

have a somewhat complicated attitude of mind which is claimed to be Cartesian: we have split things up to such an extent that the teacher of art history does not allow himself to utter the word 'beauty' or his colleague in aesthetics, who thinks everybody must have his special field, would immediately hand in his resignation.

"It is necessary to have what I shall call a minimum grammatical culture, so as not, for example, to put Dürer into the 18th century or to place, as I have sometimes heard, Roman art in the 15th century. Again, it must be realised when we are face to face with works of art that they too have a right to their own truth and freedom which is not ours. I think a willing effort to reinstate these works in the setting of their ancient truth is the primary concern of respect for the human individual. Let us take an example dear to us all in the Elgin room at the British Museum: whether you go into raptures over the aesthetic quality of classical art or if at least you just love it, you may tend to forget if you have not seen the scale models beforehand, that the magnificent Ionic friezes of the Parthenon are placed more than thirty feet up so that it is actually very difficult for a man of normal height to see them when he walks between the colonnade and the inside walls. Thus we forget that Greek art which we have taken as a basis for discussion, and an academic one nowadays, was nevertheless made not for men but for the gods with the help of men. If our future artists forget the use and the value of art in earlier times it shows a lack of sensibility on their part which can lead to error. When you consider a work of Egyptian art which represents a figure carved for eternity as a representation of that eternity, a very important problem arises—you can feel it even in our modern age—there is what has been imposed on the artist and there is also the way the artist has made it so as to achieve the greatest magical potency for his time.

"Now I believe—and it is a fundamental truth even for us—that the work of art is perhaps our last source of magic at the present time (together, fortunately, with the Cosmos which is replacing it), I believe the work of art is still seen as a magical act, a kind of deed of assignment and an act of equivalence. This is why for me there is no real quarrel between what is called, sometimes too broadly, figurative art and what is called, sometimes in too restrictive a way, abstract art.

"This is the reason why the right use, as Pascal said, the right use of the history of art claims our attention. The essential thing is to avoid juxtaposition. Consequently the big problem is, while meeting the need for some elementary basis of chronology, to present works of art to students as evidence of the work of their eminent seniors—for that is what they are—who happened to come before them. When you are an artist, you borrow or at least seek nourishment from others and you do not bother whether it is something made last week or five centuries ago: you take what is good for you where you happen to find it."

So it was important to take young artists into museums and to make them understand actively, by choosing freely, the works they would draw, afterwards urging them to invent new compositions as a result of the impact they had felt. Thus they would see that there was a sense of permanence between the old masters and themselves in the way they discovered and constructed their forms.

"It goes without saying that to compare works of art with other works of art of different continents and different periods is essential for the artist. If we made the effort to ask ourselves what a work of art of the remote past meant at that time, it would be a way of understanding it better, loving it better and making it more completely a part of ourselves; in addition it would be a way of meditating on