

ON CUBISM

The painting movement which, born some ten years ago, has been called Cubism, is perhaps not the one which surprised the World the most, nor the one which, after getting the greatest number of enemies, recollected the most of adepts; but it is undoubtedly the artistic *Effort* which, being the most important of our time, brought in it the most of confusion.

This confusion, in which at first people seemed to delight, itself, lasted long enough. The efforts attempted by each artist to make it cease is a proof of it. The need of understanding and of better understanding is felt everywhere. I am speaking of artists, as it is not only amongst people but also amongst artists that the ambiguity existed and, unfortunately, exists still with persistence.

The matter is not only the divergencies of taste which existed always amongst them and will happily never cease, but there are several essential points which it would be perhaps useful to reach and to admit in common, in order to establish a base for an art which many claim for absolutely different and even opposed reasons. The matter is yet an art which by its persistence and its development has proved enough its reasons and its rights to exist.

The opinion of a single man could certainly not make everybody agree; but it is perhaps not useless to attempt to some explanations of general order, some precisions of particular order, useful in any case to resolve a clear difference. The serious efforts of several would certainly gain by not being confounded with the more or less justified, more or less honest (artistically spoken) fancies of painters which, having nothing to bring to the movement, are only attracted by the beyond-measure modernism when it is not by other less avoidable reasons.

Some pretended to go beyond Cubism, which is the art in evolution of our time, and in order to get out of it, they went backward. Back again to the art of imitation in choosing only between the most modern objects to be represented, they believed, in avoiding the difficulty, to solve an arduous problem. With the titles under which they were obliged to complete their works, they left the plastic domain for a literary symbolism, the fantasmagoria of which is, in the domain of painting, absolutely worthless. Also, if it is difficult to find *new means* in an art, it is only worthy to find them proper to this art and not in another one. This to say that the literary means used for the art of painting (and vice versa) can only give us an easy and dangerous appearance of novelty.

Cubism is an eminently plastic art; but an art of creation and not of reproduction or interpretation.

Now, what can a man create in painting, if not a picture, and this creation with new adapted means? The first cubist painters found proper means and those who followed their traces did not pay enough attention to them. The latter took the appearance of works yet realised and worked « in the manner » with the pretention to start on their account, a new art. It is time to notice it, otherwise people would make of this deep art — of which only the superficial side was seen — a superficial art. By this disastrous way of judging, people saw only incoherence where there was, even at start, *research of discipline*. To-day, for few rare elected, *the discipline is established*, and as no one has ever dreamed of a cold, mathematic and antiplastic, solely cerebral art, the works which the cubist artists produce, appeal direct to the eye and to the sense of the lovers of painting. But to love this painting it must be first understood why its appearance is so much different from the one our eye is accustomed to.