the restoration of the house, and a Reading Room on the first floor where they may join the Walpole Society or read Mark Girouard. The central experience, however, is of the sensibility art is displaying: the house for those who harbour Whig (or Knellish) sympathies, it now affords a rare and rich pleasure.

JOHN INGAMELLS

Paris
L'art en France sous le Second Empire

This exhibition, at the Grand Palais until 13th August, and previously seen, with differences, at Philadelphia and Detroit, is a further report upon that measured reconsideration of the socially accepted art of nineteenth-century France which has been proceeding now for some ten or fifteen years: the catalogue, a bibliographical gold-mine for students of the subject, lists many of the one-man exhibitions which have recrystallised individual artists.

What the Grand Palais offers is a synoptic view of the taste of these years: its range is wider than that of earlier surveys like Epaissis [1973] or Le Musée du Luxembourg in 1874 (1974), for most of the arts and crafts of the period 1852 to 1870 are represented. There is no book illustration, but, fashionably and quite reasonably, a considerable photographic section.

This display of nearly 400 objects, the latest of a series of Franco-American co-operative projects, should have grasped every advantage that magnitude could give; but all the signs are that no single mind has directed it, and it has vapourised into a costly dazzle of diverse themes and forms.

The contributors of survey-texts to the catalogue are themselves at great pains to affirm that multifariously which was a historical fact of the period itself. L'art et ses critiques: une crise de principes reflectively cites Mérimeé (referring to the London International Exhibition of 1862) on 'strange combinations of different styles brought together by accident, which denote on the part of their authors nothing but an absence of ideas and a lack of reasoning'. The charge might fit a good number of the decorative arts objects at the Grand Palais, such as the fountain for perfumed water by Marchand, Piat and Meyer, which, if not accidentally, conjoints Gothic and Renaissance forms (Fig.100).

Almost half of the exhibits are thus objets de luxe utilising medieval, or renaissance, or rococo vocabularies. A considerable group at the beginning of the exhibition has close associations with the Imperial family, so that, near Carpeaux's affecting marble figure of the Prince Imperial, aged nine, with his dog Nepve (Louvre), mass-produced copies of which made the sculptor's fortune, is not only His Highness's cradle (with Sèvres enamels after Flandrin) but also his rattle, designed by Charles Rambert, fabricated by Honoré-Sévérin Bourdoncle, and constituting a pioneer use of aluminium.

Indeed, it must surely be in their technical resourcefulness that the real interest of these objects lies. Though Louis-Constant Sévin, designer of a daunting collaborative work, the Hope Cuppe, asserted that 'Si j'emprunte aux styles du passé (...), j'interprète toujours', the fine distinction of detail and variety in most of these specimens of design must be for the specialist's eye alone.

The Hope Cuppe itself is for strong stomachs, but the exhibition does present such dazzling and enjoyable feats of craftsmanship as the huge block-printed wall-paper, Le jardin d'Armide, designed by Edouard Muller and printed in Jules Desfossés's factory, looking like the largest and prettiest silk-screen print imaginable (Fig.101); or the complex of enamel plaques by the restlessy curious Popelin, set in the social book wood frame, and celebrating the Caesarian qualities of the Emperor.

The craft objects of the exhibition make no general point: but their assemblage here in large numbers will be of great professional use to historians and connoisseurs of a wide gamut of decorative skills.

But it is with the fine arts that issues of artistic significance and of intrinsic quality become most pressing for any born doubter brought up on recent or penultimate accounts of the course of nineteenth-century art.

The immediate effect of the paintings and drawings, and to some degree of the sculptures scattered throughout the exhibition, is again of enormous stylistic diversity. This is a little different from the eclecticism of applied arts shown, for, though derivations from, say, the painting of Ingres, or from Spanish painting, leap to the eye, the interval between model and follower is not the narrow one of mere imitation. Ribot's Le Supplice des Cois (Le Supplice d'Aloisino Cane) (1867, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts) is in execution as much as subject a brilliant consequence of the Hispanic fashion of the period, with a quite distinctive grainy and dashing handling. The curious Comédie humaine of the néo-cret Jean-Louis Hamon (1852, Compiègne, Musée du Château) follows Ingres at some distance, but is totally personal in its tri-modal style — fully coloured in the foreground, monochrome in its remoter figures, and with brief salient passages of painterly realism in lantern and child's toy; its imagery of mawkish baby-figures and personages of hollow-eyed Ossianic grandeur may be enjoyed, but not perhaps openly. (Fig.99).

The distinctive or otherwise of Second Empire styles is discussed in the extremely useful catalogue text on painting by the prolific and Joseph Rishel which, after an account of evolving Salon policies, surveys the styles. The traditions of Ingres, Delacroix, Courbet, and Couture are characterised as preconditioning the period: but the conclusion on Second Empire art proper, as elsewhere in the catalogue, is that, however varied, it displays, not distinguishable stylistic streams, but only changes in the genres attempted (with history-painting in decline).

