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LECTURES ON ART EDUCATION

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The last issue of this bulletin announced that lectures on art education would be delivered at the University of Chicago by Professor E. F. Fenollosa, and indicated his exceptional fitness for treating this theme by stating his long and varied experience in both the Occidental and Far-Oriental art worlds. The lectures were heard, and the stereopticon pictures seen with eager delight by some four hundred people. Instruction and illustration alike were rare to the point of uniqueness; and since those members of the *Morris Society* who were unable to be present cannot be directed to any publications on this theme by Mr. Fenollosa, a summary of the instruction is given here, with regret that the illuminating and demonstrating pictures cannot be added. It is evident, moreover, that even the instruction, which was penetrating, sensitive, and frequently splendid, can receive only scant justice from a mere summary. Mr. Fenollosa spoke with not only full knowledge but genuine enthusiasm, as one that had a message of great import to deliver; and his audience steadily came to believe that he had.

The term structural, though equivalent to the term decorative, is truer to the proper conception of art as something, not first extraneous and then added to, but as something inherent with the object treated. As a matter of history, art has developed, not by increasing exactness of expression, but by the suggestions of structure, as seen in the bands of figures on Greek pottery or Redskin basketry, and as proper to all mural decoration and in general all architecture.

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Artistic excellence in Europe rose to a climax in the fifth century B. C., gradually sank until the thirteenth century, rose to a second climax in the fifteenth century, sank again until the nineteenth century, and is now happily again rising, but for how long depends upon us. The cause of degeneration in each case was excessive attention to realistic details of anatomy and the like, at the expense of structural beauty of line, dark-and-light, and color. The so-called Fates from the Parthenon pediment afford a splendid example of structural beauty, inasmuch as the nearly horizontal lines, proper to limbs and drapery in recumbent pose, meet a counterplay in other lines nearly vertical, which yet pass subtly into the former. *Per contra* Signorelli's painting is faulty by reason of its too highly modeled nudes, which, moreover, do not group or space well in the composition. But Raphael's stanzas were structurally fine, because their figures were accommodated to the semicircular frame they were designed to fill.

The growth of Japanese art falls into five periods; several of which owe their rise to Chinese influence, which in turn derived some early traits from Mesopotamia, and later others from the Greco-Buddhist sculpture developed in Gandhara in Northwest India. This Chinese art reached its climax under the Tang dynasty, 618-905 A. D., then fell, but recovered to a second though lower climax under the Sung dynasty, 960-1126 A. D., again fell and recovered to a still lower climax under the Ming dynasty, 1368-1644 A. D., since when it has steadily declined to its present low estate. In the following characterization of Japanese art only sculpture and painting will be regarded, to the neglect of those minor decorative arts which are commonly taken as the whole of Japanese art. The first period of Japanese art, in the seventh and eighth centuries, showed a religious sculpture in wood or bronze, derived from China *via* Korea, and still retaining trace of the Greek influence but with a more abstract modeling as became the Buddhist subject, and with a more decorative setting on the lotus and glory. The second period, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries showed a religious painting, also Chinese derived, of which Kanaoka was leader while Yeishin was its consummation, being the Fra Angelico of Japan in tenderness of line and in glory of color. The third period, from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, showed a purely national school, mostly of military subjects descriptive of the current civil warfare. The fourth period, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, shows a renewed Chinese influence of the Ming type, which itself had restored the grand idealistic landscape of the Sung. Here Sesshu, a student for several years in China, was the great master of line,

fluent yet powerful, and he must rank as one of the few great draughtsmen of all times and countries. The fifth period, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, witnessed the second rise of native ideals, and expressed itself notably in the black prints used for book illustration and as broadsheets. In the Shijo school the great names are Okyo, Ganku, and Sosen, in the Ukiyo school they are Hiroshige for landscape, Kiyonaga for figures, and Hokusai for everything.

