Two Turbaned Heads: GERICAULT

Gericault "knew that when he witnessed a race, his eye did not see these details, but the race as a whole, the flashing curve of a neck, the spot of white on a horse's head, the sudden gesture of a struggling jockey bringing down his whip." The excitement and movement of the scene could not be expressed in the more or less abstract lines of the classicists. This is the spirit that motivates *Marie de Medici on Horse Back*, which he painted after Rubens.

The powerful *Two Turbaned Heads* illustrates Gericault's fine sense of the dramatic, as does the *Raising of Lazarus*. In the former the figure on the right is the same as one of the bearers of Christ in the *Entombment*. Portraiture is represented by *Young Painter at Easel* and *Head of a Man*, the same model as the *Carabinier* in the Louvre. Gericault was interested in animals, aside from the horse, giving them a sympathetic treatment that is evidenced in *The Lioness* and *Royal Tiger Lying on the Bank of a Stream* in the Sterner exhibition. Even when Gericault turned to such classic subjects as *Death of Hector*, *Fall of Troy* and *Triumph of Venus* he gave full play to his predilection for ample forms, robust and powerful movements, and the strong lines that was expressed in the sculpture by the great artists of the Renaissance.

Delacroix filled many sketch books with imaginary drawings and rapid sketches which were to become the treasure house of the artists who came after him. An important part of this exhibition is given over to these drawings.

If any single painting by Gericault marked the transition between Classicism and Romanticism it was the *Raft of the Medusa*. Gericault devoted the spring and summer of 1818 to the painting of this huge canvas, which was to become "the despair of the academicians and the hope of the Romanticists." It was inspired by a disaster at sea when the ship Medusa was wrecked and its survivors were battered for weeks on a single life raft. Gericault caught the dramatic moment when the survivors, in desperate agony, hail a ship on the horizon. Although this masterpiece may be missing, the exhibition is full enough to give an impressive record of a man who was a pioneer, who with inventive genius, fertile imaginative and a native instinct for painting brought pulsing life to fellow artists chilled within the cold walls of Classicism.

The Dead Horse: GERICAULT

The Voice of Art

THERE IS A GROWING DESIRE on the part of many artists in America for a federal fine arts department in Washington, under which the government's art activities would be coördinated. A bill providing for the establishment of a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts has been prepared for presentation to Congress early next session, according to a letter from Sidney Loeb, executive secretary of the Artists Union of Chicago, The bill, revolutionary in its content, is a definite step towards a centralized government art program, and will probably provide artists with a ready source of argument, —for and against,—during the next few months. Its provisions are based on the "Federal Art Bill" that was drafted by the Artists Union of New York, with revisions by the Midwestern Conference of Unions and Organizations last Summer. A resume follows:

The bureau shall consist of "five members appointed by the President for a term of two years from a panel of artists elected by a National Convention of Artists, which shall be held each year." The convention, which shall be called by the President one month after the enactment of the bill, shall consist of regularly elected delegates from organized groups of artists throughout the United States.

Regional divisions of the Bureau of Fine Arts shall be established with an operating center in each division. Regional administrators "shall be appointed by the Bureau from a panel of artists elected by a convention of artists of each region." Each regional administrator shall elect from the same panel a Regional Art Council of five artists to aid and assist in an advisory capacity.

Each art center shall "register all artists within the territorial division which it serves who may apply for employment, and each of such artists. . . shall be paid during the period of such employment by the Regional Division at a minimum rate per hour of $2 for a minimum of fifteen hours per week, to provide the artists a sufficient and reasonable standard of living for a professional person."

All artists so employed shall be known as "professional artists."

A professional artist is defined in the bill as "one who has gone through a prescribed period of training as an artist, who makes art work his or her profession, or whose work shall have received the approval of the Regional Division of the Bureau, as qualifying the creator of such work to be designated a professional artist, by a general survey of the artist's work by the Regional Division."

