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Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow, *The Essential Cubism: Braque, Picasso and their Friends, 1907-1920*. New York, George Braziller, Inc., in association with the Tate Gallery, London, 1983, 448 pp., 233 illus., $65.00 (cloth)

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See table of contents

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One cannot help remarking that some of these observations might be more or less expected from art historians who grew up with Abstract Expressionism, but this does not invalidate them. The brushwork is there and it is only fair to call attention to the way such effects are largely responsible for generating the distinctive mood of Eakins's paintings.

After exploring the style of each of the paintings, Johns then turns to an iconographic-iconological analysis. In the case of *Max Schmitt in a Single Scull* this involves a history of the sport of rowing, particularly amateur rowing, and the way it was illustrated in popular prints and magazines. Equally important are the meanings and values that were associated with the sport at the time, values of physical and moral discipline, intelligence, and communication with self and nature that drew Eakins to the subject as a contemporary manifestation of an almost classical ideal of heroism. Since the painting celebrates the achievements of a Philadelphian in a distinctively Philadelphian setting, these values also allowed him to present it as a kind of monument to civic pride. Similarly, in the study of the *Gross Clinic* there unfolds a systematic examination of the imagery of anatomists and physicians from the time of Rembrandt, the history of medicine, especially surgery, and even an investigation of the particular kind of surgery Dr. Gross is performing and why it was chosen as the subject. Especially fascinating is the account of how Eakins's portrait of the long dead and largely forgotten Philadelphia sculptor William Rush restored that artist "to the canon of the history of American sculpture." One can do no more here than hint in this way at the extent and variety of the material Johns judiciously brings to bear on the paintings.

The picture that emerges of Eakins and his work from Johns's study is richer in texture, more varied, and more profound than any previously presented, as is her picture of the intellectual and cultural environment which he both worked within and helped to define (she also appends an excellent and useful bibliographical essay to her text). At a time when art historians have become increasingly concerned with the theoretical basis of their methods, her book also makes an interesting contribution by way of offering, as it were, a practical demonstration of the fruitfulness of methods developed and refined since the twenties. Clearly she owes much to the method of Panofsky and I have already mentioned how her work puts one in mind of Clark's programme for a social history of art. In this sense it addresses not just those interested in Eakins and late nineteenth-century American painting but a wider public as well.

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DOUGLAS COOPER and GARY TINTEROW *The Essential Cubism: Braque, Picasso and their Friends, 1907-1920*. New York, George Braziller, Inc., in association with the Tate Gallery, London, 1983, 448 pp., 233 illus., $65.00 (cloth).

Those fortunate enough to attend *The Essential Cubism* exhibition at the Tate Gallery in the spring of 1983 were treated to an eyeful of masterworks by Picasso, Braque, Gris, Léger, and others on a scale that few museums today are capable of mounting. For those who were not so fortunate, there is the catalogue by Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow which documents and beautifully illustrates (often in colour) each of the works exhibited, with fleshed-out provenances and new material unpublished elsewhere. Many of the paintings and graphic works (the exhibition also included the sculpture of Laurens and Lipchitz) come from private collections and are published for the first time here. With all this going for their retrospective, it is a shame that the authors saddled such a potentially important opus with a bias that most readers will find suspect if not thoroughly disagreeable.

In their introductory essay, Cooper and Tinterow begin with the reasonable premise that the public is familiar with Cubist art in only a generalized way, recognizing its formal qualities without really comprehending its *raison d'être*. This they attribute to exhibitions that present unfocused or all-embracing notions of the movement without penetrating its significance or clearly examining its origins. To rectify the error, the authors propose to define for us "true" Cubism "in its purest form" in terms of the two major practitioners of the style, Braque and Picasso. Thus, we are told that:

> Cubism as it was created from 1909 on by these two artists was never, in the conventional sense, a definable style of painting which other artists could adopt as it stood. The central episode in the evolutionary history of Cubism is entirely dominated by Braque and Picasso, who together progressively perfected and consolidated their new manner of pictorial representation, and eventually (1911) shifted from a perceptual to a conceptual approach to reality.

Cooper and Tinterow go on to describe the movement as a reaction against Impressionism, while relying on the Impressionist paradigm—the terms "Modernism" and "avant-garde" are conspicuous by their absence here—to explain Cubism's origins and development. For the authors, it was strictly a two-person affair which changed its look and direction as others took up the idiom and adulterated it. Finally, Cooper and Tinterow recall Juan Gris's *phrase lapidaire* that "Cubism is not a manner but an aesthetic: it is a state of mind."

The Essential Cubism unfortunately leaves it up to the reader to determine the compelling factors of this state of mind. The early, formative years of Braque and Picasso and their investigation of such source material as the paintings of Cézanne and African art are conscientiously chronicled, but without regard to the historical forces that are often instrumental in shaping the mind set necessary for the production of a work of art. The few quotations from the press found in the various entries do not provide a clear or balanced view of the critical reaction to the new painting, and we are thus deprived of any basis for exploring the moral or ideological implications that these innovative works surely convey.

