

and I hope you share my opinion that such a criticism is not only too harsh but incomplete.

The Turkish paintings here exhibited have been mainly criticized as reflecting too faithfully the French accent. What is expected from a young school as a newcomer to the world of western art is clearly ^{not only a high standard, but} a new way of feeling, of seeing which is derived from some original experience. If we have failed to achieve this it is certainly not from lack of nationalism as I hope to show later, but rather from absence of universality, for all great art is the expression of a dynamic culture, and a culture with any vitality always bears a national character. The real question then is this: is it possible for an original culture to take root and grow in our society in place of our old Ottoman culture? Without attempting to answer this such a fundamental question I should like to start a discussion by making a few remarks about the problems the modern Turkish artist is faced with and the ways he tries to solve them. For the sake of preciseness I shall confine myself to painting and I will ask your indulgence if I oversimplify the picture.

In spite of the restrictive effect of the religion Islam in the 16th & 17th century there was a very lively school of miniature painting in Turkey. It is true that we never attained the richness of colour & texture, the intricacy of pattern of our Persian models, but what we achieved had a distinctly personal quality, the characteristic features being the simplicity of design, the predominance of the essential forms over the details and a freshness in the colouring which recalls our highly original manner in pottery. If we had accepted the western influence before the decline of that school, a new artistic tradition might have been formed. For example in the 15th century the Byzantine influence, far from hindering the development of our own style in architecture, had enlarged its scope, given grandeur

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and nobility to it, thus contributing to the
formation of the great classical style of the 16th century.
In painting we missed our chance. By the time
the western representational art established itself
in Turkey, the miniature tradition had lost its
capacity of integrating a foreign influence. The two
idioms coexisted for a time quite independently
until the decisive victory of the western style
in the 19th century. There was some primitive
charm in the meticulous works of our first
representational painters. Then a few excellent
landscape painters appeared, who brought a
very national feeling of immensity and
nostalgia in their Anatolian landscapes.
Unfortunately these isolated attempts did
not prove strong enough to found a new school.
After the foundation of the Academy of Fine
Arts in Istanbul in 1883 the representational
art soon degenerated into academism and was
worsened by the introduction of a pseudo-
impressionism, that depressing compromise
between impressionism and academism with
a delay of some 50 years.

Then comes the generation of contemporary
painters who, ^{after} having studied in Paris in
the late twenties and the early thirties founded
the modern movement of art in Turkey. Many
of them are teaching in the Ac. of F. Arts and
they are mainly responsible for the works seen
in this exhibition. These artists who had at last
caught up with European painting did sincerely want
to produce original work. Their immediate predecessors
had tried to give the illusion of a local flavour by
painting mosques and hills overlooking the Bosphorus in
a conventional postcard style. The painters of the new
generation not only enlarged the repertoire of Turkish
subjects but also realized that their style should fit
their subjects.

reviving

help the individual artist by their spiritual ^{impact} ~~help~~ ~~to~~ ~~rediscover~~ ~~his~~ ~~traditional~~ ~~taste~~, throwing light on some aspect ~~helping him to rediscover~~ his traditional taste, throwing light on some aspect of his own character, helping him to rediscover his virtues and limitations. Now if this inner experience is not strong enough it will not induce ^{the artist to} ~~the~~ invent new forms for its expression. He will content himself with choosing one of the western styles at his disposal ^{through} which ~~distorts~~ his emotion ^{will be} ~~is~~ least distorted and you will get the average picture in this exhibition.

But suppose we deal with an artist who has found some difficulty in assimilating alien idioms. He admires gothic cathedrals, but there is something hard in him which refuses to like the mystic darkness, the feverish flour of their architecture. Although he has lost his faith ~~he~~ can only love the spacious brightness, the static beauty of full rounded forms, the serene peace of our great mosques.

How could

~~he~~ ^{How could} ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~materialize~~ ^{materialize} his state of mind ~~effect~~ ^{effect} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the two dimensional microscopic world of ~~the~~ traditional oriental painting? ~~On the other hand~~ ^{is it strange} ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~cannot~~ ^{cannot} assimilate the style of ^{Picasso} ~~the~~ or Rouault as what he cares about has not found its ~~real~~ ^{real} expression in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~medium~~ ^{medium}. He will therefore feel compelled to ~~illustrate~~ ^{illustrate} put on the canvas full, spacious, ^{forms} clearly coloured ^{and well balanced} forms ^{in static equilibrium}, and you will get something like the Carpet weavers of Tughlakain, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} of the few pictures in this exhibition where the emotional experience has burst the conventions of the french idiom and has created its own language.

Here we have a perfect example of how a real spiritual communion with the past ^{can} ~~has~~ forced the artist to break his attitude of restrictive choice and ^{to evolve} ~~to create~~ an original ^{style} ~~idiom~~ which ^{properly} ~~is~~ as ^{properly} ~~is~~ twentieth century belongs to the twentieth century as much as Dufy's.

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If we are to have more artists of this kind clearly what we need do is not to import a greater variety of suitable western styles that we would try to modify but rather to increase the opportunities of going through similar experiences by analyzing with greater care and sincerity our reactions whenever we come into contact with western influence or with the remains of our tradition. ~~at the same time~~ at the same time we should learn to purify and develop such emotions and to extract from them their proper means of artistic expression.

These different stages of sincere analysis of emotional concentration and of methodic organization will require from our modern artist a westernization in the truest sense, for, as I see it, the ^{dynamism} ~~superiority~~ of the western mind lies precisely in this spirit of research and enquiry with which it can conceive ideas to manufacture ideas.

Another ^{serious} ~~gap~~ ^{or a quality} in our art and literature may be the indifference to moral problems and the ^{lack of unity towards character and characterization,} ~~lack of humanism~~. That explains why the art of portrait ^{as a character study} has never been ^{very} popular with us and why we can write good poems but not ^{as many} good plays or novels. If the Turkish artist of the future wants to rediscover his fellow-men as well as his tradition he ^{may} ~~will~~ have to be more ^{inquisitive} ~~curious~~ about them and analyze their character and behaviour with ^{deeper} ~~more~~ sympathy and understanding.

In short with method and humanism combined we may hope to free ourselves from ^{a superficial subject} ~~the imitation~~ of to our French masters. ^{in Paris} ~~We~~ Besides the beautifully balanced and symmetrical world of our ancient architecture and calligraphy we may well see the lunar landscapes of Anatolia interpreted by artists who will have to create desolate

shapes, savage neutral colours and a harsh accent in order to convey the infinite sadness and grandeur of those barren lands. We may also discover a new side of universal pity ~~for~~ ~~under~~ in the pride and the generosity, the poetical gifts of the Turkish peasant in the middle of his great poverty. ~~Our art~~

Our art has everything to gain from becoming an art of character rather than one of decoration. and I believe the youngest generation of artists is already taking this ~~orientation~~ ^{orientation}.

All these are possibilities for the individual artist. Unfortunately a national tradition artistic tradition is not the sum of such isolated successes. As a living organism it is the reflection of a way of life and of a general moral outlook. It is not simply by recreating the past or by analysing ourselves that we shall found ~~our~~ ^{new culture} tradition, but precisely by creating a ~~new~~ dynamic society with a need for a new culture. As long as the artists have to work amid public indifference, solely relying on State support we can have solitary talents but no living school of modern Turkish art.

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