November 1953
75 cents

ART NEWS

Berenson: Lotto
McBride: Wyeth
The new Picassos
Spender: English art
This month

Famous as one of the internationally influential English "poets of the thirties," Stephen Spender is also an informed and perceptive commentator on modern culture. His latest book is an autobiography, World within World. . . . Bernard Berenson needs no introduction in these pages. This section from his monumental monograph, Lorenzo Lotto, completely revised since its initial appearance in 1895, appears here for the first time. . . . painter-scholar Jean Charlot was born in France and became a leader of the muralist movement in Mexico; he is now a professor at the University of Hawaii. . . . A. L. Chanin co-authored the Museum of Modern Art's publication on Cabo and Persner when these Constructivist sculptors, who are also brothers, had their retrospective.

Next month


Editor and Publisher
Alfred Frankfurter

Managing Editor
Thomas B. Hess

Assistant Editors
Henry A. LaForge, Eleanor C. Moore

Contributing Editors
Henry McBride, Bruno Anne Seckler

Regional Associates
Lawrence Campbell, Richard Goodman
Suzanne Guise, Betty Coitilde, Fairchild Potter

Design Director
Bradbury Thompson

Associate Publisher
Robert E. Baker

Circulation Manager
Louis W. Solomon

Production Manager
David W. Bratamondi Assisted by E. F. Zircon

Advertising Representatives

Chicago, Ill.: Harvey R. Kiper, 505 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 1, Ill.

Great Britain: Will Kitchin, Jt., 110, Finsbury Street, London, E. C. 2

ARTnews is published monthly from September to May, quarterly June-July-August, and copyright 1955 by the Art Foundation, Inc., 654 Madison Avenue, New York 21, N. Y.

Subscription rates: Full subscription, consisting of the ten monthly issues, $6.00 per year in U.S.A. Regular monthly edition only, $7. per year in U.S.A. (Foreign postage $1.60 per year additional.) Single copies of the regular monthly edition, 25c each. Single copies of ARTnews ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EDITION, $1.50 each.

The Editor welcomes and is glad to consider art and photographic work with a view to publication. When unsolicited for publication, and if accompanied by return postage, every care will be exercised toward their return, although no responsibility for their safety is undertaken. Under no circumstances will the editor accept any selected art whatever be accepted if sent to the magazine unsolicited for inspection. No stipulations are made as to style or subject, and no restrictions can be given, nor can the magazine art as the intermediary in salae.

The complete contents of each issue of ARTnews are indexed in The Art Digest, published quarterly, and available to public libraries. The names, credits, and content of ARTnews are fully protected by copyright in the U.S.A. and in foreign countries and may not be reproduced in any manner in whole or in part, without written consent. (The registered U. S. News Office, 654 Madison Avenue, New York 21, N. Y., has been issued under the Act of Mar. 3, 1879.)

ARTNEWS.

November 1955

Volume 52, Number 7, Part 1

Articles

English artists vs. English painters 14
Stephen Spender

The Louvre solves Louisiana 18

Lorenzo Lotto: resulting impression 20
Bernard Berenson

Please bring yourself up to date 26
Alfred Frankfurter

Who discovered America? 30
Jean Charlot

Gabo makes a construction 34
A. L. Chanin

Wyeth: serious best-seller 38
Henry McBride

Major illustrations

Studies for a Portrait 14
Francis Bacon

The Benediction 19
Chardin, colorplate

Danie 20
Lotto, colorplate

Heal of Xipe 33
Aztec sculpture

Kinetic Construction 37
Gabo, colorplate

Portrait of Karl 38
Andrew Wyeth, colorplate

Departments

Editor's letters 6

Art news of America 7

Amateur standing 8

Coming auctions 10

Editorial 13

Reviews and previous 40

Art news from Los Angeles 44
Jules Langsner

The print collector 65
Irving Haas

New sources, new materials 68

Where and when to exhibit 69

Competitions, scholarships 69

The exhibition calendar 69

Cover

This 4-foot terra cotta, representing Diana, goddess of the hunt, has just been acquired by the City Art Museum, St. Louis. Attributed to an Etruscan artist of ca. 460 B.C., it shows archaic Greek influence upon the typical stocky realism of this mysterious culture. It is the only complete (reassembled from 21 fragments) female figure of its type and has been named one of the greatest Etruscan finds in history [see p. 7].
By Jean Charlot

Who discovered America?