European and Far-Oriental art may be compared by a parallelism of subject, showing equal depth of insight and as wide an interest in the world. In architecture, a circular tomb near Rome shows similar lines to those on the Temple of Heaven in Peking. In sculpture, a realistic carving by Ghiberti compares with a *ramina* in Nishi Hongwanjo, Kyoto; while Donatello's St. George compares with an eighth-century Guardian of the Altar at Nara; and the Farnese Hercules is suggested by the muscular treatment of a Nio in a Kyoto temple. In portraiture, a portrait of Kongtse is comparable for power with that of Da Vinci, though the former is without modeling. Both Japanese and Europeans represent still life with excellence. Among animal pictures, Ganku's deer may be set beside Potter's Bull, and Tetsuzan's Fox beside Landseer's dogs. For dramatic treatment, the Buddhist Summons of a Preta parallels Giotto's Raising of Lazarus. Landscape shows much similarity between the two races. Thus, one of Hokusai's views of Mount Fuji suggests a certain Hobbema, just as a picture of foliage immersed in atmosphere by Danshidzui does any Corot, while Hiroshige's Moonlight in Yedo shows subtle differences of tone that recall Whistler's Thames. Similar composition is also seen in the two types of art, as is the case with Makkei's Kwannon on a Rock, compared with Raphael's La Belle Jardinière, and again with Sesshu's Jurojin compared with Botticelli's Primavera, both also being personifications of fecund nature, though the Mongolian is commonly supposed incapable of personification.

If we turn to the elements of form, we obtain the following parallels between East and West. Kiyonaga shows equal suavity of line with Raphael. A Japanese Fighting Bulls shows single strokes of brush as expressive of motion as those in Rembrandt's Lion. A Whistler and a Sesshu both show texture in line used to impart relief or perspective, the foreground texture being darker and sharper than the background. A private park in Tokyo reveals a far subtler composition than the garden at Versailles. The bronze Trinity on a Screen possesses the same wealth of line as do the Fates from the Parthenon. Finally, the loftiest reach in the use of line is revealed

in Godoshi's *Bosatsu*, as in Michel Angelo's figures on the Sistine ceiling.

The art element of dark-and-light or, to use the Japanese term, of *notan*, arises from four sources: (1) local tone, (2) distance, (3) shadow, and (4) pattern. No attempt will be made here to define beauty of dark-and-light, any more than was made to define beauty of line. Enough that artists have made a choice, which is everywhere practically identical. Art is in fact individual and not reducible to rules. Dark-and-light begins with its simplest form of two tones, in such articles as Redskin baskets, Greek vases, simplest patterns for rugs and the like, and drip pottery. Other tones may be added up to a considerable number, but five tones prove very convenient. The dark-and-light of local tone should dominate the other possible components of dark-and-light. Thus, the Venetians, notably Titian and Giorgione, properly subordinated shadow—that is, the modeling of their undraped figures—to this local tone. For example, the *Venus of Giorgione* presents a white mass, little differentiated in itself, against a dark background. Raphael was sufficiently good in dark-and-light, but his pupils failed here with a consequent confusion of forms, in which distinction has been sacrificed to the shadow heresy. Signorelli also had given nude figures looking like sections of cannon balls, each figure without distinction from its neighbor in respect to dark-and-light. The climax of badness was reached by David, whose work reproduces men as if they were plaster casts. Later in the nineteenth century the French aimed at better effects; and Millet, Rousseau, and others found much help in the Japanese prints just then first reaching France. The stereoscopic view of nature, though of utility in life, has less value in art than the mosaic view as patches of dark-and-light. Sometimes these tones are only delicately distinguished mass from mass, as was done notably by Whistler and some Japanese such as Hiroshige but especially Kiyonaga, who is a world master in this element.

It is likely that Professor Fenolosa will repeat these lectures with additional lectures on color and possibly on Chinese literature, in Chicago during the forthcoming season. Those who wish to co-operate to that end should address the Secretary of the Morris Society as soon as possible.