Even if this is the present view of specialists in the period, visitors to the exhibition may quite properly ask whether, in its original displayed, not distinguishable stylistic streams, but only changes in the genres attempted (with history-painting in decline).

The most urgent issues, for anyone concerned with the period, are still: what was the social acceptance of the régime, so long a prejudged or an undiscussable subject, have intrinsic merit, high, low, or intermitent; and what precisely was their relationship to that approved sequence of avant-gardes into which art-history has at times shrunk the entire nineteenth-century chronicle.

The difficulties facing the organisers of all large travelling exhibitions, and the diplomatic and cultural character of the present occasion, must of course be acknowledged. Nevertheless the decision to adopt a panoramic format, and to represent very large numbers of artists and craftsmen, takes the major critical and historical questions no further forward. The decorative arts of this period surely raise problems distinct from those in the fine arts, and requiring a separate exhibition of a smaller and utterly different show could have elicited the real links between fine art and design.

But to allow a proper consideration of artistic merit, there could have been a denser representation of the principal fine art currents and, in particular, of the major 'official' personages of the art world. One would have been grateful for ten or fifteen works by Cabanel, rather than four. Among only three works by Bouguereau, there is a subtle and elegant Le Jour des morts (1859, Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts) which, by Jules-Elie Delaunay is the Mort de Nessus (1869–70, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts), which in this context looks like a very good painting indeed, and, if palpably the result of a traditional training and a period in Italy, is full of real feeling, evidently experienced, and in no way compromised by its expression through the pondered processes of academic picture-making (there are twelve preparatory drawings at Nantes, and a painted sketch in private hands) (Fig.1).
and themes are visible in a small ancillary show, of didactic character, at the Musée d’Art et d’Essai in the Palais de Tokyo. Entitulé Autour de quelques oeuvres du Second Empire, and arranged by pupils of the École des Arts Décoratifs, the presentation is necessarily lacking from the larger display. In particular, at the centre of a consideration of the Second Empire nude, more pointed and more accessible than the corresponding ill-lit section at the Grand Palais, there is that famous Civic Liliac by Jean-Antoine Houdon, current in the Louvre, the enjoyment of which has been forbidden by bien-pensants for the past hundred years. Another major Delaunay, La Peste à Rome (1869, Louvre), is shown with rich documentation, and, around Belly’s Les Pêlerins allant à la Mosée (Louvre), a further sub-section outlines the whole course of orientalism.

The Pêlerins was seen in the Salon of 1861, as were no less than seven more paintings now shown at the Grand Palais. It was upon this Salon, that young Cézanne in a letter to Joseph Huot wrote some famous verses. We are reminded that interaction between official art and the recently preferred avant-gardes cannot have been other than extremely lively; there is much to this effect in the catalogue, and the final section of the exhibition, ‘Tendances et perspectives’, illustrates fragmentarily the beginnings of the decisive break with almost all that is seen in the preceding rooms. It is hard, at the sight of Monet’s Le Jardin de l’Infante (c.1867), (Oberlin College), of the Manet still-life from Washington (c.1866-67, National Gallery) (Fig.103), or of the Degas Edmond et Thérèse Morbilli (1867, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) (Fig.102), which indeed, in combining Ingrasm and a freer manner engagements, the impression, not to feel a raising of the spirits before a more direct and dangerous way of painting. But a lucid demonstration of the real virtues of what was being relinquished still awaits its exhibition.

MICHAEL DORAN

The Netherlands

The 150th anniversary of the Leyden University Herbarium inspired both this institution and the Lakenhal Museum to display a bewitching collection of botanical drawings, ‘Flora Illuminated’, from the end of the seventeenth to the early twentieth century (5th April–20th May). The drawings, water-colours, etchings and lithographs were originally executed as illustrations for botanical books and most of the exhibits show the entire plants, or sections thereof, buds, flowers, fruit and seeds. They are the first selection from a vast and, until recently, neglected collection which, for almost 150 years, was looked upon as material for use by undergraduates. In fact, apart from being most accurate illustrations, most of the exhibits are also works of art.

The earliest specimens shown here, signed SM or SDM, and dated 1690, are delicate water-colours by an as yet unidentified garden of the time, but the most impressive examples are those made by Laurens van der Winne (1712-1742), a member of the Haarlem family of painters who moved to Leyden in 1735. He painted these brilliant ‘flower portraits’ at Leyden in 1736 and 1737, possibly in the garden of the Amsterdam Academy, for Professor Van Royen (1704-1779). In addition he made water-colours after sketches made at the Cape by an unknown explorer-draughtsman (Fig.107). With the aid of these (most accurate) sketches Van der Winne also composed a unique and fascinating painting in oils of an imaginary Cape landscape full of examples of the local flora in the foreground.

