

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ART CRITICS

Amsterdam - The Hague

July 2-10, 1951

SUMMARY RECORD.

Opening Session

Municipal Theatre, Amsterdam

Monday, July 2

President: Mr. Paul FIERENS (Belgium)

Vice-Presidents: Raymond COGNAT (France), Gerard KNUTTTEL (Holland),
Eric NEWTON (U.K.), James J. SWEENEY (U.S.),
Lionello VENTURI (Italy)

General Secretary: Mrs. S. GILLE-DELAFFON (France)

General Secretary
of the Congress : Mr. H.L.C. JAFFE (Holland)

Rapporteur Général: Mr. L.P.J. BRAAT (Holland)

Secretariat of
UNESCO : Mr. P. BELLEW, Division des Arts et des Lettres
Mr. F. BOLEN, Division du Film et de l'Infor-
mation Visuelle

Mr. Gerard KNUTTTEL, President of the Dutch Section, welcomes the Congress. He expresses his gratitude to the International Association of Art Critics for having chosen Holland as the meeting-place of its third Congress. Financial support from the Dutch Government and the Municipality of Amsterdam have made it possible to receive the Congress. In the name of all present he thanks the Dutch Secretariate, especially Mr. JAFFE, Mr. BRAAT, Mr. DOELMAN and Miss De HULIJ.

Mr. Paul FIERENS, President of the International Association of Art Critics, greets Holland and the town of Amsterdam as hostesses of the art critics. He thanks his Excellency Mr. J.M.L.T. CALS, representative of the Dutch Government, and Mr. A.J. d'Ailly, burgomaster of Amsterdam, for their presence and also expresses his thanks to the "Prins Bernhard" Fund and the Director of the "Holland Festival" for their help.

The International Association of Art Critics considers this day as an important landmark in its history: from now on it will be definitely international. The idea to unite art critics has its origin in France. Therefore the first Congresses were held in Paris and from the very beginning UNESCO has offered its hospitality for which the critics are very grateful. After UNESCO it has been the Biennale at Venice which in its turn has offered its services and the congenial atmosphere, in which the programme of the present Congress could be worked out in detail. No doubt, the critics, in coming to Amsterdam, have made the first of a series of journeys that will take them to the principal centres of learning, study and artistic production: wherever an effort is made to establish a community of the mind surpassing all barriers between the nations and conforming with the modern world.

The ungrateful task to organise the Congress, with which AICA has charged the Dutch Section, proves to have been carried out extremely well thanks to Mr. KNUTTEL, President of the Section, who has exerted himself to the utmost, and also to Mr. SANDBERG, Director of the Municipal Museum, and Mr. JAFFE, the very active secretary-general of the Congress. They as well as the other members of the Committee of Organization may be assured of the critics' gratitude, which includes Mrs. GILLE-DELAFOY, who has prepared everything in Paris. In each of the countries represented the Presidents and secretaries of the national Sections have done their utmost to make the participation of their countrymen to the Congress as brilliant and efficient as possible.

The PRESIDENT draws attention to the fact that UNESCO a year ago has charged the International Association of Art Critics with an inquiry on the reproduction of works of art, on the art film and the spreading of artistic values among the working-classes. The results of this inquiry have been appreciated, as UNESCO has entrusted the Association with a second inquiry: on the situation of artists. He is sure that the members of AICA are fully convinced of the importance and seriousness of the subject.

The PRESIDENT concludes by expressing his best wishes for the success of the Congress.

Mr. A.J. d'Ailly, burgomaster of Amsterdam, welcomes the Congress in his turn. He is fully aware of the importance of such an international Congress and holds that art does not belong to any country in particular but to all countries. Art critics should be enabled to work at liberty without feeling the strain of being influenced by the authorities.

Mr. J.M.L.T. CAIS, State-Secretary of Education, Arts and Sciences, is glad that the International Association of Art Critics has decided to hold its third Congress in Amsterdam, the first to be held outside Paris. Some of the subjects to be discussed at the Congress - for instance, "Van Gogh" and "De Stijl"-

have acquired an extremely great importance for Holland. He emphasises the usefulness of the critic's task, the necessity of a flourishing artistic life and the importance of bringing the public in closer contact with art. He concludes by declaring the Congress opened.

Mr. Gerard KNUPTSL introduces the subjects that will be discussed at the Congress. He expresses the wish that all who take part will get as much out of the Congress as possible to the benefit of their profession and requests them, when judging contemporary Dutch art, to take into account the struggle which the artists in his country have in adapting their national character to the modern spirit.

The meeting rises.

Summary Records of the Plenary Meetings

Chairman: Mr. Paul FIERENS (Belgium)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Raymond COGNAT (France), Mr. Gerard KNUTTEL (Holland), Mr. Eric NEWTON (U.K.), James J. SWEENEY (U.S.A.), Lionello VENTURI (Italy)

General secretary: Mrs. S. GILIE-DELAFFON (France)

General Treasurer: Mr. Walter KERN (Switzerland)

General Secretary of the Congress : Mr. H.L.C. JAFFE (Holland)

Rapporteur Général: Mr. L.J.P. BRAAT (Holland)

Members of the Organizing Committee: Mr. C. DOELMAN (Holland), Mr. A.M. HAMMACHER (Holland), W.J.H.B. SANDBERG (Holland), K.E. SCHURMAN (Holland)

Secretariate of UNESCO : Mr. P. BELLE, Division des Arts et Lettres.

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First Plenary Meeting
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam
Tuesday July 3.

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The CHAIRMAN opens the meeting and announces that it will be devoted to the study of subjects 3 and 6. First: subject 3, "The organisation of temporary exhibitions, from the point of view of curators and of art critics". The reporters are : Mr. ARGAN, Mr. HUYGHE, Mr. PENROSE, Mr. SANDBERG. Secretary of the group: Mr. SANDBERG. A communication will be made by Mr. DEROUILLÉ.

