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Everywhere in the 1960's, basic and far-reaching changes are occurring in the concept of what kind of art can and should be taught in formal learning situations. Historically, painting has been among the most distinctive creations of Western civilization. Other civilizations created great sculpture and architecture, but in none was there anything comparable to the art of painting as developed in the West between c1400 and c1850. This traditional preeminence is still much in evidence, still very influential. Still today when most people talk about "art," it is "painting" that they mean.

THE ARTIST: USEFUL OR USELESS

A re-evaluation of art education in the face of the changing function of art and the role of the artist in present society, by Dr. Allan Gowans.



Still today, "art history" in universities primarily means "the history of painting," as the most cursory glance over a few catalogues will show: the overwhelming majority of art history courses in fact deal largely or exclusively with painting, the history of Western sculpture is most commonly considered in a context of the history of painting, and architectural history as often as not taught in a separate department from art history altogether. And still today, as in the earliest sixteenth century academies, "art schools" primarily mean places where painting is taught, where drawing is conceived as a preliminary to painting, "design" a tool for analyzing it, sculpture and even architecture to some extent 3-dimensional extensions of it; even in Art Education, painting is conceived as the archetypal activity: collages, string compositions, design forms, etc., all being taught essentially in a context of "the picture," and the "art teacher" being most often a painter.

But for a century now, painting has been steadily losing its traditional place as first among Western arts. In consequence, all the traditional premises for the practise and study of art have been shaken, and all the courses and curricula based on them are changing accordingly.

The first hints of change came with the Arts-and-Crafts movement of the 1860's and 1870's. Inspired by the theories of John Ruskin and the practise of William Morris, a new type of art school began to appear, emphasizing printing, weaving, metalwork, furniture, as much or more than painting. By the first decade of the 20th century, there were a good many of them, three at least being world famous: the Glasgow School of Art, led by Charles Rennie Mackintosh; the Konstfackskolan in Stockholm; and the Darmstadt Arts & Crafts School in Germany, associated especially with Joseph-Maria Olbrich and Walter Gropius.

It is worth noting, however, that all the new Arts & Crafts schools were firmly committed to the principle of proceeding from "pure" to "applied" art — i.e. the way to produce "better" and "more beautiful" chairs or jewelry or books is to have them made by "artists" instead of by soulless machines from pattern books. It followed that, though painting was no longer as pre-eminent in them as in ordinary "academy art" schools, they all taught it prominently. Their descendants still do. In the modern Glasgow School of Art, painting was more emphasized than in any of the other British schools I visited; about half the 1967 annual exhibition on display at the Konstfackskolan when I was there had to do with drawing, painting, or sculpture; the exhibition I saw at Darmstadt in May, 1967 was entirely advance-guard painting, indistinguishable in type from all such exhibitions everywhere. Even the famous Bauhaus at Dessau, which Walter Gropius developed in the 1920's as a supposedly less arty and more sociologically doctrinaire successor of the Darmstadt school, is at least as well remembered for painters like Klee, Kandinsky, and Feininger as it is for Breuer's tubular furniture or the architecture and planning of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe.

And it is worth noting, too, that until the 1960's all these schools also remained in a more or less "special" category, the great majority of "ordinary" art schools remaining dedicated as firmly as ever to the primacy of painting. Seen in historical context, what has been happening

in this decade is simply a reversal of the pattern . . . the arts-and-crafts type of school, with its emphasis on an end product of some social usefulness, is becoming the norm, and the older art school oriented towards painting is becoming the exceptional case.

In historical retrospect, too, we can see that the basic reason behind this development has been a change in the nature of painting itself. In *The Restless Art* I described this change as a shift from Beauty to Reality as the object of painting, thus changing the basic concept of what the activity called painting is, with a change in forms inevitably following. Others may prefer to describe the change in existentialist language; but however explained, the fact is that painting has become steadily less and less teachable, more and more private, and only solipsistically related to an outside world. It is no accident that the first Arts-and-Crafts schools appeared in the same decade as Courbet formulated the new doctrine of Reality as the goal of painters' activity; neither is it any accident that the decade of "happenings," of pop art and anti-art has been the decade when art schools everywhere have begun restructuring their programs to eliminate, minimize, or de-emphasize painting as the central co-ordinate subject of their curricula.

