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## PICTURES THAT DO NOT "DATE."

### Women Who Wear Special Frocks for the Studio.

#### ART v. FASHION.

#### Why a Society Artist will Not Paint Modern Dresses.

There is a possibility that women 100 years hence who want to know what their ancestresses in 1926 looked like may not be able to find out, for the modern woman is taking more and more to being painted and photographed in "picture frocks," that belong to no definite period.

This is due in the one case to a reluctance of artists to paint clothes that they characterise as "unpaintable," and in the other to the reluctance of women themselves to be photographed in fashionable garments that in ten or fifteen years will definitely "date" them.

M. de Laszlo, the portrait painter, pleaded guilty, in an interview with the "Evening Standard," to originating and fostering this unfashionable fashion for "period" dress in modern portraits.

#### "Nothing to Paint!"

"How can I paint a beautiful picture of a woman in one of these modern frocks?" he declared. "There is nothing to paint! When she sits down there is nothing but bare legs and bare arms. Her head is all face, with no frame of hair.

"A young girl of fifteen or sixteen perhaps. Full of grace, radiating youth and innocence. Yes. Perhaps—her I will paint in a short frock with no shape. But an older woman, no.

"So I dress the ladies who come to sit to me. Here, you see—and here—and here." He drew forward pictures, one after another, of modern beauties—mostly half-lengths. This one wrapped in a beautiful shawl—this one with a scarf thrown over her shingled hair and falling on to her bare angular shoulders.

This other against so dark a background that we could not tell where the close-cropped hair ended; but only where it began around the face. Yet another in a long-sleeved white satin frock of early Victorian design, falling in rich, gleaming folds the painter had surely enjoyed working on, to the ankles.

#### "The Modern Spirit."

"You see, when women wore clothes like that always, there was a picture to paint. Lovely materials, graceful draperies, something left to the imagination. All this blatancy—it is the modern spirit. But it is a mistake.

"You express that spirit in these modern clothes that are so poor, so ugly! Go and look at the women in the old masterpieces, at the women in the Greek friezes—and then look at yourselves in pathetic, inartistic dresses—and you will all feel ashamed at the comparison!

"But," objected the "Evening Standard" representative, "you admit that modern clothes express the modern spirit—and portraits surely should be historical. Don't you think that if modern portraits all present women in beautiful picture frocks, that are only worn for the sittings, they will fail to give an accurate historical impression of our period to posterity?"

"That is true," he admitted gravely. Then, with a delicious flash of mischief, he added: "So perhaps for the sake of historical accuracy, of expressing this restless period in which even friendship has ceased to exist, I will soon paint two or three ugly and inartistic pictures of women in these awful dresses—all ugly legs and poor arms! But it will be just as a historical record."

He rose and went out of the room, returning a moment later with a tiny Pallas-Athene, which he put on the centre table.

"That," he exclaimed, "is the ideal dress for a woman. No one has been so wise as the ancient Greeks, since."

M. de Laszlo does not find, however, any reluctance on the part of the women themselves to be painted in thin ultra-modern frocks, nor any shrinking from being "dated" thereby.

#### Photographers' Views.

With photographs the story is different. Then it is the sitters themselves who choose to appear as "Pinkies," or Gainsboroughs, or early Victorian misses. And they are afraid of being dated, at any rate according to two fashionable photographers.

On the Richmond Athletic Ground (titled) they ought to be particularly interesting. The one side and Bishop and Young on the The fight at half between Laird and Worton. Snythe and W. E. Pratten, who have taken part in international trials during the past few