

## The Lively Art of Fakery

ONLY THE innocent these days consider the acquisition of art, even on a modest scale, an precarious occupation. Along with the usual problems of authenticity, provenance, and chronology, the present-day buyer also faces difficulties growing out of modern mechanization. Take, for example, a collector interested in an expensive bronze sculpture that reputedly exists in only eight casts. What is to keep an unscrupulous entrepreneur from making innumerable further casts from an already existing one? Unauthorized and unsupervised by the artist or, if the artist is no longer living, by any relative or representative, such casts are little better than reproductions.

A similar dilemma haunts the print market. As a result, the Print Council of America, "a nonprofit organization fostering the creation, dissemination, and appreciation of fine prints, new and old," recently called the art press together to release some disturbing facts. Presiding at the meeting was Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald, president of the Print Council and currently America's most important print collector. Answering the question "What is an original print?" the council repeatedly underlined the following three points:

1. The artist alone can create the master image in or upon metal plate, stone, wood block, or other material.
2. The print must be made from these materials by the artist or under his direction.
3. The finished print must be approved by the artist.

According to Mr. Rosenwald, these specifications are too often sidestepped today. He cited the case of "a leading museum in New England that last winter published and offered for sale a 'Portfolio of Ten Works by Ten Painters' described as original plates." Actually, however, he said, "these were silk-screen reproductions of paintings and the artists did not make the plates—i.e., the silk screens." He went on to describe a recently discovered forgery: "At an auction in New York, a bidder purchased what he thought was an original print by Ben Shahn." With the help of the indignant artist it was disclosed that "an edition of 200 reproductions, numbered and signed, had been made from an original Shahn drawing." These reproductions, priced at \$100 or more, were widely circulated. Happily, the auction house in question took back the

forgery and returned the money. But the fate of other purchasers may be less reassuring.

Also serious is a case that, according to Mr. Rosenwald, "involved a New York art publisher and dealer who produced, advertised, and offered for sale, at \$125 each, limited editions of two Salvador Dali lithographs, numbered and signed." These, Mr. Rosenwald pointed out, were "photo-mechanical lithographic reproductions of two Dali drawings and were not made by Dali, though he apparently signed them." Granted, the dealer did not specify they were original works, yet, said Mr. Rosenwald, "the advertising and sales promotion stated they were 'lithographs,' signed and numbered by Dali, and the public naturally assumed they were originals." Otherwise, why would purchasers shell out \$125 per print?

One could draw up a formidable list of similar abuses. In a booklet called "Standards for Print Dealers," the Council notes that "numbered and signed reproductions, restrikes from canceled plates, fake originals, book illustrations, and pages from art magazines (sometimes even numbered and signed, framed or unframed) are offered as 'original' prints." The important question is how to differentiate between original prints and reproductions. At times, trained professionals are confused. And one must remember that false claims are not always deliberate; they can result from ignorance.

CERTAIN steps are being taken to inform the public, thanks to the Print Council of America. This organization, which is assembling an estimable list of reliable print dealers throughout the country, has persuaded the National Better Business Bureau to circulate an article called "Standards for Print Dealers." Most important, the Comité National de la Gravure Française has lately issued a "Manifesto for the Defense of the Original Print." I say most important because in recent years numerous doubtful so-called original prints, produced mechanically in France, have flooded the American market. Helpful, too, is the warning by UNESCO that "copies of original works of art made wholly by photo-mechanical or other mechanical processes" must not be issued as originals.

No one discredits a good reproduction. However, it should never be

pawned off as an original work, nor should it command the price of an original work. The controlled subtleties that result from an artist's personal involvement are lost, as a rule, in mass production.

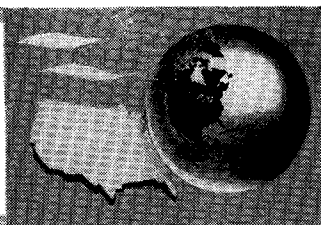
Today there is an acute need for new legislation to protect the public from misleading and fraudulent practices in all fields of art. Speaking recently on "The Future of the American Museum," Lloyd Goodrich, director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, said, "Closely connected with research is the problem of forgery and fraud, and the museum's relation to them. The extent of forgery in the American art world is not generally realized. I am not talking about honest differences of opinion as to attribution, but forgery deliberately perpetrated by dishonest artists (if you can call them that) and connived in by unscrupulous dealers and auction houses. In my own field of American art, and in the case of three painters I have worked on—Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, and Albert Ryder—forgery is a major problem. Through the years I have examined and recorded at least 500 pictures falsely attributed to Homer. In the case of Ryder, whose total life work was only about 165 paintings, the fakes outnumber the genuine works nearly five to one."

THEN, attacking the central problem, Mr. Goodrich recommended legislation to protect art experts. As the situation now stands, museum staffs have the necessary technical and laboratory facilities as well as the knowledge to advise on authenticity. "But," he added, "this is a function that in general they avoid. The reasons are obvious. Existing legislation is inadequate to protect the expert who is asked for an opinion." Many museums throughout the country, fearing possible lawsuits, forbid their curators to advise on authenticity. The public is obviously the loser.