The famous Arensberg Collection of Pre-Columbian objects—which until recently stood among Braque, Duchamps and Miró in that collector’s Hollywood home—is presented for the first time to the public by its new owner, the Philadelphia Museum. Some 175 works, from a huge Aztec calendar stone to little Tarascan puppies, are installed in a special show lasting to December 5. On this occasion, painter-scholar Jean Charlot offers a provocative analysis of how informed European taste—from Dürer to Dela—has reacted to this savage, compelling art.

Contrary to the current prudential cliché, primitive art was not wholly unappreciated in the past. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries many a non-classical masterpiece has been lovingly preserved for us in the cabinets de curiosités of the amateur. Though mingled as a rule with other curios—stuffed crocodiles or giant clams—its magic nevertheless may well have worked on its cultured collector, too shy to publicize an appreciation that ran against the taste of his day.

More recently and openly, the rapport of so-called primitive cultures has enriched immeasurably the form and manner of our contemporary arts. Insomuch as the dictatorship of taste imposed by Greco-Roman forms waned, advanced artists and critics, as eager as were their Victorian predecessors to lean on precedent, filled the void with a new or renewed appreciation of African, Oceanic and Amerindian arts. In this indirect form of specialized pleading, once the finger is put on comparable facets in primitive and modern art, the need is filled, and interest lags.

I wish to review here the shifting standards that Occidental taste successively used in its appreciation of pre-Hispanic art. Such a review may expose the relative shallowness of our convictions when faced with Aztec, Mayan or Tarascan works, and underline the fact that, notwithstanding their present aesthetic canonization, these forms and their original meaning remain largely for us terra incognita.

In the case of Mexico, we possess critical texts dating from the earliest days of the Conquest. Hernan Cortés was a lawyer at heart and a conquistador de facto; yet who could miss his awe at the beauty of the Aztec royal treasure as he took time out of the very act of plunder to report the news to his Emperor: “What could be more astonishing than that a barbarous monarch...”
such as he [Montezuma] should have reproductions made of gold and silver, precious stones and feathers, of all things to be found in his land; and so perfectly reproduced that there is no goldsmith or silversmith in the world who could better them, nor can one understand what instrument could have been used for fashioning the jewels. As for the featherwork, its like is not to be seen in either wax or embroidery, it is so marvelously delicate."

And again, writing just after the siege and sack of Tenochtitlan: "Among the other booty taken from the city were many golden shields, crests and plumage, and other such marvelous things that they could not be described in writing nor comprehended unless they were actually seen: so that it seemed fitting to me that they should not be divided, but rather that they should be presented as a whole to your Majesty."

When the Aztec loot reached Spain at last, the Crown Treasurier had it measured and weighed with calculating intent; the value of precious metals and rare stones took precedence over the even more precious imponderables that neither scales nor calipers could detect:

"Firstly: a large wheel of solid gold with a monster's face upon it, worked all over with ornaments in bas-relief and weighing 3,800 pesos of gold.

"Item: two collars of gold and precious stones. In another square box a huge head of an alligator in gold. . . . Also two large eyes of beaten metal and blue stones to put in the head of the alligator.

"Item: eighteen shields ornamented with precious stones with colored feathers hanging from them.

"Also: two books such as the Indians use.

"In addition: a huge silver wheel; also bracelets and beaten silver ornaments."