Changes in art school curricula have been most dramatic and far-reaching in England. Acting on the recommendations of a National Advisory Council of Art Education, made in the early 1960's, a Diploma in Art & Design (Dip. A.D.) has been established as the equivalent of a university degree in the art field, with rigorous standards for attaining it. This diploma may be given in four specified areas, viz., Fine Art (painting and sculpture); Graphics (including illustration, printing, etc.); Textiles and Fashion; and Three-Dimensional Design, the last a broad category including such areas as furniture, industrial design, stainless steel cutlery, and architecture. Of the 130 English art schools originally investigated by the Council, only 29 were considered to be offering instruction of high enough standard to justify their awarding this diploma, and by no means all of them were judged qualified to award it in all four areas. Consequently, all the English art schools are in process of overhauling their curricula and reorganizing their departmental structures to meet the new specifications.

The important thing is to understand the principles behind the new curricula, and, having grasped them, see to what extent they are applicable to our situation here.

The first basic principle is a revised concept of what "art" is. No longer "painting" or the cluster of ideas associated with "painting," i.e. the Precious Object on Exhibition, "art" in all the new schools is an activity having some definite social reference. "Visual sociology" is what they called it at Kingston, their philosophy being formulated as "art, the living answer to social problems." Dr. Hult described the new program he is proposing at the Konstfackskolan in Stockholm as based on "environmental planning." Ulm flatly calls the activity pursued there "problem-solving." And so on. Superficially, and in theory, there is a remarkable consensus among all of them.

But in the practical application of this theory to curricula, great differences are apparent. These differences spring from a very fundamental dif-

(continued on page two)

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The Book

by Alan W. Watts. Available at Ivy's 95¢

review by Barbara Trottier

On principle, I detest-God-promoters. If someone is going to promote me — well, OK! Here are people undergoing psychotherapy for fantastic sums of money, and Watts will tell them they're cool for only 95¢! But that isn't the whole story, or the whole solution. Which is the sole objection I have to The Book — it reads like the final declaration on the self and it just isn't, simply because there are different quirks to everybody's personal scene. However wide open you may be, Watts will not give you all the answers. But here is a good chunk of enlightenment about you, in a nice, uncondescending, relatively intelligent style. So, if you happen to need a boost on some future Monday morning, when nothing and nobody is going for you at all, and you feel like throwing the whole week to a date with Mary Jane, whip out The Book, thumb through it, and ZAM! I don't guarantee that it will stand up to suicidal tendencies or acute paranoia or any kind of manic-depressive attitude. Then? Dear Mary Jane.

The social game we are playing, apparently, is self-contradictory and 'doomed to perpetual frustration'.

It would be ridiculous to give the entire game away, but fundamentally, Watts claims there are no barriers; it is only the rules and the narrowness of our consciousness that provides the sensation—and often despair—of alienation. In his introduction he says '... the prevalent sensation of oneself as a separate ego enclosed in a bag of skin is a hallucination which accords neither with Western science nor with the experimental philosophy religions of the East—in particular the central and germinal Vedanta philosophy of Hinduism. . . . We are therefore in urgent need of a sense of our own existence which is in accord with the physical facts and which overcomes our feeling of alienation from the universe. It is rather a cross fertilization of Western science with an Eastern intuition.' Further on in the book, Watts proposes that every individual is a unique manifestation of the whole, as every branch is a particular outreaching of the tree. To manifest individuality, every branch must have a sensitive connection with the whole body. The stressed point, and a comforting one at that, is that differentiation is not separation. And 'unless one is able to live fully in the present, the future is a hoax'. Because society—that is, us—demands that we be free and separate from the world, implants an illusion of separateness, and thus, the individual, caught up in this self-contradictory mess of rules, feels he has to conquer nature and keeps on striving to eradicate something which is as necessary to his being as dark is to light and solid is to space and each is to all. Everything is part of the Whole, everything IS the Whole. This last concept, I think, fascinated me the most, the awareness that I am everything, and that everything is me. Applying the same black/white idea to my comprehension of the book, I hit peaks of revelation, like seeing the tips of waves — and this is Watts' own image — other times, I was way down in the eternal trough and didn't know what the hell he was getting at. So it all isn't as blindingly clear as you may think, but a clarity/obscurity set-up, a case of instant identification, or no identification at all.

I could go on quoting ad infinitum—but perhaps it is better to tell you who you are. Keep this under your Frosh beanie and all that hair, but you are IT.

creeping functionalism . . .

(continued from page one)

ference of opinion as to the essential relationship of this "visual sociology," "environmental planning," or "problem-solving," to what has traditionally been known as "the aesthetic experience" of spectators, or the "creative act" of artists.

