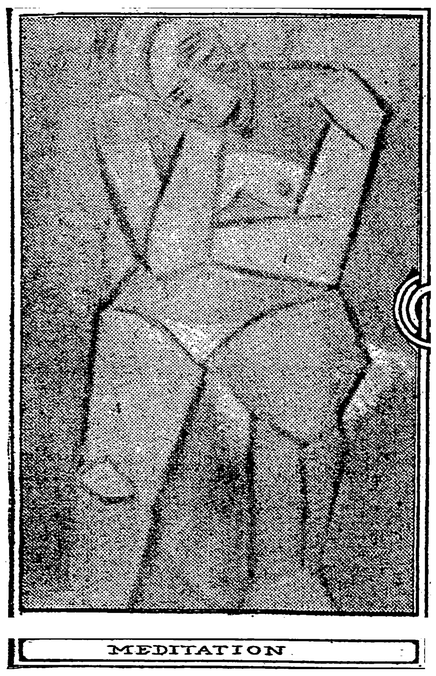
THE "CUBISTS" DOMINATE PARIS' FALL SALON



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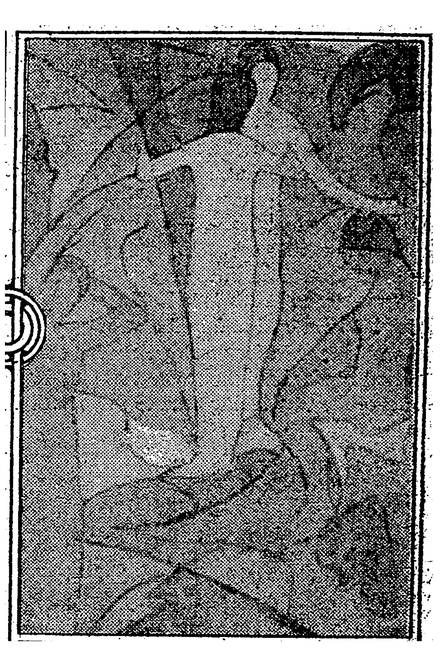
PICASSO in his STUDIO



TRAVAIL A L'AUTOMNE by FRIESZ



CHABAUD and "LA PLACE AUX AFFICHES"



BAGNEUSE by METZINGER

Eccentric School of Painting Increases Its Vogue in the Current Art Exhibition--- What Its Followers Attempt to Do.



GEORGES BRAQUE

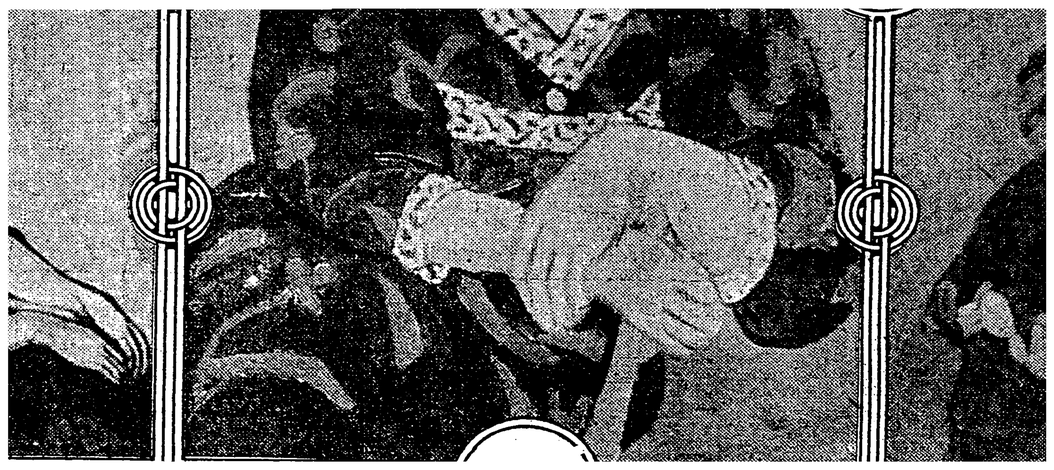




CZOBEL



PORTRAIT DE FEMME



TETE D'EXPRESSION



PORTRAIT DE FEMME by HERBIN

AMONG all the paintings on exhibition at the Paris Fall Salon none is attracting so much attention as the extraordinary productions of the so-called "Cubist" school. In fact, dispatches from Paris suggest that these works are easily the main feature of the exhibition.

