

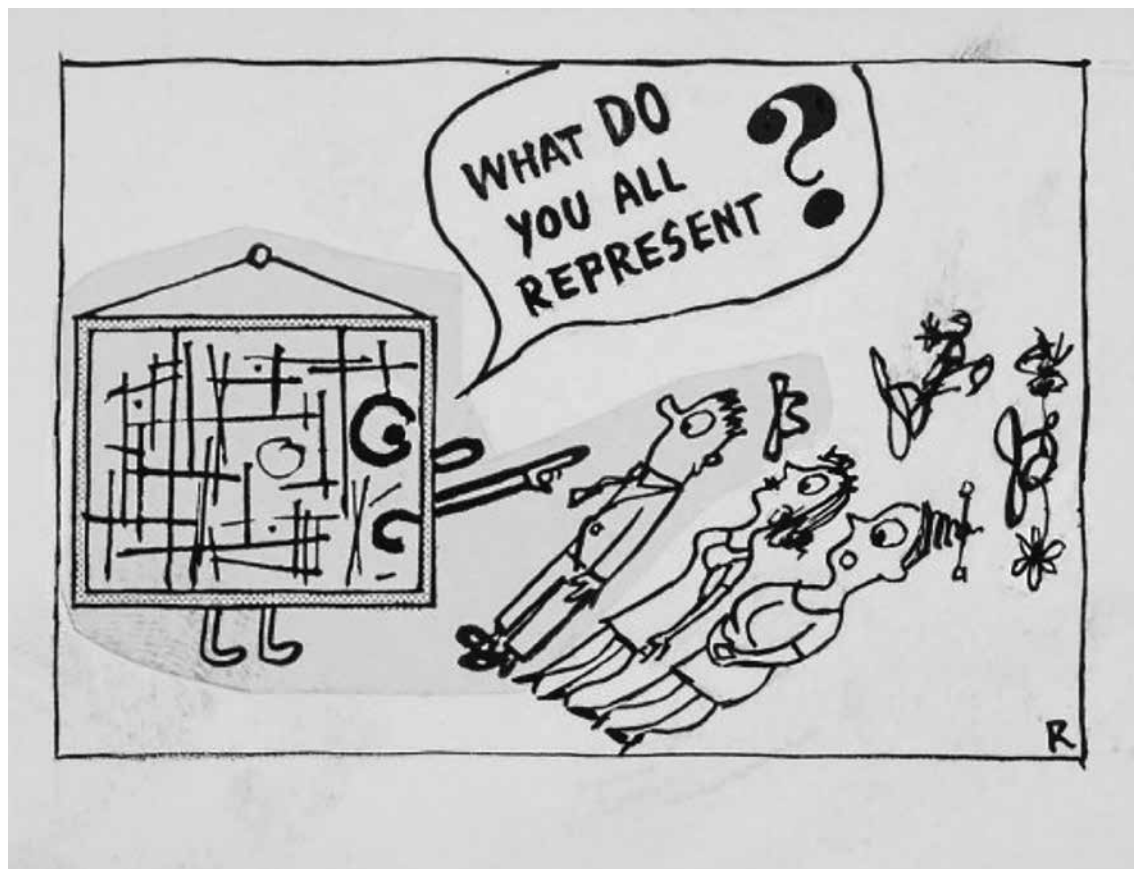
# DOKUMENTY

(wybór Margaux Verdet)

# DOCUMENTS

(selected by Margaux Verdet)

Source: New York Public Library



"What do you all represent?" *PM*, May 5, 1946



# HOW TO LOOK AT CREATION

a page of art-reports from the Art-World by artist-reporter Ad Reinhardt

Three points of view to think about when you look.

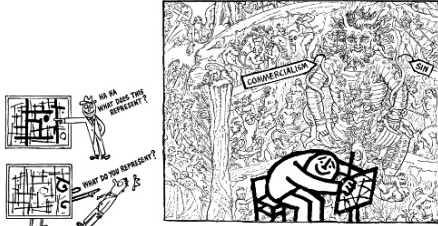


Some artists (like the anonymous medieval artists in the collectivist societies before the 13th century) are content to work (like carrying out God's will) in a **PRE-CREATED** scheme of things.

Some artists (like the post-renaissance artists before the 19th century), free from a religious pre-conceived picture of the world, are busy **RE-CREATING** a "nature that God created."

Some artists (like the cubist and abstract artists of the 20th century), free from mere reproduction of nature, concern themselves (like Gods) with pure **CREATION** (and a **NEW** world).