Ominously suggestive was the estimate of the raw metal's weight, before being melted and cast into more acceptable currency, Cortez' gift to the Crown was paraded before courtiers, rather than as an art exhibition, as a reminder of the far-reaching might of the sovereign. When Charles V made his triumphal entry into Antwerp in 1521, the American loot was part of the many carnival exhibits. Albrecht Dürer saw it there and then on his tour of the Netherlands, and jotted in his diary the earliest estimate by an artist of the strange objects: "Further, I have seen the things brought to the King from the new golden land: a sun, wholly of gold, wide a whole fathom; also a moon, wholly of silver and just as big; also two chambers full of their implements, and two others full of their weapons, armor, shooting engines, marvelous shields, strange garments, bedspreads and all sorts of wondrous things for many uses, much more beautiful to behold than miracles. These things are so costly that they have been estimated at a hundred thousand florins; and in all my life I have seen nothing which has gladdened my heart so much as those things. For I have seen therein.
Who discovered America? continued

wonders of art and have marveled at the subtle ingenta of people in far-off lands. And I know not how to express what I have experienced thereby.

If it tells us something about Aztec art, this text is equally eloquent as concerns Dürer himself. The Italianate veneer of the mature master washed off when confronted with this American revelation. To the fore came his Gothic training as a German goldsmith and a taste for Apocalyptic intricacies that could well rejoice in the fullness of craft linked with nightmarish visions of his Indian counterparts.

All through Colonial times in Mexico, cultural matters remained in the hands of missionaries, mostly Franciscans and Dominicans. Properly to convert the heathen, the missionary learned his tongue and assimilated his customs. Influences worked both ways, with the conqueror not always cast as the victor in this cultural bout. In the sixteenth century, the preacher orated in nahuatl to a squatting congregation, pointing with a stick to pictures painted, or rather sign-written by native converts. Their style, in its Indian-ness, belies the foreign subject matter. A Franciscan mestizo, Fray Diego Valdés, learned even to engrave didactic plates that stand halfway between Aztec hieroglyphs and the symbolical theological tableaux that were then the fashion in Europe. Though not in words, his works constitute a sixteenth-century critical appreciation of American aesthetics, appreciative to the point of mimicry.

However the business of the missionaries was to convert natives to Christianity; and it was passionate business, carried on with passion, and replete with incidents that appear brutal when looked at with a hindsight colored by modern liberalism; the willful toppling over high cliffs of monolithic idols that would smash on the rocks below; the staged bonfires of manuscripts; the melting of pagan jewels to be remodeled into vessels for use at the altar. A simple enumeration of wreckings and burnings may be misleading, for this mayhem was unconcerned with art; it never was the form, line or color that was then under judgment as was to be the case in Victorian times. The theologian at bay was convinced that, behind the daemonic force of the forms lurked an actively demoniac power. It was not unappreciatively that the monk hacked at and put to the torch such works, but, as it was, fully conscious of their worth. Thus, when the great stone Coatltecu [p. 30] was unearthed on the main plaza in the eighteenth century, it was speedily and fearfully buried again. In 1803, Baron von Humboldt stepped over the awesome idol, "stretched out in one of the galleries of the edifice of the University... covered with three or four inches of earth."

Touched, as was his class and his generation, by the spirit of the free-thinking French philosophes, Baron von Humboldt could look at pre-Hispanic art factually, merely as carved stone or as painted agave paper. His is the first modern dispassionate appraisal of Aztec art for art's sake. Unlike Albrecht Dürer, Humboldt, nurtured on the classical theories of beauty of Raphael Mengs, could not wash away from his consciousness the Greeks and the Romans, but [Continued on page 49]

Surrealists were among the first moderns fascinated by the macabre Aztec rituals: in this stone carving [right] a priest wears the flayed skin of a victim, impersonating the god Xipe. 8 inches high.
have made it a matter of conscience to put them all in. The effect is to make life look accidentally dead, where with Bacon it looks instantly vivid. Every painting by Freud is a kind of autobiography, a dissecting and analysis of the person or object. When he paints something watchfully alive—such as the wide open eye of a model—the fact of its being alive is examined with something like a fascinated horror. He seems most at peace when the question of life or death, terror or aridness, arises when he is painting hair or feathers, which would look the same whether the subject were alive or dead, so long as he had not set in. As a matter of fact, in some of his paintings of birds, there is actually patte-
fiction.

