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ARTISTIC TENDENCIES IN ITALY.

It will be useful, before talking about the actual tendencies of art in Italy, to mention which were the origins of the modern researches in this country.

The early relationship with the new formal conceptions, starts, at about the end of XIXth century, supported by post impressionist movements.

Then the impressionist and post impressionist discoveries became known and they served as a basis for the first modern current that appears with an international and up to date cultural purpose. The "Futurism" (1909-1917) personifies the new spirit of modern life in the world, now growing in Italy with the quick industrialisation of the country, the renovation of philosophic conceptions, and the unsuspected enthusiasm for the increasing of a new culture. A group of young artists who have absorbed the post impressionist experiments, searches, by the means of a new expressive form, a violent reaction to the academic mentality, and, at the same time, some solutions of the european artistic problems which will bring them into the current of the modern research.

They operate in a parallel manner with the cubists, and, as these were searching a static equilibrium of plastic means, they worked to rejoin a dynamic equilibrium.

Almost at the same time, De Chirico discovers the intervention of the "Unconscious" in pictorial problems, working at his metaphysical painting.

Both of these movements posed some problems that we can find later repeated or resolved by schools like: the suprematists, the dadaists, the surrealists, the neo-romantics, and, also, under some aspects, in the abstractionists.

The working out of these two modern directions in Italian art, ends about 1922 with the last metaphysical magazine "Valori plastici". Then, culture, fallen under the intervention of fascism, becomes nothing more than a new official academic romanticism.

The death of the best futurist artists, Boccioni, Sant'Elia, Russolo, the defection of many others, brings artists backward to Giotto, to the mannerists, to the Lombardo romantics, in a search of themes and old fashioned formal solutions.

So, during 20 years, art in the modern sense slept in Italy.

The restricted possibilities of information, the lack of cultural exchanging, the strong political oppression, isolated the culture in the country and smothered any possible progress or vitality. Only during the last war did new movements appear on the way of the modern international artistic researches.

Also if local, and showing different aspects, these tendencies all had a common purpose.

That was a desire to participate again in the world's valid and active culture.

They stated, as the main point of their work, the assimilation of the most recent stylistic innovations that contemporary masters like, Picasso, Braque, Kandinsky, Matisse, etc., had brought into



modern art.

They refuse to look any more at the Italian official tradition and they start the reaction against all what still exists as produced by this tradition.

Here we have the two opposed main tendencies of to day.

The conservative and official one, appearing under several aspects; Novecentism, Tonalism, Late Expressionism, supported by the old names of Carrà, Morandi, Manzù, and financed by almost all of the market; the young and modern one grown, under different aspects in the different traditional centers of Milan, Rome and Venice, supported by the faith and the work of young new names.

This tendency is clearly the most interesting one.

It shows two general directions depending on which of the contemporary masters the artists are interested.

The first one, in Milan, develops from the discoveries made by Matisse, Braque, Rouault, and from the post expressionist work of Picasso, is led by the "Fronte Nuovo delle Arti" (Guttuso, Birolli, Morlotti,).

The second direction started in Rome, led by the Group "Forma" (Perilli, Dorazio, Consagra, Turcato, Guerrini) and assimilated later some artists working: in Venice (Vedova, Pizzinato, Viani), in Milan (Dova, Reggiani, Fontana), in Turin (Sottsass, Spazapan, Massaglia). In a national exhibition of abstract art where for the first time in Italy was shown the work of so many interesting personalities.

This one, having absorbed the lesson by Picasso, Matisse etc. refuses it as an overrated experiment after the results rejoin by abstractionist masters like, Kandinsky, Magnelli, Mondrian, Pevsner Calder. Their first move was negative: a polemic against the provincialism of the official national culture, then it became positive, an attempt to educate the public in new forms of art.

The cultural proposals they made, are: 1 the founding of a new museum of modern art where positive contemporary works of art should be exposed, 2 the opening of a model school of art and applied arts like the old Bauhaus, 3 the increasing of international exchange of exhibitions and publications.

To day, our presence in this meeting shows that art is starting again to live in Italy, faith and work of young artists will keep it living.

We owe so much to some men, like L. Venturi, G. Severini, A. Magnelli who kept continually alive our hopes with their work and efforts, when we can say that at least we work for the world's culture. We wish that our work and all our energies should be spent as a faithful contribution to the history of men.

Presente' par Piero Dorazio et Achille Perilli

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