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ADULT ARTS EDUCATION

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ADULT ARTS EDUCATION IN SWEDEN

I. The Popularization of Art

In Sweden, cultural and social discussion in the 20th century has, to a certain extent centered on the popularization of cultural life and the Fine Arts. At the end of the 19th century, already, Ellen Key, the internationally known author feminist preached with fervor the gospel of "Beauty to All". Since then, cultural life has been continually broadened. At the time of the First World War, Richard Bergh, the painter, was appointed Head of the National Museum. In re-organizing the collections of the Museums for the purpose of public appeal, he undertook a task of the utmost importance. Other important dates are 1930, when the National Art Council was founded, and 1947, when the Popular Movements' Art Association came into existence, as a result of the early postwar spirit of progress.

In Sweden, nevertheless, there is still evidence of bad taste and underdeveloped sense of aesthetics. Many Swedes still adorn their homes with worthless pictures and other art products of very poor quality. Mass produced pictures are still sold all over the country, at factory gates, in market places, offices and homes. However, remarkable progress has been made during the last two decades; a larger group of people have become interested in aesthetic matters. In thousands of homes there is today not only a live interest in art, but also a small, personally chosen art collection and, perhaps, a selection of good books on art, as well as reproductions for study purposes.

It is often said that the unity between Art and People during and before the Middle Ages, came to its end during the Renaissance. Then Art became a concern of the ruling minority. Generally the masses lived without Art (folkart excepted). At the present, the aim is to re-establish this unity, as well as to break the isolation of the artists and put to an end the aesthetic poverty of the masses. It would be an overstatement to pretend that in Sweden this task has been completed; however, in the last decades, improvement in that direction has been clearly noticeable.

Two features of this development are especially apparent. One is the widespread acceptance of modern styles, the other the increasing interest in art by

groups of people who are traditionally considered not to be the bearers of culture. There is, of course, still a lag, as regards general taste in art, but no longer as obvious. Modern styles are becoming more and more accepted. A considerable number of the Swedish people have no longer aesthetic ideals of the 19th century. People no longer ask, as they used to: "What does this picture represent"? Abstract and non-naturalistic styles have become accepted and liked. This means that nowadays, young artists may not have to wait till the end of their lives to become appreciated by the general public. Even if not quite abreast of the new trends the general taste of the public has come pretty close to them. Artists no longer work in a vacuum, they know their work will be appreciated.

It is interesting to note that many among this new art public are young people and industrial and other workers of rather scanty schooling. It is among these people that interest in art has most noticeably increased in recent years.

A couple of years ago, the most important Swedish art magazine "Art Review" interviewed a number of persons on art conditions in their communities. The answers represented a cross-section of interest in art in modern Sweden. A Librarian at Ludvika, an industrial town of some 12,000 inhabitants in central Sweden, wrote as follows:

"The principal events in our town during the past year were: Three fine exhibitions: in January: Young Norwegian Art; in February: Primitive Art; and in April: Seven foolhardy avant-gardistic Graphic Artists. In the autumn, our own art society's lottery exhibition, moderate and acceptable, and an art dealer's exhibition from Stockholm of the usual easy to sell type. Furthermore, five individual exhibitions, three of which were fair, one bad though unpretentious and one very inferior. We get too many exhibitions, should much prefer fewer and better. The poor artists have sold a great deal, the fair ones less and the really good ones hardly anything at all. HSB (a co-operative housing establishment) has put up a good sculpture in a suburb - this is the second sculpture in our town - and the art committee has bought eight or nine paintings of a reasonable quality, for our public buildings. Three amateur art groups in sketching, painting and sculpturing have been working under the reliable direction of educational associations. One group has followed the radio course on the History of Modern Art. Finally, on three occasions, art films have been shown and discussed."

The growth of the interest in art is mainly caused by two factors: One is the existence of the popular movements: the trade unions, the temperance movement, the consumers' co-operatives, the farmers' organizations, the Adult Education Associations etc. all of which have contributed to the shaping of modern Sweden. These movements have been the means of the masses in achieving a democratic society, a Welfare State with a broadening of the general level of education. The popular movements - have never exclusively centered their work on economic or other special interests. Very often they maintain an extensive cultural programme, endeavouring to improve the social and cultural conditions of their members. A union meeting may, thus, end with a cultural programme; visiting art exhibitions, recitals by authors etc. The organizations have also shown considerable generosity in making grants to general cultural activities.