Mr. W.J.H.B. SANDBERG (Holland) enumerates the six subjects under consideration: a/ why exhibit, b/ why not exhibit, c/ in which way exhibit d/ with what funds exhibit (economic point of view) e/ where exhibit, f/ how many works of art to exhibit. He then asks Mr. HUYGHE to speak.

Mr. René HUYGHE (France) examines the reasons why one should not exhibit. Restoration of works of art must be avoided. Now, whereas the transport of pictures is attended to with the greatest care, this decreases during the exhibition itself and on their return hardly any care is taken at all. One should not exhibit because the works of art should not be endangered: also

because exhibitions are held to attract the public: well, the public guest "blasé" and only comes to see its "stars". Finally, the owners may lose their readiness to lend any further. Mr. HUYGHE suggests to draw up regulations by which exhibitions should not be prevented but be limited in number. The Rome Conference of 1930 broached the subject already. In 1935 the international Office of the S.D.N. worked out regulations in this sense, of which the most important terms are: 1. every museum makes up a list of works of art which should not be removed; 2. a picture that has been exhibited elsewhere does not leave the museum for some time, e.g. for three years; 3. centralisation of information to promote efficiency; 4. drawing up of a list of precautionary measures. In 1950 ICOM has examined the question again. The resolution accepted by ICOM should be seconded.

It would be desirable to organise only a few important exhibitions which in spite of the difficulties of organisation would mean a saving of much trouble. The first task of curators and art critics is to protect the masterpieces for generations to come. Works of art do not exist for the benefit of man, but man is there for their benefit. Mr. HUYGHE concludes by reading out a resolution which he lays before the meeting (See: Resolution 1, page 21).

Mr. G.C. ARGAN (Italy) agrees with what Mr. HUYGHE has just said on the risks of transport for works of art and the necessity of control. He adds that exhibitions sometimes are of great importance for the scientific life of the museum. He wants to make a distinction between two sorts of temporary exhibitions: 1/ those which are connected with the ordinary activity of the museum in so far as they are necessary for the alternation of the collections; 2/ those which have an exclusively scientific and didactic character and aim.

A larger and more systematic development of the first type of exhibitions seems desirable. As for those of the second type, there is a possibility to make them coincide with antique art exhibitions of which modern culture seems to stand in great need. Exhibitions of this sort should be organised in the museums either in connection with museographic studies or with the progress in the arrangement of museums or with their scientific and instructive activity. Mr. ARGAN agrees with Mr. HUYGHE to second the resolution accepted by ICOM.

Mr. DEROUDILLE (France) declares that Mr. HUYGHE, by his presentation of the problem, has called up the picture of the rich man who prefers to keep his goods to himself to sharing them with others. Mr. DEROUDILLE, in his quality of provincial critic, thinks it necessary that the spirit of the masterpieces penetrates everywhere. Whereas curators want to protect the works of art for generations to come, art critics wish to make them known now. The art critic wants to give the public information which he cannot give without the help of temporary exhibitions. Curators and critics can co-operate for it is their common task to prove that a work of art is a patrimony.

Mr. Raymond LANTIER (France) draws the attention to the objects of palaeontological art which deserve protection still more. They are unique and date back for over 50.000 years. It

should be prohibited that they ever leave the museums.

Mr. SANDBERG then calls upon Mr. LEYMARIE to speak. Mr. Jean LEYMARIE (France) agrees with Mr. HUYGHE where the negative side of exhibitions is concerned - i.e. the risk run by old art - and the positive side - i.e. the more active part to be given to modern art. By the co-operation of curators and art critics a free organisation of exhibitions should be brought about without any official pressure.

The CHAIRMAN then opens the discussions on subject 6: "The sources of abstract art and modern architecture in the Netherlands". He announces the names of the reporters: Mr. C. van EESTEREN, Mr. Charles ESTIENNE, Mr. Pierre FRANCASTEL, Mr. S. GIEDION, Mr. H.L.C. JAFFE, Mr. Herbert READ, Mr. J.J. SWEENEY; secretary of the group: Mr. JAFFE. The discussions of this session will be especially devoted to modern architecture in Holland.

Mr. KNUFFEL first introduces to the audience some of the artists belonging to the "Stijl" group: Mr. van EESTEREN, Mr. RISTVELD, Mr. VORDEMBERGE-GILDEWART, Mr. HUSZAR and Mrs. van DOESBURG, trustee of the works of her husband and of those of Mondrian (Cheers).

Mr. H.L.C. JAFFE asks Mr. GIEDION to speak.

Mr. Siegfried GIEDION (Switzerland) declares that it is none of his concern to point out that Mondrian and van Doesburg could have done better, nor to stress the danger of academism for some of his successors. He only attempts to make their artistic and human intentions understood. The first question to be put is the place which the "Stijl" group and its originator, Theo van Doesburg, occupy in the whole of modern movements. In an article, published in the periodical "Cicerone" in 1927, van Doesburg says that his studio at Leyden has become the meeting-place of those who wish to solve the problems not only of art, but of life. He has founded the periodical "De Stijl" in order to gather all the forces interested in the new problems and, from that moment, the group has wanted to put its own domain in order: that of art. Mondrian and van Doesburg have tried, for that reason, to return to the irreducible elements of art: concern for purification, after the "tutti-frutti" that dominated the public taste.

With the help of slides Mr. GIEDION examines architecture since 1900. He then studies the square and the neutral forms which van Doesburg, Malevitch and Wright have taken as their starting-point. He concludes by saying that without wanting to designate the "Stijl" group as a national movement, one should be allowed to see an unconscious reflection of the Dutch scenery in Mondrian's conceptions.

