Oscar B. Jacobson, director of the school of art, is a personality which stamped its impress first on the university, then on the southwest and finally on the nation. He is a painter and a critic; he is a discoverer, for he it was who first pointed out the beauties of the southwest to the painter; the work he did with the Kiowa Indians has attracted international attention. A rapier wit, a constant kindness, a deep philosophic interest in life, make Professor Jacobson a significant figure in the national art world. "The character of art" is the second university lecture, delivered April 12.

The character of art

By Oscar Brousse Jacobson

I

HOPE that no one expects me to tell him what art is. Once I thought that I knew, but I am approaching fifty, at which age one no longer presumes to be a judge of art, if of anything.

In presenting this subject permit me to call attention to my trousers. Believe it or not, the first French Revolution gave me these trousers. The French gentlemen wore knee breeches of silk. The mob who came to Versailles to ask for bread wore overalls. The mob won, and ever since we men of the Western World have been flagging about, with these emblems of democracy sometimes at half-mast. If Louis XIV had not built Versailles and had not made his court the grandest in the world, it is not improbable that I should appear wearing knee breeches. There are causes and effects. On the heels of the marching armies of the World War women's pedal extremities came into their own. Hair and skirts proving bothersome, feminine heads became bobbed like the Egyptian sphinx and skirts evolved into Scotch kilts presumably as emblems of liberty, equality and fraternity. Then the depression arrived and jobs departed, the young ladies no longer cared so much for this new freedom, but proceeded for purposes of their own to make themselves again as feminine and alluring as possible.

History seems to be a series of magnificent chances. Do you realize that if the English at the time of old Queen Elizabeth, aided and abetted by the gods who controlled the weather, had not destroyed the Spanish Armada in the Lowlands Sea, I would probably be speaking a modified form of Spanish here today.

If Napoleon had not been short of ready cash Oklahoma would perhaps today have as president Monsieur Doumer. If Henry VIII had not been quite so fond of the ladies, or so hard to please, what do you suppose our administration building would be like?

If an attractive, elegant young blade living in a little hill town of Northern Italy in 1300 had not been taken with severe illness, the Santa Fe Railway Company would probably not build its stations in the Spanish Mission style but in something else. For the man who afterwards came to be known as Saint Francis of Assisi founded the order of monks who were to establish their missions along the King's Highway of California, and this created an architecture for our whole Southwest.

Most of you probably care nothing about Mohamed, yet the followers of this prophet in Afghanistan, Turkey and Persia have had an influence on your family life by beautifying the floors of every home in this land with their rugs—or imitations thereof.

While Caesar was walking in his marble palace in Rome in the year 4 B. C. a child was born in a caravansery in one of his unimportant provinces, who was to become a god to half the earth and in whose glorification a new and wonderful art was to arise, a thousand years later—Gothic architecture.

For the personality of one individual often determines the character of coming ages. Some would maintain that history is but the biography of great men and that the character of a people and likewise the character of its art are but accidents. Great men, good men, saints and rascals have molded epochs. They undoubtedly have helped in creating the style of a period in history, but nevertheless Art is something deeper, more elusive, more profound, more sacred.

We have then arrived at the question, first, what is art? which is almost impossible to answer, unless the definition may be "joy of beauty in work." What determines its character? What makes art such as it is today, such as it was among the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Senegalese? Great men determine it, religion determines it, the climate and soil determine it, the race determines it, the climate and soil determine it, the epoch determines it, occu-
Civilization is a comparative recent and fragile thing. So far as we know, finding a way out, and every step of the journey can be traced through art.

Out of the central highlands of Asia, two streams of the Aryan race emerged. The first, moving southwesterly became the Ionians, the Greeks, the Persians and the Brahman Hindus. The second, traveling in a northwesterly direction, was to become the Scandinavians, the Celts, Goths, Franks, etc. These streams sometimes meeting, later separating, or forming new combinations, met on the fields of France to form an interesting nation. Other migrations formed other combinations, Celts with Anglo-Saxons and Normans became English. Iberian, Roman, Goth, Berber and Arab became Spanish. In their travels these people encountered different kinds of soil and climate which were to mold them into different patterns. The gloomy, dark steppes of Northern Europe have made the Russian what he is and have created Russian art and music; have produced a Tchaikovsky and a Roerich. The black forests of Germany have contributed to making the German people what they are—heavy, strong and sentimental; have produced a Wagner and a Franz Von Stuck.

