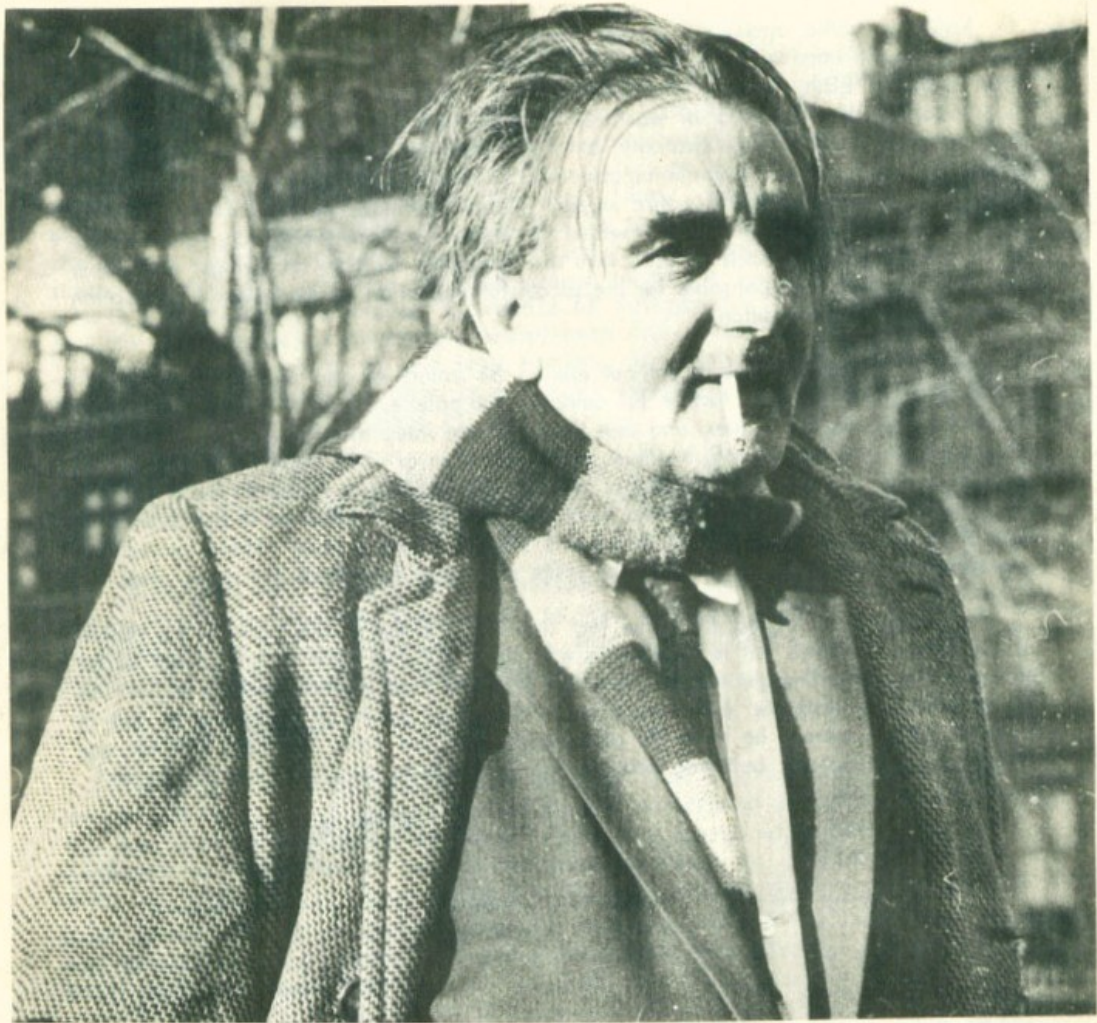


KANDIS



OPENING APRIL 6, 1959

STEWART - MAREAN GALLERY
135 EAST 62 NEW YORK

KALDIS BY HOWARD DAWN

*To Marina Kallias
the way servant
of the Muses and its companions
children with fraternal*

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1.- Apocalyptic and Cataclysmic Landscape | 7.- Floating Color Forms |
| 2.- Polydactylic Divine Hand | 8.- Bull's Cape Bubbling |
| 3.- Sappho Eternal Sleep Blessed | 9.- Greek Volcanic Landscape |
| 4.- Panhellenic Landscape | 10.- Psara Aegean Island |
| 5.- Floating Greek Islands | 11.- Heroic Hydra " " |
| 6.- Tortured Landscape | 12.- The Abode of the Muses |



*Greenberg &
Holt Rinehart & Winston
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Kaldis, Athens July 29, 61*

Kaldis is neither avant nor derrier garde. To be avant one becomes light and trivial, and on the other hand, the derrier is burdensome and oppressive. Aristodimos happens to be by birth, ancestry and development, a mature guerilla fighter and as such he is adapted to every form of warfare. At times he attacks frontally and pursues the resisting canvas with savage brutality, at other times he caresses it paternally. He has prudence to suppress his volcanic impulses and retreat to mark time, — then he returns to the area of pigment warfare thru zigzag motion for more effective blows. That is, at no time does he become panicky before the mute two-dimensional canvas, but observes calmly, then abstracts or adds thru his numerous sketches, drawings, and other auxiliary weapons, indispensable for the successful operation of his original conception into a vibrating composition.

I have watched him paint without mixing his colors on the palette. "A painter", Kaldis said, "should never torture his colors on the palette, whatever mixing is necessary should be done on the canvas, and thus they become integrated into a color chord." I have seen 10 and 15 year-old Kaldises on linen, cotton or plain paper, and they are as fresh as if they were painted yesterday. His colorful landscapes transport me to Greece, the Cote d'Azur, or to New England seashores, and others enable me to appreciate the light of New York in such a variety of aspects. His still lifes are never "nature morte" but are animated with life, and his portraits while sometimes analytical are never cruel.

I rejoice instead of regretting the fact that Kaldis is not a race horse in the Hippodrome of yearly shows. Art is timeless, so why the rush? The artist who does not derive pleasure out of the thought and the deed of painting itself cannot possibly impart his joy to others. Aristodimos' exuberant and "child-like" nature is always to be felt in his work. Like Anacreon he loves life and beauty and has many passions, but not any violent ones, except his bubbling passion for Art which he considers his true religion.

