

LEICESTER GALLERIES

SUMMER EXHIBITION

Consisting of about 200 oil paintings and water-colours and a few pieces of sculpture, the Summer Exhibition at the Leicester Galleries might be said to resemble the Royal Academy, the New English Art Club and the London Group rolled into one and spiced from across the Channel.

The centre of interest is "His Majesty The King," by Mr. Richard Sickert. Frankly based upon a Press photograph of the King in Guards uniform with busby held to his chest, leaving some function, it preserves the immediacy of the original in swift movement and alert glance, but shows how such a "snapshot" impression can be translated into a work of art by organization of colour in tones which match the open intervals of a slightly un-exposed photograph. The scarlet of the tunic becomes a pleasing pink, the gold of sword hilt and facings is embrowned, and the blue of trousers is reflected in the lights on the sepia-coloured background. It is the artistic redemption of the accidental. This picture is made the occasion of a skilful piece of hanging, being flanked by two flower-pieces by Miss Ethel Walker, which repeat both the colours and the loose handling of the portrait with excellent effect on the wall. Otherwise the exhibition affords some very happy gleanings in a wide range of subjects and styles. Artists like Pissarro, Monet, Mr. Steer, Mr. John and Mr. Duncan Grant can be taken "as read," but a few words may be said about some things by less familiar hands. "Hampstead Heath in Winter," by Mr. Donald Towner, is a remarkably good painting in the early Monet manner, faultless in its recession of grey tones on white; "Early Spring Landscape," by Mr. Tod Picton Warlow, gives admirably the depth of a wooded dell, partly by the direction of touch, and by the concentrated red of a chimney balances the greens and countenances the orange foreground; and in "Rococo Tree" Mr. Edward Burra has reconciled human and vegetable forms in an exciting composition which recalls Indian sculpture.

WOLMER WOOD,

MARLOW COMMON,

MARLOW, BUCKS.

July 22nd 1936.

my dear Philip

I really do not think that the "Times" has ever before published quite such a nice notice as this. What on earth is the meaning of the first piece that I have underlined? What are "open intervals" in a photograph and how can colour be organized in tones to match them? And what is a "slightly unexposed photograph"? If a photographic plate is "unexposed" there is no photograph on it and a print from the plate would not have "open intervals" but would be entirely blank and it would be equally blank whether it was slightly or greatly unexposed.

The second underlining also requires explanation but I think

the intention is to excuse Sickert's use of an "accidental" snapshot as a foundation for a picture by crediting him with the power to infuse artistic qualities into it. — it is a silly phrase, anyhow.

As for the third underlining, how can a "concentrated red" — what is a "concentrated red? — balance the greens? It might be a contrast to them, but I have never heard of red being used to balance green; and I would much like to know by what technical process a "concentrated red" chimney is made to ~~be~~ "countenance" an orange foreground. Really, I think that Marriott — if he wrote this note — has reached his lowest depth of imbecility, and the "Times" ought to be ashamed of printing such stuff.

I was very sorry to see the death of Terrick Williams, announced today; I have known him a good many years and have always liked him — he was a painter of real capacity and sound taste and his death leaves a considerable gap.

How are you and how are things going with you?

Our love to you both

always yours

M.L.B.