The danger for Freud is that his kind of truthness adapts itself very well to a certain kind of academism. Only a slight modification is required to turn an autotype into a Royal Academy portrait and recently Freud has shown a willingness to make this adaptation.

One or two stalwarts of French Impressionism and "pure color" remain respectable figures on the English scene. Duncan Grant is an English Impressionist, at present out of fashion, but a painter of very solid achievement. The exhibition of Mat-

Who discovered America?

thew Smith at the Tate Gallery reminds one of the very considerable achievements of a kind of English taste, which, drawing strength from France, manages to grow vigorously, freely and independently of French greatness. Matthew Smith, one of the most important English painters, goes back to Wilson Steer and other excellent minor masters.

But among the younger men, there seems little energy which is not adventur-
ous, and English painting seems today to be developing more seriously in search of a modern English tradition than it has done since the first World War. Whatever one thinks of Sutherland, his work this year at the Biennale showed that he has painted enough pictures to be a whole school of painting unto himself. Bacon has painted much less, but he has a bereavement of sensibilities for quantity in Sutherland. The Neo-Romanticism of Piper seems to be in decline, and younger painters seem almost incapable of produc-

ing work which does not imitate Sutherland or Bacon, though an exhibition I have just seen of recent paintings by Keith Vaughan reveals a great strength in a young artist who has developed Cézanne’s manner of painting the nude. All the same, present painting and sculpture are the most alive arts in England.

continued from page 33

do Hall handled the resulting conflict with great equanimity. After having de-
scovered an extensive collection of casts—Apollo Belvedere, Iasoelia, etc.—given by the King of Spain to the Mexican Academy of Art, he refused: "The remains of the Mexican sculpture, these colossal statues of Hassiates and porphyry, which are cor-
ed with Aztec hieroglyphs, and bear some relation to the Egyptian and Hindu style, ought to be collected together in the edifice of the Acad-
emy, or rather in one of the courts which it is about to build. It would be enriching to see these monuments of the first cultivation of our species, the work of a semi-barbarian people inhabiting the Mexican Aztecs, placed beside beneficent forms produced under the sky of Greece and Italy." So in advance of the times was this proposition to exhibit pre-
Hispanic art in a museum of art that it had to wait until our days to come true.

Soon after Humboldt spoke, the Viceroy pronounced his assent, and in 1837, at the close of the Mexican Congress, great approval of Colonial art, but blind to fashion-
able prejudices to what had come before. In his Dialogue of the History of Mexico, 1860, he has only this to say of Aztec paintings: "One should not look in them for a knowledge of chiaroscuro or of perspec-
tivity, but for a taste for beauty and grace . . . They failed to express moral qualities and the moods of the soul . . . and showed a certain pro-
pensity to observe and to copy the less genial aspects of Nature, such

NEW PRODUCTS BY ANCO

7. New Products by ANCO

If it doesn’t bear the ANCO trademark, it is not an ANCO product.

The Sensational New

NO. 81A MASTER EASEL

The only studio easel with all these features...

1. New adjustable canvas rest with built-in palette holder
2. Oversized additional tray for larger paintings
3. Simple thumbscrew adjustment
4. New adjustable canvas holder...pinned stretched canvases or panel
5. Rear support easily set at best working angle...folds flat for storage
6. Base has non-skid rubber domes
7. Selected kiln-dried lumber, strained walnut...78" height

Individually packed
Shipping wt. 15 lb.
NEW List Price $5.50

New White Hardboard Palettes

will eventually replace all other types of palette...easily cleaned

- White coating shows colors as they will appear on canvas
- White coating is non-absorbing
- No messy papers to dispose of...

thumb grip shaped to fit both right and left hand

NEW No. 501A Berkshire Stabilizer-Sketch Box Rest with Palette Holder

- New ingeniously designed palette holder keeps palette level while easel slops
- Easily attached without tools to any tripod sketching easel
- Supports any standard size sketch box
- Made of selected lumber stained walnut