DEXIOS K. ZERVOS

It does not matter my dear colleagues whether you are on the right or the left side of the blossoming Academy or off its center as Renoir was most of his creative life. Irrespective of what one does he cannot escape from his destiny. So the most we can do is to aim always at the target. Renoir, like so many other great artists, always tried and so often hit the bull's eye, so he attained fame before he expired. However, you may be interested to know that twenty-four years after his death the stigma with which the academicians blotted and scarred Renoir's name was still bleeding in the mind of a charming Buffalonian, Mrs. Mathews, whom I had the good fortune to meet in her spacious mansion. She was an unassuming and sympathetic old lady who told me that she and her late husband had visited Paris in the 1880's. Mrs. Mathews very proudly showed me the self-portrait of the French Academician, Bougereau, whom they had approached since, like most nouveau riches, they were looking for labels. They had patronized the contemporary French painters, but not Renoir, who was then only slightly known, and not, of course, the great Cezanne, or any of the late 19th century painters who are famous today.

How vividly this charming Buffalonian narrated to me, over cups of tea in the early 1940's, the unique experience of meeting Bougereau! She showed me the self-portrait, with many decorations, including the Legion d'honneur, dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. Mathews, and conspicuously signed with his name. She remembered all the decorations, but although she listed them to me twice, there were so many that I cannot remember them. What I remember distinctly, though, is a large picture of a nymph-like maiden, which resembled Tiepolo's theatrical figures, though its background had the earthy quality of Courbet's robust landscapes. It was an incongruous painting ... Bougereau, not being a creative painter, had been incapable of integrating the two traditions, despite his unusual virtuosity, which even the great Cezanne envied. He lacked the personality of the true artist, who at times uses three or four traditions and recreates them in a unique personal form. Technique per se is not the important element of art.

While I was still looking at the Bougereau painting, Mrs. Mathews, for no apparent reason, suddenly became very excited and said in an agitated voice:

"Imagine, Mr. Kaldis, how my husband would feel if he learned in his grave, that the money he bequeathed to the Albright Gallery was to be used to purchase an awful Renoir nude! ... This is terrible! ... I'm planning to take legal action against the purchase."

"Why so, Madame?" I enquired.

"Our friend Bougereau used to tell us that Renoir painted only the whores of Paris ... I should not be at all surprised if this painting too, the one they are thinking of buying with our money, once decorated the entrance to some brothel on rue Gregoire de Tours in Saint-Germain des Pres, or some filthy place up at the Place Pigalle, where Renoir used to hang around in the early eighties..." Before I had a chance to say a word, she continued, "I presume that you know Paris, Mr. Kaldis, and have noticed those awful streetwalkers..."

I was in a good mood and, having been raised to respect old ladies, I did not argue with this vivacious octogenarian, but simply said:

"Renoir in the 1880's was not at all such a painter as you describe, Mrs. Mathews,... On the contrary, he was a highly respected artist of Paris."

"Don't tell me that... I know his work from A to Z," she said angrily.

"If he was not as good a composer as his friend Cezanne," I retorted, "He was one of the best juicy painters of all time".

"Don't you dare compare Renoir with Cezanne, Mr. Kaldis... I do not like Cezanne's clumsy drawing, but at least his nudes never give you the impression that they are drawn from the inmates of whorehouses... Cezanne's nudes, as you know," she added, "are very ascetic, and I like the way he painted those charming leaves reflected in a pond... I do like the Cezanne we have at the Albright, and I am glad it looks like the pond at his parents' house at Aix-en-Provence..." She became rapturous... "And how he captured the grandeur of those chestnut trees behind the house, with its beautiful

furniture and the imposing marble staircase!"

"I agree with you, Mrs. Mathews, that he abstracted nature and its adornments as few have done in the history of art... But Renoir visited Cezanne at that house, and he was the first to advertise and to try to sell his paintings in Paris. Please give him a little credit..."

The maid served sherry, and Mrs. Mathews complained that we were drifting away from the original conversation. She said bitterly:

"Let them at least buy a landscape of his... Although I am not as crazy as some of my ultra-modern friends about his twisted little brush strokes... However, they are not morally offensive..."

"Be fair, Mrs. Mathews," I said angrily, "I have seen this Renoir nude at Rosenberg's in New York, with the blue cloth over her knees. This jewel-like painting is certainly not at all pornographic or hedonistic, but innocent-looking. It is a nude, not a naked woman. Her expression is as fresh and pure as a baby's".

"Please do not force me to repeat what I said a little while ago. Why should we encourage such indecencies? I stayed in Paris long enough to become acquainted with the artistic circles, but I never saw Renoir in any respectable salon".

"You are wrong, Mrs. Mathews," I said, "If it were so, if Renoir had no respectable friends, how then could he have obtained from Richard Wagner's friends in Paris many letters recommending him to the great composer in Palermo?"

"In Palermo?" asked Mrs. Mathews in amazement.

"Yes, in Palermo, Sicily, at the Exquisite Hotel where Wagner was busy with the first sketches of his immortal 'Parsifal'. He did not dare to offend his important supporters in Paris, who had recommended Renoir to him as a great artist ... So he interrupted his composition and posed for the artist whom you so unjustly call the painter of whores".

"You don't mean that, Mr. Kaldis... Renoir sketching Wagner in his bedroom...!" she cried in amazement, and then, shaking her head, she continued reflectively, "We had to pay a lot of money for the privilege of sleeping in Wagner's room during our honeymoon... You bring me back to the best days of my life, Mr. Kaldis... Wagner, Wagner, what a thrill it was! I wish I were young again!" And, taking a deep breath, as if to stifle a sigh, she added: "This darn modern medical science boasts that it prolongs life... Unfortunately, it prolongs only our old age, and not our youth".

She walked a few paces away from me, and then turned back, saying:

"Although it is late, I'd better call the Director of the Albright Gallery straight away, to tell him to go ahead and get that Renoir after all ... I am glad that you came, Mr. Kaldis, and convinced me so nicely..."