In Spain, alternating hot days and cold nights, burnt, amber mountains and lovely fertile valleys have made the haughty Castilian and have produced a Zuloaga or a Carmencita. To the Gulf Stream the Hollander owes his prosiness and dependability; to the bleak, stony moors, the Scotchman owes his inescapable predestination and his flinty conscience. The lakes among the pines and birch woods in the white nights have made the German people what they are—-heavy, strong and sentimental; have produced a Goethe, a Wagner and a Franz Von Stuck.

Religion, work and play have been the sources of inspiration for all artists. The restless struggle to master nature tends to dominate and to develop natural religion, work and play and has influenced the arts and the life of any people more or less. Civilization can best be judged by the languages used to express emotions. By languages I mean the artistic languages of music, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture and architecture—the fine arts. As a cultivated plant the arts are often universal in their character completely obliterating national frontiers. This is especially so in music and painting.

Art has grown as a wild flower among all races at some time in their evolution. This stage of development which I prefer to call the people's flowering time does not usually coincide with the period of their highest economic or political development. Later comes the sophisticated phase. As a cultivated hot-house plant some of the arts thrive better among some people than among others. For instance, the Englishman has expressed himself rather better in literature than in either painting, sculpture or music. Perhaps the rains, fogs and soups of England have something to do with this.

As national or racial art is shaped by the soil, the sunshine, the rainfall, so in the same way individual art is formed. All the arts, the intellectual arts as well as the religious, have their quality of wind and waves, are-heavy, strong and sentimental; have produced a Tchaikovsky and a Roerich. The black forests of Germany have contributed to making the German people what they are—heavy, strong and sentimental; have produced a Wagner and a Franz Von Stuck.
everything, even to my trousers. Con-
ider how Greece influenced Italy; Italy
England in the Elizabethan age. No
tue artist ever escapes the impulsion of
his time, even though he sometimes re-
bels against it. With these considerations
it is less difficult to understand Dante
of the Middle Ages, Shakespeare of the
Renaissance and Goethe of the Post-Re-
formation.

Great art is possible only when the
people have the time, opportunity and
encouragement to express themselves. If
the artist is subjected to a power, politi-
cal, social or ecclesiastical, it means sim-
ply that he has voluntarily or otherwise
submerged his craving for self-expres-
sion to supply a demand. For proof of
this we have only to turn to the endless
procession of Madonnas painted during
the early Renaissance in Italy and to the
endless parade of strutting kings during
the royal days of France.

There have been great periods of art
expression, periods when whole nations,
would seem, were permeated by a sense
of beauty. One of the greatest art per-
iods occurred between 500 and 300 B.C.
in Greece. The Greeks of the Golden
Age had a whole cabinet of Deities, but
Beauty was the real Greek God. Chil-
dren from infancy were trained to re-
spect and enjoy beauty, physical and
spiritual. Physical, intellectual and spiri-
tual harmony was the ideal. Architecture,
sculpture, drama, literature, all were con-
ceived and executed towards that end. They
tried to create everything as near
perfect as possible and this perfection
was arrived at through an intelligently
developed sense of moderation.

The Greeks were intellectually as su-
perior to, say, our modern parliaments as
distinguished bodies are superior to
the African pigmies. It is enough to say
that the huge Gothic cathedrals rise
lacy stone as if by magic—that their
thousands of sculptured images are with-
out a trace of physical voluptuousness,
that they make no bid to the senses but
are quivering with spiritual ecstasy. Even
the color of the stained glass win-
dows is symbolic of a mind almost celes-
tial. This being so, it is obvious that
modern Gothic architecture even though
it is a perfect imitation becomes a grim
joke and a falsehood in this materialistic
age.

The third great period of European
art history centers around the prince,
the king, the pope and the artist as an in-
dividual. During this period the crea-
tions of the artistic dreamer were in-
fluenced by the demands of royalty or
aristocracy but it was also an attempt
to combine the intellectualism of the
Greeks with the emotionalism of the mid-
dle ages and was characterized by free-
don and individualism even into li-
cense. Time entirely forbids any closer
inspection of the art of other periods and
other peoples. It is enough to say that
it is possible to define the art of each
epoch by one word: Egypt, eternity;
Greece, beauty; Rome, strength; early
Christian, piety; Romantic, exultation;
Gothic, exultation; the Renaissance,
artistocratic refinement and elegance; our
own age,—?

Finally we come to the individual cre-
ative artist and his way of working. In
this modern age when the scientists
are considered our high priests and the lab-
atory has become our place of worship;
when everybody studies anatomy, bot-
any, biology, geology, etc., what is the artist's status? By many he
is probably considered a nuisance or a
superfluous luxury. Let us investigate
him. Certainly, the scientists' accom-
plishments are magnificent, but even so,
it is our belief that love is something
more than biology, that a mountain is
something more than granite, a bird in
flight something more than cells, and
God something more than electrons. Re-
cently I heard a very eminent preacher
speculating on the problem of how he
could "turn on God" like the man at the
radio. The artist knows that when, and
if, that he accomplished God will retire
behind the golden clouds of art. And
Barrie told the truth when he said
there are fairies in the world so long as
there is anyone living who believes in
fairies.

