counter-balance were of the utmost importance to him.

Morandi himself was a tall, solemn, saintly man who talked little and moved about slowly. There was one painting he had just finished which I liked especially, and I asked my Italian friend to find out whether Morandi would sell it to me. The painter nodded and then quoted a price so absurdly low that I blurted out that the Milanese dealers were asking almost precisely one hundred times that much for comparable works. Morandi looked sad and disturbed. "Tell your friend," he said to my companion, "that it makes me nervous to talk about prices. If he keeps on objecting, I'll cut the price in half."

I gave up and walked away with the picture. I felt like a kidnapper, but I was extraordinarily happy with my painting. I have been ever since.

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LUNCHEON FOR FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

In 1949 a large group of Hartford's citizens gathered for luncheon at the Hartford Club in an effort to persuade Frank Lloyd Wright to design a new theatre, the old Parsons Theatre having been torn down some years before and the city left with only the Avery Memorial's small theatre and the mammoth stage of the Bushnell Memorial. The latter stage is fine for the concerts for which it had been intended, but it was so big that actors in anything other than a lavish musical production had to bellow to make themselves heard. Only an Ethel Merman could perform in the Bushnell with any success or intelligibility and even she never tried, so far as I can remember.

The luncheon party consisted of three main groups: leading business men from the community; actors and actresses who through personal or family connections with Hartford were interested in having a new legitimate theatre built; and people from the museum world, including Helen Austin, Charles Cunningham and myself. The Master had flown in from Taliesin or one of his other habitual hangouts and had arrived at the Hartford Club promptly, wearing a large overcoat and a porkpie hat.

Mr. Wright was in fine form, and all of us present knew we were to be addressed by a very great architect indeed. But I don't think anyone except Helen Austin and myself, seated together at the end of the table, was quite prepared for the kind

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of speech he would make, both of us having been exposed to his tirades before.

The Master began by addressing the leaders of the business community. He said that he had had long and various dealings with business men and that these dealings had invariably ended up in hopeless compromise from an architect's point of view. The interest of this all-important section of his audience went into a deep freeze immediately, and one could sense that if Hartford got a new theatre by Frank Lloyd Wright, it would be over their dead pocketbooks.

The Master then turned happily to the group from the theatrical world. "I understand," he said, "that some of you object to my having designed the orchestra seats in the shape of a horseshoe." I noticed that Katherine Hepburn's mother and her two beautiful sisters had paled a bit, but they grew paler as he went on in full cry. "I've been going to the theatre all my life," the Master said, "and I think it's more interesting to arrange the seats so that one part of the audience can study another part instead of staring at the nonsense going on on the stage." I wished profoundly that Kate Hepburn herself had been present to fell Mr. Wright with a right hook, as she had me in youth in the tunnel we made of autumn leaves.

I suppose we representatives of the museum world got off easily, since all the Great Man inferred was that the best

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paintings in the world combined were nothing compared to one great building (by Frank Lloyd Wright, naturally). I'd been prepared for this inference since 1940, when the collector, Walter Arensberg, told me of his anguish in living in a Frank Lloyd Wright house he'd rented in Hollywood, California, and discovering that there wasn't wall space enough for even a small drawing or watercolor. I imagine, too, that my impression of Mr. Wright's disinterest in pictures (except for small and moveable Japanese prints) was fortified when I stood near him in London's National Gallery and heard him say only "Humph" as he stood before one of Uccello's masterworks, the panel from the Battle of San Romano. Still, Wright was a very great man indeed and no amount of jocular comment can alter this fact.

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FROM DAVID TO LAUTREC

Of all art projects in which I've been involved, none made me more nervous or left me more exhausted than the large exhibition of 19th century French masterpieces from American collections held at the Musee de l'Orangerie in Paris during the spring of 1955. The exhibition was entitled "De David à Toulouse-Lautrec." The choice of works to be included was made by a Selection Committee which consisted of the directors or top curators of the leading art museums in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Chicago; I had the honor of being this committee's chairman and I therefore felt doubly responsible for the success of the enterprise.

I remember that my first worry was that the French would be offended rather than pleased by the number of their capital works of art which had ended up in American rather than native hands, public or private. This turned out to be for the most part a needless worry. There were naturally a few blasts about capitalist piracy from the Communist press, but most of the newspapers and periodicals were extremely enthusiastic. The French people, too, were almost unanimously pleased and proud. They knew after all that these masterpeices had been created by their countrymen, on their soil. If the marvelous pictures had ended up in American hands, the highly intelligent French tended to blame the matter on the stupidity of their own officialdom more than on

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American wealth. At least many of them did, and the Orangerie's galleries were crowded throughout the run of the exhibition.

I also worried about how we could install so many different kinds of masterpeices in the Orangerie's rather dark and difficult galleries. I remembered these galleries well, since I'd gone several times over the years to see the late Monet murals on canvas, depicting his lily ponds at Giverny, which his friend, Clemenceau, had proudly accepted for the French Government. I remembered that the vast Monets had been difficult to see properly in the Orangerie and that I had first had a decent look at them when they were lent to the museum in Bâle or Zurich. Indeed, it had been in Switzerland that for the first time I realized that these huge, late works were neither formless nor senile, but were among the greatest works of art produced during the earlier part of our own century, that is, primarily during the years of World War I. They had been painted at Monet's place in Giverny, about forty miles north of Paris. Perhaps because of Monet's close friendship with Clemenceau, he had been able to build an immense and very high studio out of metal and glass near his house, apparently in utter disregard of wartime restrictions on the use of such materials.

I called on Alfred Barr for help in planning the installation of the very divergent works which were to replace the Monet panels in the Orangerie temporarily. He and I worked very late for several nights marking where each painting should be hung on

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the floor plans of the Orangerie. It was a tiring business, I think more so for me than for him because he knew exactly what he was doing and I didn't. It was also a useless task, since when I arrived at the Orangerie and showed the marked plans to Germain Bazin, Director of Paintings and Drawings at the Louvre and therefore also at its adjunct the Orangerie, he knocked the plans out of my hand with incredible rudeness and said: "That installation may be all right for your country, but it would be absurd for Paris."

This was the beginning of incessant warfare between Bazin and myself. In subsequent years I've tried very hard to form a more kindly opinion of M. Germain Bazin. But I still cling to the same opinion: that he was often ~~the most~~ intolerant and insensitive. ~~and disagreeable biped it has ever been my misfortune to work with.~~ Moreover, he was incapable of making up his mind and two days before the opening he was still making drastic changes in what I thought was already a bad enough installation. I thought we couldn't possibly open the show on time and in desperation I persuaded William A.M. Burden, then the President of our museum and in Paris for the opening, to phone the angelic and highly intelligent M. Georges Salles, Director of the Art Museums of France and see if he couldn't get Bazin off my back. I don't know what the conversation between the two Frenchmen was, of course; I only know that Bazin didn't reappear for a day and a half.

What irked me most was the haughty manner in which Bazin

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treated the skilled workmen we'd brought over from our Museum. I can understand, of course, that Bazin would have preferred to have his own men from the Louvre do all the hanging. But the fact was that the Selection Committee in New York had made loans from their museums contingent on having the paintings unpacked, repacked and otherwise handled by workmen whose skill and devotion we knew by heart. Moreover, these American experts were under the direct supervision of Porter McCray, at that time Director of our Museum's International Program, and Sheldon Keck, one of our country's most highly esteemed restorers, was on hand at all times to guard against and if necessary repair minor damage to the paintings.

Perhaps it's mention of Sheldon Keck's name which recalls the most bitter of my grudges against M. Bazin. It has to do with one of the greatest of all Renoirs, the famous Boating Party in the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington, D.C. Mr. Duncan Phillips, founder and owner of the Phillips Gallery, was a member of the Selection Committee. None of us at the Committee's meetings had the nerve to ask for the loan of The Boating Party since we knew and, indeed Mr. Phillips had said in print right after he bought the picture, that this Renoir was the chief drawing card in his gallery in Washington. But when we got to the subject of which Renoirs to send to the Orangerie, Mr. Phillips said quietly and with his usual profound modesty, "Well, of course, there's always The Boating Party, if you'd like to borrow it." I

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had liked Mr. Phillips and admired him enormously for years but never more than at that moment.

We hung the Phillips Renoir in a place of honor in the middle of the long gallery at the Orangerie and for once M. Bazin didn't protest. This was a vast relief, because I had said the words, "Je ne suis pas d'accord," so many times that week that they rattled in my mouth like loose fillings. I knew something disagreeable was going to happen and it did. As I was walking past the Renoir later in the day, I heard Bazin saying in what he thought was a low voice, "What a tragedy the Renoir has been so badly skinned" - meaning that actual pigment had been removed during its restoration. Since Sheldon Keck had done the restoration, to the unqualified admiration of everyone I'd ever talked to about it, including Mr. Phillips, I very nearly let M. Bazin have it then and there for making such a ridiculous and chauvinistic statement. But this event, after all, was supposed to be a gesture of hands rather than fists across the sea and I controlled my temper. I've never told Sheldon about the incident, and I hope he doesn't read it here.

Somehow the exhibition was installed in plenty of time and the night before the opening the Honorable C. Douglas Dillon, at that time our Ambassador to France, gave a most elegant party, where there were blessedly few speeches, in one of which Bill Burden was deservedly awarded the Legion of Honor for having made the exhibition possible. The evening of the opening itself,

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Mme. Conrad Schlumberger, the matriarch of her distinguished family, gave another dinner at her Paris house and afterwards we all proceeded to the Orangerie, where champagne and orange juice were served to what looked to me like half the city's population. I said goodbye to the stalwart workmen very late at night, and there were tears in my eyes out of exhaustion and champagne in equal quantities. All the American guards we had sent over had worked fiendishly hard and well. That is, all except one, who got so homesick for American beer that we had to send him back to New York.

The week, however, was not all hard work. One day Georges Salles asked a few of us for lunch at his apartment in the Louvre. The apartment's walls were hung with Cubist works by Picasso and other modern pictures not yet admitted to the Louvre's own collections. The food was superb and before lunch we were served a Vermouth of such superior flavor and delicacy that I asked M. Salles, a man of almost incredible charm and kindliness, where he got it. "It's made in Paris only a few blocks from here," he told me and wrote down the address. I remember that a ravishing young woman acted as hostess and that Porter McCray of our Museum and Theodore Rousseau of the Metropolitan were also guests. I remember, too, that my wife was a little late because she had told her hairdresser at the Hotel Lancaster that she must be on time for lunch at a friend's apartment in the Louvre Museum. This statement had plunged the entire Lancaster staff into a helpless panic of disbelief and no one could get anything done, including the hairdresser.

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FROM DAVID TO LAUTREC

On a Sunday I got a car and a driver to take Dorothy Miller, Sheldon Keck, Porter McCray, my wife and myself up to Giverny to see Monet's studios where the great Impressionist master had painted his late water-lily pictures. Alfred Barr had asked Dorothy and me to see what paintings Monet's son might have left. He didn't think there would be many, though we knew that for thirty years or more there had been only a fitful market for Monet's late pictures, usually thought hopelessly formless. Contrary to our fears, Monet's son had a good number of paintings left, most of them extremely large and some comprising triptychs. Dorothy and I bought what we thought was the best of the triptychs for our Museum and arranged to have it sent back to New York. There was a medium-sized canvas which my wife wanted to buy herself, but I explained that this was a Museum expedition and that I was opposed to making private purchases on such an occasion. Now whenever we have a large, empty wall space, due to something being out on loan, she says, "If only you had let me buy the Monet." I don't try to explain any more. I grin or slap gently, depending on my patience, and walk quickly away, in either case reflecting that the elephant's memory is short indeed compared to that of the grown human female.

We had a surprisingly good lunch and quite good wine at the little inn in Giverny and after our visit with Monet's son we drove back to Paris, pleased with the day and our purchase on behalf of the Museum. I think in retrospect that the purchase was made just in time, because in a year or so the younger abstract

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painters in New York and Paris rediscovered the late works of Monet's career and were fascinated by the way such real objects as water-lilies and other flowers disappeared and appeared again through mists of light and vaporish colors. As so often happens, the artists' enthusiasm spread to the dealers and the collectors, and very soon the prices in Paris were extremely high. It remains to be said in fairness, however, that the first Monet of the late period to be bought after thirty years of almost unbroken neglect was acquired by Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., and that it was this picture which persuaded Alfred Barr that we had all vastly underestimated the paintings of Monet's declining years. These paintings had been pushed aside by the re-emphasis on structure of the cubists and by the ferocious use of heavy contours among the Expressionists. They had seemed retarded and spineless to the revolutionary artists of this century's first half and then suddenly they became prophetic of a swift filminess to which a number of today's talented young painters aspire. There is a lesson in this reversal of taste to be learned but very likely only the passage of time once more can make the lesson apply.

On the way back to Paris, Sheldon Keck and I commiserated with each other on having missed a widely advertised event in Paris - a strip-tease festival which brought together all the leading strippers of Europe as contestants. To have missed it was inexcusable and profoundly depressing, but Sheldon and I hadn't been able to get away from the exhibition at the Orangerie. It does seem to me that sometimes art interfers with man's higher aspirations. It certainly did this time.