It was indeed getting late, and I decided to leave before she changed her mind.

OUTLINE OF MY LECTURES ON THE KEY TO MODERN ART

by

Aristodimos Melandinos Kaldis

These lectures are a visual and oral medium for making more meaningful the living art of today. My guiding principle is that visual presentation can be enhanced by the verbal; each being a necessary companion to the other. In other words, while I utilize the iconographic method of the Byzantines, by projecting slides of painting, sculpture, architecture, vases, daggers, etc., on a screen, at the same time my verbal explanations are aimed at relaying them to their historical sequence.

Modern art is global and as such is polyglotic and multicolored. Modern art, as we all know, differs from any other art movement; for it is more receptive to every form of art. It returns to the archetype, be it Geometric, Archaic, Baroque, Non-objective, including Classical and its Renaissances, etc.* My efforts are directed toward translating its polyglotism and unravelling the multicolored carpet that it weaves. I have therefore named my lectures "The Key to Modern Art", because my lectures open on the universal garden, where all whom the Muses kissed, caressed, or just touched, can relax, absorb and recreate all the wealth of human achievement which the axe of the archeologist has brought to light from the dark chambers of the tombs; from the sand and earth-covering architectural wonders, (often neglected or ignored masterpieces!) in metal, stone, clay, pigment, papyroi or pergamine.

The universality of Modern art requires a guide. Those who enter this labyrinth, need a sword to cut the Gordian knot. While making it sufficiently exciting so that even the untutored can enjoy it with a minimum of oral explanation, at the same time I wish to be careful of the pitfalls of popularization. I firmly believe that excessive popularization leads to vulgarity. The Byzantines resorted to iconography because of the illiteracy of the masses. Today, the hectic tempo of daily life deprives the wide masses of people, including the executives of industry -- of the necessary leisure for the enjoyment of art and history. My efforts are directed toward a progressive goal, toward those who wish to participate in the enjoyment of the fine arts. Like any other artist, I know the difficulties that all contemporary art has to meet, and through and through the ages; for since the 2nd Century, B.C., art has presented obstacles to its appreciation, as we are told by Callistrates, and Modern art with its global conceptions, and its return to the archetype, be it Classical, Archaic, Geometric or Primitive -- has barriers not only of mountains and oceans, but thousands of years of interment though recently it has been excavated and enthroned in museums and private collections.

*What I mean by the Return to the Archetype is this: The return to all the sources of art and not just those of savages or primitive people. For instance, the Italian Renaissance artists returning to Plato's and Aristotle's classical art (as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci did) enriching their background.

I point out how the rapid growth of transportation, thanks to the invention of the steam engine and the relative safety of travel has made available these treasures to western artists.

The western world was ripe for such a direction at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Napoleon Bonaparte, emulating Alexander the Great, undertook the invasion of Egypt, bringing along, with guns and rifles, numerous scholars, who investigated and documented the treasures of Egypt. Like a fire that sweeps a forest, lovers of the antiquity, from many parts of Europe, descended on Greece and other countries. Some of them were true lovers of the Antique, but a major part of them were actual looters of tombs and monuments, and in their haste to take back home whatever they thought valuable, they did irreparable damage to works of art which so-called "savages" from the East and from the South respected and refrained from molesting. The notorious Elgin affair is a sad example.

Benefits of Scientific Progress to Global Art

Archaeology up to the 1870's was not a science as we know it today. It took almost a hundred years of effort and love for the Antique, which in recent times was pioneered by the 18th century German, J. J. Winckelmann, (who believed that man could be educated by looking at works of art) before archaeology began to be established as a science, paying the minutest attention, not only to monumental sculpture and precious gold ornaments, but to every kind of applied art or a fragment of it, such as inscriptions, etc. At that time, and simultaneously, all branches of science and especially biology, anthropology, ethnology, etc., were busy documenting and cataloguing every element that could be used as comparative evidence for the establishment of historic theories about backward people, thus affording us an excellent opportunity for the comparative study of history. We know of such famous names as Darwin, with his evolutionary theories, and the less known but highly important American author of "Ancient Society", Lewis Morgan, and his influence on Frederic Engels as well as the whole Marxian movement, through Engel's book, "The Origin of the Family". With the closing of the nineteenth century, with the evolutionary ideas, there sprang up the powerful movement for the return of the archetype. The stifling atmosphere in the industrial cities of Europe led men to seek solace in open country, and to the "primitive", or to the islands or lands still living in prehistoric times.

European civilization, with Paris as its cultural capital, was the first to react to ancient works of art: the objets d'art that were arriving daily, especially Japanese prints, Chinese water-colors and paintings, Negro sculpture, the art of Mayan and Aztec civilizations, from the Aborigines of Australia, the Persian and Indian miniature painting, the Russian ikon -- found a home in Paris. All these objects have dazzled the artists and the aesthetes, and opened new gates to vision, making them the pioneers of a global life now becoming feasible, thanks to the rapid travel. The western world, that is Europe and America combined, was ripe for this direction, because its traditions made it possible to accept this universality. The Christian religion with its mysticism and Oriental unworldliness, the Greek speculative spirit, with its love of beauty, (in its last stage it became cosmopolitanism, known as the Hellenistic era) the Germanic tribal conceptions of camaraderie and its blind obedience to a leader, as well as Roman law and order, all combined to produce a variety, a spontaneity, a

versatility, as well as freedom for the individual character of the artist, enabling him to develop rapidly and in so many different ways.