The other factor is the readiness of the State and other authorities to support these activities economically and otherwise. It is taken for granted, that in a Democracy the State should give all citizens a chance to participate in the cultural life of the country and be responsible for the working conditions of the artists.

Naturally, the representatives of cultural education generally think that their portion of public funds is insufficient. In spite of this Sweden must be considered generous in its support of cultural activities.

In the field of art education work has been carried out by several organizations. To begin with there are the Art Societies, both of local and nation-wide character (see chapter II). In addition, there are Adult Education Organizations (III), in most cases closely connected with the large popular movements; the ABF, (the Workers' Educational Association), with the Trade Unions and the Labor Party; the Good Templars' Educational Association with the Temperance Movement; and the SLS (Swedish Rural Educational Association) with the Farmers' Organizations etc. The purpose of these educational associations is not only basic membership training, (i.e. trade unionism), on the contrary; an extensive cultural and social program is maintained in a number of important subjects. The educational work is mainly done with groups and lectures; previously public libraries were also maintained by the organizations but are now more or less the responsibility of the State and the Municipalities. Other forms of activity have taken their place: theatre, films, music, educational work among young people, children's films, travel, art exhibitions and so on. The Government, the organizations and the participants themselves contribute towards the cost of these activities.

In recent years there has been a marked change in the approach to popular art education. In the forties, when the popular art movements started to expand there was a great deal of moralizing talk about the bad "art" frequently found in Swedish homes. Books were written on the subject and exhibitions were arranged to show these "horror products", which were in abundance. There were - and there still are - painters who will produce perhaps a hundred or more canvases with the same motif, manufactured in the manner of the mass production factory. Many such products were imported from other countries, especially from Denmark, and distributed throughout the country by an organized network of agents. The proponents of good art have tried, unsuccessfully, to find legal means to stop import and sale of such products. Another example of such business in art is inferior reproductions of bad pictures which are sold at high prices to private persons, tea-rooms, assembly-halls and the like.

In recent years, however, this whole problem has been pushed into the background. The main problem of art education is no longer to stop the sale of inferior products but to create interest in good art. A positive approach has been substituted for a negative one. Helping people to understand and appreciate good art removes the very basis of success for the inferior products. The Government Art Committee put the problem this way:

"The existence of bad art is the result of - not the reason for - the low level of aesthetic culture among large sections of the Swedish people. The enemy to fight is not low quality art but the lack of aesthetic culture".

This opinion is now widely spread among those working in art education. Consequently less energy is spent warning people against inferior art and more on making people appreciate good art.

In spite of the considerable progress made, only part of the public have learned to appreciate good art. Art education must continually seek new means to reach the public. An idea which is presently being discussed by the ABF and the Popular Movements' Art Association may be worth mentioning. It is suggested that a kind of

"art evenings" should be used as another means of propaganda. The programmes should be both educational and entertaining. Frequent use should be made of lantern slides. Some well known artist should be engaged to talk about some foreign country. Films could be shown, guessing games dealing with art, held, and a small and striking pedagogic exhibition arranged.

In these and other ways a show could be composed to appeal to the public. If this idea were to be realized, it might be a way to prove to people that art can be fun.

This transformation of art activities in Sweden has, of course, not been possible without conflicts. Representatives of the old cultural tradition and the spokesmen for the new social classes: bourgeois refinement versus popular vitality, aristocratic ideals versus democratic ideals, culture of the few versus culture of the masses. The representatives of the popular movements have held the opinion that the institutions of culture - including museums - want to reserve art for a minority of the people; that the traditional custodians of culture suffer from academic stuffiness and snobishness, and for lack of respect for the common man. Academic people and the public institutions for culture have been accused of a lack of interest in popularizing art. This is said to have made it necessary for the popular movements to take care of the matter themselves, which may sometimes have led to a certain watering down of the work. The representatives of the official side have maintained, that the popular art propaganda has used inferior methods and that they have put too much emphasis on the quick conquest of a new public for art. It has also been said that a too marked popularization of art endangers the freedom of the artists and the integrity of art. Art must not prostitute itself to be accepted by the people; one should not need to coax people; those who do not come of their own will should be left alone. These dissensions between the aristocratic and the popular ideal, between culture for the masses and culture for a few are less marked at present and may be expected to decrease further as the representatives of the different parties find ways for collaboration and the actual differences in the level of culture are reduced.

