THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Carl Spitzweg Will Be Re-Discovered Someday

By RICHARD HIRSCH
Director Allentown Art Museum

Carl Spitzweg is a forgotten name.

This is an injustice. Somewhere in the halls of Western art he deserves a small niche. Some day he will be "re-discovered." Then, it may be hoped, a place will be finally found in the scheme of things for a proper understanding of one of the more engaging small German masters of the last century.

In our times, however, everything about Spitzweg designates him as an ideal candidate for total oblivion. He told stories. That is most unfashionable. He built his landscapes, his street scenes and his interiors like stage sets. We don't like that. Worse still, his people are very human. They are characters, both in the dramatic and the vernacular sense. Finally, as the ultimate title to our careful neglect, Spitzweg painted with warm and affectionate humor. This we hold, is just not done.

Encourages Neglect

As things stand in the arts of our time, clearly, he has everything to encourage our most total neglect.

Regardless of fashion, however, "old man Spitzweg," as he was known even in his middle years in Munich, will live on. His lively charm will insure this in spite of fads and faddish art creeds.

Who is he? The son of a comfortable small Bavarian merchant, trained to be an apothecary, who discovered his talent in his young manhood — or rather had it discovered for him by people who watched him doodle after hours. After travelling in Italy and to Paris, Spitzweg painted happily, abundantly and well from then on, right up to his quiet death in 1885.

No Pretensions.

He never had any pretensions of being a "great" painter. He apparently was not even concerned with being a fashionable painter. He was content to know that, during his lifetime, his work was loved just as he loved it, smilingly. He sold well. In our times this would mean that, automatically, the works of his later years would have sold for ever higher and higher prices. Not so with Spitzweg. If someone walked into his antiquated little studio in the older neighborhood of his native Munich and clearly fell in love with some canvas lying on the floor or against the wall, he could be sure to walk away with it.

Perhaps the visitor could not afford to pay for the painting. Then Spitzweg would let the proud possessor buy him a sandwich or a stein of beer, thus happily completing the transaction.

Never Exhibited

Spitzweg never exhibited in the official "salons," his absence neither dictated by false humility nor reflecting excessive pride. His business, he felt, was painting, not the pursuit of fame. Besides there were always people standing in line to buy. In spite of this he painted, usually, quite unhurriedly.

And what did Spitzweg paint? People. But people seen in a very special way; people who were part of their surroundings, at home in them and yet, somehow, dominated by them.

For one thing, his people (except in interior scenes) are always small in proportion to the canvas. There are usually few of them and, whether it be a Bavarian street, lined with quaint houses mellowed by age, winding back into shadow, or a mountainside rising towards the sun, these people are usually dwarfed by their surroundings.

Not Oppressed

They are not, however, oppressed by the stage sets in which Spitzweg makes us look at them. These settings usually suggest height, the height of medieval watch - towers, church steeples or, again, mountain and forest. But though they rise in moonlight or Apline sun, somehow Spitzweg manages to make these settings as comfortable for his little people as an old shoe and as pleasing to us as a familiar family seat.

Obviously, all of this is quite horrendous by the standards of our day. Spitzweg is quaint, he likes his people, smiles at them unerringly defines their foibles and makes us like them. This type of thing, we are told by our critics, our art-psychiatrists and our artists of today, is not the painter's function.

But, then, although for different reasons, critics were telling Spitzweg that he was out of line, even in his own times. He had seen the armies of Napoleon sweep devastatingly across the map of Europe while he was still a boy. He had heard impassioned speeches and heerhall discussions of the "new" freedoms when the revolutionary ferment of 1848 was blowing throughout all Europe.

'Awaken the Masses'

He had wild-eyed revolutionaries shout at him about his duties, as painter, to awaken the masses. He was, in a way, exposed to an equivalent anguish and to many of the currents which have pulled our own art world hither and yon and well-nigh destroyed its moorings within society.

But Spitzweg left to others the grandiose functions, let others paint uplifting, "socially conscious" works or the then, prevalent allegories where a naked maiden impersonated Chemistry bringing enlightenment to Agriculture, equally unclothed but burdened with a sheaf of wheat.

Admittedly, Spitzweg told stories or small anecdotes, something which our times will not forgive. But he told them so well, in such a good painterly way, with such lush color and such charm of light and shade that, ultimately, he will be, he must be, forgiven. And then he will be loved.

For one thing, he was never sentimental as were so many other small painters of his time. No little children and pussy cats. No tubercular lovers looking out at the gloaming. No starveling reading to their blind grandmother.

Painted Cactus-Lovers

Nevertheless, he did paint cactus - lovers, steel - rimmed spectacles raised on forehead, in tiny gardens surrounded by old buildings, examining some prickly little growth with comic intensity. He painted the Librarian, with humor and observation.

Spitzweg is no incisive Daumier, bitingly showing up the weaknesses of the world. Rather, his is a mellow friendly understanding of some universal foibles. His is also very good and engaging painting.

TYPICAL STYLE — "The Antiquary", by Carl Spitzweg, the German painter who died in 1885. Typical of his engraving style is the atomsphere of this Bavarian street corner with its small drama of deft comedy.