At one end of the scale is the traditional view held by art schools and academies from the 16th well into the 20th century, that this aesthetic experience and creative act is the essence of and

indisputable starting-point for any activity called "art." This same basic premise was maintained even in the Arts-and-Crafts schools, up to and for all intents and purposes including the Bauhaus, and it obviously remains so in such Scandinavian successors of Arts-and-Crafts schools as the Georg Jensen silversmithery and the Bing & Grondahl porcelain works in Copenhagen, and the Goteborg Konstindustriskolan — first you make a work of Art, then you find some practical use or application for it; that is the principle. Some of the newer art schools, too, preserve this traditional view in modified form. At the Manchester Regional College of Art, for example, acknowledgment of and sympathy with current sociological orientations in art education does not alter a fundamental conviction on the staff that ultimately the School exists to produce Artists. While admitting that most of their graduates will make livings in practical arts — as industrial designers, commercial artists, interior decorators, etc. — and few, if any, as artists per se (painters, sculptors, i.e.), they nonetheless are opposed to highly specialized training in any area. They cited the case of a certain Manchester corporation, which required new industrial designers to take a ten-week course to unlearn whatever specialized techniques they had been taught at design school, as evidence for the soundness of their convictions that once a man's aesthetic sensibilities have been broadly enough developed, he will be able to apply them to any situation. This is of course no more than the old basic principle of all liberal educations; and it still overwhelmingly dominates North American art schools. Pratt in New York, Cranbrook in Michigan, the Ontario College of Art, they all operate on the principle of producing Artists first, and specialized technicians second.

What is the objection to this apparently unassailable and logically proven principle? Why is anyone questioning, let alone abandoning it? Quite simply, because of the self-defeating extremes to which the ideas of aesthetic experience and creative art in their most natural spheres of operation, i.e. painting and sculpture, have been pushed. Already c1912 der Blaue Reiter and Synthetic

Cubists had reached the point of claiming that painting is nothing but aesthetic experience and creative act, and, despite pretensions in books like Arthur Fallico's *Art & Existentialism* to be still presenting some new and daring doctrine, in fact this has been accepted orthodoxy for at least the last twenty years in Europe. Whether the idea be true or false, good or bad, is beside the point here; the point is simply that art of this kind — i.e. painting, for it is painting, and particularly Picasso's painting, that Fallico almost invariably draws on to make his point — is by its nature unteachable. Once a student grasps the essential principle (and that will not take long, for the



basic idea is not difficult, however abstrusely ponderous its formulations), nothing more can possibly be taught him. It follows that the traditional art schools based on aesthetic experience and creative act have lost any reason for existence. They survive, in fact, only in inverse ratio to the spread of the new concept of Art (painting); we may therefore expect to see North American art schools changing in the next ten years in the same way and for the same reasons as European art schools have been changing in the last ten.

It is only to be expected that the most extreme reaction to the changed state of affairs, the opposite end of the scale to the traditional art school, should be found in Germany, where der Blaue Reiter, Expressionism, and Dada flourished earliest and most widely. And so it is, embodied in the famous Hochschule fur Gestaltung at Ulm, child (essentially) of the 1920's Bauhaus and grandchild of the pre-1914 Darmstadt Arts and Crafts school. Here, even use of the words "art" and "architecture" is verboten. Here "aesthetic experience" and "creative art" are considered verbal conjurers' tricks, impressing only the weak and silly-minded. Scornfully they point out how, after expounding his doctrines of absolute spiritual detachment, his experience of pure being, and his absolutely unpremiered investigation of the nature of things, the existential philosopher must have his lunch and visit the bathroom, communicate by conventional sound symbols, and act on analogical premises—in a word, live in a solid objective causal world like everybody else. The whole concept of "Art" is shown by its evolution since the "Art" for Art's sake period to be chimerical, Ulm maintains. "Art" is simply "problem solving;" "good art" solves problems better than "bad art."

The practical result of such doctrines is a Hochschule building of grey concrete pillars, bare planks, naked metal frames, cold panes of glass, with all the charm of a social welfare waiting-room. It does seem that, surely, there must be some happy medium between complete detachment from and complete absorption by the material

The Editor,

Sir:

The short story by Brian Anderson, "The Island," which you published recently is very exciting; it has excited me into attempting a continuation.

Permit me to submit for your enlightened perusal: "The Island—continued."

Hoping that you will not only read but also enjoy and even publish "The Island—continued."

