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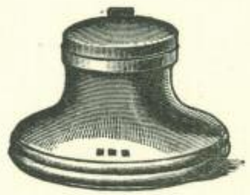

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For the present Exhibition the Committee has invited works by the Post-Impressionists.

CATALOGUE

PRICES AND OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE PICTURES MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE SECRETARY IN THE GALLERY

DRAWINGS

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GERARD CHOWNE

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HAMILTON HAY

3 Moonlit Beach

R. ANNING BELL, R.W.S.

4 Port Mahon—Minorca

MARY McCROSSAN

5 The Foreshore

HAMILTON HAY

6 Rhododendrons

7 Environs of Shrewsbury

HENRY TONKS

8 Packwood

CONSTANCE IRVING

9 In the sere

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MARY McCROSSAN

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HENRY TONKS

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GERARD CHOWNE

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16 Salthouse Heath—Norfolk

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25 Sketch for a Scene

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26 Rochford Tower, near Boston, Lincolnshire

G. W. HARRIS

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28 Dieppe Market Place

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E. C. PRESTON

30 " Wrap thy form in a mantle grey " (*Shelley*)

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E. C. PRESTON

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34 L'Aurore Craintive

35 The Dream Ship

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41 Love in a Mist (Vellum)

The Property of the Sandon Studios Society.

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44 Puff

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ENID JACKSON

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THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS

THE pictures collected together in the present Exhibition are the work of a group of artists who cannot be defined by any single term. The term "Synthesists," which has been applied to them by learned criticism, does indeed express a quality underlying their diversity; and it is the principal business of this introduction to expand the meaning of that word, which sounds too like the hiss of an angry gander to be a happy appellation. As a definition it has the drawback that this quality, common to all, is not always the one most impressive in each artist. In no school does individual temperament count for more. In fact, it is the boast of those who believe in this school, that its methods enable the individuality of the artist to find completer self-expression in his work than is possible to those who have committed themselves to representing objects more literally. This, indeed, is the first source of their quarrel with the Impressionists: the Post-Impressionists consider the Impressionists too naturalistic.

Yet their own connection with Impressionism is extremely close; Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh all learnt in the Impressionist school. There are pictures on the walls by these three artists, painted in their earlier years, which at first strike the eye as being more impressionist than anything else; but, nevertheless, the connection of these artists with the Impressionists is accidental rather than intrinsic.

By the year 1880 the Impressionists had practically won their battle; nor is it likely any group of artists will ever have to fight so hard a one again. They have conquered for future originality, if not the right of a respectful hearing, at least of a dubious attention. By 1880 they had convinced practically everybody whose opinion counted, that their methods and ideas were at any rate those of artists, not those of cranks and

charlatans. About this date the reaction against Impressionism, which this Exhibition represents, began to be distinctly felt. The two groups had one characteristic in common: the resolve of each artist to express his own temperament, and never to permit contemporary ideals to dictate to him what was beautiful, significant, and worthy to be painted. But the main current of Impressionism lay along the line of recording hitherto unrecognised aspects of objects; they were interested in analysing the play of light and shadow into a multiplicity of distinct colours; they refined upon what was already illusive in nature. In the picture by Signac here exhibited, this scientific interest in the representation of colour is still uppermost; what is new in these pictures is simply the method of representing the vibration of light by painting objects in dots and squares. The Post-Impressionists on the other hand were not concerned with recording impressions of colour or light. They were interested in the discoveries of the Impressionists only so far as these discoveries helped them to express emotions which the objects themselves evoked; their attitude towards nature was far more independent, not to say rebellious. It is true that from the earliest times artists have regarded nature as "the mistress of the masters"; but it is only in the nineteenth century that the close imitation of nature, without any conscious modification by the artist, has been proclaimed as a dogma. The Impressionists were artists, and their imitations of appearances were modified, consciously and unconsciously, in the direction of unity and harmony; being artists they were forced to select and arrange. But the receptive, passive attitude towards the appearances of things often hindered them from rendering their real significance. Impressionism encouraged an artist to paint a tree as it appeared to him at the moment under particular circumstances. It insisted so much upon the importance of his rendering this exact impression that his work often completely failed to express a tree at all; as transferred to canvas it was just so much

shimmer and colour. The "treeness" of the tree was not rendered at all; all the emotion and associations such as trees may be made to convey in poetry were omitted.

