A Modern Art Questionnaire

By ALFRED H. BARR, Jr.

THIS is a primitive among questionnaires having been invented almost a year ago as a preliminary examination to test the student's background for a course in modern art at Wellesley College. It lacks the sophistication of the more recent manner. There are no spellbinders such as: Name four important artist-photographers whose names begin with St-, or: What poet wrote in honor of an English naval victory, "We bit them in the bight, the Bight of Heligoland"?, or: What daughter of an American clergyman published in Paris perhaps the most remarkable prose work of the century, written by an Irishman and forbidden in the United States? However, like many primitives it has its own peculiar, if humble, charm. For instance, it covers with careful proportion modern expression in architecture, sculpture, painting, graphic arts, music, prose, drama, poetry, the stage, decorative and commercial arts, movies, ballet, and modern criticism, chosen from French, British, Italian, Russian, Germanic and American sources. Furthermore, the list is carefully graded from very obvious to somewhat more difficult; only the most important accomplishments, with a few exceptions, are considered; the usual position of question and answer is reversed; and finally a few actual works of art are represented by photographs or quota-

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IN RELATION TO MODERN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION?

- 1. George Gershwin
- 2. Max Reinhardt
- 3. Henri Matisse 4. The Hairy Ape
- 5. Miguel Covarrubias
- 6. James Joyce
- 7. John Marin
- 8. UFA
- 9. Alexandre Archipenko
- 10. Roger Fry
- 11. The Zoning Law
- 12. Alfred Stieglitz 13. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
- 14. Aristide Maillol

- 15. The Imagists
- 16. Jean Cocteau
- Saks-Fifth Avenue
- 18. Petrouchka
- 19. Harriet Monroe 20. Paul Claudel
- 21. Gilbert Seldes
- Franz Werfel
- Gordon Craig Forbes Watson 23.
- 25. Oswald Spengler
- 26. Luigi Pirandello
- 27. Les Six
- 28. The Sitwells
- 29. Edgar Brandt
- (who wrote this?) Thou art come at length more beautiful than any cool god in a chamber under Lycia's far coast than any high god who touches us not here in the seeded years; ay, than Argestes

scattering the broken leaves.

- Polytonic
- The Barnes Foundation
- Wyndham Lewis
- Frans Masereel
- Frank Lloyd Wright
- George Antheil
- 37. John Quinn 38. Sur-réalisme
- 39. Arnold Schönberg
- Aria de Capo
- John Alden Carpenter
- Frankl
- Vsévolöd Meierhold
- 44. Harold Samuel 45. Fernand Léger
- (who wrote this?) "Silence is not hurt by attending to taking more reflection than a whole sentence. And it is said and the quotation is reasoning. It gives

the whole preceding. If there is time enough then appearances are considerable. They are in a circle. They are tendering a circle. They are a tender circle. They are tenderly a circle.'

- 47. Suprematism
- 48. Das Bauhaus
- 49. Le Corbusier-Saugnier
- 50. Richard Boleslavsky







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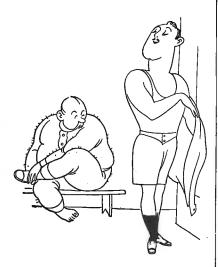
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Answers to Art Questionnaire

(Questions on page 85)

