

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Visionary and Dreamer - Two Poetic Painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones by David Cecil, Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones; Samuel Palmer and His Etchings by Raymond Lister

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nearly 100 new documents about Martin, Michael and David, reproduced in this book as his separate contribution. The second resource is a very radical course of stylistic attribution. In the Überlingen altar Dr Zoege von Manteuffel feels able to recognize six distinct hands, those of Jörg, Hans the Elder, Martin, Michael and two anonymous journeymen. Both David's and Hans the Younger's *œuvres* are extrapolated from single works, the first surely, the second less surely, signed; the others are added by a process of serial comparison and tentative chronologies are laid out.

German wood sculpture is difficult ground for stylistic attribution of this kind, and it is sometimes hard to follow Dr Zoege von Manteuffel all the way. It is not that his stylistic groupings are unacceptable as distinct aspects of the Zürns' art: they are very persuasive. It is rather that one may be unsure about groupings of this kind necessarily corresponding with personal *œuvres*. What is known of workshop practice in the Zürns' area points to an unusual degree of collaboration, delegation, and transfer of patterns and types; accidents of polychromy and scale become disproportionately important, and artists change style for different genres. In such circumstances, one would argue, *œuvres* put together entirely by attribution – they are always conspicuously more homogeneous and tidy than documented *œuvres* – have a mainly conventional value. But though one finds oneself putting quotation marks round Dr Zoege von Manteuffel's Hans the Elder, Hans the Younger and David, they are still desirable conventions and are sure to be used very generally to denote the retrospective sort of Zürn, the graceful and pretty-faced sort of Zürn, and the heavily modelled and stiff sort of Zürn. Dr Zoege von Manteuffel chances his arm frankly and skilfully, and with the authority of ten years' work in the field; and 'Zürn' had been too undifferentiated for too long.

For the separation of Martin and Michael and the revision of Jörg the ice is less thin. Dr Zoege von Manteuffel gave a preliminary sketch of his argument about Martin and Michael in 1961 and it did then seem not proven; expanded here and set off against other Zürns it convinces much more. His view of Jörg as a man who used his brothers on large commissions is entirely convincing, and isolates more clearly a very individual talent. There is naturally room for argument on many details: for instance, the division of work on the Überlingen altar seems excessively schematic and makes little allowance for a man adjusting his carving style to different parts and problems of the altar. But it is a function of the book's boldness to stimulate argument, and Jörg now emerges unmistakably as the subtlest Swabian practitioner of the indigenous style in his period.

This book is a model of the kind of monograph study German baroque sculpture needs. It has a rich and well edited body of documents, 300 good plates and – for school of Zürn – 140 smaller figures, chronological tables clarifying the dreadfully complex parallel facts of Zürn careers, and a careful catalogue of 250 separate works, many of them previously unpublished. It is an enviable achievement and will be an indispensable tool.

MICHAEL BAXANDALL

**Members of The Norwich Society of Artists, 1805–1833.** By Miklos Rajnai. Reprinted from *Norfolk Archaeology*, Vol. XXXIV, Part IV, 1969, pp. 337–454.

Dr Miklos Rajnai's article on 'The Members of the Norwich Society of Artists, 1805–1833' gives an extremely useful account of the foundation and history of the Society, and outlines the nature of its activities from 1803 up to the last exhibition of 1833. The article describes how the Society was constructed, and comments on the different types of membership and some of the personalities who filled the major offices or played a prominent part in its development. The important point about this Society is that it provided a centre in a provincial capital where local artists, amateur as well as professional, could show their work at annual exhibitions, and residents from further afield were also encouraged to contribute. We learn, for instance, that in the year 1830 the Society had six honorary members who were R.A.s, including the President, Sir Martin Archer Shee. Among the others, Sir William Beechey had been closely associated with Norwich since about 1782, and Sir John Soane had been working on a number of architectural commissions in Norfolk as far back as the 1780s.

The article is accompanied by an instructive chart, which lists each member of the Norwich Society, and indicates those who broke away with Robert Ladbroke in 1816, and exhibited for three consecutive years as an independent group, which they named the Norfolk and Norwich Society of Artists. It is fascinating to read the names that appear in this list, and to see at a glance the extent of each member's contribution to the Society. The two major figures of the Norwich School, John Crome and John Sell Cotman, both became President, and others who held this office included Robert Ladbroke (1809), John Thirtle (1814), John Berney Crome (1819, 1823, 1828 and 1829), and James Stark (1830).

