

Extract from
LIVERPOOL COURIER.
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ART SHOW WITHOUT A PUZZLE.

LIVERPOOL "AUTUMN"
EXHIBITION.

"JOSEPHINE,"

GIRL WHO LOOKS LIKE
AN APPARITION.

By JAMES EASTWOOD.

"PROBLEM-PICTURE headache"—a form of encephalitis which usually takes heavy annual toll among visitors to Liverpool's Autumn Exhibition—will claim no victims this year.

To-morrow, when the art work of 1924 confronts the public, not a solitary problem picture will invite a doubt regarding its meaning. Art patrons, therefore, denied their usual pleasure, will thus have to take the pictures on their merits strictly as works of art.

A few attempts in syncretic Cubism, a Post-Impressionistic study or two and a couple of raw samples of the French Pointelists, who believe in stating their vision in spots, will furnish enough wonder for the chronic puzzleheads. For the rest, the usual annual question how some pictures ever got past the judges will furnish the problem of the year.

The real wonder of this year's exhibition has the effect of an optical illusion—the "Josephine" of Mr. Ralph Peacock. It is painted with absolute realism—the absolute realism which R. A. M. Stevenson considered the only bad realism—and depicts a young girl dangling her legs as she sits between the panels of an antique press.

Many will pay the artist the dubious tribute of mistaking her for an apparition in the wall.

Nearby the finest portrait of the year looks down, grave, beautiful, contemptuous and distinguished—Sargent's three-quarter length of Sir Phillip Sassoon, set down for all time by the hand of a master.

Portraiture, to tell the truth, has made a bad year of it. Last season the dead genius of Shannon gave us nine superb examples of his art, and we had besides the unforgettable M. Knocdler of Orpen. To-day, from these men, nothing.

Augustus John's hand is out in his disappointing "Sir Charles Scott Sherrington"; Lavery has not bettered himself in his "Mrs. Owen Barton Jones," though he has made amends by his "Paylova," in which something of the ecstasy of the great dancer has been flung across a vast canvas in a nervous improvisation of bold brush strokes.

The likeness of Lord Leverhulme has been caught in de Lazlo's big florid painting, and yet, for all the dignity of the courtly robes, the effect is oddly diminished by the stature of the chair.

Mr. McBey's two kit-kats, "Lady Frank" and the "Princess de Rohan," sensitive, restrained and finely arranged, have perhaps the surest promise of classic power.

STILL LIFE VOGUE.

"The Macebearer" of Mr. F. W. Elwell is a fastidiously composed harmony in which the painter has solved a colour problem which portraitists of civic dignitaries generally find hard to surmount.

Among much capital landscape work there is Mr. Sydney Lee's direct and unequivocal "Among the Dolomites" (a vista of mountain scenery terrible and goblin), loaned from the Chantrey Bequest, and a spacious Bertram Priestman view of Constable's country in the "Valley of the Stour."

An outstanding seascape is "The Tide Line" of Mr. Charles Simpson, while those who are interested in the marine work of Mr. W. L. Wylie may profitably contrast his later work with the dramatic "Blessing of the Sea," an early example of his art as refreshing as it is unexpected.

Still life seems to be enjoying a vogue. There are several interesting minor bits if there are no Nicholsons, notably in Mr. Stanley Cursiter's "Glass of Milk," and two studies in Post-Impressionism by Mr. S. J. Peploe. Even Mr. Frank O. Salisbury has essayed an attempt in this genre, with what unhappy results let his "Magic Crystal" show.

SOCIAL SATIRES.

The French room contains nothing representative of movements or (excepting Blanche) of individual artists of first-class power. There are three social satires by Guillaume, a comic draughtsman whose work is popular on the Boulevards; a puerile Beardsleyesque contrivance in "La Femme aux Serpents"; and three experiments in Pointelism by Henri Martin which lack the "atmosphere" the method claims as its charm and justification—a claim, by the way, which Sidaner happily upholds on the same walls.

Sorolla's vibrant canvas exhibits him at his best, while the Blanche's comprise the pick of the portraits.

For the rest, there is again a sample of the sad, shadowy art of Carriere looking like a dun photograph of his own work; a smoky Israels; and two inferior Bosbooms.