

more closely together, should have more contacts, so that each in his own domain may benefit thereby. It is up to you who are listening to me to find the way. The plastic life is terribly dangerous, its ambiguity is perpetual. No standard is possible, no arbitration tribunal is in existence. I say again, it is for you to find the way.

Two pictures, not completely identical, were shown to the impressionist painter, Sisley, and he could not tell which was the false one.

We must live and create in a perpetual agitation, in this continual ambiguity. The one who handles beautiful things is sometimes quite unaware of them; in this connection I shall always recall the year when I installed the Autumn Salon and was fortunate enough to be next to the Aviation Show which was about to open. Through the partitions I could hear the hammers and the songs of the mechanics. Although accustomed to these shows, I had never before been so much impressed. Never had so brutal a contrast confronted me. I passed from enormous dull gray surfaces, pretentious in their frames, to beautiful metallic objects, hard, useful, with pure colours, to steel with its infinite variety, with its play of vermillions and blues. The geometric power of forms dominated all.

The mechanics saw me pass, they knew that they had artists for neighbours and in their turn they asked permission to see our show; and these good fellows who had never seen an exhibition of pictures in their lives, who were uncorrupted, who had been reared close to the first beautiful material fell into ecstasies before works which I shall not trouble to mention.

I shall always see a sixteen year old urchin, with fire red hair, a new jacket of bright blue, orange trousers and his hand stained with Prussian blue, gazing enraptured on the nude women in their gilt frames, not having the slightest suspicion that with his modern workman's clothes, blazing with colours, he literally killed the Salon, there remained upon the walls only vaporous shadows in old fashioned frames. This dazzling boy who had the look of having been brought forth by an agricultural machine was the symbol of the exposition next door, of the life of tomorrow, when prejudice shall be destroyed, when finally all the world shall see clearly and the Beauty of the true artisan and of the true artist shall be released.

FERNAND LÉGER

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