

But no one knows, in all the history of art, of a single collective mystification any more than of a collective artistic error. There are isolated cases of mystification and of error, but the conventional elements of which in part the works of art are composed assure us that errors would not know how to exist collectively.

If the new school of painting had presented us with one of these cases, it would be an event so extraordinary that it could be called a miracle. To conceive a case of this sort would be to conceive that suddenly, in a nation all the children should be born without heads or with only one arm or leg, a conception evidently absurd. There are not collective errors or mystifications in art. There are only divers epochs—divers schools of art. If the end pursued by each one is not equally elevated, equally pure, all are equally respectable, and according to the ideas which each has of beauty, each school of art is successively admired, despised and again admired.

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The new school of painting bears the name of Cubism; it was so called in derision by Henri Matisse who in the autumn of 1908 had just seen a picture representing houses, the cubic appearance of which had greatly impressed him.

These new æsthetics were first elaborated in the mind of André Derain, but the most important and audacious works which the movement at once produced were those of a great artist, Pablo Picasso, who must also be considered as one of the founders: his inventions strengthened by the good sense of Georges Braque, who exhibited a Cubist picture in the Salon des Indépendants, as early as 1908, were formulated in the studies of Jean Metzinger, who exhibited the first Cubist portrait (it was mine) in the Salon des Indépendants of 1910. Cubist works were also admitted in the same year by the Jury for the Salon d'Automne. It was also in 1910 that the pictures of Robert Delaunay, of Marie Laurencin and of Le Fauconnier, followers of the same school, were exhibited at the Indépendants.

The first general exhibition of Cubism, when its adepts had