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SPAIN, 1960

In June, 1960, my wife and I went for the first time to Spain, taking with us my elder step-son, who had been reading Hemingway's Death in the Afternoon and become by proxy an aficionado of bullfighting. I suppose that like many Americans involved in the arts, we had postponed the journey for years because of General Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. This had been a war that had aroused the sympathies of writers and artists to a degree unparalleled since the Greek War for Independence wherein Lord Byron had died of fever at Missolonghi and whereby the aloof, sedentary Delacroiz had been inspired to paint one of his masterworks, The Massacre at Scio.

We had finally decided that we couldn't wait longer to visit Spain. The chances of a counter-revolution against General Franco and his Fascist cohorts seemed extremely dim and my longing to see the Prado Museum and the city of Barcelona had become unbearably intense. My wife and I didn't like flying in those days, and we took a train from Paris to Madrid, a long but surprisingly pleasant trip. We stayed at the Ritz in Madrid because a) it was right across the street from the Prado Museum and b) because it was so often described as the best hotel in the world, a claim I would dispute in favor of its younger sister in Boston, Massachusetts.

During our first four days in Madrid, we spent every daylight hour in the Prado - surely the most pleasurable art-historical museum in existence. On the fifth day I decided to shorten the Bible's schedule by two days and rest. But late in the morn-

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ing my step-son awakened me to say abruptly that I'd missed seeing an entire gallery in the Prado. I told him grumpily that this was impossible, since I had a floorplan of the museum and had checked off each and every room. He said he knew this but the gallery he was talking about wasn't on the plan and wasn't open to the public. I immediately thought of Rome where Renaissance erotica were sometimes kept behind locked doors and opened only if the smirking guards were properly bribed. I went back to the Prado and found that the gallery I'd missed was kept closed for a very different reason. It contained many of Goya's wartime drawings which were thought too gory for general consumption. Possibly censorship for once was justified, though I found it hard to understand why this kind of censorship should exist in Spain, where bulls were skewered and matadors gored a few feet away from an ecstatic audience.

Bloody or not, I thought the hidden Goya drawings absolutely marvelous. Indeed, throughout our stay in Spain, Zurbarán, Velasquez and Goya impressed me more than El Greco, whom my generation had been taught to believe was the greatest artist Spain had ever produded. And yet am I really sure of this reaction? Certainly it's been impossible for me to put out of mind the magic surplices in El Greco's <u>Burial of Count Orgaz</u> in the Church of Santo Tomé at Toledo. The white robes shimmer in their translucence in an imponderable way no artist before or since has been able to rival.

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SPAIN, 1960

There was an unusually good program of bullfights in Madrid one afternoon, or so my step-son Thomas Hemingway Childs, told us and we went, making the usual tourist's mistake of asking for seats near the ring. It was a fascinating spectacle, almost religious in the formality of its ritual. My wife gagged just once and then only because a bull bled to death practically on our shoes, making horrible rasping sounds as it fought for breath. I think my stepson and I went to the bullfights a second time, but his mother and I sent him off alone to see the running of the bulls at Pamplona where he later said he'd been perfectly safe and where obviously he had not.

We drove out to Toledo and then to see the Escorial which I found disappointingly gloomy. And then we rented a car and hired a driver to take us to Barcelona. It was a huge, old car and it naturally broke down halfway on the trip, and we sat for hours while a village blacksmith made us an entire rear wheel to replace the twisted one which had brought us to a halt.

It's always better to see a city through an artist's eye, and Miró's eyes had taught us what to look for and cherish in Barcelona's streets, though we were helped enormously by a lifelong friend of Miró's, Joan Prats, a hat-maker by trade and a wonderfully sympathetic man. Prats was not only an early and incessant champion of Miró and his work but also an active leader of the Amigos de Gaudi, a society formed to preserve the architecture of the great architect, Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926). Oddly enough I

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hadn't first learned about Gaudi through Miró but through an article Salvador Dali wrote in 1933 for the short-lived but remarkable magazine, Minotaure. The title of Dali's article was typical of him: it was called "De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture 'modern' style." The article was illustrated by art-nouveau ornaments and it paid tribute to the genius of Gaudí, a genius which in force and variety of imagination far transcended art nouveau's expressive limits. It always seems odd to think that Dali's article was published just one year after Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson organized an exhibition of what we all now think of as modern architecture at the Museum of Modern Art and published the first authoritative book on the subject. At first and even second glance Gaudí's fantastically irregular surfaces and use of polychromatic and copious ornament would seem to be the absolute opposite of the bare exteriors and emphasis on pristine design of what we used to call "the international style", with Frank Lloyd Wright a precursor and Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Gropius and others as its particular heroes. The truth is, however, that Gaudí was too great a figure to be brushed aside as heretical by his more purist successors. It always comes as a start to remember that the enthusiastic foreword to a little monograph on Gaudí was written by Le Corbusier, some of whose later works are not a rejection of Gaudí's effulgence at all. I think especially of the apartment house which Le Corbusier built at Marseilles toward the end of his life. I can't remember the official name of the apart-

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ment, but all the taxi-drivers in Marseilles called it "the Fada building". Whether the word "Fada" means outright loony or is a vulgarization of "Dada", I just don't know. In any case, like many meaningless words, it says exactly what it's meant to say. It seems appropriate to the work both of Gaudí and the older-age Le Corbusier.

Joan Prats took us first to see Gaudí's most famous building, the uncompleted Sagrada Familia in downtown Barcelona. As we walked through this incredible church, Prats told us a little about the trouble the Amigos de Gaudí was having with the Catholic Church. It appears that the Catholic dignitaries in Barcelona were determined to make the church serviceable. The Amigos de Gaudí, on the other hand, were equally determined that it be left as it was, that is, as a ruin through incompletion rather than through the erosion of time. It seemed to me an argument in which there was only one true side - that of Prats and the Amigos de Gaudí. Not all of Gaudi's original plans were still available and, more important still, as Russell Hitchcock once pointed out: "No architecture was ever so dependent for quality, moreover, on it's designer's continuous supervision."

I think my wife and I were even more certain of the truth of Russell Hitchcock's statement when Prats drove us out to see the crypt of Santa Columba de Cervello, about ten miles outside Barcelona. Whereas in the Sagrada Familia Gaudí had often seemed like a master confectioner, making endlessly inventive forms out of stone and metal instead of spun sugar, at Santa Columba he

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seemed more a master of labyrinthine and exotic structure. Gaudi himself must have been on the spot much of the time or the crypt would have become hopelessly entangled, like a dying serpent. Unfortunately the Santa Columba has to be seen to be believed, as has often been pointed out, since photographs do little to unravel its almost hallucinatory complexity.

The blessed Joan Prats showed us all Gaudí's other buildings in Barcelona with his usual patience and detailed knowledge. But the most astonishing thing that happened to me in relation to Gaudí was when I asked the doorman at the hotel to find me a taxi driver who spoke French and could drive me through the mammoth Park Guell. I knew a little Spanish from my freshman year in college when I was advised to learn this language on the theory that all young Americans with ambition would end up as business-men in South America! (As things turned out the only Latin American country I ever visited is Brazil, where Portuguese was spoken, but the Dean of Admissions at Williams College could hardly have predicted that). I didn't know Spanish anywhere near well enough to ask the driver all the questions I wanted to about the Park Guell. To my everlasting delight, the doorman found me a driver who not only spoke French but had been Gaudí's chauffeur during the years (1900-14) when Gaudí was building the miraculous Park.

Not only was I ecstatic but the driver was, too, and we spe[nt] almost four hours zig-zagging around every corner of the Park. The driver knew precisely where every least mosaic or

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other ornamental accent had been placed; he knew small buildings like the Ippostylo by heart. He was an elderly man, of course, but his memory was precise and every time I paused to rest he would bellow at me like a sergeant of the Marines and tell me angrily that there was still a lot to see before dark. There was indeed, and the day turned out to be one of the most entrancing of my life. I was utterly exhausted when I got back to the hotel. Early the next morning the doorman phoned to say that the driver had arrived and wanted to know if I'd like to take the trip again, this time with my wife who'd been ill the day before. I waved a limpid hand at the bedside phone and went back to sleep, dreaming of encrusted, giddy stones on the walls of my room. Since Gaudí's fame has risen steadily and several friends have asked me about the Park Guell and wanted to visit it, it's maddening to think that I've lost the driver's name, though he may have died long since.

After a day of rest, I went back for another look at the Casa Mila, an apartment house Gaudi had built in Barcelona. The conciège remembered me from my previous visit with Joan Prats and let me clamber around the rooftop, where the ventilators and chimneys are as bold and ferocious as the giant statues of Easter Island and where the inspired irrationality of the ornamental iron work on the lower floors and stairways is unforgettable. I'd never before paid such close attention to architectural detail. I found it a more demanding object of attention than

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painting or even sculpture and finally I'd had enough. The next day my wife and I drove up to the Costa Brava, and it was almost a relief to find this much-touted area disappointing. We went over to the west coast of Spain and France and back up to Paris, weary and delighted with our trip in equal measure.

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SUMMER IN ANTIBES

In the spring of 1961, weary of suitcases, hotels and the other daily nuisances of travel in Europe, my wife and I decided to rent a house for the summer on the French Riviera. We had to rent it sight unseen, since it was impossible for us to go abroad before June. But on the enthusiastic recommendation of friends in Paris, we settled on a charming house perched on the old ramparts of Antibes. We knew the general area because the house was a very short distance away from the Chateau Grimaldi, later converted into the Musée d'Antibes and now everywhere known as the Picasso Museum because of the many pictures the Spanish master painted and left there right after World War II. The story of how Picasso happened to choose the old chateau as a studio is best related in Françoise Gilot's invaluable book on the great painter entitled My Life with Picasso.

Before Picasso took over the Musée d'Antibes, it had contained little of interest except a few ancient artifacts and some fairly minor Napoleonic relics; its upper floor had been empty for years. Its transformation into a vital museum by a single living artist was due to two reasons, talent aside at the moment. Since his impoverished early years, Picasso had needed a large interior working space as much as the Impressionists had needed the great outdoors. Secondly, the Musée d'Antibes' Director, M. Dor de la Souchère, was a highly intelligent, persuasive and sensitive man who realized instantly what it would mean to have

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an artist of Picasso's importance working daily on his museum's premises. So an arrangement was reached one morning on the beach at Golfe-Juan, where Picasso and Françoise had gone to swim and perhaps to escape the small villa they had rented across the road.

Picasso moved into his new studio at the Musée and Souchère somehow managed to get him large composition-boards on which to paint - a not inconsiderable feat during the lean postwar year of 1946. And in return Picasso promised Souchère, "While I'm here I'm not going to paint some pictures. I'm going to decorate your museum for you." In a sense he did so, painting some unusually large panels in his new museum-studio and many smaller works. Moreover, to these were added superb examples of the pottery he had executed at nearby Vallauris. As of this date, none of these works of art has yet been given outright to the Musée d'Antibes, Picasso being notoriously reluctant to part forever with any of his possessions. But they have remained in the museum since they were executed, and they have been supplemented by gifts from the Picasso collection of the artist's great friend, Marie Cuttoli.

The re-vitalization of the moribund Musée d'Antibes as an astonishing <u>tour de force</u> can perhaps be compared only to Picasso's single-handed rescue of the old pottery industry of Vallauris from its commercial deadliness. As Françoise Gilot recalls, "Souchere was thrilled!" One shudders to think how

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differently conservative museum curators, here and abroad, might have reacted to the idea of turning a minotaur like Picasso loose in their sacrosanct galleries.

The house my wife and I had rented was only a few hundred yards away from the Musée d'Antibes, as I've said. Like the museum, it was embedded in the high, stony ramparts overlooking the bay. It was situated at the end of a short alleyway known as l'Impasse de l'Orme which opened onto the rue de l'Orme, where the astonishing French poet and film director, Jacques Prévert, lived and now busied himself making very beautiful and original collages. The passageway was less reverently known to me as Urine Alley, since on warm days it stank to high heaven from refuse thrown from neighbors' windows and from the calling cards of countless, gaunt dogs. In the house there was a downstairs bedroom and bath and a steep stairway led up to a large terrace and living room, bounded by a low wall and, beyond it, sharp rocks on which flowers mysteriously grew; a spiral staircase led on up to more bedrooms and a large bathroom.

A totally engaging maid named Marie Lerda came with the premises. She made us delectable soup which she not immodestly called "potage de Marie", and was in general a saintly character and an excellent cook, as French housewives so often are. On her first appearance at our house, she kept revolving her forefinger against her temple. The repeated gesture meant nothing to me, but gradually we came to understand that Marie had perhaps

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been tippling too much and had undergone shock treatment. We also finally realized that she thought the treatment had been childish and useless, though clearly it or something else had restored Marie to excellent health and giggling good spirits.

Marie was deeply curious about America, a country she thought of as inhabited exclusively by cowboys, Indians and millionaires - in that order of interest and importance. She grew uncontrollably excited one morning when Souchère walked down to our house, clad in his habitual white undershirt, and announced somewhat glumly that a group of Texans had chartered a plane to make an art tour of Europe and were due at his museum the next morning.