In the village scene we may see the Antiquary carefully reading his wares under his awning, too absorbed to notice the pretty girls going up the crumbling steps. We may smile, but the calm of the place, the filtered sunlight, the stability of the old houses, the discreet colors chosen by the painter, all this has charm and serenity. It may be escapist and nostalgic, granted. But it is powerful.

Spitzweg, by some insidious comic magic draws us into his world and makes us look out more tolerantly at our own.

Is this a great accomplishment? Only history will tell. But, boldly, this observer will venture the guess that, one of these centuries (for Spitzweg painted very well and will last), in the marble halls of culture someone will find a small carved door in the shadows of an echoing corridor.

Opening it, he will find the slightly cobwebby world of Spitzweg on the other side, a shaft of moonlight and a bunch of wonderful characters with whom to spend a wordless visit, the quiet world of Carl Spitzweg, with a serenade floating in from above some old shingled roofs.

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New 4-H Project Listed by College

Corvallis — "Let's Learn to Sew" is an invitation to Oregon youngsters to sign up for a new 4-H project offered by Oregon State college extension service.

The project is written for 9, 10, and 11-year-olds. Beginners first familiarize themselves with sewing tools and the sewing machine. In addition to learning construction skills, they learn to create useful articles, get a feel for color and texture, and plan and organize their time, according to Hildegarde Streuli, OSC extension clothing specialist and creator of the project.

Youths can measure accomplishments with first year projects—barbecue placemats, shears and scissors case, and petticoat or bobby socks holders. Illustrated instructions for making all of these are included in the new manual.

Parents interested in getting their youngsters into the new 4-H project can get information from county extension offices. Nearly 11,000 boys and girls now are enrolled in 4-H clothing projects in Oregon.

Children Come in Pairs for Couple

Adkins, Tex.—UPI—Carl Center was nonchalant, almost, when his wife had twin girls, Sharon Lynn and Caron Gwen.

It was just over three years ago the couple had their first set of twins, James and Jerry. "On the first ones, I fainted," Center confided.

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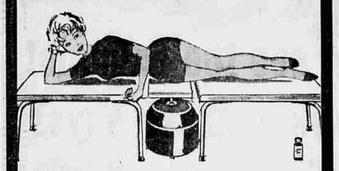

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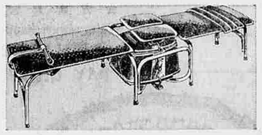

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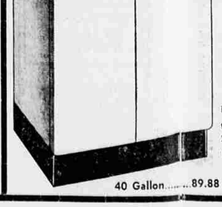

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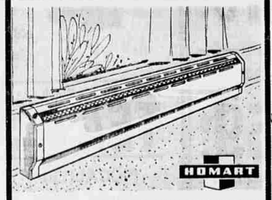

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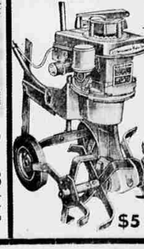

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OFFICIAL PORTRAITS—The official portraits of ex-President and Mrs. Eisenhower that will hang in the White House have been unveiled in Washington. They were painted by Thomas E. Stephens, an American artist who lives in New York City. The portrait of Eisenhower will be displayed in the Green Room. The painting of Mrs. Eisenhower will be in the diplomatic reception room. (UPI Telephoto)

What Happened to 'Big Leap Forward' In Red China? Evaluations Blamed

Tokyo—UPI—What happened to the "Big Leap Forward" in Red China?

Observers of the China scene are asking this today in view of the fact that other Communist bloc nations are reporting "tremendous gains" in industrial production.

The "gains" are usually masked in percentages, however, with no absolute figures given save in isolated cases.

While Moscow, Budapest and other Red capitals extol the virtues of the Communist system by citing advances in production—that cure-all of the Communist world — Red China isn't even trying to mask its apparent embarrassment.

'Natural Disaster' Blamed

In an effort to shift the responsibility, the Peiping regime began blaming drought and other "natural disasters" for what is quite obviously a flop in harvests.

Radio Peiping admits peasants on the communes are "working to fulfill" the 1960 farm quotas, but there has been no announcement that any social or governmental unit larger than a commune has succeeded.

Now Radio Peiping is reporting that Premier Budapest that Hungarians faced "unfavorable weather conditions this year." Despite this, say the broadcasts, harvests in Hungary approached last year's crops.

But what happened in Red China?

Last August, the Communist party announced a major shift in emphasis from industrial production to farm output.

The purpose, Peiping said, was to lend support to "militant advances in the factory."

Much of the problem, both in the commune and in the factory, lies in Communist evaluation of the functions of a manager.

To the Chinese Reds, the model tractor factory manager spends his most creative hours teaching a group of one-time Coolies and rickshaw operators how to operate a lathe.

One Chapter Ahead

Because he probably was chosen for his loyalty to the Communist party and not for his technical know-how, the factory manager is likely to be only one chapter ahead of his students in the labor manual.

In other words, the factory manager, rather than get down to some creative work in his office, wastes his time on the duties of a shop foreman.

Here is how Announcer Hu Wei of Radio Peiping describes his visit to the Shanghai glass works.