Of course, we cheerfully acknowledge
with thanks all the fine achievements of
modern scientists. We grant every claim
made by him, but even so it is not
equally true that there are oceans of hu-
man thought and experience which the
best tube of science has never sounded
and probably never will.

Come with me to the mountains, let's
climb yonder peak. A practical man and
a learned man in our party will imme-
idately tell you all about the composition
of the rocks, the minerals they contain, the
geological area to which they belong. He
will tell you about the fossils below the
ground and the fauna and the flora above
—tremendously fascinating subjects—but
when you stand on a lofty height in
the evening twilight and look down on the
mysterious shrouds of night approaching,
when you turn your gaze to the in-
finite riches of the heavens and see the
stars like lamps of God hanging in the
firmament or when you see the first
flush of day illuminate the East and
when Aurora announces the approach of
Apollo leading back another day for
man, when all the earth and air and sky
thrive with exhilaration in harmony with
the wonders of creation then you do not
turn to the man of science for an in-
terpretation of the marvelous beauty of
the mountains and the sky but to the
artist, the poet and the musician, who
penetrate beyond the external into the
realm of the spirit. Or go down to the
shore of the old ocean. Again here is
your man of science, learned and pleas-
ant and accommodating. He can show
you how much salt there is in the waves,
he is a magician who can determine how
many trillions of atoms are contained
in each drop, or weigh the whole ocean.

The artist perhaps understands or cares
but little for all this useful knowledge.
But he has the power to recreate in you
the restless, everchanging sea, calm,
angry, seductive, repellent, awesome. He
can give you this thrill any time, through
his pictures or his music. And none can
more than science the value of this ar-
istic emotional experience in the hap-
piness of mankind.

I mentioned the Gothic cathedrals a
little while ago. The men who built
these cathedrals were great engineers or
the structures would not be standing now,
but if they had had only scientific
knowledge no one would care to visit
these monuments. The builders of these
churches were first and foremost artists. As we approach Notre Dame of Paris, or Amiens let us examine these piles of stone, see what they mean. All the towers reach upward like giant fingers pointing their way to heaven. The three entrances are symbolic of the trinity of their faith and the ground plan of the church is in the form of a Christian cross. Their thousands of sculptured figures form a pictorial encyclopaedia of all the then available knowledge. They give you a tremendous amount of information and misinformation about saints and devils and kings and knaves, about agriculture and medicine, literature and philosophy, but they can also give you something else. Let us enter. The nave with its fluted piers is like an avenue in a mighty forest; the vaulted ceilings are like the forest's roof. The chant of the priest drifts through the quiet space, the great organ sends its waves of harmony vibrating through the forest of arches, the sounds fly heavenward on graceful and strong wings of beautiful harmony. The whole house seems one vast world filled with the glory of the Almighty. You know and you feel that in these great cathedrals the artist builders have enshrined the holiest aspirations of the Christian ages. The artist, poet, or musician feels these things perhaps more keenly than the average man and is able to make a record of his emotions and he interprets them in his own particular style.

Another valuable role which the artist plays, often unconscious is that of historian. Did you ever stop to think that the Cro-Magnon, the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Moors, Mayas, and all other vanished people of the East and the South and the North are resurrected and measured by their art, by that which the artist impressed upon the structures in which they lived, worshiped, or died; in the garments and jewelry they wore and the things they made and used. Let me cite you a concrete example. When Carter opened the Tomb of Tutankhamen what did he find—an old king looking like a smoked herring, surrounded by a horde of the finest examples of the artists' crafts, and Egypt lives again in all her splendor.

Viewed in this light the artist assumes a larger role than the position generally conceded to him in modern times. The artist has always truly and accurately expressed the soul of his people at his particular period or epoch. It is by the fine arts that we always judge the civilization of a nation or a race, by its monuments in architecture, painting and crafts, rather than by those useful activities which minister to the needs of existence.

Art is a record not only of material things, but of the spiritual aspirations of humanity. The spirit of Greece lives not by the battle of Salamis but by the songs of Sappho, the sculpture of Phidias, and the Parthenon of Icaticus. England may grow old but she will never die while the plays of Shakespeare live. France may decline but her spirit will go on as long as the work of her thousands of artists exists. Italy will not die as long as the paintings of Michelangelo or the Comedy of Dante remain.

