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Barr

1

(WSL asked for + rec'd Xerox of all this - 12-4-79)

[per RR who says Barr's initials]

Critical Catalog (wall labels)

Loan Exhibition of Modern
Graphic Art.

by Alfred

Fogg Museum

Spring 1925

[Alfred's handwriting]

^{not by Alfred}
criticisms of exhibition of modern Art at
Wellesley
May 1927

[5] [Hans Barr's writing] (not in this envelope)

pink

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→
England is singularly rich in calligraphic decorative draughtsmen such as Blake, Burne-Jones, Charles Ricketts and Aubrey Beardsley. But she was singularly poor in naturalistic draughtsmen. Among such continental masters as Daumier, Menzel, and Forain CHARLES KEENE is the only Englishman worthy of mention. His line is admirably brief and profoundly witty. He was one of the greatest English artists and is much neglected in England and America.

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Eugène Béjot's etchings belong to the tradition
of Meryon and Lalanne.

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Hermann Webster is even more imitative than is
Béjot of Meryon's sharp edges and sharp contrasts of light
and dark.

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ALBERT BESNARD, like his Northern counterpart Anders Zorn, is primarily interested in the problem of the figure seen in an unusual or difficult light. There is much of Manet and something of the impressionists in his position.

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The art of MARC CHAGALL is partially DADA - that is it recognizes no rules, no precedents, and no traditions. In drawing and composition it suggests no aesthetic intention of a visual nature. The interest is literary more than pictorial, psychological but not logical. It lies in the assemblage of objects and ideas the relation between which is tenuous but piquant. The selection of these objects is not always rational - the representation of them is intentionally naive. Like Stravinski, the musician, Chagall looked to Russian folk art for stimulation. The result is perhaps comparable to Hey Diddle Diddle the Cat and the Fiddle - or to the drawings of an untrained child - but there are subtly sophisticated overtones. Dadaism came as a reaction against all order and discipline in art and life. The movement was short-lived and carefully futile - but it had certain emancipating effects.

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These three heads form an interesting comparison. At the right is a fine traditional drawing by Augustus John. At the left RENOIR whose influence on recent art is second only to Cézanne's. Renoir loves richness of color which he achieves even in black and white - and breadth and fullness of form. He has been called an Impressionist but in his later work light is not studied for itself but as a means of evoking form by abstract light and shade - much in the manner of the Italian masters of the Renaissance.

DERAIN in his print has made an interesting linear design of the human face. The curves of the chin and the lower lip are concentive - the lines of the eyes, brows and nostrils are simplified. Though there is nothing archaistic about the print its aesthetic character is not far removed from the masque-like faces of Vith century Greek sculpture with their archaic smiles and schematic eyebrows.

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One may mention Goya and other predecessors in strangeness but this does not explain Ogilon Redon. Though he was born in 1840, he is very modern because he strove to explore the esoteric regions of his own spirit. His lithographs are the visual expression of his discoveries.

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CEZANNE, the founder of Post Impressionism, learned much of his art from Pissarro, but he felt that Impressionism by its bondage to light led to the neglect of form and structural composition. This print shows clearly how he strove to evoke plastic forms by powerful synthetic drawing, to arrange these forms in an aesthetically interesting composition, while retaining the vitality of Impressionistic color. In so doing his interest in simplifying - or synthesizing - caused him to depart from what is strictly representational or natural in appearance. The impressionists made a similar departure from 'natural' color to emphasize brilliancy of light. Cezanne's composition is founded on Poussin and the old masters.

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Three examples of French draughtsmanship toward the end of the XIXth century. MARY CASSATT an American pupil of Degas represents the Ingres tradition though her line is lighter than in the former and more heavily accented than in the latter. STEINLEN uses the broad rich line of Daumier. Louis Legrand combines something of Manet and of Degas. Daumier, Manet and Degas inspired most of the progressive draughtsmen of the period.

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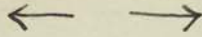
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This lithograph for all its exotic veneer displays Gauguin's partial dependence on his predecessors. Not only the subject matter but the decorative conception is close to that of Manet's Olympia.

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The exotic woodcuts by Gauguin done in Tahiti show the beginnings of the decorative phase of Post Impressionism - just as the Cezanne shows the beginning of the structural phase. Done in the early nineties, they are a landmark in the renaissance of the original woodcut which has developed so remarkably in the last twenty years. The beauty and variety of surface quality comes from the cutting - an ingenious mixture of scraping, gouging, and hatching.

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Camille Pissarro's name is less conspicuous than
that of Monet, his fellow impressionist, but his modest art
bids fair to outlast that of the latter.

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PICASSO is the most inventive intelligence in modern art. He began with Steinlen (whose work is shown opposite), played with negro sculpture; with Braque created cubism; and deserted that for a return to nature - and to Ingres. But it is Ingres' line simplified and continuous in contour, based however on profound knowledge.

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TOULOUSE-LAUTREC lacks the humour of Daumier and the impersonality of Degas. He took whatever was cynical and pungent in their work and added to that the bitter disillusion of his own vision. His drawing also combines the ideals of Daumier and Degas but with a much more personal accent than in Steinlen or Legrand. Compare his work with that of Beardsley.

