



"The Persistence of Memory," by Salvador Dalí, lent to A Century of Progress Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago by the Julien Levy gallery, New York. This has proved to be one of the most perplexing of pictures at the exhibit. It is surrealism.

Superrealism Is Contributor to Art

By Whitley Noble

SPACE and time and the physical world of substances have no objective reality apart from the mental concepts of them that man creates with his mind.

A simple formula, even though startling, A mouthful from one Sir James Jeans, celebrated British scientist, whose utterances sometimes are heavy and viscous like gear grease, but who cannot wield a brush for a thing called art, and therefore cannot lay before a gasping public in material pigments those mental concepts that profoundly develop within his own magnificent cerebrum.

Too bad! If Sir James and his like could put pictures upon canvas, what might the world not see?

It remains yet to the artist of palette and brush, unfortunately or fortunately, to create our pictures for us. It is he, and he alone, who as a picture maker may wander outside the frontiers of the real—if anything is real—into the unexplored jungles of fantasy. It is he who may distort one and all of our standard mental images, our chain-store mental concepts, sincerely or with tongue in cheek, and call it art. And we like it or we don't like it, depending, of course, very much on what others think about it.

This all brings us to the two paintings reproduced upon this page, exhibits that reveal in a marked degree the influence of mental concepts.

The upper picture, which, to one totally a stranger to the thing called art, might appear as an ordinary portrayal of a collection of objects out of focus or possibly merely a scene in which candy watches melting from too much heat are presented in conspicuous position, is far—far,



"The Farm," by Joan Miró, lent to A Century of Progress Exhibition at the Art Institute. Miró is described as a Spanish primitive in a twentieth century world. He paints conventionalized objects, animals, and people gayly and in raw colors. Anyone observing this painting of "The Farm" would recognize it as a painting of a farm, though mental impressions involved are not of standard type.

Mind Creates a Perplexing Picture

indeed—from what it might appear to be. It is a surrealist's super-realistic accomplishment in surrealism, which, as one might suspect, is a school of art that is more real than the real—if anything is real. It is called "The Persistence of Memory," is the work of Salvador Dalí, a Spaniard, and is the detailed presentation of the vision as though it were an extraordinarily vivid dream. The title of the painting suggests that in the unrational depths of the mind, watches (symbolic of time), skins of animals, mountains, sea, insects, all are combined in a pattern which is not real, but in the idea of the artist, surreal, dominating the ideas and responses of waking hours as well as the hours of sleep. Perhaps, it is ventured, Señor Dalí carried that "landscape of the mind" about with him from childhood until he finally made it real—if anything is real—through strokes of his brush.

Different as day is from night is the work of another Spanish artist, Joan Miró, who created the painting reproduced in the lower picture. It bears the simple title, "The Farm," and even a Catalonian peasant would recognize it as such. Miró himself, first and last, is a Catalan—in his olives, browns, and deep blues that bear a distinct relationship to the color gamut of the early church murals of Catalonia. This relatively early work (painted in 1921-'22), while more objective than the artist's later works, contains the germ of his style. Miró is a traditionalist and a primitive, creating a world of "invented" rather than observed objects. A traditionalist-primitive never is confused with a surrealist.

Both paintings are hung in A Century of Progress Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago.