

About Art and Artists

Spring Comes to New York in the Form of a Display of Flower Paintings

By HOWARD DEVREE

WINTER-WEARY New Yorkers may have their faith in spring (and summer, too, for that matter) resplendently restored for the next month by visiting an exhibition titled "The Magic of Flowers in Paintings," which opened with an invitation preview last evening at the Wildenstein Galleries.

More than eighty paintings from a dozen public and a half hundred private collections are on display and they represent the progress of flower painting from the middle of the sixteenth century until the present—from early Flemish and German painters to contemporary French artists.

Some very famous canvases are included in the exhibition. Among them are Van Gogh's "Sun Flowers" from the Tyson Collection and "White Roses" from the Harriman Collection, Gauguin's "Flowers of Tahiti" from the Edward G. Robinson Collection, Matisse's "Anemones and Chinese Vase" from the Baltimore Museum's Cone Collection and "Plaster Torso," formerly in the Block Collection and now lent anonymously, eight Fantin-Latours, five Redons and eight Renoirs.

There also is work by Dutch and French artists of the seventeenth century, a Jan Brueghel panel, a Picasso gouache and first-rate examples by Bonnard, Sisley, Monet, Berthe Morisot, Manet, Vuillard, Cezanne (an oil and two water-colors), Courbet, Delacroix, Rouault, Derain, Soutine and a dozen others.

Aside from the excellence of most of the paintings, one of the most impressive things about the show is the great diversity. Here are the space filling decorations of the seventeenth century, the subtle color of Redon, the deceptively spontaneous effects of Cezanne, the simplicity of two extremely beautiful Manets, particularly one in which the painting of the stems and grasses under water in the glass vase is pure magic. And the development of Renoir's style from 1870 to 1909 can be traced in the changing palette, forms and varying warmth of the selections by him. Only the few American canvases (by Hassam, Heade and Beigel) prove a distinct let-down.

The exhibition has been arranged for the benefit of the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association (admission 50 cents) and will be current through May 15. There is an illustrated catalogue with a foreword by John Rewald.

For those who wish to see still more flowers by a master of his kind, there is an exhibition of water-colors and color engravings by the French artist, Pierre Joseph Redoute (1759-1840), at the Audubon Society. Audubon called him "the flower painter par excellence." And while these water-colors and color engravings are very literal they are so sensitively and subtly done that they escape being regarded as botanical studies and are unquestioned works of art.

Most of the examples are on loan from the National Museum of Luxembourg, M. le Gallais, Luxembourg's Minister to the United States, and private collectors. The exhibition will be circuited in the fall throughout the country under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service.

An exhibition of painting and graphic art by Mexican artists has opened at the Carnegie Endowment International Center on Forty-sixth Street, just west of the United Nations Plaza. It is being held under the auspices of the center in cooperation with the Town Hall series, "Mexico—a Report of Progress," and is also sponsored by Dr. Francesco Villagran, Mexican Consul General, and Dr. Rafael de la Colina, Mexican Ambassador to the United Nations.

Among the more widely known artists of Mexico represented are Tamayo, Charlot, Rivera, Merida, Orozco and Siqueiros. Most of the pictures are on loan from private collections and the Museum of Modern Art has lent Tamayo's "Melon Slices." The "Maguey" by Orozco might have served as a symbol for "Thunder Over Mexico." The three examples by Rivera are hardly characteristic, but all the other work shown is quite representative. Part II of the showing of Mexican culture will follow early in May.