I remain,

Sir,

your servant,

(I adore happy endings)

"Cinderella"



the island . . . continued

Synopsis of Ch. 1: A Poor Priest lands on a small desert island, finishes the only food in his first meal, wastes some time praying, runs about in a frenzy after drinking sea water, and to the great delight of the local flora dies in agony.

Ch. 2. The Amiable Atheist. The following week an amiable Atheist struggled ashore on the same island. Because the elements love atheists better than priests, his clothing was unrotted, his muscles untired. With fresh eager eyes he surveyed the island, without wasting any time to be grateful that he was there (the world owes atheists something, anyhow!) As the priest had eaten the dates, and there was no other fruit, the atheist realized that he would have nothing to eat. He did not however lose his amiability, but calmly reasoned: "Man has four basic needs — sex, drink, food and shelter. Although the climate here seems mild enough for me to do without the last, I can find no means of satisfying the

world; between an aesthetic embracing everything in the world indiscriminately and an aesthetic indiscriminately unrelated to anything, and quite apart from any psychological repulsion, I think that a theoretical fallacy in it can be demonstrated. That is, while the general principle can be defended, that the difference between dead Art and the living arts is that living art always must do something, the notion that functionalism is the only criterion of art seems to me indefensible. For example: I would agree that a ship can be a work of art, and further that a ship which wouldn't float or steer would be a bad work of art no matter how attractive its lines might be; I am sympathetic with those who argue that the two greatest medieval artistic creations were cathedrals and ships, and that one was no more and no less functional than the other, each serving a particular purpose. But just as we may say that, while among cathedrals demonstrably serving their functional purpose well, some in addition were more pleasing to look at than others, so among ships more or less equal in seaworthiness, some were more visually attractive than others, and deliberately so — and that the difference was the measure of their art. (The same thing applies to airplane design today; a designer may make many modifications in design which will not affect airworthiness but will make one airplane more visually attractive than another — and art is the difference.) You may argue, as Ulm does, that since the difference is not measurable or provable, and depends on subjective reactions, that it is not real; I would agree that to separate the "art" element entirely from function is a grave fallacy, but it is even worse to deny its validity altogether. It is like arguing that while a pair of legs separated from a body is grotesque, it follows that legs do not have any real existence; and surely at all times in history, sensitivity to the abstract and the numinous has always been one attribute distinguishing men from animals (faculty for reason and logic being the other).

Of the schools I visited, two seemed to me to have philosophies at once avoiding extremes of theoretical aesthetics, realistic in terms of the present state of art, and adaptable to Victoria's particular situation. These were the School of Art at Kingston-on-Thames, and the new program proposed for the Konstfackskolan in Stockholm, both of them abandoning the traditional emphasis on primacy of creative act and aesthetic experience in art education, but both also rejecting Ulm's premise that these things are unsubstantial and meaningless. Their essential premise, on which their quite diverse programs and curricula are based, is that aesthetic experience and creative act are real and important, but they are the RESULT of artistic activity, not the CAUSE of it.

The rationale of the program at Kingston-on-Thames, where "art is the living answer to social problems," was pictured to me in terms of concentric circles, beginning with town planning as the most all-embracing art and working in through architecture and interior decoration to what they call "personal product design" at the core (this, needless to say, embraces a good deal more than the mere "packaging" such a designation might suggest to us; it is graphic design, ceramics, crafts, painting, all related to social environment but expressing an individual's personal taste and comprehension.)

Dr. Ake Hult, rector of the Konstfackskolan in Stockholm, described the new program he is proposing to the Swedish ministry of education in somewhat similar terms. The Konstfackskolan is one of the oldest art schools in Europe, and is the principal art school in Sweden. It was founded in 1848 as a special "crafts and trades" school. In

the later 19th century its curriculum was modified in the direction set by the Arts-and-Crafts movement, and in 1945 a further reorganization expanded it on the principle of training artists for both crafts and industry; by this time an extensive program in painting and sculpture was in operation. Dr. Hult's proposed new program takes "environmental planning" as the basic *raison d'être* of the school, within which broad framework four main areas of concentration are proposed: (1) interior decoration and fashion design; (2) product design (what we would call commercial art, essentially); (3) visual communication (photography, stage sets, typography, posters,