- George Gershwin: American. Among the manufacturers of Jazz this "White Hope" reveals as a musician a decided talent which has received great approbation.
- Max Reinhardt: One of the foremost among German masters of the theatre arts. Known, unfortunately, in this country by The Miracle.
- 3. Henri Matisse: French. Very possibly the greatest living painter. Once one of Les Fauves, now accepted as a master by all critics save Mr. Cortissoz who rejects his work because of its "lack of suavity in the manipulation of painted surface"
- 4. The Hairy Ape: Eugene O'Neill's violent tragedy of maladjustment in the machine age.
- Miguel Covarrubias: Mexican draughtsman and caricaturist. "The Prince of Wales and other Americans," etc.
- James Joyce: Irish cosmopolite. Author of Chamber Music, Ulysses, Dubliners, and master of prose in the "stream of consciousness" manner which sacrifices clarity and form for the illusion of exhaustive completeness.
- 7. John Marin: American artist. In his watercolors considered in the first rank; a position trumpeted by the recent sale of one of his paintings to a magnanimous Washington collector for \$6000.
- 8. UFA: German moving picture company. Perhaps the only great film producers who frequently sacrifice commercial for artistic values, UNIVERSUM FILM AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT.
- Alexandre Archipenko: Russian Sculptor now conducting a school in New York. Famous for his masterly and highly sophisticated fusion of late Renaissance elegance with the cubistic formula.
- Roger Fry. Organizer of the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition in England—the most brilliant English art critic supporting the modern aesthetic attitude (ma non troppo).
- 11. The Zoning Law: Ordinance in New York and other large cities governing the height of tall buildings in proportion to the width of the street, thus safeguarding light. Resulting in the "step-back" design of the newer skyscrapers, this law is of infinitely greater importance to American architecture than all the stillborn and sentimental archaism of the so-called revolutionary architects.
- 12. Alfred Stieglitz: American photographer, pioneer and prophet of modern art in America, founder of "291" and the Intimate Gallery, impresario of the Seven Americans, husband of Georgia O'Keeffe, and the only New York art dealer who employs the Socratic method without destroying patronage.
- without destroying patronage.

 13. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari:
 Epoch-making German moving picture. First film with expressionist settings to attract popular attention in America.
- 14. Aristide Maillol: One of the greatest living sculptors.

- 15. The Imagists: A group of poets English and American, attempting to isolate and realize vividly sensations and emotions by a sparse and enameled imagery wrought in free verse form but influenced by such diverse classical sources as the Chinese and Hellenic. Among them are or were John Gould Fletcher, Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, Amy Lowell and the not quite anonymous H. D.
- 16. Jean Cocteau. Parisian modernist of incredible versatility—poet, novelist, dramatist, satirist, inventor of ballets, and staunch champion of all that is witty and adventurous in the arts.
- 17. Saks-Fifth Avenue: Through its advertisements and show windows this department store has done more to popularize the modern mannerism in pictorial and decorative arts than any two proselyting critics.
- 18. Petrouchka: Ballet with music by Stravinsky.
- 19. Harriet Monroe: Editor of Poetry, matriarch of Chicago poets.
- Paul Claudel: French poet, mystic, dramatist, now Ambassador to—of all places—the United States.
- 21. Gilbert Seldes: Editor, dramatic critic, author of *The Seven Lively Arts* in which the relative qualities of Beethoven, George Gershwin, and Puccini are clearly discerned. Ernest Newman will not comprehend.
- 22. Franz Werfel: Noted German dramatist in the Expressionist manner. The Goat Song, etc.
- Gordon Craig: "Old master" of the modern theatre and the modern woodcut.
- 24. Forbes Watson: Art critic of The New York World and editor of The Arts in which he maintains a standard of criticism and scholarship which is both conscious of the past and sensitive to the present.
- 25. Oswald Spengler: German philosopher. In his Der Untergang des Abendlandes (The Decline of the West) he proves by cumulative analogy a cyclical theory of history and the decadence of our civilization. If, however, decadence is the "inability to create new forms" the personalities and works of art included in this questionnaire are at least attempting a refutation.
- 26. Luigi Pirandello: Italian dramatist who twines his audiences, his directors, his actors, and himself in a spider web of problems ontological and epistemological. Six Characters in Search of an Author, Enrico Quattro, etc.
- 27. Les Six: Honegger, Auric, Taillefere, Milhaud, Poulenc, Wiéner,—once a group of youthful Parisian composers but now individuals mature and divergent. Erik Satie, their leader—be it never said without tears—is dead. His cohort embraces most of the progressive musical talent of France.
- 28. The Sitwells: Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell Sitwell, until the marriage of the last, a trio inseparable and prodigious, forming the core (Continued on page 98)



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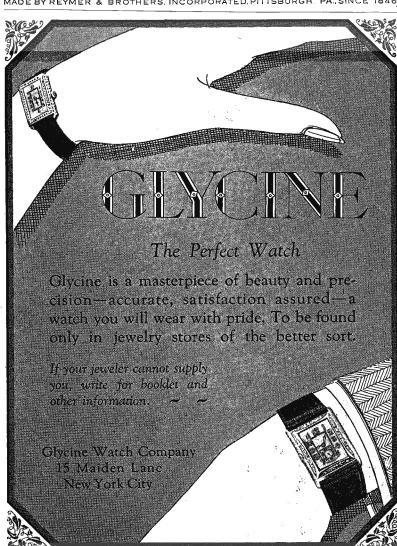
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Answers to Art Questionnaire

(Continued from page 96)

of a highly sophisticated group in London.

