

APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY ESSENTIAL IN ART

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Broader every day grows the American's conception of what art really is and of what it means to the social-economic questions arising daily. Art no longer finds its limits with the canvas of the artist painter, nor even is it confined to the "genuine antique" of a decade ago. Its mystery is a thing of the past. Its quality—beauty—is seen as an impersonal thing and man's desire for it and his joy in its association are accepted as a natural, logical inheritance, common to all. This view makes the impersonal quality—beauty—a personal thing to every man and a desirable one to all alike. Ultra wealth no longer insures an artistic home, nor clothes less hideous than those worn by persons who have no means at all. Intelligence plays an important role in every good selection. Historic periods, expressing ideals and conditions of centuries gone, are to be studied, not copied; to be understood, not blindly accepted. This leads to intelligent personal expression.

There is evidence that decoration is beginning to be seen as such and that pictures are realized in their true relation to decorative effect. Every day people prize less of baroque Italian Renaissance effects, of unsavory French rococo mirrors and of tapestries whose detailed pictorial effects rival the nineteenth century hand-painted china.

We are beginning to ask, too, what are the conditions which modify one's choice in architecture; what furniture and decorative effects are best suited to some particular home, its surroundings and its occupants; what clothes, how chosen and

how made, best express one's individual nature and what material ought to find its place in this or that place of advertising display. In short, this is a social, economic, commercial age, in which art is seen in its relation to the things with which man lives and works and in which he trades with competing houses in this or foreign lands.

Choosing and arranging materials of any kind is design, and the principles governing this process are being studied in their relation to every form of commercial output. Let us have original applications of principles, not copies of others' work.

INTELLIGENT CHOOSING.

Color is a language. It is scientific as well as æsthetic in its nature, and should appeal to the intelligence as well as to the emotions. Of what use is a drawing for the cover of a current magazine if it cannot be reproduced in line or color, and wherein lies the value of sketches for the interior of homes whose colors, textiles and furnishings are impossible to obtain?

It is the business of art schools and of all persons engaged in teaching art to see to it that the æsthetic sense is developed and that beauty appreciation is the result of such instruction. The teaching of drawing technique also, as a means of intelligent conception and as a process for conveying ideas, is essential to any complete thought of this subject. The power to apply the knowledge of what beauty is to every form of human expression may come only by a systematic training in a thoughtful selection and

arrangement of form, line and color to every field in which one works. After a time beauty held in intelligent consciousness becomes an unconscious element in any form of human endeavor, and is thereby expressed in all man's work. This is the kind of training that makes possible "American styles for American women"; that develops men who are able to suit architecture to our practical conditions, and that produces a state of mind which creates objects whose artistic merit lies in the subtle harmony of their form, line and color, and not in the amount nor the number of kinds of heterogeneous ornament applied upon them, nor yet again upon how accurately men can draw, but upon the quality of their ideas, which means a systematic training of both the intellect and the æsthetic sense in their development. Technique in expression is far easier to acquire than are the genuinely good ideas to express.