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On the Universality of Architecture

by Herbert Read

If the division of labour which, beginning in the 15th century, led to the separation of the arts no doubt permitted them to achieve heights of accomplishment which were at that time unprecedented, the fact remains that this very separation was more than regrettable. We no longer have monumental works, and, nearly always, the collaboration between our architecture and the plastic arts proceeds only by way of sorry compromises. Nevertheless, though he is often proclaimed to be a functionalist, a Mies van der Rohe is working deliberately in the direction of a fusion between architecture and technology. The present atomization of the arts can disappear only if the architect can rediscover anew how to make his influence prevail as a universal personality.

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The Problem of the "Synthetic" Work

by Joseph Gantner

This issue reproduces the first part of the address of Professor Gantner, delivered last winter at Mainz and in Cologne, as part of the discussions devoted to the "integration of the various arts". The author here considers the question of what is called in German "*das Gesamtkunstwerk*", synthetic work or "total work", that is, the work whose realization involves the joint cooperation of the different arts, as, e.g., in the cathedrals of the Middle Ages. This was a matter of course as long as there is unity of belief or as long as the authority of the temporal power is uncontested. The synthetic work, beginning in the 15th century, is the creation of outstanding personalities (Leonardo, Goya), and then becomes a quest for an aesthetic unity, in the absence of any metaphysical or social criterion. It is possible that the contemporary universal expansion of abstract art will give rise to a new type of "total work".

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Bernini and the "Staging" of St. Peters of Rome

by Reinhold D. Hohl

Bernini, a prodigious organizer, for fifty years made St. Peters his work, in accordance with a unity of conception and style peculiar to himself. Everything, from the Bridge of Sant Angelo to the *cathedra Petri*, manifests the dual idea of the papal dogma and the Church triumphant. Calculations of perspective, light effects, sculptures and stucco-work, everything combines to produce a total effect which is deliberately spectacular, and it is in this sense that without any pejorative intention we can speak of "staging".

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The Church of Ottobeuren

by Richard Zürcher

This Benedictine abbey church at Ottobeuren, a late-baroque Bavarian work, the creation of Johann Michael Fischer, is eminently an example of the synthesis of the arts, the same spirit prevailing obviously in its architecture as in the wealth of its decoration, which is both unprecedented and deliberately calculated.

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Between Architecture and Sculpture

by Benedikt Huber

Formerly one and the same artist was often both architect and sculptor, whereas nowadays most of the attempts to integrate sculpture and architecture have remained abortive. However, even if the "synthesis of the arts" is in our age probably unrealizable as a whole, partial syntheses to be sure remain feasible. A Gaudi, a Le Corbusier are examples of the fact that architecture can even be in itself a plastic work, and in this connection we can expect in the future a fruitful collaboration between the two disciplines.

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Inquiry into the Integration of the Arts

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In current discussions the problem of a reconciliation, of an eventual synthesis of the arts, is becoming increasingly timely, for which reason WERK has asked various architects, sculptors, painters and specialists on the history of art to express their points of view on this question. In the opinion of *Hans Fischli*, architect, painter, sculptor and Director of the School of Applied Arts of Zurich, it will not be possible to think of any synthesis of the arts as long as society, the State, the church, industrialists and artists themselves remain prisoners of the situation in which they now find themselves.—In the eyes of the architect *Ernst Gisler*, the difficulties of a synthesis lie above all in the insufficiency of quality of works of art; moreover, rather than talk about a synthesis, it would be better to speak of a coordination of the arts, whose validity

is guaranteed by a freely consented collaboration.—The painter *Max von Mühlenen*, for his part, tends to see in the difficulties encountered by the idea of the synthesis of the arts a source of its opposite: disintegration, although, according to him, non-representational art is, as it were, predestined to feel at home in modern architecture.—The sculptor *Albert Schilling* considers a synthesis in the sense of Gothic or Baroque to be completely unrealizable; the antithesis is, on the other hand, in his view, the authentic form to be assumed by any contemporary style,—but taking cognizance of this fact and taking without reserve all its consequences could very well give us a new unity.—The "unity of opposites" is likewise the conception championed by the painter *Emanuel Jacob*, who sees in the vain effort to bring about an impossible synthesis a danger for the healthy autonomy of each of the arts.—*Hans-Jörg Gisiger*, a sculptor, suggests various ways of encouraging the "confrontation" of the arts, from which one day integration could emerge—a method which appears to him to be more useful than giving in to the propensity of our age to the effect that to talk about problems is to resolve them.—With a fine optimism the painter and graphic artist *Karl Gerstner*, instead of looking 250 back (date of the atomization of the arts), imagines what will happen 250 years in the future, in 2210—that is, he dares to hope that there will then exist a state of affairs in which art and life will be so integrated that art will have ceased to be called "art".—As for Professor *Georg Schmidt*, Director of the Basle museums, "as long as man is one-half public being tied to architecture but also one-half private nomad, the best that can be hoped for is a half-synthesis of the arts".—Finally, the sociologist *Lucius Burckhardt* believes that our 20th century has within it the seeds of a new structured society, this being the indispensable condition of a new classicism and hence of any integration of the arts.

The Synthesis of the Arts in Education

by Alfred Roth

In a period as intellectually fecund as ours, we could never a priori deny the possibility of such a synthesis, of which, moreover, it is easy to point out more than one precursor: present-day architecture and town-planning, civic centers, new schools, modern theatres.—As for art education, aside from according more attention to general subjects and realizing that we have nothing equivalent to "Bauhaus" (except the "Hochschule für Gestaltung" in Ulm), we can, on the level of method, do something useful by encouraging work in teams and promoting collaboration among "academies" and schools of architecture.

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The Goetheanum of Dornach as an example of Synthesis

by Willy Rotzler

Inspired by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy, the Goetheanum is a typical case of an integrated work, a "global" work incarnating in its own fashion the formal world of "art nouveau" and of symbolic expressionism.

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The Synthesis of the Arts in the work of Le Corbusier

by Bernhard Hoesli

Although Le Corbusier, contrary to Wright, by no means seeks to realize a "total work" in the Wagnerian sense but aims at coordinating the different arts among one another (he himself practices them), we are nonetheless justified in talking, in the case of Le Corbusier, of a synthesis in depth: the unity of vision of the New World of Space.

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Max Bill and the Shaped World

by Eugen Gomringer

Max Bill, at once architect, painter, sculptor, industrial designer, writer, poet and teacher, demonstrates that a synthesis of the arts is possible, in his person and in his work.

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A Dutch "Synthetic" Group

by Hendrik Hartsuyker

The "Liga Nieuw Beelden", founded in 1954, champions both abstract art and the intensification of contact among the various artistic disciplines.—An exhibition of sculpture organized under its auspices, "Beelden in Het Heden", has been held in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; it is at the present time being shown in various cities in Germany and will be presented in Basle this autumn.

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