Mr. James J. SWEENEY says that Mondrian in his maturity did not think that his works should be considered as easel paintings. It was his idea to show what could be realised with the "ambiance". Mondrian did not make any distinction between matter and spirit. Neither he nor his group wished to rival a Rembrandt or a Vermeer in their works. Those works strove to be the expression of the surrounding world. The contents of two

extracts from Mondrian's letters testify to this: one addressed to Mr. Moholy-Nagy, the other to Mr. Sweeney himself. Contrary to Mr. GIEDION, who has emphasised the importance which Mondrian attached to stability, Mr. SWEENEY finally remarks that towards the end of his life Mondrian goes back on this view and is aware that it is important to turn away from static balance and return to dynamism, i.e. movement.

Mr. JAFFE thanks Mr. SWEENEY and asks Mr. RIETVELD to speak.

Mr. RIETVELD explains what the "Stijl" means to him; this movement is not merely national in character: he has always regarded it as an international idea. The group endeavours to utilize all materials available and to preserve their intrinsic aesthetic value. The group wanted to disengage itself from old traditions and influences. In using primary forms it has created a new conception of form.

Mr. JAFFE thanks Mr. RIETVELD and asks Mr. van EESTEREN to speak.

Mr. C. van EESTEREN declares that the "Stijl" group has never been a private circle, but that it represents an idea. He emphasises the fact that he belongs himself to the second generation because there is a distance in time of ten to twenty years between him and Mondrian and van Doesburg which at the time when the movement was developing was a considerable difference. He has come into contact with van Doesburg at Weimar and a real co-operation has resulted from this meeting. The "Stijl" stands for a co-operative creation.

Mr. van EESTEREN states that abstraction and mathematical reasoning amount to the same; without abstraction life is impossible. The group has realised the necessity of humanizing the abstract.

The rest of the discussions is put off till the 4th session.

Second plenary meeting
Kröller-Müller National Museum, Otterlo
Wednesday, July 4.

The CHAIRMAN announces discussions on subject 5: "Van Gogh, critical appreciation of the period before 1886". He gives the chair to Mr. KNUTTTEL, who is secretary of the group.

Mr. Gerard KNUTTTEL (Holland) first introduces the Kröller-Müller Museum to the audience. He then enumerates the names of the reporters: Mr. LUZZATTO, Mr. FIERENS, and himself, and announces a communication by Mr. COURTHION.

Mr. G.L. LUZZATTO (Italy), who has suggested this subject, should like to arrive at a critical pronouncement on the Dutch period in van Gogh's life. He quotes the work of Mr. van Beselaere on this stage of the artist's life. In this work the author has glorified this period to the degree of comparing van Gogh's drawings of farmers with Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Is it right thus to judge of works which seem to be those of a painter still in process of development? He does not believe so. In that case one should have to give up the idea that van Gogh's creative life was an admirable example of artistic progress and reconsider one's opinion about less successful works. Those belonging to the Dutch period would no doubt never have drawn so much attention if the vitality of the later works had not called for the study of that period of the painter's life.

Mr. Pierre COURTHION (Switzerland), examining van Gogh's early work, thinks that it has been his technical shortcomings that have saved him: in refusing to draw according to academic rules, he has prepared his whole future.

During the period under consideration at this moment, van Gogh gives up his first mode of drawing and studies symbolic forms and later on naturalism which leads him from diggers and weavers to the potato-eaters. It is only later that he will find the perfect expression of his technical language. Without instruction and without advice, he sticks doggedly to a profession for which he has no natural gift whatever and continually returns to reality which he renders with difficulty. Van Gogh will not cultivate his art really and fully before he has freed himself from the external bonds to which he refers in his correspondence before 1886. His formative years are decisive for his development into a unique person.

Mr. Paul FIERENS (Belgium) states first that in the course of the nineteenth century two Dutchmen have contributed something essential to French painting: Jongkind and van Gogh. It is not until his arrival in Paris in 1886 that van Gogh has become a painter of the French school. In the period under discussion France plays a certain part, but Holland may lay claim to the most important part in the formation of the van Gogh of Etten and Nuenen. To be able to understand the Dutch period, van Gogh's "gloomy" period, one should turn to Flemish expressionism: van Gogh may be considered as the father of expressionism, but of an expressionism that is strictly northern. He has never been an impressionist, for he has never been a painter of the instantaneous. If van Gogh had consolidated the

half-realistic, half-expressionistic vision characteristic of the best works belonging to the Dutch period, he would no doubt have created that "Flemish expressionism" which may be regarded as the justification of his art in its first stage. It is useless to wonder how van Gogh would be judged if he had stopped painting in 1886. The van Gogh of Nuenen would not be incomprehensible without the van Gogh of Arles. Van Gogh's first period gets a wider significance because it happened to have consequences outside the French school.

Mr. Gerard KNOTTEL (Holland) refutes the opinions pronounced by the preceding reporters, quotes passages from van Gogh's letters and emphasises the fact that the painter was conscious of having a vocation in life. Vincent does not suppose that his art is subjected to change. In his letters he always appears convinced of his destination. Although his stay in Paris had an influence on the outside form of his pictures, he writes at Arles: "I believe that all I have learned in Paris has vanished and I return to the ideas which I had in the country where I worked before I knew impressionism". If van Gogh had stayed in Holland, he would no doubt have developed himself from the technical point of view and would have been recognised as a great painter.

Mr. Paul FIERENS takes the chair again and expresses his gratitude to Mr. KNOTTEL and asks Mr. L. PIERARD to contribute to the discussions.

Mr. Louis PIERARD (Belgium) wants to add a question to those examined by Mr. COURTHION: that of Van Gogh's religion. It has had a great influence on his aesthetic formation during his Dutch Period. The importance of the religious sense with van Gogh should be studied.

The meeting rises.

Third plenary meeting
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam
Thursday, July 5

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The CHAIRMAN opens the meeting and asks Mr. PIERARD to speak.