Souchère spoke no English, and he asked me if I would come over and give the Texans a gallery talk. He was such a charming man that I didn't have the heart to tell him that I'd done only one gallery talk in my life and that that had been a disaster. The occasion had been in Hartford in 1934, when Chick Austin and I had assembled at the Wadsworth Atheneum a retrospective Picasso exhibition. Chick himself was a spellbinding lecturer, and I a very bad one. But he had been busy that day and asked me to take over. I started through the galleries with a fair crowd of Hartfordians in my wake but soon there were only six or seven people following me. Since I loathe and fear lecturing in all its form, I was quite ready to take the blame for the melting away of my audience. But then, to my relief, I discovered that a very old friend of mine, thoroughly tipsy, had started a rival

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gallery talk and had lured my customers away by telling rather ribald stories in a French-Canadian dialect. The stories, of course, had nothing whatever to do with Picasso or his work, but that was of minor moment. I had given up then and followed the crowd. But I couldn't give up now when Souchère needed my help, and I told him I'd be at his Museum promptly at 10:00 A.M. For the rest of the day Marie treated me as though I had mistakenly vacated my throne on Olympus, though she wilted when I told her it wasn't at all necessary for me to carry a gun in a holster when talking about art to the Texans. She abandoned her dreams of Gary Cooper, buffaloes, and John Wayne and asked me what the state flower of Texas was. I had to tell her I really didn't know. But my wife, with woman's insatiable greed for minor facts, said she did know and that it was the bluebonnet, so named for its indigo color. Marie disappeared at once and didn't come back to get our supper.

In the morning Marie reappeared, just as I was ready to walk over to meet Souchère and the Texans. Her hair, face, arms and dress were all stained a bright blue and in her hands she held an enormous bunch of gladioli which originally must have been white but which she had dyed the same violent color that had spilled over onto herself and her clothes. "Pour les Texans," she said, with her usual musical laughter, and she and my wife scurried around to find vases for the flowers.

I left for the museum and Souchère introduced me to the

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Texans. Then he departed abruptly for his office and the Texans and I started through the Picasso galleries. I felt nervous, though I had fortified myself with a large Martini on the not unreasonable theory that when I returned home my liquor, too, would have turned blue. I need not have worried. The group of some 25 Texans was in the charge of Douglas MacAgy, a bright man with whom I had worked in the Museum of Modern Art and who was later the Director of the Dallas Museum. I thought Douglas looked a little peaked after a long bus tour for art's sake. But he had briefed his group on how and why so many of Picasso's works happened to be in the Musée d'Antibes.

There was little I needed to add, except when questioned, and this was a vast relief, the more so in that I myself find nothing more irritating than being jabbered at when trying to look at paintings and sculptures. Some of my dealer-friends have the terrible habit of expounding about their wares to visitors to their galleries. A far worse outrage to concentration takes place when museums install mechanical docents, electrically amplified, on their walls. It is, of course, impossible to synchronize these machines with the amount of time a given visitor wants to spend staring at a particular work of art. To adjust himself to what the machines are trying to explain, the gallery-goer has the choice of breaking into a trot or going lame, and neither stratagem works very well. I remember with special horror listening to these aids-to-learning in Washington's

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National Gallery a few years ago. When I left I was given a card to fill out, saying how I thought the mechanical docents could be improved. I was trembling, but I managed to write down in a firm hand, "Short circuit the whole goddamned system."

Anyway, at Antibes the Texans seemed well-informed about Picasso's incredible career, the men limp with fatigue, the women enthusiastic victims of their glands. I asked the whole group back to the house for a drink. We guzzled champagne, talked about Picasso's virility and admired Marie's blue flowers. It was a pleasant afternoon for us and, I hope, for the Texans. Only Marie seemed rather crestfallen, presumably having expected a rodeo to take place on the premises. "Texas, pfft!" she kept mumbling after the visitors had left, and was beginning to get our dinner. I really believe that if James Stewart had walked in the door at that moment, she would have slapped his face hard, especially if he were wearing chaps.

The day after the Texans had left, Jacques Prévert walked over for a neighborly drink. In youth Prevert had been an inseparable friend of my great friend, the late Yves Tanguy, and I had long been enchanted by his poetry and by the only one of his films I had managed to see. Tanguy's widow (and My God! how she hated the word) had told us before we left America that we would be beguiled by Prevert. We were indeed. Kay Tanguy had also told us that Prévert liked to drink as much as Yves had. "And as much as you still do," she added with cross

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affection. I therefore got out for Prevert the bonded Bourbon which I'd hidden from the Texans, explaining to Marie that even Texas women got giddy or sullen on anything stronger than champagne. Besides, Bourbon was hard to get in small French towns and I thought Prévert would like it. He seemed to like it very, very much, and after three fast drinks he went over to perch on the low wall which separated our terrace from the sharp rocks below. Prévert looked and acted perfectly sober. But I have a strong Humpty-Dumpty complex about my drinking companions sitting on low walls and I managed to lure Prévert to safer ground on the other side of the terrace.

Prévert had a round, pudgy but extraordinary mobile face. He talked a great deal in a guttural voice, ranging abruptly from blunt facts or questions to eloquent parabolas of fantasy. He asked me first about Tanguy in America and then he wanted to know whether I'd been to see Picasso. I replied that I had not, since Souchère had told me that Picasso then didn't feel like seeing anyone and was tired of the endless procession of visitors to his villa, La Californie, in Cannes. I told Prévert how desperately I wanted to see Picasso again but that I felt I should respect the Great Man's wishes. I think now that I was trying to be too thoughtful. I'd been home in America only a few weeks when word reached me through a mutual friend that Picasso was offended because I hadn't made the effort to see him when I'd spent the whole summer only a few miles away! But Prévert

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too had told me that Picasso wanted privacy that summer. "Since you can't see him," he added, "I'll take you down the street to see Guy Bernard, who composed the music for the film on Picasso's Guernica."

A few days later, Prévert picked us up and we walked down to Bernard's house. The house had once been a butcher shop and over the outside door was placed a stuffed animal's head. My wife insisted that it was a horse's head, rather the worse for wear after long exposure to the weather. I told her crossly that the last mistral we'd driven through had done something to her brain, because why would a self-respecting butcher advertise the fact that he sold horsemeat? It turned out, to my chagrin, that she was right, since years ago harsemeat had been considered more of a delicacy than no meat at all, especially in small French towns.

We entered the house with eager help from Prévert. The interior was dark and completely filled with stringed instruments, old and new but mainly very old. We were greeted warmly by Guy Bernard and he led up up five flights of narrow, steep stairs to a terrace overlooking the bay and a magnificent landscape, with low buildings and endless green fields. It was the sort of vista I've always liked best, that is, it was landscape rather than scenery. Switzerland and the mountainous parts of America have always left me cold because they have no believable scale but merely rear up and lie down again. In this as in other predilections, I agree with Gertrude Stein, who once said that she liked a view but liked to sit with her back to it.

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Bernard was extremely learned about music's long history and much of the time he left me dangling as we talked about it. I could follow him partly, however, when he talked about the difficulties of composing a musical accompaniment to Picasso's tender and at the same time ferocious masterpiece, Guernica. I thought I had known most of the huge painting's moods but, listening to Bernard, I knew I did not. I had seen Guernica first at the Spanish pavilion in the 1937 World's Fair at Paris, where it was shown along with a few of Picasso's sculptures and an ingenious mobile by Sandy Calder which was a fountain but employed mercury rather than water, so that its components shifted as the molten metal coursed along. And I had seen Guernica very, very often as it hung in our Museum on extended loan from the artist. Yet I, so utterly unmusical, learned more about the mural's complex emotional content from listening to Guy Bernard than I had from any art historian.

We had known before leaving America that there would be many things we'd want to see in the Antibes area. So on the boat going over to France, I'd consulted a fellow-passenger, Buckminster Fuller, as to what kind of car we should rent. I knew Fuller was an authority on the subject. Indeed, I'd never forgotten the day in the early 1930s when Fuller had arrived at thee Wadsworth Atheneum and had insisted on taking Chick Austin and me on a drive through Hartford in a car he had just designed. I think it was called a "Dymaxion" car, but that may have been

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the name of a later product of Fuller's amazing imagination. In any case, the car Chick Austin and I rode in had only three wheels, probably as an aid to maneuverability. I'm not likely to forget this fact, since during my childhood in Hartford, a neighbor on Forest Street had taken me for a ride in a three-wheeled car he had invented. His name was Kelly and I remember little else about him except that on a subsequent trial run, with someone else aboard, he made the last ten yards of the trip upside-down and he and his companion were carried off to the hospital, dead or nearly so.

The ride with Buckminster Fuller from the Wadsworth Atheneum had not been soothing. We had zoomed in and around traffic at terrifying speed, with Fuller constantly exclaiming, "See how it works, see, see!" I couldn't possibly have seen anything. I was numb with fear and longing to be back in the Atheneum's parking lot. Nevertheless, I kept reading about Fuller's inventions in later years, and when he told me firmly on the boat to rent a certain advanced model Citroen car, that's what we rented at nearby Cannes.

It was a good car, I suppose, but it had one imponderable eccentricity, deliberately planned, of course. When you started the motor, the whole car rose slowly for four or five inches and then gradually settled down to earth again. The troubling part of this strange procedure was that as the car rose and descended all the doors locked for an unpredictable length of time,

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sometimes for a few minutes, sometimes for half an hour. I remember that once we were driving home from the beach, sealed up tight, and a very pretty, young and obviously German girl tried to thumb a ride. I would like to have obliged, but there was no way to do so without stalling the motor and starting the whole levitation process from the beginning. I felt badly about this and bellowed through the closed windows, "Excusez-moi, Fraulein, mais, après tout, c'est un Citroen." Why I had felt impelled to shout in bad French to a German girl who couldn't possibly have heard me, I no longer know. I thought it was the height of thoughfful chivalry at the time. I guess I secretly hoped the girl was lòoking for Buckminster Fuller, cudgel in hand.

Our first longish excursion in the Citroen was to visit the newly-opened Léger Museum at Biot. For many years I'd been of two minds about Léger's art. I think he was almost never as inspired a cubist as Picasso, Braque and Gris. On the other hand, at intervals throughout his later career he produced certain masterworks like the Breakfast and the much later Three Musicians which I once owned, and then found I couldn't afford, though the dealer, Valentine Dudensing, said he would make me a special price because he himself had posed for one of the picture's three figures. Both pictures are now in our Museum, where they belong, and they seem to me more and more impressive. For a long time Leger's paintings struck me as too crude for comfort but I see now that his bluntness was a very real part of his

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eloquence as an artist. Several times in his museum at Biot I was struck by the deftness of line and modeling which underlay his massive forms, as though he had been a heavyweight champion who could, when necessary, box like a nimble bantam.

I thought about Léger's possible importance all the way home to Antibes in our levitating Citroen. And since I also thought about whether the car would get us back to Antibes or take off for Mars in a sudden fit of enthusiasm for higher spaces, I remembered the first time I'd met Léger, by accident. It was in the very early 1930s, I was living in Paris for a few months and I had with me a long, black Packard roadster, with a special body. It was a handsome car and one day I parked it on the Boulevard St. Germain while I went into a bistro to get a drink. I knew what Leger looked like from photographs and when I came out of the bistro I saw him circling around the Packard in evident admiration. I couldn't resist asking him whether he'd like to drive the car. "Mais oui, mon Dieu!" he said and pumped my hand with his massive paw and off we sped to the Bois de Boulogne, he silent with concentration and I with shyness. He thanked me profusely when we got back and I told him he was an excellent driver, though speed limits, cops and traffic snarls were all things to be disregarded or overcome by sheer speed and power. He remembered the incident several years later when I took him and the Calders to lunch at the old Hotel Heublein in Hartford, where he had come for the Wadsworth Atheneum's Paper Ball. "Do you remember that pedestrian I missed by a foot?" he asked. I

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said I did but, to tell the truth and however callous it sounds, I remember more clearly a truck he missed by an inch.

In Paris, before going down to Antibes, we had seen much of Marcel Duhamel and his charming wife. Duhamel was the chief translator of English and American fiction, especially detective stories, for the venerable and distinguished French publishing firm, NRF. In youth, Duhamel, my close friend, Yves Tanguy and Jacques Prévert had been inseparable companions and had called themselves The Three Musketeers, a term of self-adulation and vowed fidelity to each other which I had always thought reserved for American adolescents. We now drove up to see the Duhamels in the Citroen. Their vacation home was in a newly established, country-club resort called Castellaras, up in the hills above the Côte d'Azur. I find most American resort towns intolerable unless they are beginning to run down a bit at the heel, and Castellaras with its elaborate tennis, golf and swimming facilities seemed even worse, possibly because its kind of life was still easy to avoid in France. But the Duhamels' house was enchanting and the high corn growing in their garden seemed as alien as it had to the Bible's Ruth. We ate and drank superb wine, liked the Duhamels very much and all in all had a fine day.

David Douglas Duncan, the photographer, turned up while we were at the Duhamels' house. He was just completing the inspiring job of photographing the many works of art which Picasso still had in his possession at his villa in Cannes. The photo-

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graphs were later published in book form. It is a useful document on a great man's art and method of working.

