

STUDIES

THE STATE OF ART PUBLISHING

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This general title covers many problems :

- 1) Artistic problems, concerning artists and the influence on public taste,
- 2) Material problems, concerning the rights, royalties and interests of artists as well as those of writers and art critics.

I) ARTISTIC PROBLEMS

Recent progress in the publication and reproduction of works of art has completely transformed publishing conditions during the last few years. As a result, relations between the artist and the public will undergo a radical change. The ever-widening horizon of the public has put an end to the isolated character of the work of art and has enabled it to be seen as part of an "ensemble" and to be judged in relation to this "ensemble". And so it can not only be admired in its own right but also by comparison with other works, thus taking into account influences exterior to itself.

Moreover the perfection of reproduction, which can in certain cases create the illusion of possessing the original work, has separated two elements which until now were closely associated; the feeling of rarity and the feeling of beauty. We can look forward to the moment when reproduction will no longer be an evocation of the original work but a multiplication of it so perfect that the original will be nothing but a prototype, and thousands of amateurs and collectors will have the joy of admiring masterpieces in their own homes.

Modern art, in its tendency towards synthesis, has willy-nilly prepared the way for this evolution and it is clear that works by such artists as Matisse, Léger, Picasso or Braque are easier to reproduce exactly than a Rembrandt, a Vermeer van Delft or a Delacroix. Consequently it is not unlikely that the conditions of the artists life and creative activity will follow a very different pattern to that which existed in the past.

2) MATERIAL PROBLEMS

The evolution of publication in its effect on the state and obvious extension of its public also raises problems which concern both artists and writers. (Historians or critics).

Owing to lack of precise legislation authors' interests are very badly defended. It must be admitted that the percentage on the sale of books cannot be the same as for other writers, the proportion of manufacturing expenses being very different, but it is inadmissible that the text be payed less than, for example, the cover of the book.

It would be useful to compile a documentation on the state of publishing in different countries : scales of payments - size of editions - translations, etc.. and try to work out reasonable solutions. This could eventually be undertaken by the I.A.A.C.