Despite more than seven decades of hindsight and re-evaluation, it is important not to underestimate the shock value of the Cubist manifestation at the Salon des Indépendants in 1911—the first opportunity the gen-

eral public and many artists had of viewing this art. Neither Braque nor Picasso was represented at this exhibition; so the public, unaware of the movement's origins, thought they were seeing true Cubism. The authors, in their attempt to redress this initial misapprehension, fail to take note of whatever legitimacy or notoriety the little masters may have given the movement; they insist upon the primacy of the true Cubists.

The selection of paintings, *papiers collés*, drawings, and sculpture is stacked in favour of the best and the best known, Gris and Léger ranking alongside the seminal Picasso and Braque. Attempts to paint true Cubism made by artists such as Gleizes, Metzinger, Marcoussis, Hayden, Villon, Lhote, and Le Fauconnier are dismissed in the authors' words as "pathetic" and consequently only a few of their works are represented.

The catalogue notes accompanying these works are often principally concerned with separating Cubist from non-Cubist, as if the authors were trying to weed out the undesirables from an exclusive club. Gleizes's *Portrait of Jacques Nayral* (1911; no. 222) is described as "a conventional portrait painted in a post-Cézannian idiom, which involves elementary facetting and cubification derived from Braque and Picasso." The figure of Nayral, to be sure, lacks the multidimensional analysis of Picasso's *Man with a Violin* (1912; no. 132). On the other hand, it is not all that different from the earlier *Nude Woman in an Armchair* (1909; no. 118) whose features and torso are neatly and legibly rendered in prismatic forms. No one will dispute that Picasso, Gris, and Braque took the Cubist language as far as anyone could take it or that alongside the masters Gleizes's efforts are indeed "conventional"; but if post-Cézannian cubification exhibited in 1911 as Cubist art is not a form of Cubism, the reader may be excused for not having another interpretation immediately at hand.

The attention the authors give to Léger as one of the Big Four is rather surprising, as in their opinion he was only a true Cubist for three years (1910-1913). The *Woman in Blue* (1912; no. 97) with its tilted planes and linear framework certainly resembles synthetic Cubism as then practised by Braque and Picasso; but the emphasis on rounded forms and in particular the predominance of red, white, and blue areas against the more neutral tans and greys announce a personal adaptation of the aesthetic, "a state of mind" significantly altered. Held up next to the Gleizes, Léger's *Woman in Blue* is certainly the work of choice, but it is not immediately clear why Léger is more of a true Cubist than Gleizes except that he is a better painter.

Another essay devoted to the "Early Purchasers of True Cubist Art" proves more satisfactory, although the bombastic claim that this is a previously unexamined field is unkind to previous authors. Collectors such as the Steins, Morosov, and Shchukin are well known and a full discussion of the dealers and collectors who championed this art can be found in Malcolm Gee's 1977 Courtauld dissertation, *Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting*, published in 1981 by Garland Press. For those unfamiliar with the history of collecting of this period, however, the authors have provided us with a concise, informative summary of the important buyers, the critical sales (notably the Kahnweiler and Uhde sales of 1921-23), and an idea of the prices the works fetched.

The special care with which Cooper and Tinterow treat this corner of history is hardly cause for wonderment. Cooper in particular was on friendly terms with the major Cubist painters and owned a choice selection of their art. Some of that art was on view at the Tate Gallery and is reproduced in the catalogue. It is perhaps here that the organizers of *The Essential Cubism* went astray. While reliable definitions of the "isms" of art are always in short supply, zealous collectors can do much harm by confusing the dictates of a discipline with the limitations of their own personal tastes. The unhappy result is that true Cubism remains an elusive ideal and, like all ideals, more figment of the imagination than reality.

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MICHAEL D. LEVIN *The Modern Museum: Temple or Showroom*. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Dvir Publishing House, 1983, 206 pp., 207 illus.

The current boom in museum construction across the United States, as Grace Glueck remarked in *The New York Times* (Sunday, 23 June 1985), "makes the building spree of the 1970's, once thought to have abated, look like a practice run." Her observation also reflects the situation in many European countries, especially Germany, and of course in Canada, with the construction (albeit painful) of two new national museums, the new Vancouver Art Gallery and the enlarged Royal Ontario Museum, and the projected expansions of the current structures of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Art Gallery of Ontario. Museum building is currently a glamorous business involving internationally itinerant superstar architects—Philip Johnson, I. M. Pei, Arthur Erickson, Hans Hollein, James Stirling, Richard Meier, Gae Aulenti, Michael Graves—and hundreds of millions of dollars apparently readily available from both governments and private donors. And this, ironically, is at a time when operating funds have become increasingly tight and overall museum attendance, according to the polls, seems to be declining slightly. It is no less interesting that many of the new building projects are dedicated to housing growing collections of contemporary art, which are not traditionally crowd pleasing, while museums are finding it more and more urgent to expand visitor attendance dramatically to impress those same public and private funders so that they can keep their doors open and finance increasingly expensive and, it is hoped, popular exhibition schedules.

Such social conundrums aside, the practice of museum building is more than ever fraught with controversy. Museum professionals heatedly argue the respective virtues of relatively anonymous structures to house their treasures as against more self-assertive and characterful spaces. These may not be new issues for the eighties, but postmodernist architecture, with its challenge to the often bland uniformity of international modernism and its fascination—expressed also in museum building—with metaphor, historicist quota-