Domenicos Theotocopoulos known as El Greco

For example, when I speak or write about El Greco, my aim is to establish the locale where the artist was born and grew up, where he travelled and studied, like Mt. Athos, Venice, Rome, and how he worked and triumphed in Toledo, what political and economic conditions prevailed at that time and what were the philosophical ideas that contributed or determined his conceptions. My opening slide or reproduction happens to be a calligraphic seal of the omnipotent Sultan who terrorized the western world, whose dagger hung menacingly over Crete, his birthplace. Or I may chose a Minoan Octopus vase symbolizing the marine life of El Greco's island, whose tentacles show the vibrations of his paintings. My next slide may be St. Euthymios of the monastery of Lavra at Mt. Athos and its identical resemblance to that of the Cardinal now at the Frick Museum. Then I will show a fragment of a silver vase showing the elongations of the Cretan civilization and how the bending position of the figures resemble El Greco's painting of the "Adoration of the Magi" at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Such coincidences are a result of mountainous topography and atmospheric conditions of the Aegean landscape, since the silver vase was unknown to El Greco, though it happens to be known to us today. On the other hand, Picasso's "Two Harlequins" now at the Barnes Foundation, resemble, in some respects, an ikon of two figures from a monastery in Greece, and also many Russian ikons. The Cretan school at the time of El Greco's birth and development was second-to-none in Byzantine iconography. They were supplying the Russians with portable ikons and murals, and to the entire Near East which the Turks enslaved. Then I proceed with the presentation of some Venetian masters under whose guidance this Byzantine painter studied, especially Tintoretto. His native Crete was ruled at that time by the Venetian empire and therefore El Greco's sojourn in Venice fortunately lacked that disturbing element usually caused by new environmental adaptations. It is true, however, that the exotic Venetian life was somehow a sharp contrast to the gloomy atmosphere of his native island, where the Turkish expansion was encroaching menacingly. Venice, and especially the studio of Tintoretto, gave a new stimulus to his Byzantine background. Later on, in Rome, he painted a shocking self-portrait which, unfortunately, is missing. His stay in Italy was very beneficial for his further development and growth in Spain. The Hellenistic or Greco-Roman sculptural composition "Laocoon", inspired Greco to recreate the agony of the Trojan priest in his famous painting "Laocoon". I emphasize that from all the renaissance artists, including Tintoretto, he had a great affinity in the intensity of his drawing to that of Signorelli. But whereas the master of Orvieto may excell in three-dimensional solidity, he is lacking in that abstract composition and organization of El Greco's "Interment of the Count of Orgaz", at the St. Thomas Church in Toledo.

El Greco Arrives and Stays Forever in Spain

We all know that it was Spain, and especially Toledo, that opened the gates of his disturbed nature; where the Inquisition and counter-reformation, under the leadership of Ignatius Loyola, tantalized his surroundings. Here too, Theotocopholus by no means felt that he was a stranger. The Iberian Peninsula from prehistoric times to the present period has had many features

similar to those of Crete, such as the bull fights, the dancers in ancient and modern times, etc. In the period of El Greco they both suffered from the Arabian invasions and they both enjoyed the brilliance of Byzantine sculpture and painting. In Toledo he painted as he pleased and his recurrent court fights with the clergy are widely known. Here he distorted by elongating and contracting with unparalleled freedom. It took almost four centuries before the leading master of the modern movement, Paul Cezanne, made possible the recognition and acclamation of the dormant fame of El Greco; although the young member of Balzac's entourage, Theophile Gautier, and others, felt the ecstatic power of the Cretan, much earlier.

While at this point of my lecture I project on the screen the "Bathers" of Cezanne and compare them with a detail from Greco's "Count of Orgaz". Going further, I include Picasso and others who carry this distortion to Procrustian extremes, for the benefit of the whole. Usually I add, parenthetically, that distortion for distortion's sake is as meaningless as abstraction for abstraction's sake. Excessive abuse of these plastic means robs the painter's or sculptor's conception of all its substance.

I follow this with El Greco's elongated "St. John the Baptist" and compare it with the Minoan "Fisherman of Milo", a tradition unknown to El Greco, since it was brought to light comparatively recently. Its affinity I attribute to the pursuit of form by an artist whose diet, atmospheric conditions, the topography and means of production, remained unaltered throughout the four millenia that separates these two paintings.

El Greco an Epical Painter

El Greco, like so many other giants of the brush is an epical painter. His expressive and explosive compositions and brushstrokes do not exclude the use of decorative elements. Every great painter combines expressive and decorative elements. However, there are serious works such as Werner Jaeger's "Paideia", attacking painting and sculpture. The author dismisses painting, *per se*, as just decoration. Such is man's nature -- that when he is attached to a thesis, it is difficult to budge him from the narrow ground where he stands. Thus we also witness Salomon Reinach, another author, (having an axe to grind) condemning, (in his anti-religious opus, "Orpheus") ikons calling them "horrible color daubs ...and an outrage on reason".

Today, thanks to the modern art movement and above all, to Delacroix's healthy romanticism and robust constructiveness in giving a new orientation to colorful painting, we know how precious these ikons are in their abstract compositions and color chords. Greco's talents, as we know and appreciate them today, could not have developed to the extent they did without the benefit of his Byzantine background. His tormented soul at times relaxed sufficiently to enable him to paint "Mater Dolorosa" with such tenderness of feeling, proving to us that he was capable of lyricism too. On the other hand, his avant garde vision enabled him to paint the famous landscape "Toledo" now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, long before "pure" landscape painting (that is, landscapes painted independent of religious subject matter) was both begun and developed by Claude Lorraine and N. Poussin. Its cloudy sky, active and explosive, is a masterpiece, which stirs both the untutored and the connoisseur. All prejudices of astigmatism disappear before this work of art that reveals and imposes humility by its ecstatic power.

El Greco's work is prophetic because he was fortunate to be born, raised and trained, on the fringes of the Near East, where Byzantium ruled for over eleven centuries. In spite of its so-called "backwardness" it contributed to the enrichment of painting, Mosaic and abstract sculpture. With its polyglot population, its mystical religiosity and its unworldly semi-orientalism, it succeeded in avoiding cultural stagnation. In its last stages, thanks to the revival of the classics under the leadership of M. C. Psellus and its subsequent early renaissance, it succeeded in becoming the teacher of western Europe and the forerunner of the present era in our own America -- where all the races and colors of the world co-exist, where they all have the legal right and the opportunity to look at the Brother Sun, in the same way that St. Francis did (concluding slide - El Greco's "St. Francis", now at the Prado in Madrid) hoping to reunite every one in the bond of brotherhood. I believe that the timelessness of flaming art such as El Greco's, as well as that of other great artists, is a torch that illuminates our path to that promising direction.

