

can Art News, one of the best known national art journals of the day, gave the exhibition a rather kindly patronizing paragraph, but in mentioning Standing Woman wrote, "One regrets that an artist so evidently serious in his aims should sacrifice too often to the extraordinary cult of ugliness which seems to have taken the place of beauty on the altars of modernism à outrance."

Very revealing are the critical comments made ten years later in 1928 when Lachaise again showed Standing Woman in a one-man exhibition at the Brummer Galleries. Incidentally this was the first time the statue was seen fully completed and cast in bronze. Eminently suited to this fluid material, the figure fully exploits the possibilities of metal. Highlights and bold shadows intensify the sweeping curves, and only in metal could so heavy a body be securely balanced and coordinated on its toes. The passage of ten years completely reversed critical opinion. Standing Woman now brought rave notices in place of scornful derision. The critic of *Creative Art* wrote, "The great bronze Woman by Gaston Lachaise is a satisfying beautiful thing. Here is sculpture with an inner bigness, a mature control." The review in *The Art News* was ecstatic. In writing of Standing Woman its critic said, "This great bronze, a creature of full, rounded forms and magnificent gestures, dominates the exhibition. From every side one turns to it with admiration not unmixed with awe."

Thus in the brief interval of ten years, revulsion and indifference changed to an almost hysterical approval. In 1946, it is far easier to appraise Lachaise, for we are not pioneering when we accept him as a great sculptor of the 20th century. True, he founded no school, but with unique persistence he repeatedly, even ruthlessly, explored the possibilities of a new American vocabulary for sculpture; a vocabulary peculiarly unpopular in a country devoted to immature form. It must have taken both courage and conviction to break with all the established Puritan traditions of "beauty" and "grace," but in so doing Lachaise added a new strength to American sculpture. His figures boldly assert the rich plastic possibilities of the human body.

Incidentally it might be interesting to know that there are three other bronze casts of Standing Woman in addition to the one at the Art Institute. The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, and R. Sturgis Ingersoll of Philadelphia each own one.

KATHARINE KUH

In Reply

FROM time to time, the *Bulletin* will run a little column called "In Reply." As an added service to Members, this column will attempt to answer technical and factual questions relating to art objects belonging to or exhibited by the Art Institute. Questions, limited to fifty words or preferably less and signed with the Member's name and address, should be sent to Katharine Kuh, Editor, *The Bulletin*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago 3, Illinois. Brief answers "In Reply," prepared by curators and other specialists on the museum's staff, will be printed along with the questions.

Do You Know

- ... that the Art Institute has an active and supporting membership of 15,671?
- ... that more than 1,000,000 people visit the Art Institute each year?
- ... that the finest sequence of 19th and 20th century French paintings in the world hangs here?
- ... that this is the only museum to have an entire gallery devoted to paintings by Renoir?
- ... that our Toulouse-Lautrec collection is the finest in existence? . . . also our collection of ancient Chinese bronzes?
- ... that the Art School is the largest in the world, with an enrollment of 6700?
- ... that Grant Wood, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Bill Mauldin studied here and George Bellows was once on the faculty?
- ... that the January issue of *Art News*, in its national 1945 round-up, nominated the Art Institute for three "bests" in "outstanding achievements": the acquisition of Seated Nude by Renoir, White Tablecloth by Chardin, and the re-installed Lucy Maud Buckingham Medieval Collection?
- ... that the Art Institute Restaurant serves more people than any other museum restaurant in the country?
- ... that the staff and employees of the Art Institute number 325?
- ... that the Art Institute was the first museum in America to show a Picasso, a Cézanne, a Van Gogh, and the first to show and to own a Matisse?
- ... that the Art Institute is the only museum in Chicago whose doors are open every day in the year?