EXHIBITION REVIEWS

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

THE GOYA EXHIBITION AT CHICAGO

By JOSEP GUDIOL

"The Art of Goya" shown in February at the Art Institute of Chicago was not only the best exhibition of Goya's work ever to be assembled in America but a great contribution to public appreciation of Spanish painting. Spanish art needs this kind of contribution. There are long periods of its history blanketed by foggy obscurity, out of which emerge only a few well-known names. Countless Spanish artists, nearly as good as their famous brethren, have been totally eclipsed by these masters. In addition, the number of monographs written about these individual personalities are very often merely repetitions of the frequently inaccurate accounts related by Palomino and by still less accurate modern writers. In reality, therefore, a great part of Spanish painting has not yet even reached the stage of preliminary research. This uneven appreciation and the injustice to various Spanish artists accounts for their absence from museums and collections outside of Spain. If they do appear, it is only because they bore wrong attributions, or were believed to be representatives of more fashionable schools. However, in the seven volumes on the history of Spanish painting written by Dr. Chandler R. Post, Romanesque and Gothic paintings have been studied and classified, and an unusually clear and penetrating light has been cast on the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, a period which is relatively dark in the history of painting of other countries.

When a painter has become internationally known, we find that, due sometimes to tradition and pseudo-scholarship, or to mere materialistic considerations, his personality has become manipulated and distorted. This is especially true in the case of Goya, and for this reason the assembling of a large number of his works is important. Goya is doubtless better represented in this country than any other Spanish painter, and the sequence of work throughout his long and colorful life could be readily followed and stylistic analysis made from the fifty beautifully installed and well-lighted paintings in Chicago.

His early period in Madrid, when he painted the cartoons for the Royal Factory of Tapestries in the style brought to Spain by a group of French artists and modified by the contrasting influences of Tiepolo and Mengs, was well represented by the Confidencias in the Park, the Boy On a Ram, Winter, and by the excellent Gossiping Women, which may be considered one of the masterpieces of Goya's first period. Goya made his debut as a portraitist with such portraits as Ventura Rodríguez and Admiral Don José de Mazarrón, which were followed by the portraits of the Duke of Alba, Marqués de Sófrega, Don Bernardo Yriarte, Queen María Luisa, and a Bullfighter, painted during the last ten years of the eighteenth century. The technique of the Marqués de Sófrega is comparable to the glorious Maja Desnuda in the Prado.

Goya's great activity in the eight years preceding the Napoleonic War was represented in the Chicago show by the portraits of Don Ascensio Juliá, the Marquesa de Casa Flores, the Marquesa de Fontana, Don Antonio Nortega, Don Isidro González, and the Condesa de Gondomar, by the two large unfinished Allegories, and by the appealing Bandit Margato series, in which, by the portrayal of the sequence of action in an incident, Goya presages modern cinematography. The post-war period was the most fully represented in the exhibition. Included were a Bullfight, the Hanging of the Monk, and the portraits of Víctor Guye, Don José Manuel Romero, Don Fr. Miguel Fernandez, and Don Ignacio Omurryan y Rourera, but the impressive canvas, The Majas on the Balcony, and the newly-discovered Encampment Outside of a Burning Tent were the most conspicuous examples.

The last period of the master was divided between a tumultuous political moment in Spain and voluntary exile in Bordeaux, and in the latter circumstance he painted his most intense portraits, such as Don Juan Antonio Cuervo and Don Tiburcio Pérez, and the extremely powerful St. Peter. They provide evidence that Goya's career was always in the ascendency.

This magnificent collection of paintings was complemented by etchings, drawings, and lithographs, giving a complete picture of Goya's evolution as a draughtsman and as a thinker. In these graphic works one may trace his development from the early religious etchings and copies from paintings by Velasquez, through the gay Madrid period when his struggle for success made him ironic, during his illness and consequent disappointments in love which turned his native irony into sarcasm, to his last period when the disasters of the war and the stupid incomprehension and stubborn individuality of most Spaniards caused him to become the most frank and
crue! narrator of Spanish life. It is really impossible to understand and follow Goya's evolution without studying his drawings and etchings. Besides, they reveal him as a narrator not only of simple facts but of a sequence of facts wherein he formulated his observations on life, joy, fanaticism, superstition, war, and hatred more clearly than is possible in any written description. Some of these series were merely collections of sketches. In the case of the Caprichos, Tauromachia, and Disparates these sets of sketches were converted into etchings and published. Goya's predilection for narration by a series of compositions began when he executed the sets of cartoons for tapestries depicting popular life in Madrid. His paintings of various scenes are seldom individual unrelated works. Even his portraits possess the homogeneity of a family album and it would be a simple matter to make several series of them, each of which would show a striking unity and would reveal much of the psychological history of Spain.