Mr. Louis PIERARD (Belgium) apologises for speaking on the subject of Copyright before the Saturday session. He states that copyright is an established principle now. The only difficulties still to be surmounted are those connected with the application of the law. He will only examine the question of the moral right of the artist to protest against all mutilation or transformation of his work after it has been sold. There is the Convention of Bern of 1896 which has been revised several times, last in Brussels in 1940. The new article 6bis of this Convention deals with the protection of those rights.

Mr. PIERARD especially emphasises the dangers to which in certain countries works of plastic art and architecture are exposed. Henceforth one can appeal to article 6bis and thus have a possibility to protest.

The CHAIRMAN requests Mr. PIERARD to draw up a resolution on the subject which will be read out at the last plenary meeting. (See: Resolution No 3, page 21).

He then announces that the meeting will be devoted to subjects 2 and 1, the first being: "The Psychology of Art". The reporters are Mr. DEGAND, Mr. HUYGHE, Mr. SWEENEY. Secretary of the group: Mr. DEGAND. Mr. LUZZATTO will make a communication.

Mr. Léon DEGAND (Belgium) declares first that in his opinion we have to do here with the Psychology of plastic arts. In the first place we have to consider the whole of the artistic phenomenon where three elements may be distinguished: the artist, his work and the spectator. Secondly we have to pay special attention to the plastic language. In his work "La Psychologie de l'Art" Malraux has rather dealt with the philosophy of art than with its psychology, unless it be by accident.

It is necessary to make a distinction between the arts according to their means of expression: discursive and intuitive arts. The study of plastic arts has to start from a psychological examination of the means of expression. In the figurative arts, for instance, construction is based on the horizontal line and the horizontal plane. In the abstract arts the law of gravitation does not apply, there is neither high nor low.

Laboratories for the psychology of the plastic language should be created.

The CHAIRMAN then asks Mr. HUYGHE to speak, reminding the audience that the latter's course at the "Collège de France" was held on the Psychology of Art.

Mr. René HUYGHE (France) will develop his speech along the same lines as his course on the Psychology of plastic art in the Chair with which he has been recently entrusted. Two points: why a psychology of art? which is the best method to follow? The critic has to identify himself with the artist. Every age has its absolute standards. It is to Taine that we owe the introduction of historical relativity. The nineteenth century, being an age of science, has

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wanted to see every work of art as a historical fact. Yet, it is not the historical conditions but the work itself that should excite interest. It has then been understood that a work should be studied independent of history. It has been said that every style passes through three stages: youth, maturity, old age (Focillon in France). The law of evolution in art repeats itself always and independent of history.

Art is a language, indissolubly connected with a way of expression. There is no question of a work of art unless matter and form are one. This language of art has been studied by Mr. Delacroix thirty years ago, who has published a Psychology of Art: he has gone farther than Focillon who accentuates form.

In judging a work of art by psychology, the best method is to start from the perceptions. But psycho-physiology has a tendency to lose itself in too many details.

Works could be examined from two points of view, either from an unconscious tendency to create which belongs to the province of characterology and psycho-analysis and therefore is not related to the artist himself, or from a conscious tendency which is consequently a valuation (for instance: which are the reasons why one finds the same tendencies at one period in all the fields of art, while there need not have been question of influence?).

It is the fundamental task of the historian to determine from what material the work has been made. The critic has to ascertain first of all in how far the artist has taken advantage of that material. It is the idea of quality that comes into consideration here. Far from leading to a too extreme determinism, psychology, on the contrary, liberates art. If one does not occupy oneself with the psychology of art, one only takes into account external facts.

At present, the critic's function is extremely important, for man has been outstripped by the machine; so the idea of quantity predominates. The tragedy of the modern world is due to the fact that only in the domain of art quality still prevails. The liberty of man is threatened, but it is his grandeur that he is now conscious of his liberty. At present art is not a luxury, but a primordial function of civilisation. In this way the art critic is the last bastion of culture. It is distressing that many intellectuals believe that we have come to the end of a dead culture and a doomed civilisation. It is pretended that the only solution is either to fly or to stay where one is and, if need be, die there: here is, however, another solution which is to live.

The CHAIRMAN expresses the admiration of the audience and himself to Mr. HOYGHE (applause!).

Mr. James J. SWEENEY (U.S.A.) agrees with the two preceding speakers. He therefore wants to emphasize the critic's function. Art being first of all a language, its immediate expression is found with the help of words. No communication can be made without the medium of those metaphors called words; art, which is after all a means for man to communicate with his fellow human beings, only preserves its freshness by the coining of new metaphors. As with a coin that is struck and put into circulation: the public gets familiar with it and soon the coin is no longer used. Hence the necessity to strike new ones. It is the same with works of art: first there is the period of their creation, then that of circulation; the public gets used to the work and then we have the period of oblivion.

The last two stages are essential for the propagation of art: otherwise there would be a disastrous accumulation.

It is the critic's function to diminish the mystery of the work of art and, doing so, to call for a renewed creation. His task consists in preparing the way for new metaphors. The critic's function is not to evaluate works nor to classify them from the point of view of history, but to assure the continuity of the creation of new works.

Mr. G.L. LUZZATTO (Italy) thinks that Mr. SWEENEY's conception of the metaphor is dangerous, as it makes the public believe that the critic is always looking for new experiments.

The CHAIRMAN states that there is some contradiction in what the different speakers have said and asks Mr. SWEENEY to speak again.

Mr. James J. SWEENEY supposes that he has been misunderstood. He believes, actually, that that evolution should only take place very gradually.

Before closing the discussion, Mr. Léon DEGAND states that the psychology of plastic arts could not possibly be a normative science: it is a study which arrives at certain statements but does not lead in any direction. He proposes to include "The Philosophy of Art" in the programme of the next congress.

The CHAIRMAN then announces the following subject: "The relations between art history and art criticism". Reporters: Mr. HAMMACHER, Mr. NICOLSON, Mr. VENTURI, Mr. CHASTEL (absent), and Mr. HUYGHE, who has been invited to join the group. Secretary of the group: Mr. L. VENTURI. Communications will be made by Miss M. ROUSSEAU, Mr. R. VRINAT and Mr. M. BARATA.