"if we cannot free ourselves, we can free our vision." —Piet Mondrian



## HOW TO LOOK AT 3 CURRENT SHOWS

Why do artists paint? What do they mean? — We can't do your thinking and looking for you (the way a hearst-paper does) but we'll try to help you know what you're looking at and for and so represent something yourself.

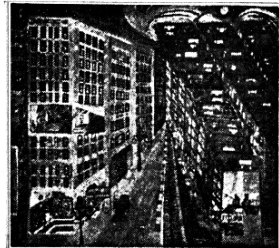
"Follow, follow, follow, follow, follow, follow, follow, ma!" —Old Song.



Ralston Crawford, at the Downtown Gallery, 32 E. 51 St., is a Somebody in the art-world. Sponsored by Fortune magazine, he was the only artist-reporter present at the Bikini Bomb Tests. (Did anyone assign a musician-reporter to take notes on the music of the split-spheres?) The publicity-release says, "The millions of words and miles of photographs emanating from Bikini generally imparted no more than the most superficial and external record of the event." Not liking this pseudo-abstract-thinking one bit, we shouted, "Holy smoke, what tricks will the painting-business dream up next?" Do crooked shapes and twisted lines represent painting's adjustment to the atomic age?(NO)



Frederick Taubes, at the AAA gallery, 711 5th Av., is a Somebody in the art-world, too. Author of 5 books, enemy of modern art, he has had more one-man-shows (60) than any other living artist in this country. Pointing to this painting-thinking we exclaimed, "Art for Art's sake stuff, a vulgar display of hopelessly out-dated illustrative skills for skill's sake, an empty show-off activity that even a biblical-legend can't fill." It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a slick, "professional" "noble craftsman" to enter into the kingdom of creative activity. "Ye must be born again" (to recapture the imagination you lost when you became an adult), Taubes, you old master.



Ralph Fasanella, at the 44th St. gallery, 133 W. 44, is a Nobody in the art-world. A trade-union-organizer, a non-commercial, non-"professional" artist, he has been painting for only one year. We were impressed with the thinking in this work, which asks the onlooker to think, too. Implicit everywhere here was the (good) democratic idea that creative-painting-activity belongs to everyone potentially and not to the few, special, hack-skilled, "sound craftsmen" who produce dept-store pictures. The best reaction to an exhibition is to go home and paint yourself (perhaps re-examine all our money-grubbing-values in the process, too). Looking requires a theory of thinking (do you know?)

## HOW TO LOOK AT A THEME

Every Christmas, museums gather all their pictures with pine-trees, snow and reindeer in them and exhibit them. Often art-galleries show a group of pictures with the same subjects. These are called theme shows. If you recognize the same things in each picture then your trip to look at them can be considered a success (we guess). Three good ideas for theme-shows are the Horn, the Horse and "behold the people."



One loves to think about the horse, Ridiculous, of one, of course— But when one sees the horse at play, As one does almost every day, One thinks one's art one will divorce To go and watch the playful horse.

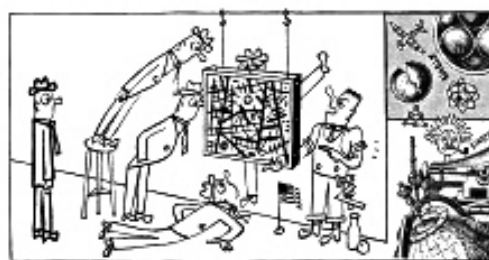


How to Look at Creation; How to Look at 3 Current Shows; How to Look at a Theme, published December 15, 1946



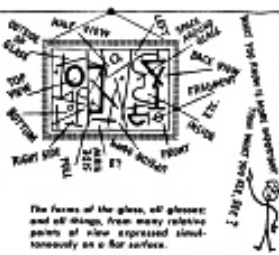
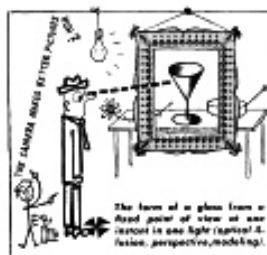
# HOW TO LOOK AT A CUBIST PAINTING

Here's the beginning of an explanation of modern art. After we've studied it a little more, we'll tell you a little more — about surrealism, abstraction, or whatever you want. — By Ad Reinhardt.



If you think that every painting should look like something real, then you live in that century (long gone) that believed the real world was a matter of what things look like. This sort of imitation and illusion "saw" things from a fixed, absolute point of view (later satirized by surrealist painters who make something look not only like one thing but also like six or seven other things).

A cubist painting is not a "picture" or a window-frame-hole-in-the-wall, but a new object hung on the wall and is part of the early twentieth century's overturning of traditional ideas of time and space. It explored its world (1908) from many relative points of view (later developed into abstract painting which shows what lines, colors and spaces do, and mean, by themselves).