As well as indicating the office and type of membership of each exhibitor, the chart also gives details of the number of works that they exhibited. Crome, for instance, showed as many as thirty-one works in 1807, the year that he was Vice-President, but Cotman's contribution in the following year was as high as

sixty-seven. Soane doesn't appear to have exhibited anything at all, but Benjamin Robert Haydon contributed one work in 1824, and both William John Donthorne and William Wilkins were exhibitors on several occasions.

Many of the names that appear in the list are unlikely to have been known outside the area, but they are nonetheless interesting figures of the Norwich art scene. William Freeman, dealer and frame-maker, accompanied Crome to Paris in 1814, and became President of the Society in 1820; he subscribed to Cotman's 1811 *Etchings*, owned Crome's *Fishmarket at Boulogne*, and in 1828 lent a number of seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes to the *Old Masters* exhibition organized by the Society, whose title was changed that year to *The Norfolk and Suffolk Institution for the Promotion of Fine Arts*. The Revd William Gordon, who showed regularly in the first few exhibitions, owned pictures by Both, van Goyen, Poelenburgh, and Wouwermans. Francis Stone, a prominent architect who later became County Surveyor, was made President in 1812, and again in 1822, and formed a considerable collection of Old Master and contemporary paintings, including works by Cotman, Crome, J. B. Crome and George Vincent. An important patron who surprisingly does not appear to have been in any way connected with the Society, is Thomas Harvey of Catton House, near Norwich, a friend of Gainsborough, Beechey and Crome, and himself an amateur artist.

All experts and students of the Norwich School will find it most rewarding to have this list and chart in published form.

F. W. H.

**Visionary and Dreamer – Two poetic painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones.** By David Cecil. xviii + 222 pp. + 64 pl. + 2 colour pl. (Constable), 63s. **Samuel Palmer and his Etchings.** By Raymond Lister. 131 pp. + 39 pl. + 1 colour pl. (Faber and Faber), 70s.

The material of *Visionary and Dreamer* was first presented when Lord David Cecil was Andrew Mellon Lecturer at Washington in 1966. He then chose as his subject 'the life stories of two painters', and decided 'in each story to make my theme the man rather than the artist'. Lord David appears to have been surprised that 'in the event, the two could not be separated, since for most artists their art is the centre of existence and the means by which they most fully express their natures. When I came to tell the stories of Palmer and Burne-Jones,' Lord David continues in his disarming 'Prefatory Note', 'I found myself talking about their painting'. However, the lectures were intended to be 'portraits in words not essays in criticism', and when he came to prepare them for publication Lord David was unfortunately so unsure of himself as a critic of art, that

he called in Mr David Gould to help in selecting the illustrations and to draw up their captions. It is not altogether surprising that there is almost no contact between the text of the book and its illustrations.

Perhaps it is unfair to consider this book from an art historian's point of view, although it is tempting to do so in this journal. Nevertheless, the study of 'two poetic painters', as Palmer and Burne-Jones are called in the sub-title of the book, by a distinguished literary critic and biographer, could have been of great help to the art historian in widening his outlook and appreciation, and his knowledge of the literary content of the work of these two artists. In the event *Visionary and Dreamer* provides little such help. Most of the biographical material on which it is based is already all too familiar, and Lord David fails to give sufficiently detailed information concerning the impact of their reading on the work of his heroes. Thus only two or three pages are devoted to Samuel Palmer's late etchings, the most positively literary of all his works.

On the other hand these etchings are the chief concern of Mr Raymond Lister's book, in which the author outlines his theme as follows: 'The early visionary work remains the most important section of Palmer's *oeuvre*; his vision was largely lost or dissipated during his middle years; it returned in the etchings made during his later life.' Perhaps too large a proportion of this text is devoted to re-telling the well-known facts of Palmer's brief 'visionary' years and of the long period of disappointment and distress that followed them. But in his third chapter, which he has called 'The Vision returned', Mr Lister provides ample material for the understanding and judgement of the thirteen etchings which Palmer completed between 1850 and 1881, the year of his death. Four more were left unfinished and were completed by the artist's son, A. H. Palmer, whose own writings about his father have, once again, provided much of the source material for this study, though on this occasion some of Samuel Palmer's unpublished correspondence has also been used.

