

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ART CRITICS.

ISTANBUL.

8th - 17th SEPTEMBER. 1954.

THEME I.

Introduction:

Professor Dişal Esat Arseven.

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Orient and Occident → I am very happy to be able to express here, on behalf of the Turkish Society of Art Critics, the great pleasure which our section has in welcoming to Istanbul for the first time the eminent members of the International Association of Art Critics.

Turkey, which, as you will find out during your stay here, has realised considerable progress in the domain of modern plastic arts, has taken a great step forward by joining the big family of the IAAC. It is a move that will make its culture better known abroad, and more particularly ~~the~~ the expressions of its contemporary art.

The "Orient-Occident" theme, which is the first on the work programme of this congress, constitutes without a doubt one of the major preoccupations of the present time. The research of artists from every country and the work of critics and art historians centre again and again around this question. I believe that in giving pride of place to the Orient-Occident theme we are contributing in a very substantial way to the fusion of the art and culture of our two worlds.

I believe too that this congress will mark a very important step in the understanding of ancient Turkish art, which, in spite of characteristic which distinguish it from the art of other Moslem countries, has always been very misunderstood. Until recently Turkish classical art was confused with the works of other oriental countries, and was denied the place it merited in the history of art. Thus it is now known that many Turkish miniatures were attributed to the art of Iran, and that a considerable number of our architectural monuments were judged regardless of their value and their real characteristics.

writings helped I hasten to say however that the exhibition of Turkish art which was held in Paris at the Museum of Decorative Art, as well as many recent ~~writings~~ *writings* such as those of Professor Albert Gabriel for instance, have greatly contributed to correct many erroneous judgements.

I believe that modern art can find in Turkey one of its most important sources of inspiration. Our embroideries, carpets, "kilims", miniatures, and the arts of our folklore constitute a vast repertory of forms, colours and plastic combinations for the artist. Turkish painting which since the era of westernisation known as "Tanzimat" (which started in the 20th century) had resolutely turned its face towards Europe, is now returning to its national sources. Our young artists, encouraged by the research of contemporary masters, are becoming conscious of the value of their national heritage. The exhibition of modern Turkish Art which will be

Djelal Essat Arseven. 2.

~~inaugurated~~ during our Congress, will, I believe, illustrate the dominant preoccupations of our artists of today. It would seem that a new period in the history of our painting is about to begin.

We earnestly hope that our eminent colleagues will find a wealth of new ideas during their too brief stay in Turkey. We rejoice in the idea that this Congress of Istanbul, which we hope will mark a date in the international artistic world, will help to crystallise certain new data which will enrich international artistic literature. The presence here of so many art critics and learned historians is the best guarantee of this result.

I thank you all for the honour you do our country by coming here, and I wish you a pleasant and profitable stay in Turkey and may success crown your work.