Early Christian Art

Before I conclude my outline of what my lectures are, I wish to include another synopsis of an art period whose beginnings and development was not confined to a single city or nation, but embraced Rome, Greece, and the entire Near East. It begins with the birth and development of Christian art up to the early Byzantine period, when Constantine the Great abolished paganism and established it (the up to then persecuted Christian religion) as an official religion of the State -- in 327 A.D.

Background of First Century A.D.

With the dawn of Christianity the art movement of the Greco-Romans had already reached its highest techniques in naturalistic painting and sculpture. The anatomical progress in that period was translated in sculpture in such a way that the veins could be seen and every wrinkle, if the sitter happened to be old, and every dimple, if a baby. With the suicide of Cleopatra and the last of the Ptolemai Dynasty of Egypt in 30 B. C., Rome became the virtual ruler of the Near East. Its patricians led a sybarite life, while the Roman subjects were tortured by poverty and an iron rule. Even the Greeks were not exempted from this slavery, except a small cultured class that served as tutors or docile collaborators of the vast empire.

The Alexandrian Library with its precious papyri and papyrus already was burned. The Coptics (native Egyptians), the Greeks and the Jews, who comprised the major part of the Alexandrian population, suffered immense hardships and virtual slaughter. These three peoples formed the nucleus of the first "rebels" and those who were converted to Christianity were the enemies of their own ethnokoi (nationalists). With terrestrial misery increasing, the wide masses turned to the only Saviour who offered them spiritual comfort to their tortured bodies and souls. The Necropolises of Egypt and the Catacombs are an eloquent testimony of the determination of the Nazareths (as the followers of Jesus Christ were called) to worship in their new humanistic religion. Jesus was depicted in stone and pigment as the Good Shepherd, as Orpheus of the Thracians was, with an innocent lamb at his side. The churches of the Necropolises abound in the Dionysian symbolic decoration of the vine. Others seeking salvation from the sinful world and wishing to avoid any kind of social intercourse, sought solace in the bareness

of the African desert or peaceful meditation on the top of precipitous mountains.

Hedonistic Life of Romans and Iconoclastic Reaction of Early Christians

In contrast to this asceticism the Romans led a hedonistic life, exemplified in the "Leda and the Swan". The orgiastic paintings of Pompei are a testimony to a class that is famous for its Lucullian banquets, etc. These early Christians reacted violently against the sensuality, and as martyrs (witnesses for Jesus Christ who were summoned before the Roman Court and refused allegiance to pagan Gods and the Roman Emperor's bust) hated Greek-Roman sculpture and especially the nude ones, did irreparable damage to works of art. Mutilations of statues and almost total destruction of classical and Hellenistic paintings is the result of this reaction against anything "pagan". Social progress is never painless since there is always a heavy price to be paid for its acquirement.

The early Christians, especially those leading a hermetic life, became creators of image makers in the fashion that Hesiod describes the creation of the first wood carving depicting God. "Man walked in a thicket and cut a tree ...part of it he used to warm himself ...with the rest he worked with it and created carvings ..and to them they worshipped ..* Therefore, side by side with sculpture and painting of this period, which are a result of at least eight centuries of historically-documented evolution of Greek Art and the influences of Etruscanism, etc., a return to the archetype occurred; a movement similar to our own modern art, the latter, for its own reasons. However, what early Christian art lost in traditional technique, it gained in intensity of emotion and richness in abstract expression and is a rich source of inspiration to our highly civilized, or shall I say, technologically developed society. While we admire these masterpieces of pious devotion, nevertheless we, by no means, take the extreme view of the so-called avantists, who in their zeal for their blind one-sidedness sneer at the Hellenistic and Roman art periods as totally decadent.

Every historic period, even the most sugary of them, abound in their own masterpieces, and the artist as well as the aesthete who neglects them deprives himself of rich inspirations. Renoir can be appreciated and developed when we look at the "Aphrodite of Levaieia", with its veil, which resembles Renoir's "Gabrielle", with a bath towel. The wings of the "Nike of Samothrace" are as abstract in form as any modern sculptural creation.

Additional Examples of My Early Christian Art Lectures

Many works of art of the early Christians have their prototype in earlier forms. For instance, the sculptural composition of "Christ Carrying the Lamb" now in Rome, but exhibited recently in New York, has a prototype in the Creophoro of the late archaic and earlier classical Greek period.

So do the innumerable Madonnas, whose prototype is the Eretria's sculptural composition, with its tender embrace. Every modern sculptor or painter will benefit by studying it. Then I project on the screen early Byzantine "Madonnas with the Blessed Child" as well as the famous ikons which have

* John Galenos, the Byzantine scholiast, refutes Hesiod in a polemic manuscript.

affinities in richness of color with the Persian and Indian manuscripts; and then I show how these in turn influenced Matisse, Miro and other colorists of the modern art movement. But while we appreciate this wealth of tradition we cannot neglect the Siennese school and the monumentality of Giotto, who as I elaborate in my concluding remarks of this outline, belongs to that transition stage so beneficial to giants of eternal creation. However, even Raphael cannot be overlooked. As a master of the renaissance techniques he could teach us spaciousness and serenity; so too, the lyrical Madonnas of Crivelli, with their fruits, which challenged Cezanne's genius to make them "as solid as these things in the museums".

Various Opinions in the Origin of Christian Art

Scholars are still debating as to which prototype forms contributed to the development of Christian art. "We, artists and appreciators of art", as I say in my lectures, "can neither accept all these theories as valid nor reject them as erroneous. My next slide (thanks to Professor J. Breasted's reproduction) of a detail of a mural from the wall of Bithnanaia in Dura, shows in form a great resemblance to many Byzantine compositions and elongations. But what especially interests us at the moment, is the conical figure which brings us back to the Egyptian, 18th century Dynasty of Amenhotpe or Akh-en-aten and to Early Christian Art". At the same time, this conical form resembles Modigliani's "Woman with the Red Hair", now at the Barnes Foundation, in Merion, Pa. and to "Madam Pogany" and other sculpture by N. Brancusi. For these shapes, although they may seem strange and remote, have even enriched applied art in the design of automobiles, lamps, etc. In various ways, the primitive examples of the early Christian Art that I show on the screen, resemble in their simplicity and charming naivete, the work of French archetype, Douanier Rousseau, such as the "Lion and the Sleeping Gypsy" now at the Modern Museum in New York. Rousseau manages to preserve this now famous birth-mark of "naivete" even in his last paintings which reveal his strong compositional growth. Incidentally, Clemens the Alexandrian, one of the fathers of the Christian church defined naivete as "the habit of discarding the unessentials".