There shall also be created employment for assistant or apprentice artists who shall receive a fifteen hour per week minimum at a rate of $1.25 per hour minimum. Any person who has had two or three years of training or practice in any form of art work shall be qualified as an assistant or apprentice artist.

Types of employment shall include the following: (a) mural paintings in public buildings: (b) decorative and monumental sculpture in public buildings; (c) sculpture for exhibition in traveling and loan exhibitions; (e) lithography, etching, wood cuts, (f) commercial art, poster design and illustration for traveling or loan exhibitions; (g) art research; (h) designing costumes and scenery on theatre projects; (i) decoration and embellishment of Federal Housing projects; (j) crafts; (k) teaching any of the above schools established under the administration of the Bureau or in colleges and high schools under Federal jurisdiction.

Sales of art objects created under the Bureau shall be made tax supported or tax ex-

[*Please turn to page* 15]

Vollard Speaks

"A WINE should smell of its land!"

With that pungent, typically Gallic utterance, Ambrose Vollard, Frenchman (hence wine connoisseur), and the greatest of modern day art discoverers, placed his blessing on the humble gropings of American art for a typical American expression.

"Likewise," continued M. Vollard, "a canvas should smell of its country."

Visiting America briefly, on the occasion of the opening of the Cézanne Exhibition at the Bignou Gallery, New York, Vollard had consented to sandwich into an already packed schedule, a personal interview with a representative from THE ART DIGEST.

It is easy to understand why Cézanne required well over 100 sittings to paint Vollard's portrait. Large, heavy and solid, with close-cropped beard, the man presents volume to any room, or any canvas. When he walks he leans slightly forward; when he sits, he does so for closer attention only. There is hardly any betrayal of emotion in Vollard's face, but in his eyes, dark, with smouldering, pigmented settings, there is a great deal that passes both in and out.

Yes, Mr. Vollard agreed, all this concern of Americans with the "American scene" is wholesome. He pointed out Renoir's repeated and typically French subjects. Cézanne and Degas painted the same thing over and over. Cézanne even painted the engravings he saw in books and the cloth flowers around the house. Why should Gauguin go to Tahiti for subject matter? "Ridiculous," as Degas once said.

In his short time in America, Vollard has had no opportunity to see American art except that in the Barnes Collection, which he thought was very fine. "However," promised 71-year-old Vollard, with a youthful twinkle, "In 30 years I shall come back, and I shall tell you then,—oui?"

Does the French Government aid its art as much as the U. S. A.? The answer was a shrug. The city of Paris, itself does a great deal; the government, throught the Minister of Fine Arts, buys some contemporary art. However, in preparation for the Worlds' Fair next summer, the government is doing much more.

On the subject of Cézanne, Vollard is ever willing to speak, and to recall the bits of *obiter dicta* Cézanne so often uttered at chance moments. They are all recorded in Vollard's book on Cézanne, his portrait of the artist,—gems that Roger Fry once said "contain a whole system of aesthetics in a single phrase." In regard to Cézanne's art, his early sponsor is always insistent that he likes the art, but that he is not a critic, nor a connoisseur,—even on Cézanne.

When asked who the greatest authority is today on Cézanne, Vollard replied without hesitation, "the painters." As he said this, there seemed to come out of this great man's personality a profound, a reverend, almost a worshipful respect for all artists of all times. He who had once received, alone and amid unkind smiles, the first known impact of Cézanne's art—he was far too big a man not to remember.