The "Cubists," be it known, are a school of artists who believe that the right way to paint persons and things is to paint them in cubes, squares, and lozenges. They have been before the public now for several years.

When they first burst on the astonished gaze of Paris and the rest of the universe they were known as the "Invertebrates." That was in 1905. On recovering from its first fit of amazement at the astonishing productions of the "Invertebrates" the public promptly dubbed them the "Wild Beasts." Now they are "les Cubistes."

Whatever their name, they continue to paint pictures before which descriptive adjectives retreat in disorder. They slap colors, apparently in haphazard fashion, on their canvases, draw back a step, slap on another assortment, and then calmly label the sensational result "A Woman," "A Landscape," "Still Life," or something equally innocent and inadequate. If you seek to find out where they got their ideas you will learn that the "Invertebrates" and "Wild Beasts" and "Cubists" call themselves disciples of Matisse. But there are those who say that Matisse stands aghast before these madnesses.

In spite of the crazy nature of the "Cubist" theories the number of those professing them is fairly respectable. Georges Braque, André Derain, Picasso, Czobel, Othon Friesz, Herbin, Metzinger—these are a few of the names signed to canvases before which Paris has stood and now again stands in blank amazement.

What do they mean? Have those responsible for them taken leave of their senses? Is this art or madness? Who knows?

At all events the devoted group, advancing—or receding—year by year, can at least say that plenty of people waste time and adjectives upon them. If, like Kipling's "Bandar-Log," the foolish monkey-folk of the jungle, their desire is to be "noticed," they have been richly rewarded during their brief existence.

Last year Gelett Burgess, he of "Purple-Cow" fame, also known as an artist of eccentric habit, went to Paris and became inspired with a desire to find out something about this weird school. Perhaps the same twist of mind that caused him to turn out his sinuous and popular "Goops" moved him to undertake this voyage of discovery among hidden Parisian studios. Anyhow, he ventured forth on his quest, found what he sought, and described what he found in The Architectural Record.

The lust for discovery first stirred in Gelett Burgess when he entered the Salon des Indépendants and caught his first glimpse of a painting by one of the "Wild Men of Paris"—thus it is that he dubs those we know as "Cubists."

Here is how he describes that first glimpse:

"I had scarcely entered the Salon des Indépendants when I heard shrieks of laughter coming from an adjoining wing. I hurried along from room to room under the huge canvas roof until I came upon a party of well-dressed Parisians in a paroxysm of merriment, gazing through weeping eyes at a picture. Even in my haste I had noticed other spectators lurching hysterically in and out of the galleries; I had caught sight of paintings that made me gasp.

"But here I stopped in amazement. It was a thing to startle even Paris. I realized for the first time that my views on art needed a radical reconstruction. Suddenly I had entered a new world, a universe of ugliness. And, ever since, I have been mentally standing on my head in the endeavor to get a new point of view on beauty so as to understand and appreciate this new movement in art.

"'Une Soirée dans le Désert' was a fearful initiation.

"It was a painting of a nude female, seated on a stretch of sand, devouring her own knee. The gore dripped into a wine glass. A palm tree and two cacti furnished the environment. Two large snakes with target-shaped eyes assisted at the debauch, while two small giraffes hurried away from the scene.

"What did it all mean? The drawing was crude past all belief; the color was as atrocious as the subject. Had a new era of art begun? Was ugliness to supersede beauty, technique to give way to naïveté, and vibrant discordant color, a very patchwork of horrid hues, take the place of subtle, studied nuances of tonality? Was nothing sacred, not even beauty?

"If this example of the new art was shocking there were other paintings at the Salon that were almost as dire.