Emboldened by my success in managing the Citroen, we made another excursion by car to see a very old friend, the late Iris Barry, the founder and guiding spirit of the Museum's Film Library. Iris lived in Fayence, a fairly remote hill town north of the Riviera. She lived in a house, on the short main street, which Chick Austin had bought and lent her to live in in her retirement. The house had occasional handsome architectural details and it had a fine view of the surrounding valley from the top-floor terrace. But otherwise it looked from the outside nearly like every other house adjoining it on a dreary street. It had and has no central heating and will always need repairs. Its chief advantage for Iris, so far as I could see, was that it was given her rent-free, it was tranquil except when Chick sent other impoverished friends to visit Iris, and it was not too far from Cannes, where the Film Festival takes place annually. And I should add in fairness that the countryside near the village was exceptionally beautiful and presided over by an enormous, almost totally ruined villa from the Napoleonic era. Why Chick didn't buy that villa, I'll never know, but it could be that its dozens of collapsing columns defied even Chick's insatiable desire to convert ruin into luxury. And perhaps the bitter winters were too much for him to contemplate.

It was good to see Iris again, as it always was. For more

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years than I can remember she had been one of my favorite drinking companions and often when the others had gone to bed, she and I would sit up until dawn reviewing the crimes and benedictions, the failings and great qualities of our friends. Unlike nearly all women I know, drinking made Iris neither sombre nor giggly. it made her steadily more eloquent and her memory sharper. She was a voracious reader and used to review books for the Harald-Tribune and other newspapers. Her wit could be deadly but most often it was softened by laughter. Her accent and character were thoroughly British but her contempt for unnessary politesse was thoroughly American. After all these years I can no longer remember whether it was she or the novelist Stark Young, who once, in the middle of a tiresomely circumspect party, roared out in anguish, "More obscenity, please!" It sounds like Iris.

Iris and her French friend, Pierre, came over to see us several times at Antibes and we invariably ate dinner at a small but excellent restaurant called "Felix au Vieux Port", down near the water's edge. We always ate grilled loup, cooked over tiny twigs, We took Loren MacIver and her husband LLoyd Frankenberg there for dinner one night and to our delight and Loren's ecstasy, a team of acrobatic cyclists appeared on the dark quai and began zooming in and out of the restaurant and around the terrace tables, steering and balancing with incredible skill. Pierre and Patricia Matisse joined us and after dinner we went to his

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boat in the old harbor for brandy and other drinks. I've never known much about the inner workings of the Quaker mind but that night I learned at least that it includes an astonishing sense of physical balance. At one point, Lloyd, thoroughly tipsy, decided to walk ashore on the bowsprit of Pierre's boat. I thought then - I still think - the boat didn't have a bowsprit but I do know that Lloyd came back from his excursion bone-dry, as a more celebrated Biblical character had done centuries before him.

We were joined on several other occasions at Félix's by one of the nicest and most distiguished men in the entire art world - Roland Penrose, the English critic and painter, who had fought courageously on behalf of the surrealist movement in London during the 1930s, had long been a trusted friend of Picasso, been a guiding force behind the British Arts Council which had been a central force in bringing laggardly English taste up-to-date in matters relating to international contemporary painting and sculpture. Sir Roland as he is now so justly titled, is one of the few men I've known who can strike a fair, perceptive and influential balance between kindness on the one hand, fierce impatience with bigotry and academic reaction on the other. I suppose the worst thing that can be said about him or anyone else is that he has no enemies. Yet over the years I've never heard a bad word said of him except by one or two colleagues whose bitchiness, like their sexual predilections, is incurable.

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I knew Roland's beautiful American wife, Lee Miller, slightly when she was studying photography with Man Ray in Paris. This was in 1935, when I published an album of Man Ray's photographs, with frontispiece by Picasso and texts by the leading surrealist writers. The album was widely distributed in Europe by the now-famous publisher, Albert Skira. Skira must have made quite a bit of money from the project, but it was impossible for me to collect any of it. So I sued him in the French courts. This proved a tiresome and hopeless procedure and there was nothing to do except become friends again. The album was distributed in America by Random House, whose boss, Bennett Cerf, complained endlessly about the album's very beautiful but fragile, spiral binding and was contemptuous of surrealism in general. There was a certain inconsistency about Cerf's attitude in that the surrealists inherited Marcel Duchamp's love of puns, and Cerf himself went on to become this country's most tireless and quite possibly its most tiresome punster.

Our trip back from Fayence in the Citroen had been so nerve-wracking that I decided balloon ascension in an automobile was not for me. When we finally got home, I asked blessed Marie Lerda if she knew of a driver we might hire. Naturally, being French and from a small village, she replied that her second cousin on her mother's side of the family was an excellent chauffeur and might be available. He was available and I guess he was a good driver, though now I was able to keep my eyes

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tightly closed when on the French highways. The chauffeur had the added advantage of having driven a levitating Citroën before, a privilege I thought reserved for M. Citroën and Buckminster Fuller. Anyway, now we were free to make any excursion we wanted along the Riviera.

On a clear day we decided to motor over to see the remarkable collector, René Gaffé, who had retired and was living in Cagnes. The late M. Gaffé and I had never met but we had written back and forth for many years, since we shared a passionate interest in the early (1911-17) works of Giorgio de Chirico which laid the groundwork for all surrealist painting except that dedicated to the automatism of Miró, Masson and others. Both of us had written a good deal about the young and incredibly inspired de Chirico and we always exchanged any books or articles we wrote about contemporary art.

Gaffé owned several capital works from de Chirico's youth. He also had bought early what is probably the best known of all Chagall's paintings - the I and the Village (1911), now in the Museum of Modern Art's collection. I share to some extent the general esteem for this picture. Nevertheless, if given my choice I think I would take a second Chagall in the Museum, the Calvary, painted the following year in a magnificent red tonality. Very likely I'm prejudiced in this choice because some of the most devout champions of abstract art have discovered and applauded a cubist influence in the angular construction of I and the Village. I think the influence is there (at least Chagall him-

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self once said it was), but it is engulfed by Chagall's love of whimsical folklore, a quality of mind which I find intolerable in a vast majority of his paintings. Chagall was a gifted colorist certainly. And yet on an extended scale he seems to me to have been most admirable in his black-and-white illustrations for the Bible. During the Second World War I had visited the studios in New York of Chagall and Mondrian. It seems to me in retrospect that Mondrian was far the greater of the two artists, though his mature pictures conveyed no overt message or emotion.

Of the many other exceptional pictures Gaffé had assembled, I envied most a large, blue, totally abstract Miró from the mid-1920s. It is a painting so fresh in color and handling that I doubt it has ever been surpassed in headlong spontaniety by Miro or any of his contemporaries. I make no special mention of Gaffé's fine de Chiricos because I've spent most of my adult life surrounded by comparable works and all passion is spent. It was strangely simple talking to Gaffé at last, we went on where our letters had left off. There was a marvelous view of the Mediterranean from the Gaffes' terrace. At least our wives kept reminding us that there was. I don't think Gaffé and I stopped talking long enough to take a real look. After all, water is water and can become monotonous no matter how quickly it changes in surface and color. And art is art and is inexhaustible when two men are trying to discover why their tastes run along parallel lines.

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A few days later, we drove over to have lunch with Pierre and Patricia Matisse at their house at St. Jean-Cap Ferrat. We ate and drank superbly on their terrace overlooking the bay. As usual with the Matisses, there were many people present whom we knew and liked: Joan and Pilar Miro; the architect José Sert and his wife; the admirable painter Jean-Paul Riopelle, whose work I don't happen to admire; the genial California art dealer, Frank Perls; Patricia's mother, step-father and aunt from nearby Monte Carlo; Peggy and Georges Bernier, editors of the lively art magazine, L'Oeil.

There was a path leading down to the bay and Patricia went off water-skiing, so that luncheon was blessedly late. We all talked and ate and talked again, far into the afternoon. The only time I left my chair was to explore the house, where Pierre had told me there were no good pictures and where there were many. It was a fine, giddy day and Marie Lerda's second cousin on her mother's side drove us home, smiling and smelling of wine.

A week later it was suddenly time to go back to America, there were weepy farewells with Marie and we took the boat from Cannes. We almost missed the boat, because at the last minute I raced to a bank to have a check in francs sent to Jacques Prévert to pay for some collages I was taking back to give to the Museum in New York. A few weeks later, I heard by the grapevine that Prevért never got the check. And then presently I heard from a trusted, mutual friend that he'd seen the check in Prevert's

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house; uncancelled, it was now part of a collage Prevert was making! Knowing Prevert's almost total indifference to money this seems a logical solution to a mystery which troubles me still.

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BALTHUS AND GIACOMETTI

One of the strangest friendships in the world of modern art always seemed to me to be that between Balthus Klossowski de Rola, internationally known as simply Balthus, and the late Swiss sculptor, Alberto Giacometti. Each occupied an exalted, solitary place in our century's art; each was magnificently indifferent to the prevailing tides of taste, style and revolutionary fervor in contemporary painting and sculpture. I would have thought their isolation was all they had in common. On the contrary, their bonds of friendship were many and deep. They saw each other whenever possible, sometimes traveling fairly long distances to do so. Both were relatively silent men but, though I myself was seldom with them together, I've heard many firsthand accounts of how they jabbered like magpies, fought, embraced, quarreled again and always ended in some curious affinity of spirit.

I don't know whether their friendship was abetted or hindered by their lady-loves. As in the case of Lewis Carroll, Balthus' female companions were too young to have exerted much of an influence one way or another. As to Giacometti, when I saw him at dinner in New York at the time of his one-man exhibition in our Museum (1965), I told him how glad I was at last to see and know his wife, Annette, after all the years he and I had known each other. I had to leave dinner early for some reason and Giacometti followed me to the door and said in his inimitable,

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swarthy voice, "You know, what you said about Annette interests me. I've been married to her for almost twenty years and I don't see or know her at all myself." It seemed a curious remark to make about a woman who was not only his wife but the most ubiquitous model for his paintings and sculptures with the exception of his brother, Diego. I doubt that any outsiders, male or female, had any effect whatever on the profound devotion of Balthus and Giacometti to each other.

I had met and known Giacometti for several years before I knew Balthus. In the very early 1930s Giacometti was close to the surrealists and I used to meet him with them at the Cafés Deux Magots and Flore on the Blvd. St. Germain. I also went several times in those years to the studio on the rue Hippolyte-Maindron in Paris' XIV arrondissement which Giacometti had rented in 1927 and occupied to the end of his life. Nevertheless it was Balthus whom first I got to know well because of an extraordinary picture he'd painted.

The picture called The Street, was the first large-scale work of Balthus' career and is an imaginative transcription of a scene on the short rue Bourbon-le-Chateau in Paris' sixth arrondissement. Balthus had painted the picture in 1933 and it had been shown in his first one-man exhibition at Pierre Loeb's Paris gallery the following year. I had seen The Street in that show and had never been able to get it out of my mind. A little more than two years later I was again in Loeb's gallery and, to

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BALTHUS AND GIACOMETTI

my astonishment, the painting had not yet been sold. I bought it at once, with a vast sigh of relief, having brooded about it almost constantly since 1934.

The fact that The Street was almost 6½ x 8 feet in size may have discouraged some possible purchasers. But the chief difficulty, as Pierre Loeb told me frankly, was that the painting's left section included a passage which even the French, usually calm about such matters, found hard to take. The passage shows a young girl being seized by the crotch by a strangely Mongolian-looking young man who has come up behind her, his face taut with easily decipherable excitement. Since the French had been frightened off by this passage, I began to worry about getting the picture through U.S. Customs. But Hartford was then a Port of Entry and I had brought so many modern paintings through Customs there that the officers regarded me as eccentric rather than libidinous, and they let the Balthus through without fuss of any kind. Indeed, one of these men told me, bless his heart, that this was the first picture I'd had sent from Europe which he really liked!

This was not, however, the end of my troubles over The Street. I hung the picture proudly on the wall at the end of the living room in my Farmington house. My son, Peter, was then only about four years old and within a month I began getting polite but disturbed phone calls from his friends' parents, asking what on earth kind of picture their children had seen in my house. I

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tried every explanation and defense I could think of, including the fact that the National Gallery in Washington always had on public view The Feast of the Gods by the Italian Renaissance's Giovanni Bellini which has as explicit if seemingly less aware gestures as that in my Balthus. Perhaps I argued my case badly; perhaps I shouldn't have tried to argue it at all in that sturdily New England community. In any case, the neighborhood clamor didn't subside nor did the number of very small visitors to my living room. Moreover, with childhood's instinct for getting right to the point, the kids would gather in front of the "questionable" passage, as though there were nothing else in the large composition worth looking at. I finally decided that it wasn't fair to my small son to have his father thought of as unmoral, if not immoral, and I reluctantly took the picture down and stored it in a fireproof vault I'd built off the garage.