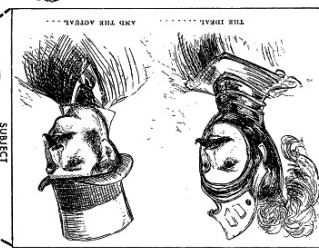
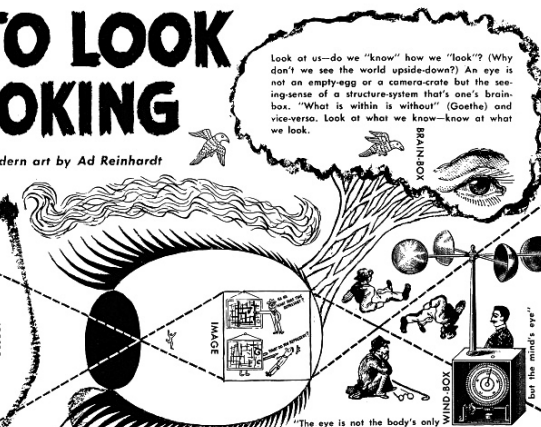
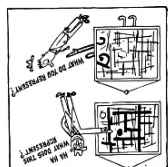
# HOW TO LOOK AT LOOKING

eleventh of a series on modern art by Ad Reinhardt

Look at us—do we “know” how we “look”? (Why don't we see the world upside-down?) An eye is not an empty-egg or a camera-crate but the seeing-sense of a structure-system that's one's brain-box. “What is within is without” (Goethe) and vice-versa. Look at what we know—know at what we look.

This page is a plastic world in itself, a paper-ivory-tower, and a private problem of people (you) and a person (us). We ponder on the great paradox of our period—bad “painted” pictures and good “non-picture” paintings. We see how things have two sides and how you and us see eye to eye always. Let those who don't like the way we look, lay their own eggs...  
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We are not responsible for the pressed drawings in this paper. The editor's views do not necessarily reflect those of the author of this page.



“There is nothing in the world so despicable as a bad artist.”—William James

“You must treat a work of art like a great man: stand before it and wait patiently till it deigns to speak.”—Arthur Schopenhauer

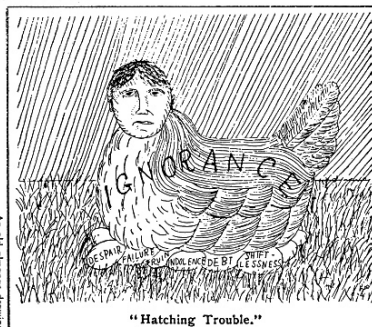
“The mind paints before the brush.”—James Ellis

“Hitler was a bad artist before he was a bad politician.”—Herbert Read

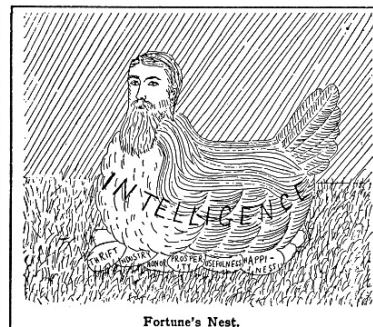
“Look here—where do we go from here?”

“Come now—look how far we've come!”

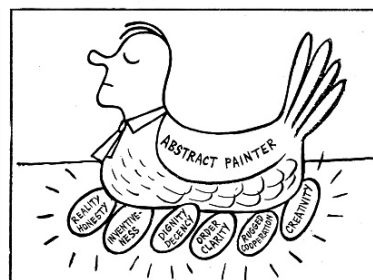
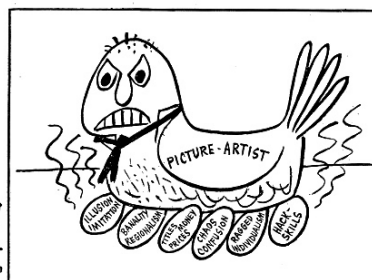
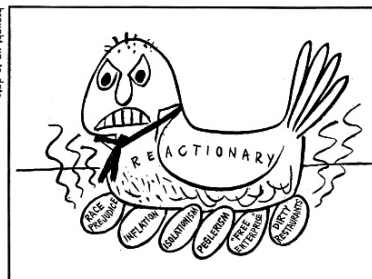
“Art is the only clean thing on earth, except holiness.”—J. K. Huysmans



“Hatching Trouble.”



Fortune's Nest.