Mr. Lionello VENTURI (Italy) states that several of the reports he has received appear to be in favour of a closer bond between Art History and Art Criticism. Others are absolutely against this, as for instance Mr. HAMMACHER and Mr. NICOLSON. He asks Mr. HUYGHE to give his opinion on the subject.

After Prof. VENTURI has pointed out the connection between the preceding subject and the present one, Mr. HUYGHE expresses as his opinion that it should be possible to come to an understanding. The historian wants to know and to establish facts. When the historian wants to judge an artistic fact, the moment has come for him to enter the domain of criticism. On the other hand, the critic estimates the value of a work of art, but he cannot arrive at a proper appreciation, when he does not confuse the outcome of historical and of critical investigation. So he has to be a historian. The historian will be especially interested in the past. The critic will be less objective. By verbal expression the critic may make works of art more comprehensible, because the public has not the ability to "read" them. The critic has a normative and creative function, as he has to stimulate artists, as Mr. SWEENEY has pointed out, to produce new works.

Mr. Benedict NICOLSON (U.K.) declares that great confusion arises from the complexity of the problem. Exact definitions are necessary. By history of art Mr. NICOLSON understands the study of known facts and of ideas resulting from these facts. By facts he understands not only questions concerning the personal life of the artist and his work, but also the whole social and political complex

of his time. The art critic plays such a subjective part that he writes, so to say, an autobiography. There is a history of art as well as of art criticism. The one activity does not exclude the other. The critic avails himself of the discoveries of the historian, in order to support his thesis with them.

Mrs. NICCO-FASOLA (Italy) wants to draw attention to one particular point. It is often said that one cannot write the history of the present, but only that of the past. She would like to prove, on the other hand, that it is possible to pass judgement on works of art of all times: this is the main problem of criticism. History and criticism strive after objectivity, beyond the purely individual impressions. On the other hand, one should bear in mind that this objectivity is not static, that it changes and develops in course of time; for that very reason it is historical.

Mr. Lionello VENTURI concludes by saying that the principal thing is to remain on a philosophical level. If the historians avoid all criticism, and the critics on the other hand exclude history, they will not satisfy anybody. History and criticism should go hand in hand. History occupies itself with facts: it has to understand them and this implies that it has to criticise them. The subjectivity of the critic needs the inspiration of the objectivity of the historian. One should avoid to lock oneself up, each in his own department, which is a result of modern specialisation and means the end of humanism. For that reason Mr. VENTURI and Mr. HUYGHE submit a resolution to the Congress (See Resolution 2, page 21).

The meeting rises.

Fourth plenary meeting
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam
Friday, July 6

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The CHAIRMAN opens the meeting and announces that the discussions on subject 6: "The sources of abstract art and modern architecture in Holland" will be continued. Abstract art in Holland will be dealt with. Reporters: Mr. FRANCASTEL, Mr. JAFFE, Mr. READ, Mr. SWEENEY. Secretary of the group: Mr. JAFFE. He expresses the hope that Mr. DOMELA and Mr. KOK will take part in the discussions.

Mr. Herbert READ (U.K.) first says that during the discussions on architecture Mr. GIEDION had thought to challenge him on the word "dehumanization". To-day he will define more accurately the meaning of this term. He does not want to attack abstract art. From the beginning he has defended it in Great-Britain. Yet, he has certain reserves towards abstract art, which raises problems of a metaphysical and psychological order.

The significance of the movement which, from the beginning, has been connected with the periodical "De Stijl", may be found in the fact, that this movement has led certain experiments of Cubism to a logical conclusion. Mondrian felt the necessity of eliminating the variable elements of perceptible experience: it was the fundamental theory which van Doesburg formulated in his articles in "De Stijl". It is one of the most coherent doctrines of contemporary art and a philosophical and fundamental criticism should be applied to it. This criticism should first of all occupy itself with the process of depersonalization, though observing a distinction between depersonalization and "dehumanization" of art. What is created by a man - and particularly by a man like Mondrian - cannot be inhuman. Mondrian and his friends have made a distinction between the various human faculties, because in their opinion some of them were not as valuable as others.

The Neoplastician has only two conceptions of reality to choose from: to see space through appearances by an intuitive process, or to create an entirely new and valid reality. Mondrian advocated the first conception. His laws may be considered as additional laws to the fundamental law of equivalence which creates a dynamic equilibrium and reveals the true nature of reality. This is the line of demarcation between neoplasticism and constructivism. Neoplasticism was not born of a social vacuum as Mr. JAFFE has wanted to point out: it is closely connected with not only Dutch life and landscape, but with far-reaching trends in the economical and the social field.

Art and architecture are the expression of our times, but a restriction should be made here. Mr. GIEDION has shown works of Mondrian, van Doesburg and Malevitch by the side of architectural projects and it was clear that they resembled each other. What conclusions are we to draw? That art and architecture are one and that all art is architecture. It seems that Mr. GIEDION is in favour of the second conclusion. This is characteristic: art, then, has lost its liberty, for architecture is not a free art. One problem has still to be solved: that of the refusal to use representative symbols. Though a civilisation can entirely dispense with the

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figurative symbol as in the case of the Mohammedan civilisation, it is doubtful whether the present humanistic civilisation can comply with it without a profound change of its spiritual condition. It seems probable that certain arts - as architecture, sculpture, music - will become more and more abstract, whereas others - as the film and drama - will satisfy the need of representative symbols. Arts should not be forced into a totalitarian unity. To some, non-figurative art is a necessity and these must not want to press their preference on the majority.