I fully concur with Mr. Goodrich when he says, "What is needed is adequate legislation, federal and state, to prevent the trade in fraudulent art, and to protect the expert. What is also needed is more investigation and prosecution by law officers, more control of entry through customs, and greater co-operative effort by dealers, auction houses, museums, lawyers, and government—in other words, by all the elements that should be concerned with the ethics of the art world." Basically, however, it depends on legislation. When highly trained specialists are willing to advise on matters of authenticity without fee, they are surely entitled to adequate protection from the law. It is getting to the point where experts are afraid even to whisper in public.

—KATHARINE KUH.

# As Others See Us



## WINNIPEG:

### *The Uses of Power*

FOUR WEEKS AFTER the April 28 landing of U.S. Marines in the Dominican Republic, one of the most remarkable phenomena is the continuing mildness of adverse reaction in the rest of Latin America.

Reaction there has certainly been, but not on anything remotely like the scale that might have been expected in a continent traditionally suspicious of Yanqui gigantism and historically fearful of the "gunboat diplomacy" represented by earlier Marine landings in Latin territories.

Where are the street mobs, hitherto so readily formed to denounce North American "imperialism"? There has been to date one fairly large demonstration in Buenos Aires, involving 6,000 performers plus the usual complement of clubs and tear gas shells. Students have burned a couple of U.S. flags in Mexico, and a group of forty at the U.S. embassy in Rio de Janeiro "booed a few times and then dispersed," to quote a press report. Mob reaction has been equally readily handled in most capitals.

The shortage of major incidents suggests that criticism of American action, extensive as it is, is failing to strike fire as might be expected. On the diplomatic front, similar restraint prevails. Rude things are said in the semi-privacy of diplomatic corridors, but many public statements are relatively tempered. . . .

This is not to underestimate Latin distress at U.S. flouting of the shibboleth of non-intervention, or the resulting crisis in the inter-American system. . . . But the reaction was not as bad as it could have been. It was tempered just enough to give the U.S. limited breathing space to exercise its leadership and end the hemisphere's predicament.

Why did the continent adjust itself to at least a needed early period of moderation? It may be that with President Johnson at the helm, and with the precedent of President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis, the United States is attracting a certain realistic respect mixed with the traditional fears.

It is realized that, as a great power, the U.S. is going to defend its ultimate interests and that the continent is going to have to live with this fact. As Colombia's ex-ambassador to the OAS put it: "The U.S. has a choice of either assum-

ing full leadership or not. If it assumes leadership it must also try to bring about a great historic movement such as the economic and political union of Latin America. Then it has a right when necessary to overrule sovereignty."

—Richard Purser in the  
Winnipeg Free Press.

## BELGRADE:

### *Dodging Responsibility*

THE TREND IN the Dominican Republic is to look for a legal basis for the continuance of U.S. arms and domination, and at the same time to try to shift responsibility for this American invasion . . . onto the Organization of American States.

This is actually a violation of the basic legal norms in international affairs—the dodging of international responsibility for a crude violation of the national sovereignty of other countries and of world peace.

—Borba.

## GOTHENBURG:

### *The Long View*

DOES THE UNITED STATES have the right to decide with the help of armed forces what kind of government another sovereign country shall have? If Brazil or Argentina should be threatened by a Communist revolt, would the United



—Krokodil, Moscow.

"The olive branch of the  
American peacemaker."

States there, too, be ready to intervene with armed forces?

This is the question that the Latin American countries are asking themselves today. They are underdeveloped, many of them are badly governed, and all are dependent on the help pumped into them by the United States. But at the same time they are proud and sensitive. The tremendous economic effort made by the United States to put the Latin American economy on its feet has been very useful, but the deficiencies in the system of distribution have provoked mistrust and hate in broad popular strata. This is of course exploited to the last drop by Communism, which, emanating from Cuba, is gaining entry into certain Latin American countries. The Dominican Republic provides it with another trump card that will be played with care. The military-political reasoning that now seems to decide the actions of the United States produces effective, immediate results. But it is doubtful that the calculations will come out right in the long run.

—Handelstidningen.

## UPSALA:

### *Best Solution*

THE INTERVENTION of the United States brings up another question, namely the process of decision-making in the White House and the channels of information to the President. The action of the United States in the Dominican Republic shows a certain obtuseness in the evaluation of the consequences of specific actions and how they will be understood around the world. The American government undoubtedly saw the situation as a dilemma where action in the form of intervention appeared to be the best solution. The question is what alternative means were available to reach the goal that the United States so frequently has declared that it strives for, namely the establishment of independent democratic countries.

—Upsala Nya Tidning.

## HALIFAX:

### *Gain in Santo Domingo*

TO OUTWARD APPEARANCE thus far, the withdrawal of United States troops from the Dominican Republic, and their replacement by forces contributed by members of the Organization of American States, is so small as to be inconspicuous. But beneath this, a principle of weight is involved.

Reckoning purely numerically, one might almost dismiss the changeover. The present prospects are for the replacement of 1,700 American troops by an equal number of Latin Americans, which will still leave almost 20,000