"When I went to interview Director Huang Ju-Piao, I was told apologetically: 'He is in one of the workshops.'

"I was not surprised. My extensive visits to factories already had taught me that the surest place to find the leading functionaries was in the workshop.

"I finally found Huang Ju-Piao in the workshop producing glass balls, a product for the manufacture of high grade glass fibre. He was in oil-stained overalls, dexterously operating a machine.

"One can imagine what would happen if a highly paid American factory manager in General Motors was "discovered" on the production line showing an apprentice how to screw fenders on Chevrolets.

If the vice president didn't fire the factory manager, he should get his own walking papers for permitting a $25,000 a year man to waste his time on a $5,000 a year job.

But in Red China, everyone gets paid just about the same.

Announcer Hu Wei commented:

"As in other places, the leading functionaries of the Yaohua (Shanghai) glass factory not only live and work among the workers, but they also study in the same schools and play games on the same sports ground."

One can only assume from the statement above that the factory manager spent his few lone hours in his office bonning up ahead of his students on the art of glass blowing.

It seems likely he could do a far better job by trying to find silicone sand so the factory can start mass production, or packing plate glass properly so panes aren't delivered shattered.

Multiply this experience by the number of factories in each commune, and increase this by the 26,000 communes in Red China today and the stumble in the "Big Leap Forward" becomes obvious.

One small farmer who makes one small mistake in planting his crops doesn't spell much trouble. But put this same man in charge of 160,000 persons in a tightly organized commune and he becomes a bull in a "China" shop.

African Diplomats Term Washington Hardship Post

Washington —UPI— Sixteen new African nations are naming ambassadors to a capital which they rate as a "hardship post"—namely, Washington, D.C.

Negotiations are underway between the U.S. and African governments to establish embassies here for the countries can are recently gained their independence. Some ambassadors already have been named and welcomed by the United States; others have yet to be announced.

When all arrangements are completed, it will be the biggest embassy boom the nation's capital has seen since the United States won its own independence.

Brilliant new flags flying over Washington's streets will represent Nigeria, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Congo Republic, Republic of Chad, Republic of Ivory Coast, Voltaic Republic, Republic of Niger, Republic of Dahomey, Republic of Somali, Malagasy, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Mali, Republic of Togo, Republic of Cameroon, and Mauritania.

Hardship Post

But what makes beautiful Washington a "hardship post" for African diplomats? One reason is that this is an expensive place for a newborn nation to establish diplomatic representation.

Acquiring an embassy means buying or renting quarters in a city where real estate is as high as protocol's top hat. It also means staffing those quarters and furnishing them in a manner befitting a proud country's home in a foreign land. And for every banquet and reception invitation in this city of perpetual partying, it means reciprocal entertainment. Even the U.S. has found some embassy posts require ambassadors with private means who can afford the pace.

But State Department officials and African diplomats admit that the real "hardship" stems from the racial barriers which still exist here. Dark-skinned representatives, from ambassadors on down, have trouble finding decent homes in respectible neighborhoods —and even finding embassy sites.

Some residents of all-white apartment houses and neighborhoods object to admitting the Negroes—although these objectors often are in the minority. If an African does find a suitable house it may be at twice the regular price. Africans are recently alerted their native costume, but they sometimes must wear the brightly colored garb as a silent defense against the rebuffs they would receive if taken for native American Negroes.

The State Department is unable to act directly, a spokesman explained, but it is deeply concerned over the problem and the bad image it can cast in the international mirror of opinion. Stimulus toward solving the problem has come from city officials and real estate groups.

A recent meeting between city commissioners, State Department officials and realty representatives developed the idea of setting up a "housing liaison" man in the State Department to help new diplomats with housing and similar problems. At present there is no such machinery in the government. It would give diplomats someone to go to at the start and someone who could elicit cooperation from realtors.

A city spokesman termed "unbelievable" the enthusiasm for the project by local realtors "who represent millions of dollars of property."

"It's too bad Uncle Sam doesn't ask more of this kind of help from people," he added, "when they're so eager to give."

Other diplomats may have difficulties getting settled, too, he said, but the new nations have no predecessors for guidance. Their representatives are trailblazers here and they have been allowed to "muddle through" by themselves.

A State Department officer, back from a recent trip to Africa and who has set up U.S. offices in several African countries, said they "have been extremely cooperative with us and our problems" in opening embassies here. He added that many Africans arriving here have spent much time in Europe and are "shocked" by their contact with prejudice here.

"America is underdeveloped in some ways too," he said.

67 Clocks Provide Timely Diversion

Warsaw, N.Y.—UPI—Ned Miller really means it when he says, "I love that tick-tock sound . . ."

Miller, a retired knitting mill worker and a bachelor, likes clocks for companionship. He has 67 of his collection of antiques in operation, and every quarter hour the visitor is made aware by the sound of chimes and gongs.

At 6:30 nightly, Miller gets the time signal from the radio, checks his big pocket watch by it and then makes the rounds to wind his clocks. At 10:30 a.m. every Sunday he winds his 8-day clocks.

The alarm of an ordinary table clock gets Miller out of bed daily.

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