It was a good plan to exhibit a few paintings by Bayeu and Lucas in the Chicago exhibition, to show the tremendous difference of quality between Goya and other Spanish painters with whom he has so often been confused. This confusion has frequently worked in both directions. Many paintings by Lucas have been labeled as Goya and, strangely enough, several Goyas have been attributed to Lucas.

The catalogue of the exhibition is as remarkable as the show itself. Daniel Catton Rich, Director of Fine Arts at the Art Institute and organizer of the exhibition, edited the indispensable companion with which to follow and understand the exhibition. This is the ideal catalogue for an exhibition of painting. All items in the show are well reproduced, described and dated in a short and clear manner. Illustrations are closely accompanied not only by a running account of Goya, but by essential Spanish historical facts. In this way, each work in the show has been provided with a complete background. The book concludes with a concise, clear, and well-studied sketch of Goya's technique, written by the painter F. Schmid and illustrated with a scheme of Goya's palette, as represented by the portrait of Vicente Lopez, painted in 1827.

TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

"DAVID TO Toulouse-LAUTREC"

AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

BY HENRY P. McILHENNY

Before the fall of France, René Huyghes, Curator of Paintings at the Musée du Louvre, selected a group of French paintings and drawings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to be sent on a goodwill tour of South America. He drew his material not only from the Louvre, the largest single source, but from many of the surprisingly rich museums scattered throughout the provinces of France. To this nucleus he added works from private collections and from dealers. After the trip to the capitals of Latin America, the entire collection was brought to the United States, and was shown to the public at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum at San Francisco, California.1

The Metropolitan Museum in New York seized upon the availability in this country of such a distinguished collection of paintings and drawings, and took advantage of this unparalleled opportunity to hold an exhibition entitled "French Painting from David to Toulouse-Lautrec." René Huyghes's selection was used as a basis, but with a few curious exceptions the twentieth-century examples were eliminated, and some other items on the original list were withdrawn at the discretion of Harry B. Wehle, Curator of Paintings at the Metropolitan. The works lent by dealers were also discarded, in accordance with the Museum's traditional policy. The Metropolitan added to this truncated body by borrowing fifty canvases from public and private collections in the United States.

The loans, both European and American, along with three recent acquisitions at the Metropolitan, were published in an illustrated catalogue 2 that follows the restrained, dignified format adopted by the Museum. There is a brief preface by Mr. Wehle, and each painting receives a few observant and enlightening comments from the same pen. Aside from dimensions, however, catalogue raisonné information is dispensed with, doubtless to the great relief of the average visitor, but sometimes with a pang to the follower of provenances.

The paintings and drawings listed in the catalogue were hung together in several galleries, and some items either belonging to or on permanent loan to the Metropolitan, although not in the catalogue, were included. In the galleries surrounding the temporary exhibition was hung, without being incorporated in the catalogue, the Museum's vast wealth of nineteenth-century French paintings. Thus was constituted the Metropolitan Museum's major exhibition of the year.

The result was, to use the usual shop-worn superlatives, the most comprehensive, the most important, and the greatest survey of French nineteenth-century painting ever held in America. In spite of these indisputable facts, the result was disappointing, not in regard to the merit of the subject, but in regard to the organization and arrangement of the exhibition. By not using more discrimination in the selection of the pictures, by not giving the work of each master more careful thought, and by a confused method of hanging, the Metropolitan let slip from its fingers a unique chance to create something of great distinction. The chief fault of the exhibition was the hanging. If the loans or, in other words, the paintings listed in the catalogue, had not been isolated, but had instead been logically and chronologically integrated with the Metropolitan's own collection, the visitor's