Mr. James J. SWENEY wishes to take up again two points from the discussion on Tuesday: the interest Mondrian takes in a universal rather than a particular expression and the interest he takes in a "dynamic movement in equilibrium" rather than in "Static balance". In one of Mondrian's letters from the last years of his life these two ideas are very clearly expressed. According to Mondrian "the particularities of form and of natural colours call forth subjective sensations which obscure pure reality". The appearances of nature change incessantly, whereas this inward reality of nature is constant, universal. That is why Mondrian has wanted to destroy the particular form.

According to Mondrian, the cubists have not accepted the logical consequence of their discoveries. They have stopped half-way, have broken with naturalistic painting, but have never found the universal form. Though cubism has not given Mondrian any solution, it has yet elucidated the problem. To him the only constant relation was the right angle. He gathered simple forms and primary colours, never limited by nature. It is on these principles that all the works Mondrian produced during the last 25 years of his life were based.

Now and then Mondrian went too far into certain directions. He then considered his pictures either too static or too monumental, his palette too vague. The check pattern in black and white he made in 1918 he considered too far "removed from reality". Towards the end of his life he adds the colours which he used during his cubistic period to the primary ones. He abandons black, the straight coloured lines. Mondrian is the painter-poet, and not the painter-materialist; he painted his vision of reality and no abstractions.

Mr. Pierre FRANCASTEL (France) points out that, though different opinions have been expressed about the value of abstract art, there is yet agreement about a certain number of definitions. Abstract art has striven after a purification, a return to elementary things (platonic ideas). Examining the question what "De Stijl" has wanted, he believes that this group has not realised all its intentions. Eliminating and making selections it has tried to find the key to the universe: well, one can only find nature, concrete, positive and yet mysterious. He asks himself why "De Stijl" has felt a need to express itself and how the group has tried to attain its end, for it is impossible to judge abstract art in terms of values already classified: new values must be created.

Abstract forms have conquered the universe by accepting all objects (machines etc.). The abstract world is that which harmonizes best with present-day life. Abstract art develops itself in proportion as man is conscious of himself and of the world.

The CHAIRMAN thanks Mr. FRANCASTEL. He informs the audience of the arrival of Mrs. van DOESBURG, Mr. OUD and Mr. HUSZAR (Cheers).

Mr. CARASSO (Italy) who has asked leave to speak, declares that abstract art seems to him to be dangerously tyrannical and is surprised at the exclusive place given to that art. The purification and simplicity aspired after are only an impoverishment and one cannot live in a Paradise that bores one to death.

Mr. Léon DEGAND (Belgium) draws attention to the fact that at the present moment art criticism talks about history, sociology, metaphysics and that that is of no use for the critical appreciation of a work: the work itself must be examined. He does not try to understand Mondrian from his letters, but from his works. The pioneers of abstract art have thought fit to explain their ideas on paper: this is an error. This tendency to explain everything frightens, because it looks like a flight from the essential. If plastic art has something to say, it will say so through its works.

Mr. DEGAND does not see any frigidity in neo-plastic art, for those artists are often very passionate. This supposed frigidity is used as a motive to condemn abstract art as a whole. Mondrian wanted to be able to start again at the very beginning. The artistic efforts of the last 40 years mean a new conception of plastic art.

In answer to Mr. FRANCASTEL, Mr. DEGAND affirms that there is no fundamental difference between figurative and non-figurative art: there are two ways of expression. He does not believe that man has often witnessed such a change.

Mr. G.L. LUZZATTO (Italy) admires the general trend of Mr. FRANCASTEL's report, but does not agree on certain minor points. Mr. FRANCASTEL has maintained that Holland, having been made by man is not nature. On the other hand, he has maintained that during the Renaissance as well as in other periods, the new trends have not been accepted. Now this is an error, for there have been no misunderstandings in that period (for instance, Petrarch). Actually the opposite is true, where exhibitions of the works of artists of 30 years ago are organised: whereas at the time of the Renaissance ancient frescoes were effaced in order to paint new ones in their place.

Mr. Pierre FRANCASTEL says that he is happy to have provoked this reaction. In answer to Mr. DEGAND, he affirms that there are two ways of expression at present. There is even room for several ways of expression at the same time. Mr. DEGAND has said that 30 years ago an entirely new way of expression had been invented: he does not agree. In his opinion gothic art also contains certain abstract elements and he even believes that a tendency to abstraction has always existed. The really novel thing is the alienation from nature.

He then addresses himself to Mr. LUZZATTO and points out to him that what Petrarch's contemporaries have understood of him is not the same as what we appreciate in him to-day. As to absolute values, he believes in the values of eternal creation.

Mr. Léon DEGAND believes that one has to take one's own age as the starting-point. There are two ways of expression and there

is an absolute difference between the two. He mentions Mohammedan art which aimed at being non-figurative, but was, in reality, a stylized figuration, a decorative art. There is a great difference between this art and abstract art which aims at being a way of expression.

Mr. Pierre FRANCASTEL believes that Mohammedan art is like abstract art: decorative and expressive. He quotes Mr. DEGAND: "Abstract art is the art which neither in its aims nor in the means it uses evokes the visible appearances of the visible world". He thinks rather that abstract art has rendered existing appearances of the world. He concludes by declaring that abstract art means dropping the third dimension.

Mr. H.L.C. JAFFE closes the discussions and announces that the study of abstract art will be continued in free discussions.

The meeting rises.

Fifth plenary meeting
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam.
Saturday, July 7

The CHAIRMAN opens the meeting and reminds the audience that it will be devoted first of all to the study of subject 4: "The fees due for reproduction of works of art" and afterwards to subject 7: "The law of copyright as affecting art critics". Reporters: Mr. BOURST, Mr. LASSAIGNE, Mr. COGNIAT; secretaries: Mr. BOURST and Mr. COGNIAT. Communications will be made by Mr. COURTHION, Mr. GAUTHIER and Mr. DUCHEMIN.