The artist should paint and paint and paint, thought Mr. Vollard. Publicity and promotion are of no use to a living artist; his only work is to paint as Cézanne used to. No, said this greatest of art discoverers, a 20th century Columbus, whose route to India was the spiritual yearning called art, and whose first dim sight of Santa Domingo was a Cézanne plate of apples:

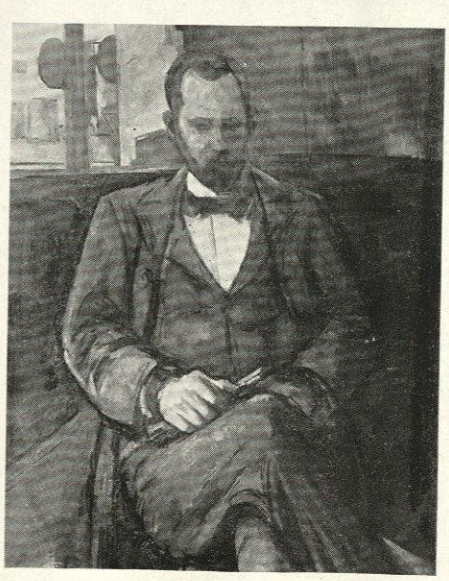
"No, not promotion; an artist should be found—discovered!"

L'Estaque: PAUL CEZANNE

Cezanne Pictures and Vollard Visit America

CEZANNE APPLES, the cubes and cones, "Poussin after nature," and, to complete everything, M. Vollard himself, have arrived in New York for the opening of a comprehensive showing of 30 paintings by the artist (until Dec. 15) at the Bignou Gallery. The works include landscapes, portraits and still lifes, covering the period from 1861 to 1906, the date of the artist's death, and among them is the famous portrait of Vollard, for which 115 sittings were required from the subject, who was testily told one day to keep as still as an apple.

In such a complete exhibition of Cézanne's art as is comprehended in the Bignou offering, the artist becomes intensely human. From his very early student days are several canvases to attest that the man once was a student, not at all sure of his metier, trying only to learn. The inclusion of so many portraits gives an unusual opportunity to watch the artist develop. From an early and very uncertain *Head of Zola*, he proceeded in seven years to the virile, very certain head of *Uncle Dominique*. In the *Portrait of Vollard*, Cézanne caught his famous stride in cubes and cones and cylinders. Totally unconcerned with the sentient aspects of the model, he saw in his sitter another form in space, like a housetop in Estaque,—no flesh, no blood, just bulk.



Ambrose Vollard: CEZANNE

Jerome Klein, writing in the New York *Post*, repeats the story of the many sittings for the Vollard portrait. "Once," says Klein, "he dozed and toppled off the precarious perch Cézanne had arranged for him. Cézanne, heedless of possible injuries to Vollard, roundly cursed him for ruining the pose. 'Sit still!' he raged.

'An apple doesn't budge.'

"So too, every human head he painted had something akin to an apple for Cézanne. Implacably he ironed out every trait that might reveal a momentary feeling or an aspect of social life. There remained only the sense of physical existence in its primary phenomenal state."

In the final phase of the Cézanne cycle, represented in portraits, landscapes and still lifes, the unending search continues,—the artist in pursuit of illusive volume. However, in the later pictures color plays an increasingly important part, broken into many more values, refracted and dispersed to establish more planes, more volume, more of the third dimension.

The saga of Cézanne and the skyrocketing of the market prices of his paintings under the stolid, but inspired, faith of Vollard, is an old story today. The Bignou exhibition, however, gave Henry McBride, New York *Sun* critic, a pang of remembrance of the time when he could easily have bought a few in Vollard's dusty old place in Paris. "The prices of the Cézannes," writes McBride, "were ridiculous and quite within the possibilities of even my modest purse, but it didn't occur to me to buy. Why didn't I? Alas, I was not a Sir Hugh Lane, to capitalize upon my art enthusiasm. As Charles Francis Adams said in his memoirs, 'Opportunity is forever knocking at our doors, but is rebuffed so shamefully that it is only by accident that people ever get rich.' Why, if I had only bought three of Vollard's Cézannes I should now be living in a Park Avenue tower with a terrace and a view over both rivers and possibly a Danish cook (they say they're the best). But it's all too sad to dwell upon that phase of the matter now. It is Vollard, not I, who lives in the tower; and probably he has a whole galaxy of cooks."