This is the fundamental cause of difference between the Impressionists and the group of painters whose pictures hang on these walls. They said in effect to the Impressionists: "You have explored nature in every direction, and all honour to you; but your methods and principles have hindered artists from exploring and expressing that emotional significance which lies in things, and is the most important subject matter of art. There is much more of that significance in the work of earlier artists who had not a tenth part of your skill in representing appearance. We will aim at that; though by our simplification of nature we shock and disconcert our contemporaries, whose eyes are now accustomed to your revelations, as much as you originally disconcerted your contemporaries by your subtleties and complications." And there is no denying that the work of the Post-Impressionists is sufficiently disconcerting. It may even appear ridiculous to those who do not recall the fact that a good rocking-horse often has more of the true horse about it than an instantaneous photograph of a Derby winner.

The artists who felt most the restraints which the Impressionist attitude towards nature imposed upon them, naturally looked to the mysterious and isolated figure of Cézanne as their deliverer. Cézanne himself had come in contact with Manet and his art is derived directly from him. Manet, it is true, is also regarded as the father of Impressionism. To him Impressionism owes much of its power, interest and importance. He was a revolutionary in the sense that he refused to accept the pictorial convention of his time. He went back to seventeenth-century Spain for his inspiration. Instead of accepting the convention of light and shade falling upon objects from the side, he chose what seemed an impossibly

difficult method of painting, that of representing them with light falling full upon them. This led to a very great change in the method of modelling, and to a simplification of planes in his pictures which resulted in something closely akin to simple linear designs. He adopted, too, hitherto unknown oppositions of colour. In fact he endeavoured to get rid of chiaroscuro.

Regarded as a hopeless revolutionary, he was naturally drawn to other young artists who found themselves in the same predicament; and through his connection with them and with Monet he gradually changed his severe, closely constructed style for one in which the shifting, elusive aspects of nature were accentuated. In this way he became one of the Impressionists and in his turn influenced them. Cézanne, however, seized upon precisely that side of Manet which Monet and the other Impressionists ignored. Cézanne, when rendering the novel aspects of nature to which Impressionism was drawing attention, aimed first at a design which should produce the coherent, architectural effect of the masterpieces of primitive art. Because Cézanne thus showed how it was possible to pass from the complexity of the appearance of things to the geometrical simplicity which design demands, his art has appealed enormously to later designers. They recognise in him a guide capable of leading them out of the *cul de sac* into which naturalism had led them. Cézanne himself did not use consciously his new-found method of expression to convey ideas and emotions. He appealed first and foremost to the eye, and to the eye alone. But the path he indicated was followed by two younger artists, Van Gogh and Gauguin with surprising results. Van Gogh's morbid temperament forced him to express in paint his strongest emotions, and in the methods of Cézanne he found a means of conveying the wildest and strangest visions conceived by any artist of our time. Yet he, too, accepts in the main the general appearance of nature; only before every scene and every object he searches first for the quality which

originally made it appeal so strangely to him: *that* he is determined to record at any sacrifice.

Gauguin is more of a theorist. He felt that while modern art had opened up undiscovered aspects of nature, it had to a great extent neglected the fundamental laws of abstract form, and above all had failed to realize the power which abstract form and colour can exercise over the imagination of the spectator. He deliberately chose, therefore, to become a decorative painter, believing that this was the most direct way of impressing upon the imagination the emotion he wished to perpetuate. In his Tahitian pictures, by extreme simplification he endeavoured to bring back into modern painting the significance of gesture and movement characteristic of primitive art.

