

and the artists determine the features of their epoch and docilely the future falls in with their plan.

The general structure of an Egyptian mummy conforms to the figures outlined by the Egyptian artists, and yet the ancient Egyptians differed greatly the one from the other. They have conformed to the art of their epoch.

To create the illusion—the type—is the real quality of art, its social role. God knows how the pictures of Manet and Renoir were mocked! Very well! It suffices to cast an eye upon the photographs of their epoch to see how the people and things conform to the pictures which these great artists have painted.

The works of art being, from the plastic point of view the most energetic products of a period, this illusion appears to me quite natural. This energy imposes itself on men and is for them the plastic measure of an epoch. Thus, those who mock the new painters make fun of their own features, for the people of the future will picture to themselves the human beings of today as they have been represented by the artists of the most vital, that is to say, the newest art. Do not say to me that there are today other artists who paint in such a way that mankind will recognize itself as portrayed in their image. All the works of art of an epoch end by resembling the most expressive, the most typical, art of that period. Dolls are the outlet of a popular art, they seem always to be inspired by the great art of the same epoch. This is a truth easy to verify. And yet who would dare to say that the dolls which were sold in the bazaars about 1880 had been manufactured with a sentiment analogous to that of Renoir when he painted his portraits? Then, nobody noticed it. It signifies, nevertheless, that the art of Renoir was energetic enough, vital enough to impose itself on our senses, while to the great public at the same time when he started his conceptions appeared to be mad absurdities.

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One has often, and notably in the case of the most recent painters, been confronted by the possibility of a mystification or of a collective error.