

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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The large, comprehensive exhibition of modern works of art which celebrates the Fifth Anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art and fills four floors of its building at 11 West 53 Street has been viewed by more than fifteen thousand persons since its opening two weeks ago. Many foreign artists have visited the Exhibition. Among them have been Salvador Dali, the Spanish surrealist, and Madame Dali, Pavel Tchelitchev, the Russian artist, André Lurçat and Pierre Roy, French artists, and Philippe Soupault, French author and critic. Ian Campbell-Gray, Edward Wolfe and Douglas Davidson, English artists at present in New York, have been visitors.

The Museum announces the publication of "Modern Works of Art", which contains 147 illustrations and a detailed description of each of the 208 items shown in the Fifth Anniversary Exhibition. Also included are short biographies of the 187 artists represented in the Exhibition. The book opens with an outline of the aims and achievements of the Museum in the five years of its existence, written by A. Conger Goodyear, President of the Museum since its founding in 1929. Philip Johnson, head of the Museum's Department of Architecture, has written a brief history on architecture and industrial art.

Mr. Johnson says, in part: "The last century was an unfortunate period for architecture and allied fields of design. Instead of a uniform tradition there were diverse experiments without relation to each other..... For the most part revivals followed revivals in meaningless succession Since 1900, however, the development has been a convergent one, away from diversification and toward a single consistent architecture. The split between engineering and architecture is disappearing: the design of our houses as well as our factories is based on the latest metal skeleton construction. In the minor arts objects are not only being made by the machine but are designed to suit machine process. The design of advertisements, dresses, jewelry, chairs, machine tools, rugs, boats and automobiles is dominated by one style. It is the same style as in modern architecture. Whether the movement be called 'functionalism,' 'modernism,' 'sachlichkeit,' 'stile razionale,' 'international style,' or 'machine art' the style is uniform and is easily recognizable in the objects

themselves..... The heterogeneity of the 19th century was an anomaly in the history of architecture. Re-integration is now in progress."

The book also contains an essay on modern art by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum. Mr. Barr sketches the outstanding movements in art during the past fifty years. He begins his essay with this statement: "Words about art may help to explain techniques, remove prejudices, clarify relationships, suggest sequences and attack habitual resentments through the back door of the intelligence. But the front door to understanding is through experience of the work of art itself."

After a brief analysis of the various schools, movements and "isms" of painting, Mr. Barr comes to this "unfinished conclusion": "It is dangerous to generalize about the painting of the last fifty years. It falls possibly into three periods: first, the late 19th century, in which the foremost painters, confronted by impressionism, made of it something aesthetically valuable by assimilating it into the traditions of European pictorial design. Second, the period 1905 to 1920, during which the dominant painters for the most part disregarded the traditional importance both of resemblance to nature and of subject matter. Instead they concentrated interest, more and more exclusively, upon the purely aesthetic values of design. In the third period, since the war, the traditional values of resemblance to nature and of subject matter with its numberless associations have been rediscovered. Three fresh tendencies have appeared: mural painting has been reborn to a new and vigorous life; painters have joined psychoanalysts in discovering an iconography of the subconscious; and in Europe, Asia and America the spirit of nationalism has led or driven many painters to work in a national idiom upon national subjects. Yet painting today is infinitely various. Side by side work the classicist and the romantic, the devotee of machinery and ruins, the master of abstract design and of insistent realism, the neo-primitive and the neo-baroque, the painter of gigantic political murals and of miniature and private hallucinations."