The painting stayed in the vault for a number of years. It stayed there in fact until The Reverend James L. McLane came all the way from his huge Episcopalian parish in Los Angeles to see it and bawled me out for three hours for being so cowardly as to ~~as to~~ hide a great painting away in a darkened vault. I told him I'd done so for my son's sake and this made the late Reverend McLane angrier than ever. "The picture is perfectly innocent," he kept saying, "and besides your son is a child and not supposed to know what great art is." "Nor are his friends or his friends' mothers," he added, his temper rising. Father McLane's parish was in the poorest section of Los Angeles, and I knew that in

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his church out there he had hung several Balthus paintings of young girls, not too decently posed or attired. I admired his courage but found it hard to follow his reasoning, especially since two of his own Balthus paintings contained sexual innuendoes which only the very innocent or the very stupid didn't realize were there. I'm not an Epsicopalian myself, but I've met two other ministers of that faith who've shown a like tolerance and understanding of art's specialized problems and compulsions. I sometimes wish I'd been brought up in their church instead of that of the Baptists, whose faith in Total Immersion I find appealing in the Biblical sense but everlastingly bad for the human sinuses.

I used to go see Balthus every time I was in Paris, which was almost every year in those days. Balthus had a large, barn-like studio in the ancient Cours de Rohan. The first time I went there, around 1935, he and I were talking intently about the qualities of Pierre Bonnard, a very old friend of Balthus' distinguished family. Suddenly the studio door burst open and in rushed one of the great international beauties of our century - an Englishwoman, whose name was constantly on every society page in the world and who was unbelievably beautiful. Her marvelous face alone had stopped me in mid-sentence but Balthus responded to this apparition with blind rage. "How dare you come here without phoning?" he shouted, though he knew perfectly well there was no phone. The latter fact must have occurred to him suddenly,

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for he said, "When I want to see you, I'll call. I'm very busy now with an American friend." I tried to interrupt by saying I'd come back another day but Balthus would have none of it. "Go away," he said to the young lady, and that's what she did, quietly and humbly. I guess there is such a thing as an homme fatal. He had the lean, compelling looks for it, as every woman I've ever met who knew him has assured me, over and over, over and over, again

It was in the barren studio in the Cours de Rohan that Balthus painted what is to my mind one of the greatest portraits of our century, the Joan Miró and His Daughter Dolores of 1937-38. I bought this remarkable picture the moment I saw it at Pierre Matisse's gallery, but Pierre phoned me the same afternoon and asked me if I would release it to the Museum of Modern Art because Alfred Barr liked it as much as I did and had even found a donor, a fairly rare occurrence in those earlier days of the Museum's history. It was the first time Pierre and Alfred had asked such a favor of me and I naturally said yes. To this day I can't look at the portrait - and I look at it very often - without wishing it were on my own walls. And yet I think a picture of that unique quality belongs in a public museum; at least that's what I tell myself in a stern voice.

The psychological contrast between the sombre, dressed-for-the-occasion pose of Miró and the fidgety good manners of his daughter is incredibly real and acute. It is also quite obviously based on fact. For Miró, one of the most delightful visual

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humorists of our time, is also awed on occasion by his own stupendous talent and puts his best foot forward, so to speak, even though both feet in this portrait are clad in the worn, old shoes of which he is fond. Dolores, despite her obvious affection for her father, seems ready to break from Miró's grasp and race around the studio in idle delight. And this is what happened a number of times, immortality being too frivolous a matter for children to take seriously. Miró's wife, Pilar, told me once that Balthus got so upset by Dolores' restless energy that he held her dangling out his studio window until she promised, sobbing wildly, to hold still when she and her father posed again. Pilar Miró is a calm, wonderfully sympathetic woman. But when I mentioned Balthus and the portrait, some twenty years after it was done, a cloud came over her serene face, as though she were saying to herself, "alright, alright. I know what art is. But Dolores is my daughter and that Balthus..."

As the years went by I worried more and more about whether our Museum would be able to exhibit The Street when it was finally turned over to that institution at my death. Or before, if I could ever cure myself of staring at the picture in wonder every day. Father McLane was no longer alive to defend the picture at the Museum's doors, and I didn't know where else it could find adequately ferocious protection. In 1956, however, Balthus was having a one-man show in Paris and he wrote to ask me whether I'd lend The Street. I replied that I would, of course. I added,

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not as a condition but as a plea, that I was concerned about the picture ever being shown to a large audience in its then-current state. I told Balthus in all frankness that several restorers had offered to "improve" the lurid passage but that I wouldn't let anyone touch the canvas except Balthus himself. I thought this hint would mean the end of a friendship very dear to me. But to my astonishment Balthus replied that he would like to re-paint the offending passage. "When I was young I wanted to shock," he wrote. "Now it bores me."

I heard nothing more from Balthus for months after The Street had arrived in Paris for his exhibition, and I assumed he'd had a change of heart about making any changes in the composition. But late in the summer of the same year (1956) Alfred Barr, my wife and I stopped off to spend a few days with Balthus at his Château de Chassy, near Autun. We were on our way to Paris from Cannes, and I grew steadily more nervous about what condition The Street would be in and thought in my gloomier hours that Balthus had probably painted it out entirely. He must have sensed how apprehensive I was, since he dragged the big picture into the living room at once. The Mongolian boy's hand had been moved very slightly to a less committed position on the young girl's body, though his eyes were tense with the same fever. I think The Street is safe now anywhere from Puritanical rage; I've always thought it one of the very great pictures produced by a member of Balthus' generation.

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Balthus gave my wife and myself a brief tour of the Château de Chassy the next morning. The chateau had originally been a hunting lodge and from its basement's ceiling hung enormous hooks on which stags, boars and other game had been suspended for curing. The effect of the empty hooks was mildly alarming, and we were glad to clamber upstairs again. The chateau itself and its many outbuildings made a handsome setting for Balthus, and I was sorry to hear later on, after his appointment as Director of the French Academy in Rome, that he'd given the entire property to a friend. Naturally he then bought another chateau, this time at Malvelo about sixty miles north of Rome and not far from the main highway.

We took Balthus to dinner that night at the little Hotel du Barrage in Chassy, where we were staying. I remember being puzzled by the hotel's name, but Pierre Matisse later explained to me that the French word "barrage" referred to the dam whereby the lake at Chassy had been created. The lake had become a favorite of fishermen from all over France, and it was for them that the hotel was built by the proprietor himself, an Italian called Romeo. After dinner he and Balthus sang what seemed to my unmusical ears very long, in fact interminable, duets from various operas. It's difficult to remember which of the two men had the worse and less accurate voice, but neither lacked courage or volume and they bellowed heartlessly. I do remember that, back in Paris some weeks later, we again met Balthus and his current young lady, and I asked her whether she thought Balthus had a

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good voice. She said nothing but merely flopped her pigtails over her face in a gesture of sweet despair.

To my very real regret I haven't seen Balthus over the years since he was appointed Director of the French Academy in Rome by André Malraux, President of De Gaulle's Minister of Cultural Affairs. I've nevertheless done my best to keep track of his activities and, naturally his paintings, which seem to me to have become steadily more fluent and assured. I included as many of his works as possible in his one-man exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in the winter of 1956-7. Their number was restricted by the fact that some were very large in scale because, as Balthus wrote me at the time, "If I have achieved something up to the present it is almost uniquely, I think, in my large paintings." The curious thing is that these big paintings from The Street down to its companion piece, Le Passage du Commerce Saint André of 1952-54, were all worked on rapidly, though long intervals would intervene when he wouldn't touch the canvases at all. He wrote: "I am always eager not to tire the canvas." He added, in a sentence his great friend, Giacometti, might have written: "So many painters today have found a trick. I have never been able to find one." I remember clearly that a main difficulty in directing his exhibition at the Museum was to find an adequate number of his marvelous drawings, though I knew many of them existed. Many more no longer did exist. The truth is that he hates nearly all of them, however fine they appear to others. "When I have

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finished my paintings," he once told me, "I put the drawings for them on the floor and walk on them until they are erased." I saw evidence of this almost criminal practice when I visited him at his Château de Chassy. The room in which he worked had a very old, very rough floor and on it first-rate drawings, nearly illegible except for footprints, were scattered. I got my courage up and scolded him but it did no good, of course. I scolded him in English because for the first time in all those years we talked that language together, and he knew it perfectly, having spent a long time in England in his youth and been entranced by the novels of the Brontë sisters, especially Emily Brontë's <u>Wuthering Heights</u>. (In the early 1930s Balthus made a series of illustrations for Emily Brontë's hypnotic and distraught masterpiece and converted at least one of these illustrations into a major painting.)

There is a story, probably apocryphal, that Balthus' regard for England's past was so obsessive that he claimed to be a direct descendant of Lord Byron. Whether the story is true or not - and I've never heard it from Balthus's lips - Balthus's temperament is thoroughly Byronic in sheer defiance of convention and even of the rules that govern what is called Bohemian life. At a time when most of his colleagues had Left-Wing sympathies or were more directly involved in revolutionary purpose, Balthus adored nobility, sins of extravagance and all. Throughout the countryside near Chassy he was addressed as the Count de Rola. I heard of several occasions that the "de Rola" title actually belonged to

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his first wife, Cathy and that he would lose it if he divorced her. This can scarcely have been true because in later years Balthus must have divorced Cathy in order to marry a Japanese girl named Setsuko. In any case, what is true beyond question is that Balthus' upbringing was aristocratic and highly intellectual. His mother was a painter whom Bonnard, Roussel and Derain adored and admired; his father was the author of a standard, early monograph on Daumier. Both parents were of Polish extraction; both had been caught up in the mid-19th century migration to Paris of Polish artists and intellectuals which carried Chopin into the avid arms of George Sand.

Before his appointment as Director of the French Academy in Rome, Balthus spent more and more time at his Château de Chassy, and even telegrams were forwarded to him fairly promptly, I assume, from Autun. But Giacometti was almost always in Paris and yet very hard to communicate with except in person. At least he was for me, since my French seems to be instantly soluble in gibberish when I talk on the phone. I remember that once in Paris I had some urgent message for him regarding his forthcoming exhibition at our Museum in New York. I had tried his number at all hours, since I knew he often stayed up all night and slept in the morning and early afternoon. Finally, I was at a party at the apartment of Darthea Speyer, a very dear friend, who was then the brightest light in United States Informations Service's otherwise dismal offices, and she offered to try reaching Giacometti by phone for me. I was rather vain about my French, and I thought

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Darthea's sounded like that of a Mid-Western high school student, though actually I think she came from Pittsburgh. In any case she reached either Alberto or Diego Giacometti instantly and relayed my message. She also taught me an important aid to telephone communication in la Belle France. After every sentence, whether you need to or not, you shout "ne quittez pas", and the command frightens everyone to silent attention. Now that telephone service in New York City is as bad or worse, I think I'll try the phrase here, retaining the French words for Imperial reasons.

Despite Darthea's valiant efforts, there were things I still had to discuss with Giacometti on behalf of Peter Selz, the director of our Museum's retrospective exhibition of the sculptor's work. So I went over to Giacometti's studio, hoping to see a new, large standing figure everyone in Paris had told me was especially marvelous. I saw the sculpture alright; it was lying in plaster fragments on the floor. "There was something wrong with the nose," Giacometti said calmly, "so I destroyed the piece." I knew I shouldn't have said it, but I couldn't resist asking why he couldn't have re-worked this small detail and left the six-foot tall figure intact. "No," said Giacometti, "if something goes wrong in a piece of sculpture, you must destroy everything and begin again." He added, "I'm used to beginning again." Anyone who has read James Lord's fine account of posing for a painted portrait by Giacometti will understand precisely what

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Giacometti meant by the latter words.

In June-July, 1955 the Arts Council of Great Britain held in London a large retrospective exhibition of Giacometti's work. I was in London for the first time in many years and I went to see the show three or four times, dragging as many American friends as I could with me. There was one smallish figure in plaster which haunted me in particular, though I must confess that I'm haunted a good deal of the time by Giacometti's sculptures and paintings, whether or not I'm actaully looking at them. Perhaps I was especially fascinated by the little figure because the last time I'd been in Giacometti's Paris studio he had never stopped pressing this plaster piece or one very like it with his thumbs, sometimes hard, more often very gently. He always seemed to be cajoling his sculptures into taking an inner life, as though he felt if they were not breathing, they were nothing at all.

Perhaps this fact accounts in good part for the mesmeric effect Giacometti's works have on some people, myself included. He was an artist who worked like one possessed. As I once wrote of him, even his thinnest figures seem large because "they magnetize the surrounding air and light, attracting to themselves an inexplicably poetic nimbus." These figures continue to grow in one's imagination even after the memory of them has begun to dim. I remember that it was two or three years after I'd seen the plaster figure in the London show when Pierre Matisse phoned me and said, "Your Giacometti is here." I remember, too, that this news

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panicked me mildly on two counts. First, the news came at a time when I was low on money and knew how expensive all Giacometti's works had rightfully become. Secondly, my house in New Canaan has been out of adequate wall space for many years and I knew this plaster sculpture would have to be placed indoors. The latter problem had stopped troubling me twenty years ago, but money is a more serious matter. It's very strange but the rich and the poor always know how much money they have and can plan ahead. On the other hand, I seem to belong to a strange category known as the "comfortably fixed", a phrase which always sounds to me as though I had been expertly gelded in youth. The many people in this category seldom know what they can and cannot afford and nobody tells them. So I naturally had to ask Pierre Matisse how much the Giacometti sculpture was. "There isn't any price," Pierre replied. "Giacometti sent the piece you as a present." Of course I was stunned with pleasure, but I did ask, "For God's sake, why?" "I don't know why, "Pierre answered, "but I think it was something you said or wrote about him, and he knew you loved this particular sculpture." I've no idea what I said or wrote about Giacometti which prompted this fantastic gift. If I ever find out, I'll write or say the same thing about a number of artists I admire without reservation. Except that I won't really. Instead, I'll stare at the Giacometti day after day, with joy, awe and disbelief.