My last slide of this group, illustrating early Christian and the beginning of the Byzantine era (4th c. A. D.), is the primitive "Nativity" (a relief now at the Byzantine Museum of Athens): its abstractness does not rob it of the deep emotional message that it conveys to those who see either the original, its projection on the screen, or its reproduction on a book's page.

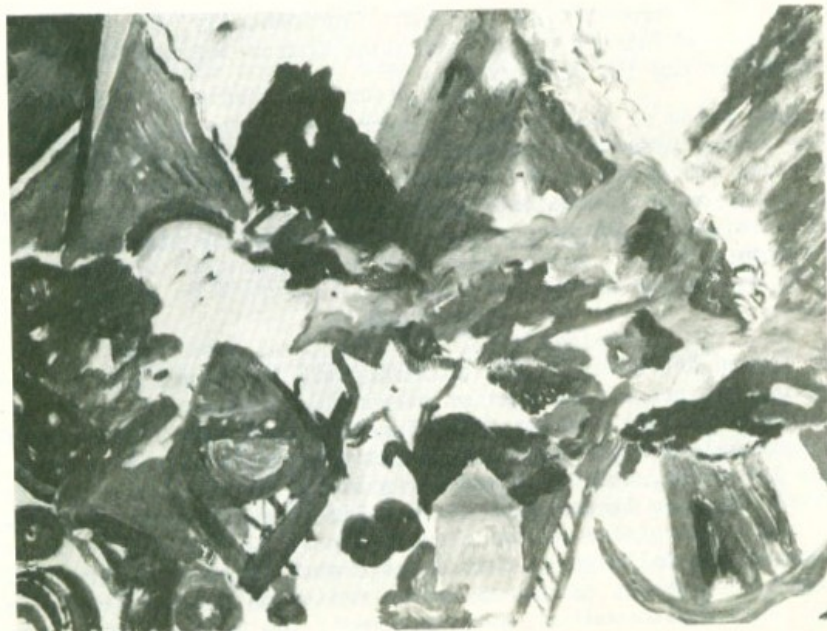
Conclusion

The modern art movement, by utilizing all the traditions of the past, and removing all prejudices against everything unclassical, enables us to appreciate the plastic beauty of the Sumerian sculpture, Egyptian, Chinese, the Greek-archaic and geometric, Mexican, African, etc., as well as the surviving paintings, because these works of art possess the Heraclitian oneness, and as such they are imbued with eternal life, as self-existent organisms, like all the masterpieces of the classical period. The degree of their difference is the following: that archaic work is powerful and sometimes overwhelming because it is nearer to the radiation point of their source, while the so-called technical achievements of the naturalistic is very far

removed from the heat of the radiating hearth of abstract conceptions. However, the late archaic and the early classical have the advantage of possessing both the charm of the archaic and the idealized conceptions of an advanced culture, whose sweetness has not as yet become sugary.



Delphi



Volcanic Greek Landscape



KALDIS BY KALDIS

GLOSSARY

ARISTODIMOS KALDIS

Aristodimos Kaldis, artist and art lecturer of the key to Modern Art, and author of a work in progress—"Not Just Myself but a Biography of Others".

PROLOGUE

That *glossa* . . . tongue is more powerful than any weapon we all agree. At the same time no one will deny that

"the tongue although she has no bones, she breaks bones"
Marketos' proverbs

However the clarity of the *pthongs* and *diphthongs* that the tongue spouts can either help us to appreciate art with their articulation, or confuse us with the soundings of vagueness which many promoters of art utilize. Vagueness in reviews and criticism should be fought by those who sincerely believe in an objective appreciation of art devoid of sympathies, empathsies or antipathies.

There is no panacea for combatting these abuses. However, the method of inviting painters and sculptors to express themselves is worthy of praise. After all, Diderot, the friend of Parisian artists, tells us that we can learn from the most obscure painters and sculptors. But, with a very few exceptions, painters and sculptors can not convey in a spoken or written form their reflections on art. Therefore, willy-nilly, they need a writer to arrange or render their remarks without changing their substance. Personally, as a painter, I feel that the more I talk on art the more I agree with Simonides that:

*Painting is a silent poetry,
and poetry is a chatting, talking painting.*

If we follow the epigram dogmatically, all criticism becomes superfluous. Like religious dogma, art is in the metaphysical domain, so it is no wonder that when we resort to words to express its mystery or indulge in polemics we often enter into a blind alley as theologians do. The theologian of the Renaissance had a difficult time explaining to the awakening masses the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. These theologians were able to survive scientific onslaught on their dogma by grasping a quotation from Aristotle, the father of science. The Roman Catholics quoted from Aristotle that the *Dokoumenon* (what do you believe) is right, rather than the *Apodeiktikon* (and not the thing that you can prove).

Faith removes *Amphi* . . . *Amphibolia*—doubt, so there is no guilt or sin. Art appreciation or criticism very often enters the same theological realm of faith—that is, fanatical mysticism expressed with its best poetic license. When we use logical words, we are often led into the barren fields of logic. On the other hand, if we resort to myths that are plastic words, we are transported on the powerful wings of imaginative faith—dogma. And dogma does not dissect, but reveals the beauty of a painting or sculpture. This apocalyptic revelation catapults us into the eternal space of ideas. Plato is right when he says there is no materialistic space, but a void. A *pandehes* . . . *pandectis*—that is, an all receptive vessel filled with dirty matter.

