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ART IN EVERDAY LIFE

ART is essential to life; it results from human passion and human hunger. It may be embodied in the lowly object of everyday service or speaking to us through the highest creative efforts of some master artist.

I read recently that "we Americans seem to have eyes for the movies, the gentle touch, and the thing we chiefly lack is taste." I raise the question: Are we not ready to resent the charge that we are altogether a hustling, bustling, money-grabbing, and altogether inartistic people, with little interest in beauty and the fine, cultural aspects of life?

From time to time we are reminded that when all else has passed away, it is the Art of a people that survives—a silent record of that people's higher aspirations, deeper emotions, and the facts of its more intimate life. Art, the cultural expression of a race in terms of visual beauty, continues somehow to live in the hearts of men—Greece in her Parthenon, France in her Cathedrals, Italy in her Madonnas, her Raphaels, and her Botticellis. We may well ponder as to just what future generations, centuries hence, may look back upon in our civilization and regard as precious.

Comparatively recently came a realization of Art as something other than the picture painted on canvas or the marble statue in the museum. We heard cries of "Art for Life's Sake" rather than "Art for Art's Sake." There were revealed ideas that had to do with the Democracy of Art as something that might touch and enrich every phase of our social and industrial life, to both our profit and pleasure.

There came likewise a realization of our personal responsibilities toward Art. For example, the matter of dress and personal attire, if accomplished successfully, is an art creation dependent upon the selection and arrangement and general adaptability of articles of wearing apparel. Each individual must arrange colored articles very much as an artist works for the same results with pigments. Artistic dress has been called the most influential of the Arts because it reflects the taste of the wearer and influences more people in one's environment than all the other Arts combined. The principles of fitness to purpose, unity, balance, harmony, and simplicity, apply to one's own expression in both dress and the home.

The really successful and beautiful home is likewise an art achievement in which various manufactured articles must be selected and brought together to meet particular needs and in an harmonious manner. The home is an expression of individuality; it reflects the taste of the owner, and each object in a room in turn affects those who experience the environment which is created.

Victor Hugo observed that houses are like the human beings who inhabit them, and someone has said that "who creates a home, creates a potent spirit which in turn doth fashion him who fashioned." We are indeed known by the company we keep and by the apparel we select, and the objects with which, of our own free will, we surround ourselves.

I wonder if we consider, as we should, the influence upon our lives of the things about us? The chairs we sit upon, the desks we write upon, the covers of the books we handle, the clothing we see and wear, and the pictures and other objects about us, both good and bad, are being unconsciously

woven into the fabric of our lives, and in a reflex manner the thoughts and feelings of our people are being revealed through them. Good taste implies clear and full thinking. Good taste and common sense are inseparable twins.

The perfect home is not a thing of instantaneous growth. One can not select the furnishings for an entire home in one afternoon and do it right. The home should grow gradually through the selection of those things which are needed for use and desired for beauty. Money is in too many cases a substitute for taste, but on the other hand, it is not necessary for taste to outrun a man's money. There may be as much taste displayed in the poor cottage as in the wealthy palace. Since our homes do proclaim our taste or lack of it, and we wish to be known as cultured and refined persons, we must not allow our individual tastes to run rampant but through careful study and close observation obey certain traditional and well defined laws of order and beauty.

These principles to which we should conform are—

(1) Fitness to purpose

(2) Order through

{	Unity
	Good Proportions
	Balance
	Rhythm
	Harmony

(3) Simplicity

The home should be a place for rest and recuperation,—“A world of love shut in—a world of strife shut out,” with the right thing in the right place.

Simplicity is one of nature's great laws, for she always displays the greatest simplicity consistent with function. This is why nature is the inspiration, not only for our works of art, but for our mechanical inventions as well. We secure it in our homes by the elimination there—from of all that we believe to be ugly and know to be useless.

It is by contemplation of fine things that we grow more like them. All great art is ennobling for this reason. We should aim to select livable pictures and choose good reproductions of masterpieces rather than cheap originals.

A frame is a setting for a picture and should create a bit of silence about a picture so that it may deliver its message undisturbed by noisy surroundings. The background and frame should not be more important than the picture. The tone of a frame should harmonize with the darkest general tone of the picture. “One may live as long without pictures as with them but—not so well.”

Attention has been called to the modern home as a place “to change one's clothes in order to go somewhere else.” There is undoubtedly a search for amusement outside of our homes and outside of ourselves. Our homes may lack the spiritual quality that the home as a real Art expression provides, and we are afraid to be alone with ourselves because we lack the independence that self-culture provides.

Without Art there can be no appreciation of art—without appreciation there can be no Art. In other words, appreciation must grow out of contacts with Art and the exercising of the discriminating faculties and Art, as least in the long run, is dependent upon the encouragement of a sympathetic, understanding audience. The development of the Arts affecting various phases of our social and industrial life today gives assurance of improved taste and a finer discrimination among our people at large.

There are several agencies that have been exerting a marked influence on the taste of the American people:

- a. Publications such as the *Ladies Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*, and other like periodicals have held up high standards for the selection and use of those things that have to do with dress and home. They have reached far

and wide; their influence can not be measured.

