

comprehends. It is a wonder that the maddest among them still feel themselves to be painters.

From the synthesis of the form to formlessness is not a matter of genius but of convenience. But all convenience is infinitely remote from art. And that is what they are! Especially remote from "pictorial art" which, in accordance with its character, can never be abstract. Abstract in this case also includes everything primitive which is not painted naively and which has therefore no reality in its soul. But these disciples of a perverted consciousness all lack naïveté, otherwise they would not have abandoned Nature and the subject so senselessly.

The subject is stronger when it is disregarded. It remains, and makes the artist who denied its existence ridiculous. A lack of subject impoverishes the imagination. Where is it then to find image and metaphor? Finally, in perfect desperation, colours and brushes are cast aside, and, with the aid of newspaper, tin-sheeting, string, wire, wood and cardboard a show piece of its vacuity is put together with which it shows what it really consists of.

"The intentional turning aside from Nature" is a mistake which takes its revenge in the picture. Nature in her compositions must be regarded in the first place as a reality which no one can disregard without finding himself in the realm of the unreal. All that is pictorial must return to Nature in which it finds its theme and image, otherwise it has no substance in which the appearance of the essentials, the artist's original conception and the idea of the creative spirit can become visible. A painter who fears to be reproached with "naturalism" misunderstands Nature and painting. In naturalism there was an under-estimation of the essential, in so far as he only saw the external manifestation, and a justification, in so far as he also sought to give form to the externals.

All "isms" in art are platitudes opposed to the development of individuality, and exaggerations opposed to the development of style. They have little to do with the soul, less with the spirit, and least of all with art. Anyone wishing to have style must not abandon his individuality or form. Style is, of course, not merely a matter of form, but its essential representation is, after all, so closely connected with form that, without it, style does not manifest its real character.

The genuine work of art is not simply our own creation. Genuine works of art are the result of sacrifice, of the ego which yields to the form seen and is fructified by this union. Everything purely subjective becomes futile, and everything purely objective lifeless. The one is not sufficient without the other. The dispute about their partialities is therefore superfluous. The difference between a poseur and an artist is whether things are only a mirror or everything to him. Only genuine works of art are necessary, hence not those intentionally perverted or sullied by vanity.

Painters who introduce their pictures with slogans are also always suspected of being better propagandists than artists. Their realm is that of an external world where they never attain the vision of real pictures. They are the same people who regard masses as monumental. They conceive style as handicraft, and think that they can exhaust possibilities with externals. In life every figure is variable and no form can become rigid. Since the character animates the figure, the expression of the form must change with the character of the content. No being can be represented without form. What is animate can only be caught in the form and the essentials only grasped from the design. It is the art of extracting the likeness of the animate from what is perishable. In this sense Nature and the subject must always become the "rendezvous of the artist and the observer".

Art without style is really inconceivable. When art lacks a style of its own it is also lack of vitality, and hence the ability to produce a picture of real life and to represent its essentials. Thus it loses the name which it does not deserve. It is possible to have style and culture without being aware of it, like that people of old among whom every craftsman was gifted. Essentially, terms are only evolved after the entity exists, and not the entity in accordance with the terms. One must have and be conscious of style in order to comprehend what it is.

Every artist has his own style. Every art has its limits. Hence it must not degenerate to an unlimited extent, but it can be extended with regard to infinity. Everything has its place in infinity. What is not designed with infinity in the perspective must be wrongly drawn. Art only becomes great when in it the earthly is in touch with the infinite.

Translated by W. L. Campbell

