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BRITISH ARTISTS

Royal Society's 171st Exhibition

WOMEN'S WORK

By Our Art Critic

It may be that one expected too much in too short a time from Mr. Richard Sickert's influence as President of the Royal Society of British Artists. In any case, there is very little change to be noted in the present exhibition in Suffolk-street, compared with those held before his election.

There is nothing on the walls to "blast with ecstasy," and much that might be damned with faint praise. But between these two conditions some things are to be found that give considerable pleasure, particularly among the water colours.

Mr. Sickert himself sends only one characteristic picture, which is almost ten years old, and the most striking works come from women. Miss Florence M. Asher's "Life" (233) arrests at once. It is large and amusing, overcrowded rather than compact in design, naïve rather than profound. Everything is in conflict. The canvas is so covered with mixed "metaphors" that it is difficult for our eyes to reach the background with understanding or æsthetic joy. Still, one admires Miss Asher's courage, but her undoubted abilities would attain fuller expression were she to limit herself to a less complex subject than "Life," which demands vision and great powers of design.

Miss Rosalie Emslie also is ambitious and meets with success in "White Cyclamen" (263) because her idea is clear and better suited for pictorial illustration. Miss Dorothea Sharp is always sure of herself, and her themes never rise beyond her range of thought or technical authority. Note how skilfully she suggests fresh air, light, and the happiness of children in the vigorously painted group No. 180. Other women whose work is attractive include Mrs. Freda Marston, Miss Mary McCrossan, Miss H. Stuart Weir, Miss Dorothea Selous, Miss Irene Ryland, Miss Sylvia Gosse, Mrs. Granger-Taylor, and Miss Constance Bradshaw.

Among the oil paintings by men that deserve mention are those by Mr. Hely Smith, Mr. Alex Maclean, Mr. Leeds Bottomley, Mr. Hesketh Hubbard, Mr. P. A. de Laszlo, Mr. Hugh Gresty, Mr. Fred Foottet, Mr. Teng H. Chin, Mr. Murray Urquhart, Mr. P. H. Padwick, Mr. James E. Duggins, and Mr. P. D. Maclagan.

WATER COLOURS

The best of the water colours are quite exhilarating, and their standard may be gauged by excellent works such as those by Miss M. Bruce-Low, Hiss Hechle, Miss St. John Partridge, Mr. St. Clair Marston, Mr. W. T. M. Hawksworth, Mr. David Wilson, Mr. Charles Ince, Mr. John Nicholson, Mr. Hely Smith, Mr. William A. Wildman, Mr. Claude Flight, and Mr. E. W. Haslehurst.