The followers of these men are pushing their ideas further and further. In the work of Matisse, especially, this search for an abstract harmony of line, for rhythm, has been carried to lengths which often deprive the figure of all appearance of nature. The general effect of his pictures is that of a return to primitive, even perhaps of a return to barbaric, art. This is inevitably disconcerting; but before dismissing such pictures as violently absurd, it is fair to consider the nature of the problem which the artist who would use abstract design as his principle of expression, has to face. His relation to a modern public is peculiar. In the earliest ages of art the artist's public were able to share in each successive triumph of his skill, for every advance he made was also an advance towards a more obvious representation of things as they appeared to everybody. Primitive art, like the art of children, consists not so much in an attempt to represent what the eye perceives, as to put a line round a mental conception of the object. Like the work of the primitive artist, the pictures children draw are often extraordinarily expressive. But what delights them is to find they are acquiring more and more skill in producing a deceptive likeness of the object itself. Give them a year of drawing lessons and

they will probably produce results which will give the greatest satisfaction to them and their relations; but to the critical eye the original expressiveness will have vanished completely from their work.

The development of primitive art (for here we are dealing with men and not children) is the gradual absorption of each newly observed detail into an already established system of design. Each new detail is hailed with delight by their public. But there comes a point when the accumulations of an increasing skill in mere representation begin to destroy the expressiveness of the design, and then, though a large section of the public continue to applaud, the artist grows uneasy. He begins to try to unload, to simplify the drawing and painting, by which natural objects are evoked, in order to recover the lost expressiveness and life. He aims at *synthesis* in design; that is to say, he is prepared to subordinate consciously his power of representing the parts of his picture as plausibly as possible, to the expressiveness of his whole design. But in this retrogressive movement he has the public, who have become accustomed to extremely plausible imitations of nature, against him at every step; and what is more, his own self-consciousness hampers him as well.

The movement in art represented in this exhibition is widely spread. Although, with the exception of the Dutchman, Van Gogh, all the artists exhibited are Frenchmen, the school has ceased to be specifically a French one. It has found disciples in Germany, Belgium, Russia, Holland, Sweden. There are Americans, Englishmen and Scotchmen in Paris who are working and experimenting along the same lines. But the works of the Post-Impressionists are hardly known in England, although so much discussed upon the continent.

ROGER FRY.

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Post-Impressionists

DRAWINGS

1 Reproductions of Drawings after VAN GOGH

PICASSO

2 Drawing
Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

PIERRE LAPRADE

3 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

JULES FLANDRIN

4 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903)

5 Dessin
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PIERRE GIRIEUD

6 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PICASSO

7 Femme au fond rose
Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

8 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PICASSO

9 Tête
Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

HENRI MATISSE

10 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

11 Drawing
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903)

12 Portrait, d'Enfant
Lent by Clovis Sagot

ALBERT MARQUET

13 Dessin
Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PICASSO

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Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

OTHON FRIESZ

15 Drawing

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

ALBERT MARQUET

16 Dessin

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

HENRI MATISSE

17 Drawing

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PAINTINGS

PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903)

18 L'Arlésienne

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

19 La Réligieuse

Lent by M. Vollard

20 Maori Women

Lent by M. Vollard

21 Enfants

Lent by Bernheim Jeune & Cie

22 Les Coiffes Blanches

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PAUL CÉZANNE (1839-1906)

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Lent by Bernheim Jeune & Cie

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Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

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26 La danse des Vendanges

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

PAUL SÉRUSIER

27 La Pluie

Lent by Galeries E. Druet

HERBIN

28 Paysage

Lent by M. Clovis Sagot

PAUL SIGNAC

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Lent by Bernheim Jeune & Cie

ANDRE DERAIN

30 Martigues

Lent by M. Kahnweiler

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

ALBERT MARQUET

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

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Lent by B. Berenson, Esq.

HENRI MANGUIN

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

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Lent by Mr. Roger Fry.

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

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Lent by Galeries E. Druet

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