List price $2.75

Sold by leading art supply stores everywhere. Duties’ selling prices may vary due to freight differential.
nately, stuck a smile by Leonardo on a Virgin by Raphael; at the end of the century, the must current was the photographic norm, patterned after the styleless style of the painter then considered as the greatest living master, Ernest Meissonier. What small pickings there were in pre-Hispanic art when looked at from those points of view were tested by Dr. Gamio, the Mexican archaeologist. He gave to cultured laymen a heap of archaeological specimens to sort, asking them to single out what they considered to be artistic objects. Though the test was taken individually, no man knowing what the next one would do, the results were pretty much agreed. Gamio noticed how the objects rejected as non-artistic were unfamiliar to his friends, that is had no parallel in European culture. The favorite among art objects was a realistic head of a knight, its formal profile seen between the open pincers of a beloved bolt. It looked a twin to the head of Alexander in the guise of Herakles, its profile seen inside the jaws of a lion pelt—a Greek medal that is a standard illustration in college textbooks.

I myself experienced the impact of what I have called the Renaissance norm when at work with Dr. Grace Morley in the ruins of the Temple of the Warriors in Chichen-Itza. At the back of the inner chamber on top of the pyramid were found several stone atlantic columns that once supported the slab of the main altar. Out of these seventeen pieces, all relaced in craft and style, we at once picked one as a masterpiece, neglecting the other sixteen. We called the elect the "Mona Lisa of Chichen-Itza"; it was photographed and published, and became wildly famous. Years after, reflecting on the choice, I realized that our "Mona Lisa" was the only one of these statuettes that lips cycled the melody. A slackening of naturalistic taboo coincides with the advent of Cubism, that took as its slogan Cezanne's dictum: "To seize nature by thepherical, the sphere, the cone." The new ideal widened insensibly the scope of appreciation of pre-Hispanic speciments. Men of the romantic moonlight, the pyramid could still dwell as Cezanne's cone. The lack of naturalism in pre-Hispanic objects, that had proved a block to the devotee of Meissonier, had positive value for the lover of Braque and Picasso. In Mexico City, the Museum of Archaeology became, without transition, both a Louvre and a Museum of Modern Art. Aztec theogonic sculptures, great serpent heads, blood mosaics, sacrificial and calendar stones, seemed suddenly the imposing precursors of the purist trend that had just swept from pictures all the host-blocks shooting crap, the cardinals eating lobster, the naked women that had passed for art only a generation before.

However, so completely were the tables turned that there was an uneasy feeling that the pre-Hispanic artist still stood ahead of those of the School of Paris in the uncompromising greatness of his means. The flat colors of the illuminated Aztec manuscripts, with raw hues paired in refined discords, could pass as the goal towards which the Matisses of Music and Dance took his first hesitant steps. The anatomy that Léger put together as if with ruler and compass were doubtless veering away from Bouguereau, but still had far to go on their semi-mechanical legs to equal the frightfully accurate costume of a Titian or of a Tintoretto. Just emerged out of Paris and of Cubism, Diego Rivera could say in 1921: "The search the Mexican artists further with such intensity ends here in Mexico, in the abundant realization of our national art. I could tell you much concerning the progress to be made by a painter, a sculptor, an artist, if he observes, analyzes, studies, Mayan, Aztec or Toltec art, none of which has any bearing on any other art, in my opinion."

