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The Triennale of Milan 1957

by Benedikt Huber

Although it is one of the most significant exhibitions, the Triennale is nonetheless exposed to two dangers: 1. the tendency on the part of certain countries to regard it as a medium for purely economic propaganda; 2. the difficulty in presenting things that are really new, on account of the rapidity with which both goods and ideas are exchanged (the latter in reviews). Moreover, in the field of modern design, the present is a period of elaboration rather than revolutionary innovations. The displays from the Scandinavian countries and from Finland (and also those from Japan) revealed the most harmonious fusion of the modern outlook with a great tradition of craftsmanship. Among the national pavilions, the Swiss was the most unified. (Once more, France was, as it were, disoriented.) As for the Italian architectural creations for the general sections, they frequently tended to be "ends in themselves". The Triennale should really have a stricter programme, and it is certainly not merely by chance that some of the best Italian architects become dissatisfied with it and seek to create a rival to it at Como.

The Swiss Pavilion at the 11th Triennale of Milan 339

A. Roth, arch. FAS/SIA, Zurich, prof. at the Federal Institute of Technology

At the instigation of the Swiss Werkbund, the Swiss Federal Department of the Interior assigned to Prof. A. R. the task of creating this pavilion, which consists of a 2 m. 65 high section and a square hall 3 m. 85 high and was designed solely as a display room. Concealed fluorescent tubes complement the natural daylight coming through the canvas roof. A harmonious interplay of painted stripes repeating on the partitions the colours of the "concrete" mural painting of R. P. Lohse demonstrates a new synthesis of architecture, painting and colour.

The Swiss Pavilion at the Exhibition of Handicrafts in Munich 1957 345

Decorators SWB: B. Rohner, Zurich, in collaboration with K. Haslinger, Zurich; W. Frey, Basle. Designer: N. Schwabe, Zurich

Official participation by the Association of Swiss Decorators at the Munich exhibition "The Modern European Home". The objects, in part unfinished, were displayed in 5 booths; natural arrangement, no attempt to reproduce actual rooms.

The Le Corbusier Exhibition at the "Kunsthaus" in Zurich (June - August 1957) 346

arch.: W. Bösiger, Zurich; assistant: E. Katzenstein, arch., Zurich

This exhibition is arranged according to subject (some of them selected rather arbitrarily): The Window, Chandigarh, Space and Design, etc., and it will provide the clearest insight into that "synthesis of the arts" realized throughout his life by Le Corbusier: architect, painter and sculptor. The choice of the "Kunsthaus" (as previously for F. L. Wright) has not only guaranteed a steady stream of visitors but also nourishes the hope for greater understanding henceforth on the part of officials and the public for the basic problems confronting modern architecture.

Problems inherent in large art exhibitions

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by Heinz Keller

This article examines only exhibitions devoted to non-contemporary art. Now, if right after the war these exhibitions increased (in large measure owing to the damage inflicted abroad on the original galleries), the trustees of large public collections are more cautious nowadays, having fully realized the risks involved in transporting priceless works of art. However, public interest in and the need for exhibitions of this kind remain keen and widespread. The important thing from now on is to know how to organize this kind of exhibition around a stimulating central theme. It is also highly important to select the works intelligently and to take the proper care in displaying them. The question of the catalogue should not be overlooked either; a good catalogue ought to contain as many exact documentation and reproductions as possible. If, moreover, large museums guarantee the best organization, nevertheless, more modest galleries have shown, thanks to their staffs of specialists, that they also have a vital role to play.

The art exhibitions in Milan

by Antonio Frova

Since 1951, the institute known as "Ente Manifestazioni Milanesi" has organized a whole series of all-European exhibitions: Caravaggio, Van Gogh, Picasso, Etruscan Art, etc., all presented at the former Royal Palace, completely transformed on the inside for each separate exhibition, all the classical decorations of the halls being intentionally concealed, except for the Caravaggio exhibition. In this connection, we should not fail to point out the boldness of the conception of the architect L. Baldessari in his exhibition of Van Gogh and of the Etruscans, and we should also mention, e.g. the beautiful Picasso exhibition (arch. G. Menichetti).

Johannes Itten

by Hans Curjel

J. I. was born in the Bernese Oberland in 1888, the son of a schoolteacher. He was raised first in the country, studied at the teachers' training college of Berne-Hofwil, where he knew Hans Klee, professor of music and father of the great painter. After he had been himself a teacher for one year, he became a student at the School of Fine Arts in Geneva, where he was unable and unwilling to adapt himself to the academic routine (1900). I. became a secondary school teacher, but in 1912 definitely abandoned all idea of a teaching career. He made another unsuccessful attempt to study in Geneva; he went to Stuttgart (1913), where he studied under Adolf Hözler, the great colour theorist. In 1915, first abstract canvases. In 1916, first exhibition, at the "Sturm" gallery. Meets Paul Klee in Munich, then opens a school of painting in Vienna. Adolf Loos assisted him in exhibiting his abstract paintings; then in 1919, Gropius engaged him as professor in the first Bauhaus team in Weimar. J. I. was influenced by Eastern thought (Zen, yoga) and his teaching included breathing exercises; thus he was not able to work for long with Gropius. He returned to Herrliberg where he took up Mazdaism. From 1926 to 1934, he had his school in Berlin, where he perfected his colour theories and his pedagogical principles. At the same time, from '32 to '34, he was director of the Textile Institute at Crefeld. After a brief interlude in Amsterdam, he was appointed, in 1938, director of the School of Applied Arts and of the Museum of Applied Arts in Zurich, where he was a great organizer of exhibitions, always closely involved in the undertakings of the Swiss Werkbund. He was also director of the Rietberg Museum. At the present time, having retired from active work, he devotes himself entirely to his painting, which he has kept up throughout his life. He is a great artist and teacher, his life and his work giving him the status of a Ruskin, a Morris and a Van de Velde.

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