

tastic dragons of the mural paintings of the church of Santa Maria de Tahull (Lérida), and there is a marked similarity between the figures of the anonymous masters of the twelfth century and those of Rouault or of the Spanish painter Solona.

Perhaps it may not be entirely fanciful to see in the choice for this exhibition of both Barcelona on the east coast and Santiago de Compostela in the extreme west of Spain, the suggestion of an artistic pilgrimage, passing through Lérida whence we may visit Santa Maria de Tahull, on to Jaca with its eleventh century cathedral where the pilgrims from Barcelona joined those coming over the Somport from France, then by the main Chemin de St Jacques through Burgos, so rich in artistic treasures, past León with its gothic cathedral, on to Santiago, the crowning glory of Spanish faith and Spanish art.

KATHLEEN POND

Heard and Seen

THE MOORES EXHIBITION

Having stolen the London Group's thunder, the John Moores Exhibition in Liverpool is well on the way to becoming an institution. It attracts artists on a scale that puts it on a par with the great international art exhibitions in America. Its prizes really are prizes. As significant exhibitions go it seems already to have been going an immemorial time, with by now the reputation that here of all places you can see what the younger generation is doing. But already it is worth asking what is going to happen next. Has it got anything more to demonstrate other than the magnificent eccentric flair and generosity of the founder? Will it be possible to avoid Liverpool becoming an embarrassment?

The critics have put up a very good exhibition with the material they were given, and I feel that they were well aware of the problem of direction, though the idea of *invités hors concours* is not a good one to help solve the situation.

The beautiful placing and feeling for the sculpture only emphasized how little good sculpture there was. The few pieces that stood out (which emphatically included the prize-winning pieces) drew one's attention to the fact that most of the pictures were larger, flatter, more decorative, less three-dimensionally framed than before, less meaningful on the whole, too. I admired the second prize, F. E. McWilliam's *Resistance*, as a first-rate piece of sculptural expression, technically superb; the *Two Heads* by Evelyn Williams is an interesting original, with affinities to the things one sees in ethnographical museums, where the image expressed carries so much weight that its momentum bridges over large gaps in formal arrangement. This links it to practically all religious

art of a certain standard in the past. Evelyn Williams' obsession with mask-heads is unique. I feel she should do them in *ciment fondu*, or, in this particular case, in some material like scagliola; with flint for hair, the solid material would add to the impact of the image.

If you have an international style (and for heaven's sake, why not?) and if an Englishman contributes to it, the result will be cool, lucid, in impeccable taste, balanced fastidious, any other adjective you like that embraces Gainsborough, Hepplewhite, Beau Brummel, Whistler, Adam; and of course Mundy is no exception. He is the latest figure in that school of painting that has always existed in England whose last figurative exponent was Victor Passmore in his Thames-side landscapes of the 'forties, and which includes Whistler certainly, and no less certainly Conder and Beardsley. The first prize for painting, *Cluster*, by Henry Mundy is most beautifully painted, and finely coloured; its composition is delicately poised, highly and sensitively adjusted, and yet I found myself moved only to a kind of respect for all this achievement. Perhaps the hesitant notion of the image, at the same time too palpable yet not convincingly defined enough, contributes to an unease. You do not know whether to appreciate the painting with your 'subliminal drift' or your consciousness. This dilemma upsets the easy flow or interplay between conscious and unconscious elements that should take place in the viewers' mind before any properly integrated vision. I thought Sandra Blow's *Sphere Alabaster* was moving, precisely because she took her vision on to one definite plane and resolved it there without equivocation. Of the Junior section Peter Blake's *Self Portrait With Badges* is surely the *ne plus ultra* of this eccentric genre.

Where will such an exhibition lead, if it is repeated in two years' time? Will it become the great sorting house of the Best Painting, show the tendencies, at the same time retain the qualities of direction and purpose that a good exhibition must have? Liverpool is almost official, and official exhibitions tend to become all-embracing in a Mom-complex way; Mom turns into Aunt Sally in a moment, and brings with it all the abuse it deserves. If Liverpool is to survive with some kind of definite direction, stricter selection is essential.

PATRICK REYNTIENS