"If you can imagine what a particularly sanguinary little girl of eight, half-crazed with gin, would do to a white-washed wall if left alone with a box of crayons, then you will come near to fancying what most of this work was like.

"Or you might take a red-hot poker in your left hand, shut your eyes, and etch a landscape upon a door.

"There were no limits to the audacity and ugliness of the canvases. Still-life sketches of round, round apples and yellow, yellow oranges, on square, square tables, seen in impossible perspective; landscapes of squirming trees, with blobs of virgin color gone wrong, fierce greens and coruscating yellows, violent purples, sickening reds, and shuddering blues.

"But the nudes! They looked like flayed Martians, like pathological charts—hideous old women, patched with gruesome hues, lopsided, with arms like the arms of a Swastika, sprawling on vivid backgrounds, or frozen stiffly upright, glaring through misshapen eyes, with noses or fingers missing.

"They defied anatomy, physiology, almost geometry itself!"

Burgess shares the opinion that, although Matisse is named as the man responsible for all these horrors, he is, in reality, by no means so black as he is painted.

"Poor, patient Matisse!" he exclaims—and imagines that artist "breaking his way through this jungle of art," to see his followers go whooping off in wild paths of their own.

Matisse may have said, perhaps, conjectures Burgess, that "the equilateral triangle is a symbol and manifestation of the absolute—if one could get that absolute quality into a painting it would be a work of art."

Thereupon one of the maddest of his pupils dashes off and builds a woman entirely out of triangles.



LANDSCAPE by DERAIN

Then, perchance, Matisse talks of the "harmony of volume" and "architectural values."

Result: Another madman "builds an architectural monster which he names Woman, with balanced masses and parts, columnar legs and cornices," and still another—"molds a neolithic man into a solid cube, creates a woman of spheres, stretches a cat out like a cylinder, and paints it red and yellow!"

All that may shock Matisse; nevertheless, he is accused of painting his own wife with a stripe of green down her nose, so he is by no means so quiet and conventional himself, in spite of his sad sighs when confronted with the work of his "disciples."

It was pointed out to Matisse once that he had painted a woman with only three fingers.

"True," he agrees, "but I couldn't put in the others without throwing the whole out of drawing—it would destroy the composition and the unity of my ideal. Perhaps some day I may be able to get what I want of sentiment, of emotional appeal, and, at the same time, draw all five fingers. But the subjective idea is what I am after now; the rest can wait."

And the missing fingers wait!

Burgess's quest of the wild men of Paris took him into remote quarters of Montmartre and Montparnasse, into chaotic studios where worked men "all young, all virile, all enthusiastic, all with abundant personality and all a little mad."

There is Georges Braque, who paints nudes with square feet and right-angled shoulders. Braque is of athletic build, with broad shoulders, of shy demeanor. Before one of his weird productions—a woman with a balloon-shaped stomach—he remarked:

"I couldn't portray a woman in all her natural loveliness. I haven't the skill. No one has. I must, therefore, create a new sort of beauty, the beauty that appears to me in terms of volume, of line, of mass, of weight, and through this beauty interpret my subjective impression.

"Nature is a mere pretext for a decorative composition plus sentiment. It suggests emotion and I translate that emotion into art. I want to expose the absolute, and not merely the factitious woman."

Thence one may go to the studio of Derain to see "a group of squirming bathers, some green, some flaming pink; all, apparently, modeled out of dough."

Here, also, is "the cubical man himself, compressed into geometric proportions, his head between his legs."

Also, a portrait of Dérain's cat in the shape of a cylinder, and a lot of weird African carvings.

"A wild place, fit for dreams, but no place for mother!" exclaims Gelett Burgess.

Dérain, like Braque, tries to put his ideas into words.

"What, after all, is a pretty woman?" he asks. "A mere subjective impression—what you yourself think of her. That's what I paint, another kind of beauty of my own. There is often more psychic appeal in a so-called ugly woman than in a pretty one; and, in my ideal, I reconstruct her to bring that beauty forth in terms of line or volume.