I saw Giacometti as often as possible when he came to New York

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in 1965 for the opening of his exhibition at our Museum. His reaction to New York was rather curious; he kept telling me that the city was very like Venice. The parallel escapes me utterly to this day, though I seem to remember that Giacometti took a boat trip around Manhattan and was fascinated by the surrounding waterways. In any case, he seemed happy in New York, especially after we assured him that he could phone his brother Diego in Paris every day. I overheard one of the two brothers' conversations on the phone. It consisted almost entirely of exchanged analyses of the weather in Paris and New York and it comforted them both greatly, particularly if the skies were clear or it was pouring rain in both cities. If it was cloudy here and fair in Paris, Alberto would become gloomy for a short time, as though nature had no right to play disparate tricks on brothers who had seldom been this widely separated or for this long a period. In all the times I saw Giacometti, I never once met Diego. Nevertheless, in the studio on the rue Hippolyte-Maindron, his presence was always felt, whether or not one of Alberto's many portraits of him happened to be visible at the time. If Alberto alone was incredibly talented and Diego content to supervise casting and work on ornamental objects designed by his brother, theirs was in essence if not in fact a twin brother act - the most creative and inspired of our time.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS: J.T.S.

1. ROUAULT

The largest one-man exhibition I directed for the Museum of Modern Art was of Georges Rouault's paintings and prints and was held during the spring of 1945. Remembering my rather harsh dispute with Ambrose Vollard over Rouault's importance many years earlier, it seems rather strange that I undertook the show, though I had repented my youthful opinion to the extent of buying a Rouault painting from Joseph Brummer. Even so, I didn't keep the Rouault long, to Brummer's intense disgust, and I'd come to believe that Rouault was a great painter only from roughly 1903 to the end of World War I, though he thereafter became at his best a superb printmaker, as the late Carl O. Schniewind, then curator of Prints at the Chicago Art Institute, pointed out in his text for the Museum's catalog of the show.

I also remember that before World War II I had made a special pilgrimage in Paris to the Musée Gustave Moreau of which Rouault was Curator, a job to which he had been appointed as Moreau's favorite pupil. The post was essentially honorary and Rouault seldom appeared in the building. I had therefore tried to find the painter at the apartment of his sister, with whom he lived. But he didn't appear there either and the sister was so modest a woman that she could tell me little about her famous brother's way of life and methods of working. I did finally see Rouault in person once at a restaurant. He looked like a haggard busi-

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nessman of the middle classes and he had almost nothing to say. This seems a curious fact in that after he knew I was doing his show at the Museum of Modern Art, he bombarded me with extremely long and often extremely garbled letters. In addition he provided some motes for the Museum's catalog. He took great pride in himself as a writer. It was a pride I could never bring myself to share and I tend to agree with the quotation he used as an ending for his notes: "The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life."

I don't mean to minimize Rouault's importance and courage as an artist during his earlier years as a painter and later as a printmaker. But I'm still puzzled by the veneration accorded him in this country when the world was torn by World War II. Even among many collectors, artists, dealers and museum curators who didn't share Rouault's devout faith as a Catholic, the painter was regarded as an Avenging Angel. I could understand why Rouault's Christian morality would have an immense appeal during the war's anguished years. I couldn't understand why owning one of his pictures would seem to some collectors the equivalent of Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage, since Rouault's name had been well known internationally for years. Nor could I understand why admiration for him should have made these collectors dismiss as charlatans Rouault's peers in the School of Paris, especially Picasso. I used to get into endless arguments with friends as different as Sam Lewisohn and Pavel Tchelitchew when I insisted that Picasso was a far greater artist than Rouault.

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These and other friends did their best to convert me to the true faith. None of them had any success whatever. And none gave up trying. They would always end up infuriated when I would say that Rouault was incense, Picasso quicksilver, and I preferred the latter substance.

Mine was obviously a minority opinion and a number of collectors I knew in New York and, especially, California were prouder of their Rouaults than of works by any other modern painter. Their pride was shared by some American writers who were affluent enough to collect and I can remember having fierce disputes with the late Stark Young and other novelists. It was only occasionally that I could agree with them, as when I saw Edward G. Robinson's superb Rouault The Old Clown in his Hollywood house. Otherwise Rouault's repetitions seemed monotonous, especially in pictures executed during his later years. I remember that when the Museum of Modern Art asked me to direct a second Rouault exhibition after the war so that foreign loans could be included, I replied crustily that I didn't think such loans would add anything important to Rouault's stylistic and emotional range. After seeing the second Rouault exhibition in the Museum, I'm convinced I was right.

2. BEN SHAHN

When, in 1947, the Museum of Modern Art asked me to direct Ben Shahn's retrospective exhibition I felt a sense of elation which never diminished from the beginning to closing day.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS - BEN SHAHN

I'd followed Shahn's work closely since 1930, when his Sacco-Vanzetti series of small tempera paintings was shown at the Downtown Gallery in New York and later at, of all places, the Society for Contemporary Art at Harvard whose President was Chairman of the Committee which convicted or helped convict the two alleged murderers. I hadn't seen either exhibition, alas, but I had looked often at reproductions of Shahn's pictures in Creative Art and other magazines. Moreover, I'd read the Honorable Felix Frankfurter's impassioned defense of Sacco and Vanzetti when it had appeared in the Atlantic Monthly for March, 1927. It was rather a hard article to miss, since protests against the conviction of the two men (they were finally executed in August, 1927) were reverberating throughout the world. In much later years Felix Frankfurter was often the houseguest of my Farmington friend, Wilmarth Lewis, the leading authority on the life and works of Horace Walpole. I tried on several occasions to ask Dr. Frankfurter about the Sacco-Vanzetti case and trial. His reply was always the same, "That's a case I'd rather not talk about." And he never did, though the outrage in his face was apparent.

I had heard a great deal about Ben Shahn in 1933 from Walker Evans, who had undertaken the hopeless task of making me a good photographer and who, three years before, had shared a cabin with Shahn at Truro on Cape Cod. It had been Walker who had taught Shahn to take photographs, primarily as notes for his paintings. And Walker's technical instructions had been sim-

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plicity itself, "Set the shutter and the lens and point the camera at anything which pleases you." It sounds like as simple a recipe as Eastman's famous, "You press the shutter and we'll do the rest." But it wasn't, as anyone who's seen the photographs of Evans and Shahn will know. Both had the all-essential eye of artists.

After I moved to New York in 1942, Shahn and I became close friends. I had met him only briefly at the time of his show at Julien Levy's gallery in New York in 1940. From that show Chick Austin and I had bought for the Wadsworth Atheneum an enchanting small picture called Vacant Lot; it shows a solitary young boy practicing baseball against a mammoth, brick wall. From New York it was a fairly easy drive to the house in a New Deal development for garment workers in which Ben Shahn lived to the end of his life. Sometimes, too, in later years Ben and his wife Bernarda would drive up to see me in Farmington. The latter were exciting occasions not only for me but for my young stepson, who listened raptly to Ben's endless repertory of stories and whom I once overheard telling a crowd of visitors, "All that junk by Picasso, Miró and de Chirico is in this room. The Shahns are in the front hall and my room. Just follow me." And the visitors did, obediently.

In later years, when success had come at last, Shahn built a big studio behind his house. But he still lived in one of the housing units for garment workers in what used to be called Jersey Homesteads and later, appropriately, was re-christened

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Roosevelt, New Jersey. He had done one of his best murals for the little settlement's recreation center and he had no intention of leaving. It was at his house where I finally learned why drawings for his big show at the Museum were so hard to find, though I knew he had drawn constantly all his life, even as a child when he would draw likenesses of Babe Ruth and other celebrities for the edification of the bums in his impoverished neighborhood in New York. "The thing is," Ben said one day in his house, "we have a fair here every year for Red Cross or some other good cause. I have a booth and make drawings of passers-by for 50¢. But the subjects always always look so disappointed that I give them a few more drawings from my studio to make them feel better." No wonder his drawings had become scarce! And for 50¢ a batch, My God!

If finding enough drawings for his show at the Museum was a problem, another was that some of his best very early paintings had been bought years ago by a collector who had settled down to the amiable if destructive life of drinking all day and night in a hotel bedroom in New York. I went to see the man a number of times but neither I nor the bellhops could rouse him. I don't really remember what his name was but Ben and I began to call him Dunbar and the password to get into Ben's show when we were hanging it became "Hail and Dunbar!" Naturally we were never able to borrow the pictures from Mr. Dunbar or whatever his real name was.

The Shahn exhibition went up quickly and Ben was most help-

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ful in an unobtrusive way. I can remember only one brief hitch in hanging the show and that was when an elderly Trustee of the Museum walked through the galleries and was irritated by the number of posters for the Congress of Industrial Organizations I was placing on the walls. Since Shahn was a very fine graphic artist and the posters were among his best works in design and typography, I thought it best to make one point clear at once. I said to René d'Harnoncourt "If the posters go out of this show, so do I and for good." In half an hour René was back and said, "Everything is O.K. Just go ahead and put up the rest of the posters." I never knew how René had managed to calm the devoutly conservative member of our Board of Trustees. But I'd seen René's skill as a diplomat work before and I wasn't surprised, only relieved.

My admiration for Shahn as an artist increased steadily and after the show was over I wrote several books and articles about him, his paintings and his graphic art, always with the greatest enthusiasm and pleasure. The last time I saw him in person was when he was a visiting member of the Fogg Museum's faculty and had just written an eloquent book called "The Shape of Content. A few years later he died unexpectedly, as the great have a sad way of doing. There was a memorial seminar and exhibition at the Skowhegan Art School and Bernarda Shahn had asked me to give the main address. Unfortunately I fell seriously ill and wasn't able to make the trip to Maine. So I wrote the speech out and it was read by the Black artist, Jacob Lawrence, whose works I

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had liked for a long time. There was something appropriate in this in that if ever there was a person who believed in the brotherhood of all men, it was Ben Shahn, as his life and work eloquently attest.

3. PAUL KLEE

In 1949 the Klee Foundation of Berne, Switzerland, lent the Museum of Modern Art a large group of paintings, drawings and prints from its collection and I was asked to direct the resultant exhibition, with able assistance from Miss Margaret Miller, long a valued member of the Museum's staff and a devout student of Klee's art. The loans from Berne were supplemented by a fww works from American collections and the exhibition was shown later at leading museums throughout this country.

Before working on the show and its catalog, I thought I knew Klee's work pretty thoroughly, since the Museum had already had a large Klee exhibition in 1941 and several New York dealers, notably Karl Nierendorf, J.B. Neumann and Curt Valentin had shown the artist's works almost annually. Nevertheless, Klee's imaginative gifts were so profuse and unpredictable that any large exhibition of his paintings, drawings and prints was bound to offer new and delightful surprises. The Berne show was no exception. I can remember clearly how often Margaret Miller and I gasped (quite literally) as we came across pictures from Berne which we'd never seen before in fact or even in peproduction. I can only hope that my text for the catalog reflected some of Margaret's and my awe and excitement in working on the exhibition.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS - PAUL KLEE

There is one respect in which Klee remains unrivaled in the art of his own and probably even of earlier times - the direct projection in visual terms, and visual terms alone and unaided, of a fantastically varied humor. His titles reinforce his visual wit, of course, and were given in our catalog in the original German as well as in English, since they abound in untranslatable puns. Klee's is the rare humor to which tears as well as laughter seems the right response. He was a magician of the finest order and also a clown whose grimaces encompass both tragedy and mirth and, either way, wring our emotions dry.

The range of Klee's awareness was no less remarkable. He looked at objects we've all seen, from flowers to insects, from trees to the placid waters of harbors. He looked at children with eyes newer and fresher than theirs; the ornaments of festive adult celebration seemed always to have been invented by and for him. Everything he saw and recorded was born anew and I sometimes think that if our planet is reaching its end, Klee, if alive, could have re-invented it in a day and given it a more beguiling form. My colleague, Alfred Barr, used to call Klee the great "little master" of our time. And yet if the scale on which he worked was usually small, it had every power of largeness. His favorite symbols - arrows, transmogrified animals, abstract spots and dashes, seemed whispered and yet they echo with grandeur and unfailing authority. There was no such thing as getting used to Klee's vision; it could change and retreat and move forward again without warning signals of any reliable

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kind. As an artist he could nearly always defeat critics, with their elaborate apparatus of chronology and stylistic analysis. For that ability alone, in this age of pigeon-holed academic certainty, we must be grateful to him. He was like the ultimate magician whose tricks no one could do more than pretend to understand because their inexplicable ingredient was genius, no more and certainly no less.

4. MODIGLIANI

Perhaps there is a note of caution for all art critics in the fact that the first article on a painter or sculptor I ever had published was a bitter attack on the works of Amedeo Modigliani. I no longer have a copy, thank God, but I know it appeared around 1930 in one of the several magazines my partner in a Hartford bookshop, Edwin Valentine Mitchell, published in fairly rapid succession. I think the magazine may have been called Booknotes but it might have been The Literary Observer which began to appear bi-monthly soon after the first-named periodical folded up.