Artist and Appreciator: the human being is a self-proclaimed "logical animal". However, the artist being a *Demiourgos*—creator, succeeds through intuition on rare occasions, in avoiding the pitfalls of logic. On the other hand, the appreciator has to make his own efforts, faithfully and with deep religiosity, until the work of art will reveal its inner beauty without the help of the intermediary, the self-appointed judge—the critic.

To *Oraion kai Kalon*: the beautiful and the good are attained through effort. No wonder then that the bitter, the dirty etc. are called, philosophically, positive elements of life. The clean, the sweet etc. are *Arnitika*—negative. These virtues are denied to us by nature. The most that we can do is to be truthful.

LOGOS

TRUTH

Alitheia—truth, without lethargy. How many times, for instance, have you heard in lectures and discussions the word "Truth"? Without sounding pontifical, truth—*Alitheia* in Greek—means to report, say or review something without error or lethargy. That is: not forgetting—*Lethe*—to include or to discard; not to err—

Lanthano—erring. In reporting or handling one has to be very, very infallible. Being infallible is an attribute reserved for the Gods, not for common mortals.

That is why it is more correct to say that this great artist or philosopher is less infallible than another who talks on art *ex-cathedra*.

TIME

Chronos—time. There was no such thing as the fallible or infallible before human beings interfered with Mother Nature. Thanks to *Prometheus* and *Hephaestus*, or more likely to *Chronos*—the almighty Time, we learned slowly and steadily how to use our hands. First of all, we created out of the *thicket* (virginal nature) . . . Space: *Horon* in Greek, *Locus* in Latin and *Ghei* in Japanese.

SPACE

Space . . . to separate . . . to make room for another. "The space first of all they measured . . ." says Homer in his *Iliad* (Gama 325). Clearing more trees and leveling the ground they created a small space—*Horion* in Greek, that is, a small village or hamlet. When our ancestors cleared a larger area they created a big space—*Hora*—meaning a large city. (Who but Hesiod can describe this process better?)

LIGHT AND CHAOS

"The first man", Hesiod says, "walked into a thicket and cut a tree . . . part of it he used to warm himself, another part to cook his meals, and with what remained he played and he created a *Xoannon*—a wood carving . . . which the others worshipped."

The result of this clearing was the creating of a definite space—and simultaneously . . . *Light* was produced out of the chaotic thicket where the pitch darkness of *Chaos* prevailed prior to the cutting of the trees.

Time in its long, illimitable course

Brings forth to Light and buries all again.

—Sophocles (*Ajax*)

Chaos—where one is lost—*Hanetai* in Greek or *Heo* . . . that is: pouring the unwrought matter, raw material. "Indigestible", Long. 15.5. Milton's "Void formless infinite", and Plato's "A yawning abyss". (Tim 50 B and 51 A).

DESIGN

Schedion—*Schema*—Design. At the beginning of historical development, when the human being slowly comes out of the forest—thicket—life, he floats on makeshifts—designs, shapes, or schemes: *Schedia* in Greek and *Schidram* in Sanskrit. Design is a diagram, "the external appearance", in Plato's *Republic* (601A)—like any textile design or bas relief on furniture or on a wall. It is the intention or the pursuit of a goal which succeeds or fails in its plan or design. Design or shapes, being makeshifts, are not harmonies. Harmony, synthesis, or composition is an amalgam of related designs or shapes, with color and line, that are joined together to form a harmony, a composition.

HARMONY

Harmos—peg. Harmony is derived from the Greek *Harmos*, meaning peg or nail. Large nails for the keel of the big schooner and smaller ones for the other parts . . . they are joined harmoniously to achieve a balance,

a composition, like perfect weights on a set of scales.

A design or scheme—can be achieved on the spur of the moment and the artist changes it in the process of adding more shapes or designs so that he can achieve a harmony.

SYNTHESIS

Harmony or composition is a mixture of various shapes or designs that creates a unified form, a synthesis—*syntheto* (put the places together). However the synthesis or structural formation requires, according to Galen, a mixture of solids and liquids. Therefore the true artist is neither solid like the academician who uses the traditions as "a torch in the torch race that is passed to another (Plat. Legg. 776 B) but fails to integrate them through his own personality; nor is he one of the avant-garde who discards the traditions altogether, and becomes too liquid, and therefore degenerates into lightness and triviality.

TRADITION

Paradosis—tradition (handing down, a transmission . . .)

So the artist is neither solid (unbending) like the traditional craftsman nor liquid like the painter or sculptor who claims to have no antecedents—as if he were an unborn Olympian God. Since the span of life is so brief, we cannot discard the traditions that were handed to us from the past, despite the fact that "*Tradition is an incubus that tortures the living*".

Others justly call tradition—*paradosis* ("I give to" or "hand in")—a burden. This burden should be carried cheerfully by the artists without allowing themselves to develop into hunchbacks of eclecticism. The greater the artist the larger the number of traditions he absorbs and recreates through his sensitivity. The result is a recreation of the past through the present. An artist combines both the robustness (solidity) of a longshoreman and the sensitivity (liquidness) of a lyrical poet. To be strong physically, if you happen to be a longshoreman, is automatic.

EPIC

Epos—a word (word by word in a row . . . combined with myth; an expression; synthesis; the precise word). The artist is epic. He combines solids and liquids. That is: the epic poet, composer, painter or sculptor enriches his compositions with lyrical elements. He grows by juxtaposition; that is why we sometimes use the term counter-point—which is an apposition. The epic writer uses *logos* (which is proportion) and myths that uplift the soul while instructing it. An epic poet or painter is always sublime and avoids the hyperboles of a G. B. Tiepolo or any other flamboyant painter or sculptor.

Illustration of *Epos*: A Cretan bard once corrected me angrily when I applauded his rival who had recited a few stanzas in his Cretan dialect. The huge *Minotaurus*, holding his ancient *Lyra*, said to me angrily, "What Spyros my *antagonistis* (rival) recited just now, my grandfather used to sing too . . . But I added something

of my own, and I see now that I joined them together . . ."

This episode which took place under the sign of the double axe of the labyrinth in Crete, is an explanation of epic creation that has continuous growth—in contrast to lyrical creation which lacks continuity and sometimes copies the past, and therefore does not grow or snowball into epic proportions.

