

# M A R I E L A U R E N C I N

L'Art d'une telle femme est l'honneur d'une époque...

Guillaume Apollinaire  
(L'Intransigeant, 17 avril 1911).

Au moins en voilà une qui n'est pas q'une fauvette;  
elle sait ce que la grâce, elle est serpentine ...

Auguste Rodin

Quelle rie  
Et Marie  
Laurencin  
L'or enceint  
Dans ses belles  
Prunelles.

Jean Moréas

With Marie Laurencin there was a greater sense of personal and individual creation. One can never quite think of anyone in connection with her pictures other than the happy reminiscence of Watteau. With her work comes charm in the highest, finest sense; there is nothing trivial about her pictures, yet they abound in all the graces of the 18th Century. Her drawings and paintings with spread fans and now and then a greyhound or a gazelle opposed against them in design, hold grace and elegance of feeling that Watteau would certainly have sanctioned. She brings up the same sense of exquisite gesture and simplicity of movement with a feeling for the romantic aspect of virginal life which exists nowhere else in modern painting. She eliminates all severities of intellect, and super-imposes wistful charm of idea upon a pattern of the most delicate beauty. She is essentially an original which means that she invents her own experience in art.

Marie Laurencin concerns herself chiefly with the idea of girlish youth, young girls gazing toward each other with fans spread or folded, and fine braids of hair tied gently with pale cerise or pale blue ribbon, and a pearl-like hush of quietude hovers over them. She arrests the attention by her fine reticence and holds one's interest by the veracity of esthetic experience she evinces in her least or greatest painting or drawing. She paints with miniature sensibility and knows best of all what to leave out. She is eminently devoid of excessiveness either in pose or in treatment, with the result that your eye is refreshingly cooled with the delicate process.

That Marie Laurencin keeps in the grace of French children is in no way surprising if you know the incomparable loveliness of them. Apart from her modernistic excellence as artist, she conveys a poetry so essentially French in quality that you wish always for more and more of it. It is the light breath of the Luxembourg gardens and the gardens of the Tuilleries coming over you once more and the same grace in child-life as existed in the costly games at Versailles among the grown-ups depicted so superbly by Watteau and his most worthy followers, Lancret and Pater, in whom touch is more breath than movement. It is a sensitive and gracefully aristocratic creation Marie Laurencin produces for us, one that makes the eye avid of more experience and the mind of more of its subtlety. It is an essentially beautiful and satisfying contribution to modern painting, this nacreous cubism of Marie Laurencin.

Marsden Hartley



E. R. Weiss