F!S., to the NEWS

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MODERN ART UNMASKED

Is Modern Art an enigma to you? Are you one of the many mill ions whose reaction to those ugly and incoherent shapes is to shake ypur head in disbelief or to walk silently through museums and public places too embarrassed to criticize what you cannot understand?

If so, you will welcome the devastating expose of Modern Art by Tom Wolfe called "The Painted Word." With intimate knowledge of his subject, with the vocabulary of the cosmopolitan intelligentsia, and with the light touch of exquisite sarcasm, Mr. Wolfe cuts up the sacred cow called Modern Art and leaves its carcass bleeding on the floor.

And mirabile dictu! This act of lese majesty appears not in any conservative or intellectually primitive publication, but in the current issue of that Establishment journal of the Literate and **Limousine Liberals, HARPER'S MAGAZINEo**

Mr. Wolfe's 22-page article is a definitive description of the phenomenon called Modern Art which burst on the American scene in the 1920s, rejecting the mission to be a mirror held up to man and nature, and enshrining instead the new god of the Avant-Garde and the new orthodoxy that art exists merely for the sake of form and color on the canvas.

Mr. Wolfe traces the development of Futurism, Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, Social Realism, Picassoism, the obsession with Flatness, Conceptual Art, Minimal Art, Pop Art, and all the other art isms that gained social chic during the last 50 years.

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The craftsmen of Modern Art reaped all the rewards of financial success and critical acclaim, not because it was understood or appre ciated by the public, and not because of any genuine talent; but because a few fashionable people discovered their own tises for it. In the 1920s the words "modern" and "modernistic" came into our language as exciting adjectives (somewhat like "now," as in the Now Generation).

Modern Art was the product of several little cliques, each in pursuit of its own goals, including untalented non-conformists seeking notoriety, the nouveau riche seeking an entree into high society as Patrons of the Arts, those who inherited wealth but thought it was smart to hobnob with the proletariat, the Socialists of the 1930s seeking to turn art into a propaganda weapon, and businesses trying to mask their corporate profit-making with a veneer of Culture.

The millions of American people who patronize concerts, operas, plays, and movies, and who buy books and records, had no part in pro moting, financing, or appreciating Modern Art. All the decisions were made and the trophies distributed before the public was even informed. The entire movement was invented and sustained by some 10,000 persons living mainly in eight cities: Rome, Milan, Paris, London, Berlin, Munich, Dusseldorf, and New York.

Although 20th century scientists built upon the wisdom of their predecessors and led man to soar through the air and out into space,. the practitioners of Modern Art closed the door on true progress by rejecting everything that their predecessors from Leonardo and Michelangelo on down had discovered. Historians of the future will wond_er why. Modern Art is not for the ages, but, in the 21st century, is likely to be relegated to the guest bedrooms of beach houses of the affluent who were conned into buying it.

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