LYRIC

Lyra—lyrical, as long as the lyra lasts . . . a song strain like the nightingale's, often expressing a variety of subjective feelings and sentiments. (However, we have no right to sneer at a lyrical work in any medium).

Illustration of lyra: A Persian poet saw a vine-leaf that was lying in the gutter whose scent attracted his attention. Picking it up and holding it in his palm, the poet asked the vine leaf whether it was a leaf or a rose, since it smelled so much like a rose despite the fact that it looked like a vine-leaf. The latter responded promptly that it was a vine leaf. "However", it added proudly, "with the roses I kept company and their perfume permeated me".

ILLUSTRATION

Iconographia—illustration. If it is a graphic illustration, its aim is to enlighten, adorn, or elucidate the text like the iconographs of the Bible. If the intended illustration transcends itself and becomes through the brush or pencil of the artist a work of art "*a silent poetry*" then it distracts the reader from the literary value by attracting attention to itself. And vice-versa, if the writer-critic can articulate or write poetically, he ceases to be a scribbler of metaphors; he does not illustrate the painting with prosaic words, he captures the essence of the painting and graduates into "*a talking, chatting painter*". Sometimes a rare blessed coincidence takes place when the painter and critic or appreciator have equal abilities (like Signorelli's *Purgatory of Dante* at Orvieto or many Homeric or Biblical scenes by famous artists throughout history).

DECORATIVE PAINTING

Diakosmitikon—decorative painting. An adornment, embellishment, or fitting up like the scenography of the theater . . . If a painting is put behind or in front of a dress in a show case and we are attracted to the dress rather than the painting, the painting is decorative. A work of art would annihilate the physical presence of the dress.

COLOR

Derma—Color . . . *Derma*, in Homeric times, the skin. When color is applied creatively, it multiplies itself and enhances the composition. It has magical powers. It moves the shapes and forms without changing the lines of a painting. However, color is a dangerous temptation for those who suffer from *achromatopsia*—color-blindness. Fortunately this optical impediment is not so perilous to painters as it is to city drivers or to navigators of narrow shoals. For example, a headmaster in England relented and allowed one of his pupils to take carpentry in lieu of the arts. Three days later the pupil returned to the class with his left hand in a sling.

The pedagogue said to the student "Unlike the Fine Arts, young man, carpentry does not tolerate inaccuracies".

RHYTHM

Rhythmos—from the Greek *Rein*—to flow. When your eyes follow the flow from one point to another without wandering outwards; when this miracle occurs, it succeeds in creating the energy of time and space. Otherwise you are looking at a vignette.

VIGNETTE

Clima—or *Coronis*:—a vignette. Originally an adornment, an embellishment by a branch of vine—*clima*—to clarify, optically, a sentence, a written phrase. Also, to make a display. Usually an illustration and not a work of art. It has no life of its own. Simply the craftsman makes a display but fails to graduate into an artist, as did the fine craftsman of ancient vases. It lacks, therefore, a vibration, a soul or psyche; it is inanimate. The work of art blows and transforms everything into spirits—*Pneumata*.

"From the shores of Ionia,
And from the Athens air,
Which when it blows,
into spirits—Pneumata transforms everything."

—Palamas (*Gyftos*)

ABSTRACT

Apherimeni—abstract, in Greek . . . absent-mindedness, as in a trance or enraptured. All works of art are abstract. That does not mean that all non-objective paintings are automatically enraptured works of art. Iconoclastic or figurative paintings should be judged on their plastic merits, without bias.

The presence of subject-matter should never be a criterion for judging a work of art. Otherwise we become blind followers of the totalitarian Academy of Justinian. This Byzantine emperor, besides closing Plato's Academy, burned precious icons and mutilated statues in the name of Christian morality. Iconoclastic vandal that he was, he allowed the depiction of some innocent animals.

CONCEPTION and MYSTICISM

Syllipsis—conception . . . is a pregnancy of thoughts. Usually the artist conceives mystically [from the Greek *Mys*—mysticism . . . the muscle that closes the eye]. The mystic facilitates the concentration of his thoughts by closing his eyes. Thus, he is totally absorbed and succeeds in neutralizing his physical environment.

EPILOGUE

The collector and esthete, Dr. Albert C. Barnes, who spent his life writing on art, says, somewhere that there are elements in art that no words can convey. So do not blame the critics and reviewers, dear colleagues, when they fail sometimes to render in words the hidden treasures of your paintings and sculptures. To paraphrase Plato's *Timaeus* (51 A):

"This then is the view for which I, for my part, cast my vote", and say with Simonides: "*Painting is a silent poetry*".



Therefore do not expect it to chat but to reveal its beauty.

The above Glossary appeared on page 36-38 of the second issue of "It Is".



Polydactylic Divine Hand

Willy, nilly American Art has to stand on its own feet. It is autocephalus, not by its own choice, but by the blessed necessity which challenges ingenuity. For, as I point out in my lectures, the École de Paris which radiated so brilliantly for two centuries lost its cosmic fire, and thus the international art movement became Acephalus, that is without a head to guide its steps. Instead of lamenting like weaklings in need of crutches, we should heroically accept this fact which Sophocles so brilliantly expresses in his Oedipus in Colonus:

" to the Gods alone,
Belongs it never to be old or die,
But all things else perishes with all-Mighty Time..."

At least we are consoled by the fact that the work of these creative Demi-Gods is immortal since they have imbued eternal life into their pigments the way the Attican tragedian imbued it into his words.

Today American Art has a wide horizon far larger than any other country ever had. It is ~~up~~ up to us to create it by removing all the obstacles that hinder its realization.

I firmly believe that in our mechanical civilization the artist's role is neither to ignore nor be frightened by the brutality of our tempo... While conscious of the social forces surrounding him, he must transfer his restlessness to the canvas and there out of the discord of the strains and stresses of our civilization create an image magical enough to transport the sensitive observer away from his physical environment into the beyond which as Plato so correctly describes in Parmenides, carries us into the boundless regions where no limitations exist.