"television background"); (4) art education (training of teachers in elementary and secondary schools). Under the proposed plan, formal sequential teaching programs in painting and sculpture will be abolished, but courses in this area will continue to be given in the final years, under the title of "Fri formgivning" (literally "free form-giving"). The general principle of this was explained on analogy with music: "once the basic discipline of music has been mastered, and the student fully understands and can control a chosen instrument, so that he (quite frankly) is competent to earn a living in some useful application of his skills, then his free improvisation and expression should be encouraged, not for utilitarian ends, but as a means for personal satisfac-

tion no matter what he does in life." When I asked what happened (to be practical about it) to the present staff in painting and sculpture, he replied that he foresaw no need for changes. As he sees it, the material of the present painting and sculpture curricula will be broken up into two main areas; the "practical instruction" in media and techniques will be incorporated into early years (for example, he foresaw the sculpture instructors teaching space, form, texture, etc. in industrial design, producing "more aesthetic toys, playpens, therapeutic equipment, etc.") and the "aesthetic content" into the "fri formgivning" seminars in the last year. In this final year also he proposed a seminar in art history treated as social and cultural history, which would (I gather) supplant the present historical sequence of courses presently required of art students. (It is only fair to note that Dr. Hult felt it would take "several years at least" for his program to materialize, and that, as might be expected in so long-established an institution, considerable opposition was in evidence; rival factions were handing pamphlets out at the door to the annual exhibition which was then in progress and there was much conspiratorial buzzing at lunch tables, etc.)

At this point a mention of the Birmingham College of Art & Design might be in order. This college's program is not really applicable to our situation, for it is closely correlated with the needs and resources of Birmingham's heavy industry, of which Victoria has none; though it offers the four main areas of the Dip.A.D. Fine Arts is "by far the smallest", and in fact I was told 90% of staff and funds are directly or indirectly connected with the Three-Dimensional faculty (industrial design, interior decoration, fashion). What is interesting is Birmingham's idea of "Fine Arts workshops." These are in effect seminars, operating outside of the four main areas of formal study; "experimental, unrelated to particular faculties," they are for students to attend "a day or so a week" in their first and second years, but carry "no credit, and have no formal teaching." This is of course a recognition (a) that the aesthetic experience and creative act as developed in the 1960's cannot be taught; and (b) that nonetheless Birmingham considers they belong in a students' programs. Though Birmingham's practise of putting such seminars at the beginning of student programs does not seem practicable for us, their function within the total program is well worth our study.

This article is based on visits made over the period May 10-31, 1967, to the Glasgow School of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, Manchester College of Art and Design, Birmingham College of Art and Design, Kingston-on-Thames School of Art, Hornsey (London) School of Art, Royal College of Art (Professor Mischa Black), Konstfackskolan in Stockholm, Konstindustriskolan in Goeteborg, Georg Jensen school and factory in Copenhagen, Bing and Grondahl Royal Porcelain Factory in Copenhagen, Art School in Darmstadt, and the Hochschule fur Gestaltung in Ulm.

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by cinderella

other three, and will die of deprivation within a time which no doubt could easily be calculated. The only hope is from man — perhaps if I light a fire, somebody will rescue me." Unfortunately although the waves had spared his shoes they had destroyed his matches, and the amiable Atheist had never learned any Boy Scout lore. He died happy however, murmuring gently, "Thank God, I'm an Atheist!" The trees and grass liked this man far better than the priest, but wondered why he did not grow a tap root in order to find water.

Ch. 3. The Happy Hippy. At last the perfect Man arrived on the island. He was a Happy Hippy totally self-sufficient, unlike his predecessors. He had no need of food, drink or shelter; all he needed was within himself. He had taken a very long trip indeed, and it seemed that he would never come back.

THE END



four poems by e. littleton . . .



the soldiers

A giant boot sucks mud
from the rice roots . . .
A line of long men with
steel and bulky packs
trundle in dark machines
and crush our straw construction . . .
One enormous arm dangling
sweet chocolate,
the other spits aluminum-fire
which, straight as a river pole,
makes the jungle dance . . .
They bleed when they fall,
but I don't believe it.

the village

Warm mornings and breezes,
fish and rice and green
shadows steaming;
grinning circles on
squatting haunches
gone.
From this dry and dusty
place we can see
in the distance
another village billowing
and little black stick-men
like ants, running
in blind patterns
flailing
round the flame.



the jets

In swift concussion triple
three silent silver arrows
split the morning,
followed by thunder
and stunning clubs
across my head . . .
A child's mouth is open,
burnt black, toothless and
creased, like an old man's
crumbling on the pyre.

night

The moist womb deepens
and tiny warm
orange fires
eat the wood . . .
Quiet talk and bird hoots
in the black fern silhouettes
of the bamboo . . .
Then deadly New Year
crackers stream white,
somewhere a hundred
drums implode,
and night is lurid day.