The Cubists, better to appreciate what they called the pure plastic forms of Americanian sculpture, concentrated on its purely architectural, an artful conglomeration of cubes, cylinders, cones and spheres, wholly disdainful of make-believe. It was in a way disingenuous to dwell thus in terms of style with the fruits of a culture that had no name in its tongue for the "fine art" artist and no concept of art for art's sake. The next step—to take into consideration this essential truth—came again as the backlash of strong currents unleashed from a far-off million years, passing through a period in which subject matter in art was slighted as literary, and emotion skirted around as old-fashioned. Surrealism helped the intellectual to investigate in turn the passions, the dream or ecstasy, intimately woven in the "Cubist" body of pre-Hispanic masterpieces. Successive incarnations of a single object can illustrate the change. To the Cubist, the head of Xiye (p. 33) was beautiful for purely plastic reasons: the scaled spherical segment of the mask, a positive form, was answered by the negative space of the O of the open mouth; it was truly a sculpture as the host Branmuller. Surrealism helped one remember also how these lovely circular rhythms were mysteriously built around a less delicate event: the flaying alive of God, impersonating victim, and the priest clothing himself in the warm and dripping hide. Out of old falls came facts truthfully collected by the missionaries concerning the insects and bestiality, the massacres, mutilations and planetary suicides related of the Indian theogonies. The study of Lee Katz could give us a renewed estimate of Coquillette: "Vitellodactyl's first act after birth is the destruction of his many mothers, the stars, and of his plotting sister, Cowabaxxuqui, the moon, all blotted out by the rising sun. From the point of view of the subconscious, we have a very interesting analysis of Vitello-
dactyl's Odipus complex in protecting his mother, and the Electra com-
plex of the daughter Cowabaxxuqui against her. It is a perfect Freudian background for the Surrealist power of this symbolic image with its skulls, serpents, blood hands and cut-out hearts, so strongly reminiscent of early Surrealist films."

Thus we come back today to our point of departure in time, with a passable understanding of both the
form and content of pre-Hispanic art. A familiarity with modern art has truly increased our potential familiarity with Amerindian art. Perhaps, after all, when the missionaries of Colonial times took fright at sensing the energy dormant in Aztec sculptures, and retaliated by physically maiming them, they paid the fullest homage possible to this art, never intended by its makers for Platonic appreciation.

Lorenzo Lotto continued from page 25

tioned. Although one of the first of Lotto's known pictures is usually interpreted as a psychological subject, a Danaë, it is treated far more sentimentally than was the pendant Magdalen by Italian painters of a generation or two later. She illustrates indeed a tendency in the Renaissance exactly opposed to the one that is usually pointed out: instead of poignantly Christianity, Lotto Christianizes paganism. Nothing could be less premeditated than this little picture, in which the childlike Danaë sits, fully clothed, in a wooded landscape. Sincerity and naïveté are its distinguishing qualities as indeed of all of Lotto's early pictures. Yet that we note such qualities as sincerity and naïveté at all, proves that the painter has already passed beyond the stage in which impersonal feelings and beliefs find unconscious expression.

In 1513 Lotto was called to Bergamo, where off and on he remained for twelve years. When he went there be was thirty-three years old, and complete master of his craft. He was in the full vigor of manhood and entering upon the happiest period of his career. His pictures at this time, particularly those still preserved at Bergamo, have an exuberance, a buoyancy and rush of life which finds utterance in quick movements, in an impatience of architeconic restraint, in bold foreshortenings and in brilliant joyous coloring. There is to be found, in his other Italian artist whose paintings could be described in the same words, and that is Correggio. Between Lotto's Bergamasque pictures and Correggio's mature works, the likeness is indeed startling. As it is next to impossible to establish any actual connection between them, this likeness may be taken as one of the best instances to prove the inevitability of expression. Painters of the same temperament, living at the same time and in the same country, are bound to express themselves in nearly the same way—not only to create the same ideals, but to have the same preferences for certain attitudes, for certain colors and for certain effects of light. Yet Lotto, even in these Bergamasque works, differs from Correggio by the whole of his psychological bent. Correggio is never psychological: he is too ecstatic, too rapturous. A sensation, or a feeling, comes over him with the rush of a tidal wave, sweeping away every trace of conscious personality. He is as tremendously sensitive as Lotto, but his sensitiveness is naively nervous, while Lotto, as has been said, reserves his most exquisite sensitiveness for states of the human soul.

In these years Lotto felt that immense joy in life, that exaltation of man realizing the beauty of the world and the extent of his own capacity, which found perfect expression in Titian's Assumption and in Correggio's Parma Assumption. Lotto's expression is less complete than either Correggio's or Titian's, for in him there is ever the element of self-consciousness, of reflection, reduced for a brief while within the

Lotto's psychological realism gives dramatic tension to St. Lucy before the Judge, ca. 1531, a panel in his St. Lucy altarpiece (Pinacoteca, Genoa).