

# THE ART OF JOHN SKOLLE

(Excerpts)

By Ruth Morgan

(...)

If two paintings are hung side by side, one an abstraction, the other a red barn, the latter will enjoy an unquestioned victory in public acclaim. No matter how uninspired the painting, it becomes the observer's choice merely because it is recognizable. The abstraction beside it may be skilfully executed, yet the majority will shy away from it because it represents something unknown. If the beholder lacks curiosity to investigate its intelligibility, the abstraction merely creates resentment, for people in general do not wish to be disturbed by the unfamiliar.

The two major divisions in the great field of painting are represented by the purely pictorial artist on the one hand, and on the other the modern artist concerned with the presentation of the higher and more abstract principles pertaining to creative effort – striving to widen the boundaries of an age dedicated to photographic realism and naturalism. More simply, the imitative versus the expressive form.

(...)

But must our creative talent await an audience in the next generation? True, a good two-thirds of the artists of the past century were difficult for the contemporary public to understand. But our present world, bent upon exploring new areas of knowledge that push back the boundaries of time and space, should be better prepared than the world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to accept innovations. Our civilization needs as never before the humanizing influence of a living art, which constitutes one of the few remaining defenses against the appalling materialism that menaces us. And yet the impact of art upon daily life is still felt only by a limited group whose experience and knowledge have made them receptive. In spite of the wonderfully conscientious efforts of our

critics, our educational institutions, and Pepsi-Cola, it would seem that complete acceptance of today's art awaits some dim and happy future when prejudice and nescience shall have been miraculously abolished – when, perhaps, television will be able to project flashing glimpses of color and form into every home and accomplish for the visual arts what radio has accomplished for music.

(...)

The artist of integrity makes no compromise to meet any temporary systems of pretty, photographic, or trivially flattering art. His approach is never sentimental; rather it is dynamic, subtle, and inventive. Always the genuine artist's incentive comes from within.

(...)

One artist through whom we may profitably make this individual approach to the understanding of modern art is John Skolle. His work affords us an opportunity to inspect at close range a category of modern art which might be called Abstract Fantasy.

Certainly the devotees of the familiar could ask no happier approach to the abstract element in modern painting than through John Skolle's highly imaginative and fanciful world of plastic form. Although a child



Gate #1 and Gate #2

may easily follow him in his excursion into the realm of enchantment, only a few observers will have an exact idea of the means by which the delightful journey was accomplished. Having at his command a wealth of knowledge of diverse art forms, an extraordinary mastery of technique, and a remarkable sensitivity to the dramatic possibilities of color orchestration, Skolle is well equipped to give form to the subtle workings of the imagination, which he finds infinitely richer for creative painting than the field of visual reality.

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