Such is the character of art. Delight is the soul of art, and its function is to express and interpret the beauty of life, and man's search for the divine.

Sooner roll call

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Jesse May Anderson, '31 home ec., Dameron hospital, Stockton, California.
Floyd M. Ayers, '29 geol., Belchite, Kansas.
Charles M. Barrett, '28 bus., 806 South Citrus, Los Angeles, California.
Clifford Bowles, '21 geol., 2617 Main avenue, San Antonio, Texas.
H. L. Camp, '28 arts-sc., 29 M. A., Box 166 F. E., College Station, Texas.
Mrs Stella Cash Bell, '25 ed., 104 Highland, Seminole.
Mrs Dorothy Bettes Collins, '24 arts-sc., 624 Oxford avenue, Akron, Ohio.
J. R. Coates, '29 med., Henryetta Hospital, Henryetta.
G. A. Foster, '29 geol., 614 Delaware avenue, Bartlesville.
Mrs Sara Harris Reynolds, '29 ed., 2418 Dodson avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas.
Lorenz Dimmarr Huff, '27 arts-sc., Box 58, Clemens College, South Carolina.
Mrs Audrey Griffith Key, '28 ed., Box 22, Hollis, Okolona, Mississippi.
Oscar Hatcher, '20 arts-sc., 1220 Perrine building, Oklahoma City.
Earnest C. Hicks, '22 arts-sc., 5879 Washington Street, Oklahoma City.
Mrs Leonas Jones Everett, ex '24, 708 Jennings avenue, Bartlesville.
Howard Kapp, '31 bus., Box 1311, Amarillo, Texas.
Edward J. Kloepfenstein, '30 eng., 828 East Drive, Oklahoma City.
Robert B. McNeely, '24 geol., 2727 geop., 709 Ellis Singleton building, Wichita, Kansas.
Mrs Lula Morris Haskins, '28 ed., Dimuba, California.
Bruno P. Mayer, '29 law., 721 Perrine building, Oklahoma City.
Richard O. Meents, '30 Ph. D., 400 South Rennie avenue, Ada.
Mrs Maud Montgomery Dye, '20 arts-sc., 941 East drive, Oklahoma City.
Mrs Gladys Moore Pearson, '29 fine arts., 1405 West Oklahoma, Enid.
Mrs Zylpha Myers, '26 ed., Box 397, Tecumseh. R. H. Perkins, '22 B. S., Box 825, Tyler, Texas.
Mrs Katherine Robinson Cox, '22 arts-sc., 26 arts-sc., Arcola, Illinois.
Mrs Thelma Rose Hodges, '28 home ec., Willson.
Carl S. Shoults, '22 arts-sc., Box 82, Brady, Texas.
Claude C. Smith, '24 M. A., University of Nevada, Reno.
Rov V. Sturgeon, Ph. G., '20, Hennessey.

Homer T. Terrell, Ph. G., Pritchett, Colorado.
Dr Roy Chester Warren, '28 med., Clifton, Arizona.
Harold Van Turner, '26 bus., Box 1686, Pampa, Texas.
Owen A. Winsor, '22 arts-sc., care State Bridge, Wolcott, Colorado.

MARRIAGES

PASSONS-HOMON: Miss Ora Lucile Parsons, and James H. Hodges, '29 M. S., '31 doctor of education, April 16, 1932. Home, 2508 South Hudson, Oklahoma City.
WOLCOTT-MCGLOTHLIN: Miss Margaret Louise Wolcott, and Harold D. McGlothlin, ex '30, April 23. Home, 1138 North Brauer avenue, Oklahoma City.
BOLAND-MCCLOSKEY: Miss Mary Elizabeth Boland, ex '29, and Lawrence Holmes McGloskey, April 30. Alpha Phi. Home, Oklahoma City.

BIRTHS

Freeman Gat, ex '17, and Mrs Gat, a son, Freeman Gat, jr., April 22, 1932. Home, Ardmore.
Mrs Edna Sterkie Fraker, ex '22, and Elmer Fraker, '20 arts-sc., a son, Robert Vincent, March 2, 1932. Home, Chickasha.

DEATHS

Mrs Frank Lee
Mrs Frank Lee, nee Nancy Jo Seay, '34 journ., died April 25 in Oklahoma City. Burial was made in Boan, Texas. Parents home is in Wichita Falls, Texas.
Miss Virginia Lee Wyckoff
Miss Virginia Lee Wyckoff, fine arts freshman, daughter of Mrs Kate Wyckoff, Norman, died