I seem to have been angry about Modigliani's fame and his subject matter which was usually restricted to portraits of the handsome Italian's friends and mistresses. Both objections have seemed absurd to me long since and in 1951 I wrote a booklet about Modigliani to accompany an exhibition of his paintings, drawings and sculptures which the Museum of Modern Art was holding. I remember that Andrew Ritchie, lately retired as Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, was then Director of

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the Painting and Sculpture Department at the Museum. He phoned me one evening to say that the Museum badly needed a book to go with the show and asked whether I would write it - in a hurry. I was rather astonished to hear myself saying that I would be glad to, having seen a number of admirable paintings and sculpture by Modigliani since my youthful outburst.

I don't think that even when young and very green I disliked Modigliani's drawings; I don't see how anyone could have. But I'd thought his color crude and repetitious and his sculpture over-mannered. I also thought then that his reputation depended to unreasonable extent on the violence of his short, dissipated life and on his amorous conquests. I probably envied both, being a New Englander, and I know I thought this was not the way for an artist or anyone else to behave. Later I began to understand that it was Modigliani's fever, both physical and moral, which gave him his strength. In the 1951 booklet I was able to write with conviction: "It is idle to argue that he might have been a more profound artist had he nursed his energies. Exacerbated nerves were part of his talent's high price."

The miracle is that Modigliani was able to produce so much work in a very short time (mainly from 1915 to 1920). Though no catalogue raisonné of Modigliani's work exists, it has been estimated that during those five years, all of them spent in Paris except for a short vacation in the Midi, he completed around 450 paintings and a little over 20 sculptures, mostly carved in limestone which he soon found easier to cut than marble. There is no accurate way to determine how many drawings

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he made, since he drew constantly day and night. His fame has long since become international, though for a time his principal enthusiast among Americans was the late Chester Dale.

Modigliani's art has been a prime target for forgers, both because it was single minded and also because its underlying structure was linear and intensely Italian, a fact in which it differed from nearly all School of Paris artists. Yet even the veritable tide of fakes has done little to spoil Modigliani's very real attainment. I wrote of him in the Museum of Modern Art's publication: "In sculpture as in painting, his sole concern was the human face and figure, and this is true even of those works which seem intended for architectural use - the caryatid and the corbelled head. He dreamed once of working in Carrara quarries; his instinct was for direct carving rather than modeling in plaster or clay. It may be that this technical preference ... accounts in part for the nervous vitality of Modigliani's best pieces. They are at any rate exceptionally vigorous, and if we sometimes resent their exaggerations, we know they are alive."

I've long thought that the greatest of Modigliani's paintings are his nudes. They are usually also his most ambitious. Not the least of their virtues is that they spelled the end of the fig leaf and other such idiotic disguises to conceal the pubic region. Today unabashed nakedness is accepted in the movies and the theatre. But as late as the years 1915020, when

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Modigliani was producing his best works, it was only the pornographers who dared be so frank and pornographers were only rarely artists of note and talent. I wonder why the advocates of the new sexual freedom don't stop making banal speeches and go instead to put a wreath on Modigliani's lonely grave.

5. TANGUY AND DECHIRICO

The first time I saw Yves Tanguy after his arrival in America in 1939 was in Hartford where he and his wife, Kay Sage Tanguy, had stopped to visit one of her relatives, the later Walter Goodwin. I'd never known Mr. Goodwin anywhere near as well as I'd known his brother, Phil, who designed the Museum of Modern Art's original building on West 53rd Street. But I'd always liked Walter Goodwin very much and I used to watch him play polo at Narragansett Pier, he being in youth one of the top polo players in this country. I was therefore surprised that Yves Tanguy had been made so nervous by his visit to the immense Goodwin house. Yves said he needed a drink badly, as he sometimes did, and we repaired to my house in Farmington and soothed his jitters with Bourbon whiskey. The only trouble was that Yves' nervousness was transferred to me. He could then speak no English and I'd always been able to communicate with him in my feeble French. But suddenly I couldn't remember anything but English and I turned to Yves apologetically and said, "Ce soir les mots francais sont comme les lapins sur la niège.

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Ils y sont, mais je ne peux pas les voir." Yves nodded as though he understood me, so my courage and what French I knew came back abruptly and we jabbered until very late at night.

In 1955 the Museum asked me to direct an exhibition of the works of Tanguy and Giorgio de Chirico. Tanguy's show was, alas, a memorial exhibition; the de Chirico show was held to help promote my book, Giorgio de Chirico, which the Museum had just published. Among other reasons for holding the joint exhibition was the fact that, by his own proud admission, Tanguy had decided to become a painter when from a bus window he had seen an early de Chirico painting in the window of Paul Guillaume's gallery. He had jumped off the bus, raced over to peer at the de Chirico and then and there decided not only to become a painter but the kind of painter - of the world of reverie and dreams - he wanted to be.

I felt a terrible sadness in doing the Tanguy section of the show, since we had been close friends during his years in America. I used to go to his farmhouse in Woodbury, Connecticut, very often, I adored both Yves and Kay and, as an added benefit, there was always Kay's superb cooking to look forward to. For a time it bothered me that I couldn't combine a visit to the Tanguys with one to Sandy and Louise Calder, who lived only a few miles away. The two couples had been friends at first. Then an unspoken feud had broken out for two reasons which seemed to me both senseless and incurable. In the first place, one of the Calder daughters, then a child, had stuck her finger in

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some sauce Kay was cooking, just to see how it tasted. Kay, who had a pronounced dread of all children, found this gesture unforgivable. I think her anger would have blown over eventually. But at almost that precise moment Sandy Calder decided temporarily to become a painter. He worked at lightning speed, yanking the canvases up and down on pulleys in his Roxbury studio and completing several canvases each day. Tanguy, on the other hand, painted very slowly and seldom finished more than six or eight pictures each year, often less than that. He was outraged when Sandy, with typical bluntness, asked him why it took him so long when he, Sandy, was producing at great speed. The Tanguy-Calder breach never healed, though they would ask me separately what on earth had caused it. Since I was equally devoted to both couples, I gave up the odious role of peacemaker as soon as possible.

Giorgio de Chirico I'd known only slightly and for a short time, when he was living in a brownstone house in New York where Eugene Berman and Leonor Fini also lived. I do remember that he talked learnedly on a variety of subjects relating to art, that he looked disheveled and also imperial and that he ranted against many of his former colleagues in the School of Paris, most of whom, he said, couldn't even draw. This must have been about 1933 and there was already much of the academician in his character - a not unlikely result of the fact that his own technical training had been unusually thorough and had

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taken place in Athens and Munich, two cities where the academic tradition was still alive. How the young de Chirico, still in his twenties, can have had the courage to upset these traditions so thoroughly, remains a mystery. The history of hallucinatory inspiration in art is long indeed, of course. Yet a majority of good painters found it a dead end, whereas de Chirico went on to become the most vital, single progenitor of what we now recognize as surrealist art. And then he became himself an academic painter. The surrealists spotted the change first and in 1941 I tried to reinforce their dismay in a book called The Early Chirico. This naturally infuriated de Chirico, who calls himself our century's greatest artist and includes his wife, Isabella Far, as the century's greatest philosopher.

I wish both de Chiricos luck in their self-appointed majesty. I would also like to meet them as much as I would like to meet the ghosts of Ludwig II of Bavaria and King Farouk of Egypt. Still, there is a difference. The playboy kings did nothing. De Chirico created from 1911-1919 what I will always think of as among the greatest works of art of our time.

6. BALTHUS

A retrospective Balthus exhibition was something I'd wanted to do for a long time and in 1956 the Museum of Modern Art asked me to direct such an exhibition. Like the Shahn and later the Miró shows this was a labor or love and I can remember only one harsh incident connected with it and that not very serious. One

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of the finest of Balthus' recent paintings was a huge picture of a nude young girl standing before a window. I didn't have room for the picture in the show and I left it out, whereupon Tom Hess, the editor of Art News, whom I'd known and liked since the very early 1940s, when he was a member of the Museum's staff, phoned to accuse me of censorship. I reminded Tom that I could hardly be thought timid in such matters since I'd bought Balthus' early The Street when no one in supposedly tolerant Paris dared touch it. I think Tom was finally convinced that space for so large a picture was the real problem and he never objected again, though he was as ardent a fan of Balthus' idiosyncratic talents as I.

Besides, there were a number of paintings in the 1956 show at the Museum which Lolita fans with Freudian inclinations could have objected to far more strenuously. Oddly enough, the show caused no further moral outcries that I ever heard of. A good number of visitors to the show agreed with me (and Tom Hess) that Balthus was perhaps the single painter in Paris who had given realism in art a validity it had lost since Courbet's time. His works made those of the politically oriented Parisian painters look weak and contrived by comparison. It should be remembered that there was then a spate of such artists in post-war Europe, especially in Paris, where Communism reached its brief zenith among intellectuals. Today most of these artists have sunk into obscurity or begun to paint the abstract pictures they once thought idle and useless. From the very begin-

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ning art has had its own standards of validity and very few painters or sculptors have been able to survive without them.

One thing the Museum's show made crystal clear, I think: that Balthus in his best recent works had become a technical master. In doing so he had naturally sacrificed some of the penetrating crudeness of his early paintings and drawings. But the fire of his solitary temperament still burns through and it is perhaps no accident that he is one of the few younger painters about whom the great Picasso talks with fervor and puzzled admiration. Balthus is a maverick in an era of schools of painting. I find this fact both courageous and a relief. He has had his imitators, of course, as the strong always do. He has had no true rival in diverting art back to paths which once seemed deserted dead ends but on which he found signs of new life and authority.

A close friend of Balthus (it may well have been Alberto Giacometti but I can't be sure) once told me that Balthus' standards of quality are almost impossibly high. He will look with pleasure at only the greatest of the great paintings; the lesser ones bore him stiff. He is not at all interested in problems like moral, political or religious beliefs. He long ago concluded, I think, that art has its own sovereignty and should have the conscience to defend it. I know that he was the only artist in Paris to whom I confessed my admiration for a painting by Courbet which shows two superbly painted nude ladies on a bed. The picture was on the market in Paris for years and was

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very cheap (around $12,000). No one would buy it because of its Lesbian connotations and I don't know where it is now. Nor do I understand how anyone except the two ladies could know what they were up to. Nor do I think it that important. I wish only that I'd listened to the advice of Balthus and a few other friends in Paris and bought the picture somehow. I would have the support in heaven of Father McLane, whose admiration for Balthus' works I've already described in the chapter on Balthus and Giacometti. And I would have had a most marvelous painting to live with here on earth.

7. JUAN GRIS

A number of monographs on modern artists I've written for the Museum of Modern Art have sold out slowly or been re-printed. This is not true of the book I did to accompany the Museum's exhibition of Juan Gris which I directed in 1958. I think I still owe the Museum some advance royalties on the book, though I dismiss the Museum's reminders with unpardonable rudeness. The situation still puzzles me. I know that I wrote the Gris monograph with far more enthusiasm than I did the book on Rouault which has gone through several editions. I console myself with the thought that it's far harder to write about ice than fire, though I know that neither word describes adequately the work or temperament of either artist.

I think a more plausible explanation lies in the fact that my Gris book displeased two of Juan Gris' most faithful and elo-

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quent champions - his lifelong dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and the British collector and critic, Douglas Cooper. My book reproduced works from Gris' entire career. But its text implied that Gris was a finer artist before roughly 1920 than after. I heard Kahnweiler's objections face-to-face in a lecture he gave at the Museum. I know of Douglas Cooper's protest by hearsay and from a sentence he wrote in which he said, "It is only in 1920 that Gris at last seems in full possession of his resources."

To this day I still disagree with both these distinguished men. It's never true, of course, that everyone is entitled too his own opinion, at least where art is concerned. But for me the greatest pictures by Gris are his early, cubist paintings and the totally magnificent collages he did in 1913-14. Since I also prefer early pictures by de Chirico and Rouault to their later works, I suppose this qualifies me as an ambulance chaser of the worst kind, ready to embalm patients before they even get to the hospital. Nevertheless, I go on believing that the creative span of many 20th century artists has been unusually short, though I realize that the careers of Matisse, Picasso, Brancusi and others make my theory seem absurd. For the Romantics, early death solved the problem of sustaining genius over a long period of time. Our century has no such merciless answer. I think many artists go on working long after their point has been made and that only a few add significantly to what they've already said. This is a harsh dictum and to those to

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whom it doesn't apply, I offer abject apologies.

I gave in my book on Gris two reasons for the artist's decline in creative ability: his worsening health and his interest in working as a designer for Diaghilev's ballet company. Gris confirmed the latter reason himself when he wrote, "My life has been poisoned by the theatre," and in a letter to Maurice Raynal added, "All the time I am worried about the décors and that prevents me from working at my own painting. It is really difficult to do two things at once." And finally, on December 9, 1923, he sent Kahnweiler an anguished letter - "I really feel that I am going through a bad period. I don't feel confident in any medium and I'm utterly devoid of self-assurance in my work." Even assuming that Gris was a modest and sometimes tormented man, these seem strong words indeed, especially for a man who had long been acknowledged in authoritative circles as one of cubism's true masters. His fame was never really great in his lifetime but Gertrude Stein never stopped praising him and even accused Picasso of being jealous of his younger countryman, an accusation which caused one of the recurrent quarrels between Picasso and his influential patroness.