Mr. Jean BOURST (France) points out that legislation fails where the reproduction of works of art is concerned. In France, legislation is still dependent on the law of 1793. The Artists, on the other hand, fail to occupy themselves with material
-81- questions. It is the task of the present Congress to try and establish the fees due for reproduction.

Mr. Jacques LASSAIGNE (France) emphasises the necessity of copyright and right of pursuit in the domain of art. He wants to examine two essential questions: how can the levying of a reasonable fee be made to agree with the uninterrupted development of artistic culture? how can the artist be sure of the real profit of this fee under the best conditions?

Mr. LASSAIGNE states that there is confusion about these matters. He believes that the moment has come to put things in order. The rules holding good for literary copyright do not apply. It is normal that the reproduction of a work of art is attended with the levying of a right, but there are different kinds of reproductions: the reproduction in a newspaper report of a recent work, the reproduction in an illustrated edition of a work of renown, etc. The "Syndicat de la Propriété artistique" refuses to recognise the right of quotation in artistic matters. Therefore, the first claim should be that for a certain period of time - two years for instance - after the exhibition of a new work, its reproduction in a periodical or review is fully authorized.

Mr. DUCHEMIN in principle has been willing to give his consent to this proposal. Agreement on this first point would contribute to a closer collaboration between the Association of Art Critics and the Association that occupies itself with the administration of royalties. Mr. LASSAIGNE proposes to examine the possibility of instituting two sorts of rights: an established right calculated according to the present percentage with an exclusivity of, for instance, two years; an unwarranted right that might be fixed contractually at a fixed sum for each reproduction. It is to be
-81- desired that the system of the fixed right for every reproduction will be introduced everywhere in the case of collective and general works.

The attitude adopted by the "Syndicat de la Propriété artistique" about the rights which certain museums wish to claim for the reproduction of works belonging to them, seems satisfactory. Some museums (for instance, the Museum of Vienna) refuse all reproduction of their collections. According to the Syndicate, a

museum should not oppose itself to the reproduction of works belonging to it, if they have already been photographed.

The principal thing is to secure the artist the real benefit of regular resources. The situation of the artistic press is tragic: most art reviews have disappeared. Art critics want their wishes to be known.

Mr. J.L. DUCHEMIN (France) thanks Mr. LASSAIGNE for the moderate tone of his report. He wants to stress three points from this report: royalties do not mean anything to the artist; the impossibility of burdening the publishers with additional copyright; the request to abolish the Bern Convention.

The artists do not occupy themselves with the levying of rights. Organisations looking after their interests, have statutes providing for that. The speaker contests the fact that the Syndicate levies rights to which it is not entitled. He admits that the last list was drawn up in 1935. No new lists have been made, because the artists that levy rights are registered at the Syndicate. A new list will be made up.

Mr. Pierre COURTHION (Switzerland) says that, owing to the difficulties arising between the "Syndicat de la Propriété artistique" and the art critics, the activity of the critics has become, in a way, paralysed. (Publishers, for instance, have to pay such sums to the Syndicate that they are unable to pay the author). He wonders whether AICA could hold an inquiry on the subject. Should not a distinction been made between popular and scientific works? When a single picture of an artist is reproduced, cannot this be considered as equivalent to a literary quotation?

Mr. Maximilien GAUTHIER (France) believes that the crux is the problem of quotation and reproduction. If a reproduction gives the illusion of the original, it must be considered as a reproduction. But if it reduces the picture by merely giving an impression of it, it is no more than a quotation. Finally, Mr. GAUTHIER believes that the writer or his family may authorize the publication of his work without paying rights.

Mr. DUCHEMIN expresses the hope that agreement and closer contact will be established between the art critics and the Syndicate.

Mr. LASSAIGNE thanks Mr. DUCHEMIN. He believes that the rights of 15% levied on books are too high. He submits a resolution to the Congress (See: resolution no. 6, page 22).

Mr. Raymond COGNAT expresses the wish that no paper will be favoured above others.

Mr. DUCHEMIN assures him that there is no question of preference. As far as legislation is concerned, he informs him that a new law is under preparation.

Mr. Jean BOURST thinks that artists should occupy themselves more with the question of royalties. He knows important artists who take hardly any rights. He proposes therefore to make a card-index. Mr. DUCHEMIN has quoted illustrious names. He believes that the "Société des Gens de Lettres" has not the importance that is usually attributed to it.

Mr. DUCHEMIN protests as delegate of CTI.

Mr. Raymond COGNAT (France) takes the chair in the absence of Mr. Paul FIERENS and thanks the reporters as well as Mr. DUCHEMIN. He then announces the next subject: "The law of copyright as affecting art critics." He will be the only reporter, as Mr. PIERARD

has spoken on the subject before and Mr. CASSOU is absent. He wants to go further into detail. The critic who publishes a work without reproductions, containing a fairly important number of pages, finds himself in the same situation as the novelist. Yet, the circulation of his work is limited. If, on the other hand, the work is illustrated, the contents are often of a more general kind and rights must be paid to the artists. In the speaker's opinion the art critic is frustrated in this way. It is often through the author that the publisher obtains the documents. It is the author who pledges his reputation when including documents in his writings; he is responsible for them and therefore has rights also. For the art critic a percentage might be contemplated, similar to that which the novelist touches, to be divided between author and artist. Each national section of AICA should study the problems at home and give detailed information on the subject at the next general Assembly (See: resolution no. 5, page 22).

Mr. Maximilien GAUTHIER draws attention to the fact that young authors sign contracts. When their books prove a success, the contract becomes unfair.

The meeting rises.