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These two prints and the next two illustrate an almost mathematical progression from Impressionism to Cubism. Unlike Monet and Sisley, Pissarro frequently turned his attention to figure composition. A true impressionist, however, he never lost his preoccupation with light and air, so that drawing and modelling are mollified by the atmosphere - while his figures, which are as essentially part of the landscape as the trees and cows, do not count so emphatically as figure composition.

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George Bellows undoubtedly owes much to Goya and Daumier - but what draughtsman of this type does not? He is said to employ the principles of Dynamic Symmetry in his compositions. He is one of the few Americans who have dealt with the problem of figure composition with much success. His recent death is a severe loss to American art.

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Pamela Bianco is seventeen years old. Since
an early age her prodigious talent has excited interest.
She confesses a liking for Crivelli and Picasso - her
MOTHER AND CHILD confirms this decidedly, though the flower
piece is more original.

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DERAIN a leader in contemporary Post-Impressionism
carries Cezanne's simplifications to the point of stylization.
He shows the same interest in figure arrangement but his form
drawing is more conventional. He sacrifices natural
appearance for unity of design even more than Cezanne.

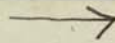
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Felix Drappemond taught etching to many of the men who began their careers in the 1850's and '60's. He is best known for his etchings of birds which show a precise naturalism combined with a decorative effect borrowed from the Japanese.

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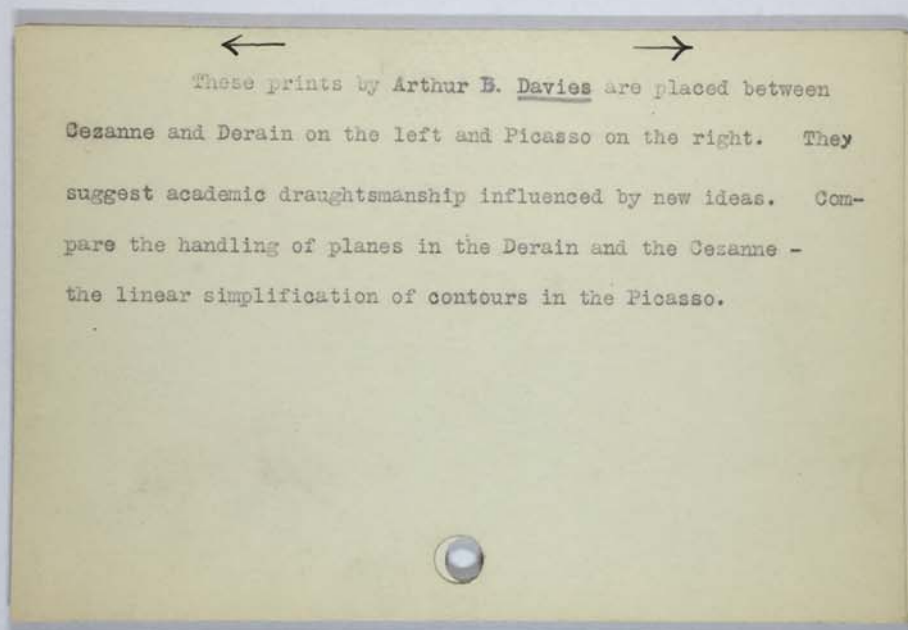
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James McBey and Augustus John illustrate contemporary draughtsmanship and figure composition that is fairly traditional. In the former there is much of Whistler but with a more energetic contour. The latter achieves a decorative effect with a free weaving line suggestive of Forain's later work.

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Cubism was the invention of Picasso and Braque but it was inspired by Cezanne who pointed out that natural forms if simplified to geometrical essentials become cubes and cylinders. This was the first stage of Cubism. Having reduced the form to cubes and cylinders and spheres it is not a difficult step to juggle them somewhat, to combine

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ARCHIPPENKO a Russian sculptor now working in New York illustrates the last phase of "denaturalization". Cubism was the invention of Picasso and Braque but it was inspired by Cezanne who pointed out that natural forms if simplified to geometrical essentials become cubes and cylinders. This was the first stage of Cubism. Having reduced the form to cubes and cylinders and spheres it is not a difficult step to juggle them somewhat, to combine in one picture the front and back of the same figure, to substitute the concave for the convex - and to do all of these things according to the aesthetic sensibility of the artist. This is what Archipenko has done.

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Gauguin and Matisse are the most important representatives of another phase of modern art, the emphasis of decorative qualities. Matisse took his cue from Gauguin but drew his inspiration from Persia and the Primitives. Like Picasso he has emerged from the period of distortion which many found so annoying. But he has retained what he found valuable in Barbaric art just as Picasso retained what he found of value in cubism. The print at the right shows his interest in pattern, the aesthetic possibilities of arrangements of figures, tables, rugs, and other "interior decorations". Vermeer of Delft, Manet, and Whistler often set themselves the same problem. The still more recent print at the right shows a new interest in plastic form.

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↓
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