No wonder that, with examples like Boschaert, Van der Ast and Rachel Ruysch, Amsterdam and Batavian botanists learned to combine science and art so successfully. In this field too, of course, styles and techniques changed with the times; all the printing techniques are represented here too. Yet, it is noticeable that a very strong tradition of botanical illustration is adhered to by all these craftsmen-artists, such as C. B. Voet (a member of the famous family of silversmiths), P. Cattell, J. van der Spyk, B. Hoola van Nooten, P. J. Redouté, Van Arckenhausen and Q. M. R. Verhulst, to mention only the more important. (It says something for the quality that one has to seek out the Redouté specimens – deliberately mushroom rooms have been selected rather than roses.)

Plants and flowers, once exotic, from the Near and Far East, the Dutch East Indies, Africa and South America, are now familiar, partly thanks to the success of the botanical books and prints, which inspired both explorers and growers to bring back cuttings, seeds and bulbs and to try to grow these newly discovered, and newly named, species in Dutch soil – particularly Dutch bulbs, fuchsias and amaryllis, orchids and lilies.

The Rijksmuseum Print Room, Amsterdam has a display of works by R. N. Roland Holst (1868-1938), the artist’s own bequest to the State of the Netherlands with a clause that it was not to be exhibited until thirty years after his death. The selection shown now consists of nine etchings, eighty-seven lithographs, 172 drawings, eighteen paintings and eleven designs for windows and murals. The exhibition is not, therefore, a proper retrospective collection; nevertheless, it is sufficiently representative to confirm this artist’s gifts, especially as a draftsman and etcher. His work is a true reflection of the new trends and techniques of his greater contemporaries in both the Netherlands and in Britain, interesting nowadays especially to the younger generation. R. N. Roland Holst was also Director of the Amsterdam Academy. The family name, Roland Holst, however, owes its fame mainly to artist’s wife, Henriette (Fig.108), one of the foremost poets of the era, and to their nephew, Antonius (1867-1976), the leading poet and essayist of his time.

Pewter made in Amsterdam, Antwerp and Rotterdam from the fifteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century was shown at the Willet-Holthuysen Museum in Amsterdam during the month of June. Over one hundred specimens display the excellent quality and the wealth of designs of Dutch and Flemish pewter. The authorities in these rich seaports frequently used pewter objects – flags, candlesticks, salts and chargers, etc. – for official receptions. It would be wrong to think of pewter as the poor relation of silver, only owned and used by the less well-off. It may not have been used for the grandest occasions, but every well-to-do family was sure to have pewter as well as silver objects for every-day domestic and festive occasions. Contemporary paintings, some of which are included in the exhibition, show how beautifully made pewter looks against oak and walnut, and many an old City Hall to this day proudly displays its pewter treasures.

Among the specimens in this exhibition, there is, for instance, one example (Fig.109) which features many of pewter’s best qualities as to design, craftsmanship, usefulness and endurance. This is a measure with a handle and a beautifully hinged lid which was made in Amsterdam in the second half of the seventeenth century by the master G.V. for the Amsterdam Chamber of the V.O.C. (Dutch East India Company). Its assay marks show the Amsterdam coat of arms plus a bird in an oval. The inscription on the lid shows the V.O.C.’s initials. This measure was discovered in 1973 among the treasures in the hold of the Princes Maria, one of the V.O.C.’s ships which was sunk off the Scilly Islands in 1686.

The catalogue of the exhibition constitutes the first comprehensive publication on Dutch and Flemish pewter, from about 1450 to c.1600. Revised interest in pewter, among private collectors as well as in professional circles, in Belgium as well as in the Netherlands, gradually led to more research and when looking at the list of sources, one is struck by the fact that it contains only two books on pewter, almost all the other titles referring to archives. One of the reasons why so little has been published in a reasonably accessible form, is the fact that, 1 Keur van tin uit de havensteden Amsterdam, Antwerpen en Rotterdam, published by the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, Amsterdam, the Provincial Museum Schiedam, Antwerp, and the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam; 350 pp. about 400 illustrations. DN22.50.

100. Fountain in silvered bronze, by Léon Marchand, designed by Frédéric-Eugène Plaut, and enamelled by Bernard-Alfred Meyer. 1867. Height 1.96 cm, width 0.62 cm (excluding support). (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes; exh. Grand Palais, Paris).

101. *Le Jardin d'Armide*, designed by Edouard Muller, printed by the Manufacture Jules Desfosse. Block-printed wallpaper, 0.96 by 0.77 cm. (Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris; exh., central panel only. Grand Palais, Paris).

102. *Edmond et Thérèse M***,** by Edgar Degas. 1867. 1.15 by 0.80 cm. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; exh. Grand Palais, Paris).