"A homely woman may please by her grace, by her motion in dancing, for instance. So she may please me by her harmonies of volume. If I paint a girl in the sunlight, it's the sunlight I'm painting, not the real girl; and, even for that, I should have the sun itself on my palette. I don't care for an accidental effect of light and shade, a thing of mere charm.'

"The Japanese see things that way. They don't paint sunlight, they don't cast shadows that perplex one and falsify the true shape of things. The Egyptian figures have simplicity, dignity, directness, unity; they express emotion almost as if by a conventional formula, like writing itself.

"So I seek a logical method of rendering my idea. Africans, being primitive, uncomplex, uncultured, can express their thought by a direct appeal to the instinct. Their carvings are informed with emotion. So Nature gives me the material with which to construct a world of my own, governed not by literal limitations, but by instinct and sentiments."

Picasso, wildest of wild men, "comes rolling out of a café, wiping his mouth, clad in a blue American sweater," to be interviewed and photographed.

"Picasso is a devil," asserts Burgess. "I use the term in its most complimentary sense; for he's young, fresh, olive-skinned, a Spanish type. I thought of a Yale sophomore who had been out stealing signs and was on the point of expulsion."

Incidentally, Picasso is "the only one of the crowd with a sense of humor."

His studio is an incredible jumble of junk and dust, bottles, rags, paints, sketches, clothes, food, ashes, and hair-raising pictures.

"Picasso is colossal in his audacity. Picasso is the doubly distilled ultimate. His canvases fairly reek with the insolence of youth; they outrage nature, tradition, decency. They are abominable.

"You ask him if he uses models and he turns to you a dancing eye.

"'Where would I get them?' grins Picasso, as he winks at his ultramarine ogresses."

Then there is Czobel, who paints women "aged 80, as a rule," with very purple complexions, mustard-colored spots, yellow throats, orange and blue arms. "Sometimes, not often, they wear bright, green skirts."

Czobel hasn't much to say about his art or his ideals or anything. Not so Othon Friesz. He talks sensibly about the wild things he paints.

He calls the mad riot of himself and his colleagues a "Ueo-classic movement, tending toward the architectural style of Egyptian art."

"Modern French impressionism is decadent," he says. "In its reaction against the frigidity and insipid arrangements of the Renaissance it has itself gone to an extreme as bad, and contents itself with fugitive impressions and premature expressions.

"This newer movement is an attempt to return to simplicity, but not necessarily a return to any primitive art.

"It is the beginning of a new art. There is a growing feeling for decorative values. It seeks to express this with a certain 'style' of line and volume, with pure color rather than by tones subtly graded; by contrasts rather than by modulations; by simple lines and shapes rather than by complex forms."

Just around the corner from Friesz's studio is that of Herbin, a melancholy hermit of a wild man, "who has no friends and wants none."

"I don't distort Nature," he declares, alluding to works on the walls of his lair that seem to refute his statement utterly. "I sacrifice it to a higher form of beauty and of decorative unity."

Metzinger has more to say about his "art" than the lone and mournful Herbin.

"Instead of coping Nature," he says, "we create a 'milieu' of our own, wherein our sentiment can work itself out through a juxtaposition of colors. It is hard to explain it, but it may perhaps be illustrated by analogy with literature and music.

"Edgar Poe did not attempt to reproduce Nature realistically. Some phase of life suggested an emotion, as that of horror in 'The Fall of the House of Usher.' That subjective idea he translated into art. He made a composition of it.

"So music does not attempt to imitate Nature's sounds, but it does interpret and embody emotions awakened by Nature through a convention of its own in a way to be aesthetically pleasing. In some such way we, taking our hint from Nature, construct decoratively pleasing harmonies and symphonies of color expression of our sentiment."

Thus talk the wild men. Their talk sounds like sense. When they solemnly juggle with terms like "beauty" and "Nature" it all sounds very nice.

But when they stop talking and exhibit their canvases! That is quite another matter.

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