How to Look at Looking, published July 21, 1946



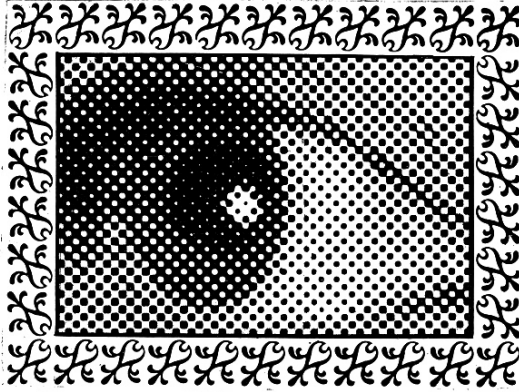
# HOW TO LOOK AT A GOOD IDEA

twelfth of a series on modern art by Ad Reinhardt



This is a good idea (Wolfgang Paalen's)—and means that people should be pulled into "painting activity" so that it can have social meaning (higher wages, shorter hours) instead of merely passively "looking" at "pictures"—which does NOT mean that it is NOT a good idea for anyone to take any artist by the scruff to ask him what his "pictures" represent.

"Institutions, pensions and honors are intended only for idiots, tricksters and knaves. Don't be a art critic, paint!" —Paul Cezanne



## "BOOM IN MODERN ART" DEPARTMENT

2015 Nichols Canyon Rd.  
Hollywood 46, Calif.  
June 8, 1946

Dear Reinhardt,  
I want to tell you how much I enjoyed your "Tree of Art" in PM. You have however placed my leaf in the wrong position. Hence this comment.

It should be lying on the ground drying up (probably to the left of the tree). Why? I've committed "artistic suicide." Some months ago I sold all my paraphernalia and closed up shop.

You might be interested in my reasons for dropping off the tree so I'll briefly sketch some of them. I can't get a show of my paintings, which, after thirty years of work, is unbearably discouraging. In spite of being "invited" to show in large shows, the juries regularly reject my entries. In the last two years I've written over forty letters to museums and have had the courtesy of but two replies in spite of the fact that the ladies and gentlemen who received them are purportedly paid to attend to such matters.

My evaluations of the reasons for this apparently unfavorable state of affairs would have little validity, as an artist is admittedly quite incapable of judging the merits or demerits of his own work. The only comment which I might feel qualified to make therefore is that the pretended open mindedness of the galleries and museums which, from their titles and attitudes might be presumed to show "Modern Art" is less real than imagined. It is my impression that most doors seem closed to those who are not near enough to the trunk of your tree.

Sincerely,  
Hilaire Hilier

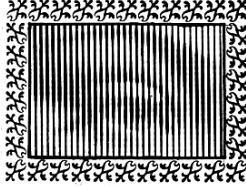
Hilaire Hilier is a well known painter and author. His most recent book is "Why Abstract?"

"One of the reasons why I am out of employment now is why I have been out of other ideas for years, is simply that I have the places to men who think as they do." —Vincent Van Gogh, Letter to his brother Theo, 1880.

"Maybe we'll fix it so life won't be printed on dollar bills." —Ralph in "A Wake and Sing" by Clifford Odets.

## MIND'S EYE DEPARTMENT

When you look close you see only dots and lines and when you look from afar you see eyes. (These are NOT abstract paintings.) This is a good idea for people who want when they look close to see only dots and lines and who when they want to look from afar to see eyes.



## GOOD IDEA FOR STILL LIFE AND NUDE ARTISTS' DEPARTMENT



This good timeless idea (Albrecht Dürer's, four centuries ago) is as good as working over a photograph if you want to paint a picture. Simply get a handy box-wire-screen, a simple graph-paper-sheet, then conveniently "fix" your eye and simply "copy" what you "see."

## POLITICAL GOOD IDEA DEPT.



## LOOKING BACK ON MODERNISM

By HOWARD DEVREE  
ONE of the best proposals

And wouldn't it be worth while for the museum to have, for the sake of the uninitiated general public, a small gallery with a standing exhibition to explain abstraction visually? For example, an oversize brandy glass against a neutral backdrop, played on by alternating lights from different parts of the room, would explain to the visitor how the outline of the glass changes and how the highlights break up its surface at different points under changing conditions. If a Gris and a Braque

## LOOKING FORWARD TO LOOKING BACKWARD DEPT.

This is a good idea by Robert Delaunay, George L. K. Morris, Ad Reinhardt and Howard DeVree.

were hung near by, the visitor might well get an elementary notion of why painters of abstraction break up their compositions as they do instead of resorting to the old academic method of merely plastering on some white paint to indicate highlights and then letting the mind supply the traditional explanation. Granted it is over-simplification, yet, as an entering wedge, so simple a device need not be despised.