- b. Advertising Art is setting before the mass of our people beautiful reproductions, frequently in color, of interiors, rugs, wall paper, lighting fixtures, furniture, table ware—all finer than that which has gone before.
- c. Motion pictures—principally because fifteen million of our people pay admission to them daily. Many are ordinary, some are bad to be sure, but in most cases Art Directors are employed who are impressing people with better examples of dress and home decoration than they had previously known.
- d. Merchandise display. Our shops and shop windows display goods with an art quality. These may be thought of as museums—very democratic and very popular. They are silent but effective teachers of beauty and must be counted as coöperative agencies.
- e. Museums and galleries have grown both in service and in numbers. Once cold, formal “Mausoleums” of Fine Art, they are now inviting places for young and old, and some have an attendance of a million or more a year. Some museums led by The Metropolitan have exhibited manufactured articles of American design and craftsmanship. They have aided designers and salespeople, and contributed much toward an improved public taste.
- f. Public School Art. For some twenty or thirty years past the emphasis in Art Education has been placed on appreciation rather than mechanical perspective or an emphasis on technique, for example. In other words there came a realization of the need for training in taste and a fine discrimination in the selection, the purchase, and the use of manufactured articles for the person, the home, and the shop.

These may be described as 100% needs. Young people who enjoyed such experiences are now consumers of manufactured articles and are demanding the best ever. Incidentally they are encouraging Art (fine color and design) at the very sources of our manufacture and merchandising.

The schools hold a very strategic position in the whole Art movement in America, for they influence all the children of all the people during their plastic and most impressionable period. Recently a study was made in Pennsylvania relative to the effects of Public School Art in a rural industrial and agricultural county. School heads not previously impressed with the value of Art Education reported that ideas of taste were carried to the home and that parents were referring to their children for decisions relative to the best selection in lamps, wall paper, and rugs. Moreover, it was reported that the art influence had reached far beyond the art period and enriched the whole school, the home, and the community life.

The art taste of a community will be no worse than the standards established in its public schools. The one is commensurate with the other. We reap as we sow—crude and coarse manufactured products, ugly homes, sordid streets; or homes of true beauty and comfort, filled with manufactured products of refined taste, streets and parkways that express the best in town planning and civic beauty.

There is a growing resentment towards unattractive “hot dog” stands, objectionable outdoor advertising and ugliness generally; there is a growing conviction that beauty is a profitable investment and that Art makes life altogether more interesting.

I am convinced that on every hand there are evidences of fine tastes, finer desires, finer affections.

Today in America there is a great movement for art in industry. Our people, more and more, are demanding that what they wear, what they place in their homes, whatever comes into their daily life, shall be beautiful. It is the problem of the American merchant as well as of the manufacturer to satisfy that demand. In the new beauty of skyscrapers, the new beauty of immense stores—the cathedral of commerce—new beauty of color and design in American manufactured products, we see the beginning of the greatest of all mergers, the union of art and industry; the beginning of a new and better civilization.

In many ways, beauty and Art are being woven more and more into the fabric of our everyday living. As Art is brought to and really enters the life of the people, it finds expression in

More beautiful homes
 Greater refinement in dress
 Increasing beauty in manufacture
 More beautiful towns and cities

And, a finer public taste and citizenship generally.

C. VALENTINE KIRBY

THE DRAWINGS OF CHILDREN

THERE are several viewpoints as to how children should be taught to draw. There is the "self-expression" viewpoint, which believes the child should be permitted to draw at will; the viewpoint which believes the child should be taught to recognize the possibilities of his self-expression; and the viewpoint that believes the child should draw according to rules. My general attitude agrees with the second. By that I mean, it is possible and reasonable for the child to recognize, after he has com-

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mitted himself in paint or pencil, what he has done. This has a moral importance, which, as an educational detail, must supersede all else. By the recognition of his methods, the child comes to a recognition of himself and his attainment. If art will mean anything to him in the future, it must mean the use of an instrument, working with and upon a medium, to create a form containing an idea. And that is exactly what the recognition of his child's expression signifies, except that it will not be understood in its delicate inferences of aesthetics and philosophy. Although I am a critic of art and a lover of the formal aspects of art, I must say that, as an educator, I must be interested in the expression as a revelation of the child. Therefore, if I indicate to the child the meaning of his revelation, I must first see that the child wants to understand and is ready for this elucidation. That can be detected by a teacher who has observed the child. It will be evidenced in his doubts, his enthusiasms, his curiosity, and his questions. A teacher working according to the third viewpoint mentioned above is not likely to observe these operations of the child, for she will be interested only in the child's methodical execution of a rule such as "central balance" or "complementary colors." She will, in other words, be interested in the job of the child, not in his expression. I regret to say that that is the most usual case.

So much for the attitude. Now to the expression. Technically, the child's drawing resembles the work of the primitive. Factually, the child's interests are as broad as his experience, real, imaginative or fanciful. Girls are more often interested in the details of beauty, boys in the mechanics of the drawing, just as they are interested in machines as subject-matter. It is for this reason that boys find more of interest in linoleum and wood-cutting than girls, in weaving, and—were it not socially stigmatized as feminine labor—in embroidery. I