Further detailed information about the etchings and their various states is contained in the Catalogue sections of this book, which supersede R. G. Alexander's 'Catalogue of the Etchings of Samuel Palmer', published in No. 16 of *The Print Collectors' Club* in 1937. All the etchings are reproduced in half-tone, which renders the delicate and hesitant qualities of such early plates as *The Skylark* of 1850 rather more convincingly than the vibrant and nostalgic atmosphere of the later masterpieces, *The Bellman* and *The Lonely Tower*. These were both inspired by Milton's *Il Penseroso*, and in them Palmer expressed his life-long involvement with the poetry of Milton, 'line after line' of which, to quote again from Lord David

Cecil, 'stirred in Palmer a delighted sense of recognition' of his own reactions to the beauties and wonders of nature. As Mr Lister indicates in his chapter entitled 'Legacies', Palmer's poetic etchings in their turn inspired other artists, such as Graham Sutherland and F. L. Griggs. The poet W. B. Yeats was also greatly moved by Samuel Palmer's works, which he aptly described as follows in *The Phases of the Moon*;

'The lovely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,  
An image of mysterious wisdom won  
by toil;'

LUKE HERRMANN

**Picasso. His Recent Drawings, 1966-1968.** By René Char and Charles Feld. 254 pp. + 405 pl. (Pall Mall Press), £10.

This book is in no sense a rival to the much more complete visual documentation of the kind provided in the volumes published by *Cahiers d'Art*. It contains reproductions of 405 drawings selected from Picasso's work between 27th March 1966 and 15th March 1968, and the selection has been largely of works iconographically complete and pictorially whole. As with the engravings recently exhibited at the ICA galleries, which Picasso made soon after these drawings, the themes are often retrospective. There are the familiar Artists and Models, Circus Scenes and bathers. The *Man with Sheep* from the famous sculpture of 1944 reappears in an enigmatic series of drawings. Picasso's own features are occasionally recognizable; like many others among his cast of characters he is an observer who cannot wholly involve himself in these orgies conducted by wide-eyed innocents.

As with the themes, so with the styles: Picasso's pen spontaneously reshapes the formal inventions of the last seventy years, but one can still watch formal, and hence expressive developments taking place, as when the head of a flautist migrates, disembodied, along his instrument (Plates 76-84); or a figure at first confident and self-possessed grows sceptical, fearful, and alienated as cubism fights for, and wins possession of, his features, a process by means of which he becomes aware that he is observed (Plates 10-13).

These drawings are indeed more than merely retrospective; they are poetic statements in their own right, and if these statements are complete, they are also of a kind which would not easily bear translation into the bolder medium of painting, which could hardly support their nuances of mood. Quite remarkably, there is no trace of formalism, hardly a single instance where a stylistic device seems divorced from expression. Picasso is now, more than ever, concerned with the human figure, sometimes in classical or seventeenth-century guise, more often timeless. The confrontation between ar-

tist and model, which seems immanent even where the theme is ostensibly other, stands for the paradox of simultaneous involvement and detachment which characterizes human consciousness itself. Between Cubist detachment and Surrealist frenzy is the ground where most of us move: Picasso has explored the extremes but now finds his poetry in this common ground.

This book is not an adjunct to scholarship; its function is to put some of the best of Picasso's recent work before the public. The quality of reproduction is good enough, though many drawings are too much reduced to make an impression and the layout is sometimes fussy. The brief and lyrical introductory texts by René Char and Charles Feld will probably be read with irritation by Englishmen who do not first study the drawings, with sympathy by those who do.

BRIAN PETRIE

## Current and Forthcoming Exhibitions

### General

Much the most delightful picture in the autumn exhibition at the **Leonard Koetser Gallery** (open until the end of November) is a little Andrea di Giusto predella panel from the famous Graham Collection (Fig.49), showing a scene inside a temple where two men with immense effort hoist a golden casket into a recess on a carpeted dais at the far end. The picture is half way between International Gothic and the young Renaissance. Though the artist is well aware of the latest, most sophisticated developments in Florentine art of the second and third decades of the fifteenth century, he clings to the popular, descriptive approach of Gentile da Fabriano, without whose predella to the Quaratesi altarpiece in the National Gallery in Washington this little scene would be unimaginable. The centralized perspective proves it must have stood in the centre of a predella. It is surprising to find such a picture in the company of the Dutch landscapists and genre painters. It stands out like a gleam of poetry in a wad of prose.

The exhibition of paintings at the **Leger Galleries** closed at the end of October, but a catalogue remains to remind us of some notable exhibits. A Devis of *Edward Parker and his wife* (1757) maintains the tradition of the conversation piece in the sense that the scene cannot be described as a 'double portrait in a landscape', but is still a 'landscape with figures'. There is a charming informality in the off-centre pose of the husband and wife as they lean on the railings of their terrace and gaze over their park. A rather crude painting of Nelson is of interest as the work of an obscure painter, M. H. Kymer of Yarmouth, who is responsible for two other Nelson portraits in the National Maritime