8. JEAN ARP

I've written in a later chapter that the success of Jean Arp's exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art (1958) was in good measure the result of René d'Harnoncourt's superb installations. I myself had little to do except write a foreword to the catalog

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catalog which had articles by Arp himself, by his old colleague in the Dada movement, Dr. Richard Hoelsenback, by the English critic Robert Melville and by Carola Giedion-Welcker, whose monograph is a key work on Arp's career. In research for the show I had skilled help from Sam Hunter, then the Department of Painting and Sculpture's Associate Curator, and from Alicia Legg, to my mind one of the absolute heroines of the Museum's long and at times troubled history.

Arp was accompanied on his trip to America by his extremely efficient secretary, Marguerite Hagenbach, who became his wife soon after their return to Europe. Both Jean and Marguerite Arp came out to visit us in New Canaan and it was an immense pleasure to be with them. Arp talked so learnedly and gently that it was hard to remember that he had once been a central figure in what remains one of the most violent and subversive movements our century's art has produced. Both Arps loved New York and the countryside nearby. My wife and I found this a relief after entertaining in our house so many painters and sculptors who could never quite dismiss the idea that they were slumming, culturally speaking, the moment they crossed the Atlantic. On the contrary, the Arps were interested in everything they saw in this country and I remember Arp telling me that he would settle here if he were younger. It was hard to think of him as anything but young and I remember the delight with which he set a huge Calder mobile of ours in motion. He couldn't seem to let go and he told me several times that Calder was "si américan",

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a fact with which I agree but wish only that the appearance of men like Calder were more frequent in this or any other country.

9. MIRÓ

The Museum of Modern Art had done a fine retrospective exhibition of the works of Joań Miró during the winter of 1942. The show was directed by James Johnson Sweeney and I've already recorded the fact that I spent nearly as much time in his galleries as I did in my own Dali exhibition, running concurrently.

I'd known Miro personally for some years, though I hadn't yet become a close friend of his. The time was still some ten years distant when he and his wife, Pierre Matisse and his wife and my wife and I would take a box at the famous strip-tease club, Crazy Horse, off the Champs Elysee, and sit there spellbound for hours. At least the men were spellbound. The women were rather bored, as women usually are at at such displays, though I still remember Pilar's comment that the strippers' performances must have been for them "très fatigantes, et avant L'amour commence, meme."

Of all artists I've known, Miro, I think, has always been the most generous. Once I asked him, along with a number of famous and affluent modern artists, to contribute a painting to be sold to help the Museum financially. His reply was prompt and typical. He wrote that he was sending one of the two pictures he considered to be his best recent works. He ended by saying how much he regretted that it was not the <u>very</u> best but

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that he'd just given that painting to a sale being organized to help the victims of the flood at Fréjus on the Mediterranean coast of France.

After World War II, I saw Miró in Paris every time I went there and once he and Pilar, Yves and Kay Tanguy came up to my house in Farmington for a long weekend. Joan was unfailingly cheerful and interested in everything he saw. Indeed, the only time I saw him upset was when someone present reminded him of the time, years before in Paris, when the surrealists had decided that he was not enough interested in their theories about art and pretended to hang him from a balcony in the studio of Max Ernst or some other painter. The prank had gone wrong and the rope had been cut just in time to save Miró's life. The incident was the end of Miró's close association with the other surrealists and I'm told that even André Breton was dismayed, not because it was Miró's decision rather than his, but because he must have been aware that Miró was the finest painter he had recruited among artists of the post-Picasso generation.

I never had the privilege of walking Barcelona's streets with Miró himself but I did so with his great friend and champion, Joan Prats, of whom I'll speak later in describing my trip to Spain in 1960. Prats knew by heart the streets and shops Miró loves most in Barcelona and its surrounding towns and he was extraordinarily informative about his friend's early career. In Barcelona Prats pointed out to me many objects which had

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fascinated Miró in marine hardware stores and in other shops such as those which specialized in toys for children and cryptic gadgets for adults. It was an education in itself to see Barcelona through the eyes of a man who had explored it so many times with the painter by his side. I understood at last why Miró, after his youthful years in Paris, had needed to return to Spain and why one of the masterworks of his Paris years had been a picture of the farm at Montroig in Catalonia which had belonged to his family for a long time and where he had been born. One of the endearing things about the Catalans is that properties often pass intact to a third or fourth generation, without visible change. In parts of France and Italy the same continuity often applies, but it seldom does so in our country.

In 1959 the Museum of Modern Art decided to hold a second large retrospective Miró exhibition and William S. Lieberman and I were appointed co-directors of the show, Bill being at that time Curator of the Museum's Department of Drawings and Prints. The exhibition was a joy to do from beginning to end, except that it was difficult to get Ernest Hemingway's famous early Miró, The Farm, out of Castro's Cuba a few days after the revolution. Hemingway was then living in the small Idaho town called Ketchum, a few miles from the elaborate ski resort "Sun Valley". I knew Ketchum well, having been divorced once in Idaho and I could understand why Hemingway was fond of the surrounding countryside, where fishing and hunting were excellent.

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Hemingway agreed at once to the loan of The Farm but warned me that it would need drastic restoration because it had hung for years in his farmhouse outside Havana, where the dampness was extreme. He was also worried that the authorities of Castro's new government might not allow the picture to leave the country and he asked me to phone him in Ketchum every evening at precisely 7:00 P.M. to let him know what progress I was making. I did so faithfully for about ten days and I was then able to tell him that David Vance, now the Museum of Modern Art's Registrar, was flying to Cuba and had reserved several seats on the return flight so that he could keep the picture near him. Hemingway was delighted, could not have been more cordial during our many phone conversations and told me repeatedly that he didn't care what the restoration costs were, since The Farm was his favorite modern picture and had been ever since he won the right to buy it in a crap game with the American writer, the late Evan Shipman.

So far everyone concerned was happy. But when David Vance got on the plane to bring the picture to New York, Castro's police roared onto the field just before take-off, insisted on having The Farm unpacked for inspection and finally decided to let David Vance depart with the picture safely aboard.

The moment the painting arrived at the Museum, Miss Jean Volkmer, the Museum's able restorer, began working on the canvas. It was a long and difficult job, not only because of the damage from Cuba's tropical weather but because the wooden

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stretchers were riddled with termites. Jean Volkmer worked like a slave on the picture for months. I knew it would be a costly job but I didn't worry, remembering how often Hemingway had told me on the phone from Idaho that he didn't care what the expense was; he wanted only to save a very great work of art by an old friend.

When the restoration was complete, Hemingway arrived in New York and went at once to the Museum to see The Farm. He said he was enchanted to see the picture as it was when he bought it and gave the Museum a check for Miss Volkmer's work. I thought everyone was pleased. But one night Hemingway's wife phoned me to say that she didn't understand how the Museum could ask her husband to pay for repairs to a picture he&d been kind enough to lend th the Miró show. I explained to her that if the Museum assumed the costs of restoring every painting it borrowed, it would be bankrupt in a short time. Mrs. Hemingway seemed to understand and was further mollified when René d'Harnoncourt, one of the great charmers of all time, called on her and thanked her for her interest in our exhibition.

I can think of no exhibition I've ever worked on which was more of a pleasure to do. Miró is supposedly not very good at answering letters but he replied promptly to questions I asked him, designed a very handsome cover for the catalog and in general cooperated with patience and care. I found his work more and more impressive as Bill Lieberman and I installed the show

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and it confirmed an opinion I'd held for some time - that Miró was the most sensitive and inventive painter of his generation. When planning and hanging a one-man show, one often fears that it may turn out to be too large. My wish to this day is that we had had at least a third more gallery space. It would be essential if one were doing the show today, since Miró's creative power in painting, ceramics and sculpture has increased without interruption since our show was held in 1959.

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10. RENE MAGRITTE

Of modern artists whom I misjudged badly in my youth, the one about whom I feel the most repentant is the late René Magritte. I wrote of him in my first book on art, After Picasso, that his paintings "wear thin, like puns too often repeated." I don't understand how I could have been so wrong, since the early 1930s were perhaps the heyday of double imagery, that is, imagery wherein a second identity is disguised and left to the observer to discover, as in certain puzzle books for children.

There was nevertheless a fundamental difference between Magritte's dislocation of surface logic and that of the other artists who were fond of ambivalent images. I suppose that the simplest way to explain the difference is that Magritte himself did all the searching for a second meaning in his paintings and stated this meaning clearly and without disguise. For example, he would paint a street scene which to all reasonable intents and purposes should appear in daylight. And then after a moment one realizes with a shock that the sky is that of night and the windows in the houses artifically lighted. He tells bluntly the changed story which sometimes underlies casual observation. In so doing, he suggests a counterlogic which haunts our imagination long after the usual double image has spent its force. His best paintings are the very essence of magic. No one knows precisely how they are done, though technical virtuosity plays a far larger role than I used to think. I also have come to believe that it is far more difficult to keep two contradictory

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identities in plain sight than to hide one behind the other. I don't know any modern artist who has managed it as often and successfully as Magritte.

Considering this almost total reversal of opinion about Magritte's importance, it seems odd that I didn't acquire even one of his paintings in later years. Perhaps this was in part because his pictures were not easy to find outside his native Belgium, where I went infrequently. The French surrealists talked little about Magritte, just as they seldom mentioned Paul Klee. In America Julien Levy had a one-man Magritte exhibition as early as 1936 but I was in Europe much of that year. It wasn't until the late 1940s that Magritte began to show regularly in New York at the Alexander Iolas Gallery and when I chose a very beautiful painting by the artist, called <u>Memory of a Voyage</u>, it was for The Museum of Modern Art rather than for myself.

At the time when William Seitz and I directed the Museum of Modern Art's large exhibition in 1965, Bill and I persuaded Alfred Barr to buy a large and remarkable early work by Magritte called <u>The Menaced Assassin</u> (1926). Meanwhile I had gone to see Magritte's show of 1948 at the Galarie du Faubourg in Paris. I thought the show a disaster, as did many of Magritte's close friends and eventually the painter himself, who later referred to it as <u>L'Époque vache</u>. All the pictures in the exhibition were painted in the style of the Impressionists and the <u>fauves</u> and I thought it the end of Magritte's career. Very soon, how-

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ever, Magritte reverted to the crisp technique which owed more to the Flemish primitives than to French art of any period. He then painted some of the best pictures of his life, and Bill Seitz rounded up many of the finest in Brussels, while I wrote the catalog in New York. I marvel still that we got the show done with its two directors so far apart, but Seitz sent me photographs and information at frequent intervals and we were somehow able to finish the job.

For several weeks there was some question as to whether Magritte and his wife Georgette would be in New York for the opening of the exhibition. They refused to leave Belgium without their dog and they had become convinced that America, like England, quarantined dogs before releasing them to their owners. I finally convinced Magritte that there was no such regulation in New York and he and Georgette arrived promptly. Their romance had been a golden one since childhood. It had also caused Magritte to walk out on the surrealist group in France because the group's leader, André Breton, had objected to Georgette's wearing a golden cross around her neck when she and her husband attended a surrealist event of some kind. I'm not a Catholic myself and I'd known and admired Breton for years. Nevertheless, my sympathies in this episode were entirely with the Magrittes. I couldn't see much point in liberating the subconscious mind if our conscious mind was denied its own decisions in religion and other matters.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS - RENE MAGRITTE

What impressed me most in working on the Magritte show was the artist's control of medium. He was not a flashy technician, as Dali had always been. But when he needed to, he could vary his bland surfaces with a rich impasto whose skillful application must be studied closely to make itself apparent. Like Tanguy his career as a painter took its start from a painting by de Chirico - The Song of Love - (1914) - which he knew only from a reproduction. And like de Chirico he was capable of using both deadpan and richly encrusted passages. I think, for example, that no one can peer for long at his famous Philosophy in the Boudoir (1947) without realizing that its sensuality is not a matter of subject-matter alone. The live breasts of the woman stare out from her nightgown on a hanger with the intensity which once frightened Percy Bysshe Shelley on staring at his wife, similarly clothed. And then one realizes how beautifully painted are her shoes on the table before which she stands and how inevitable it is that her toes should protrude from them naked, thus complementing the double-entendre between live model and the hanger on which her nightclothes rest.

There is a final point of originality to be made about Magritte's art. When Dali's giraffes with flaming manes first appeared, their outrage to logic was widely hailed in surrealist circles. Yet as early as 1933 Magritte in several paintings had set fire to a number of suppoedly inflammable objects such as metal musical instruments and presented them as though this were an everyday occurrence.

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FURTHER MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS - RENE MAGRITTE

It's not very often on completing an exhibition such as the one Bill Seitz and I did on Magritte in 1965 that one wished to see a catalogue raisonné. I'm convinced that in Magritte's case such a book would establish him as a central, rather than a peripheral, figure in surrealist art as a whole. He was a conservative man personally and disliked fanfare. I'd bet that a far more decisive force - the judgment of time - will work on his side.