Free Discussions
Municipal Museum, Amsterdam.
Saturday, July 7

The discussions on abstract art are continued. At the end of the meeting, the CHAIRMAN submits to the audience the resolutions and recommendations of the Congress. The following six resolutions are adopted:

1. "The third international Congress of Art Critics having taken note of the resolution on the regulation of exhibitions, adopted by ICOM during its last congress in London, expresses its concern on the same subject; alarmed in its turn by the growing risks to which works of art are exposed owing to the constant increase of the number of exhibitions, recommends the creation of an international organisation for these manifestations in order to bring into balance the cultural benefit to be expected from exhibitions and the duty to preserve the artistic patrimony of mankind; and recommends the organisation of a greater number of modern art exhibitions, to compensate for these indispensable restrictions on the circulation of old masterpieces."
2. "The third international Congress of Art Critics, wishing to raise the level of art criticism as well as of the art history, recommends that critics develop their objectivity by the study of history and that historians do their studies full justice by a critical consciousness."
3. "The third international Congress of Art Critics, having taken note of a communication by Mr. Louis PIÉARD, draws attention to the importance of article 6bis of the international Convention on the protection of works of literature and fine arts. This Convention, drawn up in Bern in 1886, revised for the last time in Brussels in 1948, has established in this article 6bis the notion of the artist's moral right to his work, even after he has parted with it. Nothing, in fact, can be done to harm an artist's reputation or honour. It has happened that, under the pretext of a concern for public morality, certain valuable pictures or statues have been removed as being obnoxious to good morals. By appealing to the international Convention, it may be avoided that honourable artists or art critics defending them, are thus made the objects of a discreditable suspicion."
4. "On the occasion of the third international Congress of Art Critics, critics from twenty-three different countries declare their adhesion to the action undertaken by the international Association of the Friends of James Ensor and express the wish that the home of the illustrious Belgian

artist will be saved".

5. "The third international Congress of Art Critics expresses the wish that the national Sections will prepare for the next general Assembly a detailed inquiry on the relations between publishers and art critics, and make proposals in order to arrive at the establishment of general rules ensuring the moral and material interests of art critics."
6. "The third international Congress of Art Critics, gathered at Amsterdam, affirms the indefeasible right of artists to exercise their copyright themselves; expresses the wish that the levying of rights of reproduction will take place systematically. To obtain this result, it proposes the following starting-points:
 - distinction between right of reproduction and right of quotation;
 - recognition of a period of two years during which a work of art, after having been exhibited, may be freely reproduced in a newspaper article, review or periodical;
 - appeal to the fixed reproduction right, for collective or general works;
 - in case of a due percentage, distinction between a complete right with an exclusivity of two years, and a limited right without exclusivity;
 - drawing up of a list of members of the "Syndicat de la Propriété artistique", published every year and accessible at all times; to appear on this list, the artist must have openly expressed his adhesion.

The AICA Committee decides to entrust the French Section with the negotiations with the "Syndicat de la Propriété artistique" so that results may be obtained before the next general Assembly."

Closing Session.
Ridderzaal, Binnenhof, The Hague
Monday, July 9.

The CHAIRMAN opens the meeting and asks Mr. FEBER, representative of the burgomaster of the Hague, to speak.

Mr. FEBER expresses the gratitude of the Municipality to the international Association of Art Critics for the interest its Congress has shown in the town of the Hague. The intellectuals of this town, who have a taste for the arts, follow the efforts and discussions of the critics with great interest. The critic must be able to distinguish between lasting and transitory values. He has an instructive task surpassing pure criticism. Seen in this light, he will no doubt help to raise culture from its present unsettled condition.

In the name of the Dutch Government, Mr. REININK, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education, Arts and sciences, expresses his profound satisfaction at this meeting of art critics in Holland. During their stay, the members of the Congress have not only got an impression of the past, but also of the present. He considers it the critic's duty to warn the public, as soon as he perceives the dawn of a new era in human civilisation. For human civilisation this would be the hope to recover its balance. Mr. REININK expresses the wish that at one of the coming Congresses the art critics will be able to see this beginning of a new era. It is in this spirit that Mr. REININK, in the name of the Dutch Government, closes the third Congress of AICA.

Mr. Gerard KNUTTEL takes the floor and declares that he is convinced that by the presence of his colleagues in Holland, by the discussions on the works of van Gogh and the "Stijl"-group, the last generations of Dutch artists have commanded respect and even admiration. Then, Mr. KNUTTEL compares the grandeur of the past to the present situation in Holland: Holland being a small country, it is stimulating to see that in the domain of art it still occupies a first-rank position. It has been profitable for Dutch critics to know the international opinion on Dutch contemporary art; in this way they can estimate the value of their national art. In Mr. KNUTTEL's opinion the critics have especially appreciated the architecture, town-planning and aesthetics of modern utility-engineering in Holland, which is very important because we are in a period of reconstruction. The architects have secured Holland one of the first places among nations.

The CHAIRMAN observes that, if all good things must have an end, their memory lasts. When thinking of the third Congress, he will always see before him this beautiful country of Holland and especially the friends he has met. He wants to emphasize the fact that this Congress has given all its participants an opportunity to take up contact with a highly-cultured country. The members have appreciated the art of Holland, to which a certain element of

severity cannot be denied: that is what they have admired in van Gogh and the "Stijl"-group

He then thanks the organizers of the Congress Mr. KNUTTEL, Mr. BRAAT, Mr. DOELMAN and Mr. JAFFE.

The CHAIRMAN also thanks the curators of the museums that have so hospitably received the Congress: Mr. SANDBERG, Mr. ROELL, Mr. HAMMACHER, Mr. EBBINGE WUBBEN, Mr. WIJZENBERG, Mr. SCHUURMAN and Mr. de VRIES. He thanks Mr. FÉBER, representative of the burgomaster of the Hague and Mr. REININK, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education, for their share in this closing session.

Finally he thanks the delegate of UNESCO, Mr. BELLEW, and the members of the Bureau: Mr. COGNAT, Mr. NEWTON, Mr. SWEENEY, Mr. VENTURI and Mrs. GILLE-DELAFFON, Secretary-General of AICA.

Mr. Paul FIERENS invites the audience to cheer Holland and the Dutch