- Edgar Brandt: Distinguished for his wrought iron in the modern manner.
- 30. Hilda Doolittle, (H. D.) in Heliodora.
- Polytonic music is composed in two or more keys often played simultaneously.
- 32. The Barnes Foundation: Merion, Pennsylvania. A privately owned institution for education in the aesthetic appreciation of the fine arts. It possesses the finest collection of modern French pictures in America, including several hundred Cézannes and Renoirs, many great Picassos and Matisses, fine Daumiers and Van Goghs and a recently acquired masterpiece by Seurat.
- 33. Wyndham Lewis: English painter, critic and novelist. Founder of Vorticism, editor of Blast, author of The Art of Being Ruled in which he emerges as an English Mencken who thinks before he mocks, but not enough.

34. Frans Masereel: Modern Belgian artist known primarily for his woodcuts.

35. Frank Lloyd Wright: Among the first American architects to become conscious of modern forms as an expression of modern structure. His name is a byword among prog-

gressive architects the world over.

36. George Antheil: American composer and pupil of Stravinsky recently returned from Paris to direct his very remarkable Ballet Mécanique, played by one mechanical piano, ten pianos, four bass drums, two wind machines, eight xylophones, electric bells—and, we hope, an E-flat alarm clock and a

37. John Quinn: American lawyer and bibliophile who before his death was the most emancipated among the great American collectors of modern art. Pictures from his collection are now in the Louvre and the Art Institute of Chicago.

contra-bass metronome.

38. Sur-réalisme: A new and increasingly powerful cult prevalent in Europe. To its ranks flock many who previously wrote or painted under the oriflamme of Dada or Expressionismus. Devoted to the exploration of the subconscious, believing in the artistic validity of dreams, it is an expression of faith in Twentieth Century psychology, just as Impressionism received the

sanction of the Nineteenth Century physics.

39. Arnold Schönberg: Viennese composer who discards any definite key or tonality and employs a musical form, algebraic, laconic, cerebral, in contrast to the predominant rhythms, Russian folk tunes and "back to Bach" creed of Stravinsky, his chief rival for leadership among contemporary European musicians.

40. Aria da Capo: Early play by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

41. John Alden Carpenter: Composer of American ballets. Krazy Kat and Skyscrapers.

42. Frankl: New York. One of the very few firms exclusively devoted to the designing and manufacture of modern furniture which makes "no compromise with reminiscence."

43. Vsévolöd Meierhold: Most important figure in the contemporary Russian theatre opposing Constructivism to the super-Belasco realism of Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre.
44. Harold Samuel: English pianist,

44. Harold Samuel: English pianist, famous for his magnificent performances of music by that greatest modern composer, Johann Sebastian Bach.

45. Fernand Léger: French cubist whose forms are polished and cylindrical like steel, clangorous in red and black like new fireengines.

46. Gertrude Stein.

47. Supermatism: Russian ultra-cubism in which painting is reduced by an almost scholastic dialetic to the just disposition of a black square in a white circle. Malevitch and Rodchenko are masters of this pictorial quintessence.

48. Das Bauhaus: At Dessau, formerly at Weimar, Germany. A publicly supported institution for the study and creation of modern architecture, painting, ballet, cinema, decorative and industrial arts. Among the professors are Kandinsky, the Expressionist, Paul Klee claimed by the super-realists, and Moholy-Nagy, the Constructivist.

(Le Corbusier-Saugnier) Architect and leader of the Constructivists in France. Author of Urbanisme, Vers une Architecture, among others.

 Richard Boleslavsky: Of the Russian theatre, now director of the Laboratory Theatre in New York City.

