

The following piece, purportedly written by Pablo Picasso, recently appeared in *ORIGIN* (Number 12, 1964), a journal published in Japan. It is, needless to say, a startling statement, and in endeavoring to ascertain its authenticity the editors wrote to Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, the head of Galerie Louise Leiris, which handles Picasso's work. Mr. Kahnweiler responded as follows:

Of course, there is no such confession by Picasso. What has been reproduced in many newspapers years ago and reappears from time to time is an extract of a story by the late Giovanni Papini called "Il libro nero" where the hero, a scottish millionaire, called Gog, visits strange places and among them Picasso's studio, where the artist makes this confession to him. When the whole thing started, Papini, who had not died then, loyally declared in the Nuovo Giornale of Florence that there had never really been such a confession and that he had not seen Picasso since 1918, but that it was fiction.

A CONFESSION*

When I was young, like all the young, art, great art, was my religion; but, with the years, I came to see that art, as it was understood until 1800 was henceforth finished, on its last legs, doomed, and that so-called artistic activity with all its abundance is only the many-formed manifestation of its agony. Men are detached from and more and more disinterested in painting, sculpture and poetry; appearances to the contrary, men today have put their hearts into everything else: the machine, scientific discoveries, wealth, the domination of natural forces and immense territories. We no longer feel art as a vital need, as a spiritual necessity, as was the case in centuries past.

Many of us continue to be artists and to be occupied with art for reasons which have little in common with true art, but rather through a spirit of imitation, through nostalgia for tradition, through mere inertia, through love of ostentation, of prodigality, of intellectual curiosity, through fashion or through calculation. They live still through force of habit and snobbery in a recent past, but the great majority in all places no longer have any sincere passion for art, which they consider at most as a diversion, a hobby and a direction.

Little by little, new generations with a predilection for mechanics and sports, more sincere, more cynical and brutal, will leave art to the museums and libraries as an incomprehensible and useless relic of the past.

From the moment that art is no longer the sustenance (sic) that nourishes the best, the artist may exteriorize his talent in all sorts of experiments with new formulas, in endless *caprices* and *fancy*, in all the *expedients of intellectual charlatanism*. In the arts, people no longer seek consolation, nor exaltation. But the refined, the *rich*, the *indolent*, the distillers of quintessence seek the *new*, the unusual, the original, the *extravagant*, the *shocking*. And I, since cubism and beyond, I have satisfied these gentlemen and these critics with all the various whims which have entered my head, and the less they understood them, the more they admired. By amusing myself at these games, at all these tom-fooleries, at all these brain-busters, riddles and arabesques, I became famous quite rapidly. And celebrity means for a painter: sales, increment, money, wealth.

Today, as you know, I am famous and very rich. But when completely alone with myself, I haven't the nerve to consider myself an artist in the great and ancient sense of the word.

There have been great painters like Giotto, Titian, Rembrandt, and Goya. I am only a *public entertainer* who has understood his time.

This is a bitter confession, mine, more painful indeed than it may seem, but it has the merit of being sincere.

PABLO PICASSO

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