II. Art organizations in Sweden

There are a number of special organizations for adults art education in Sweden. These organizations although they co-operate closely have divided their work in a way that is natural in view of their history and organization. The most important organizations are:

- (1) The National Art Council (Riksförbundet för bildande konst), NAC.
- (2) The Popular Movements' Art Association (Folkrörelsernas konstfrämjande), PMAA.
- (3) The local art societies.
- (4) The Swedish Society of Industrial Design (Svenska slöjdföreningen), SSID.

The National Art Council

Together with the Popular Movements' Art Association, the National Art Council founded in 1930, has been a decisive factor in the popularization for art in

Sweden. Local and regional art societies, municipalities, county authorities, museums, educational organizations and business enterprises comprise the membership of the Council. The work of the Council principally consists of arranging exhibitions. 175 such shows have been arranged all over the country. The pictures are usually borrowed from private and public collections and individual artists. The Council has practically no collection of its own. The exhibitions are chiefly educational, displaying material which is consistent and arranged in such a way that even a relatively inexperienced observer will comprehend what he sees and gain something from it. Comprehensive catalogues, sometimes as large as small handbooks, are always prepared.

In one recent year, the following exhibitions were arranged: How a work of art is born; Painters from Skane; From realism to concretism; Scandinavian art; and French Graphic Art. In each year, the National Council arranges exhibitions at about 200 places for a public of some 160,000 persons, of which generally one third are school children. As a rule the exhibitions, attended by an assistant who give lectures, demonstrates the exhibition to school classes and other visiting groups and furnishes information to individual visitors. About 1,600 demonstrations and lectures are given each year.

Locally, the exhibitions are arranged by various interested parties: municipalities, schools, art societies, museums etc. With some exceptions the exhibitions are non commercial; nevertheless, in 1952, 259 pieces were sold at a total sum of 62,000 Sw. Crs.

The National Council now obtains a government grant of 175,000 Sw. Crs. annually and receives about 40,000 Sw. Crs. in membership fees. The staff consists of 11 persons, of whom six are university trained specialists in the history of Art and Art education.

Lately, the Council has taken a considerable interest in documentaries on art and contributed to the production of a number of Swedish films as well as the import of several foreign ones. In this field, the work of the Council has been pioneering.

A collection of 4,000 lantern slides are owned by the Council dealing mainly with 20th century art. The slides are lent out to lectures, art societies etc. Some series of slides have been prepared for use by study circles.

The Popular Movements' Art Association

Very generally speaking, the National Council may be regarded as an art organization for the middle classes. A study would probably show that their exhibitions are mostly visited by teachers, office employees, engineers, physicians, business men and similar groups.

In the same way, one might consider that the PMAA is an art organization for "working classes", industrial workers and for rural groups. The National Council chiefly work in conjunction with museums and local art societies; therefore, appealing to a great extent to an audience which may be expected to be interested in art. The Art Association mainly consists of a number of popular organizations whose membership is made up of the majority of what is usually called in Sweden "social group III", i.e. industrial workers and similar groups.

The Art Association was founded in 1947 in order to bring high quality art to the members of the popular movements, many of whom were unfamiliar with this aspect of culture. ABF, the Co-operative Union, the Trade Unions' and the Employers' Association all joined the PMAA. The organization has an annual Government grant of 40,000 Sw. Crs. and receives 105,000 Sw. Crs. in membership fees. It has about ten employees, of whom three are professionals in the field of art.

Contrary to the work of the National Council, selling is an important feature of the Art Association's programme. It's philosophy is that to give people an opportunity of obtaining art of their own is better than just letting them visit an occasional art exhibition. Therefore, from the very start, the Art Association has made it a policy to commission and sell art at prices within reach of the special groups to whom it caters. Since oil paintings and other single issues are always rather expensive, Graphic Art has so far been the primary object of sale and propaganda.

Chromolithography, long almost extinct in Swedish art life, has become it's main interest. Lately, other types of graphic art, mainly wood cuts and silk screenprints have also been issued. Not only Swedish artists have been commissioned, but also many eminent artists from other Scandinavian countries. Sculptures, as well as some French prints, have been sold to a limited extent. The price for a framed print is 63 Sw. Crs. In 1955, the Art Association sales totaled 900,000 Sw. Crs., of which 750,000 derive from the sale of graphic art.

The selling is done partly through agents within affiliated organizations, partly and primarily at exhibitions arranged by the organization. Last year, ten exhibitions of different types were organized; some of them consisted exclusively of the Art Associations' own prints, others mainly of oil paintings, water colours etc. A third type of exhibition was done to suit educational purpose. One was devoted to "Halmstadsgruppen", the most eminent representatives of surrealism in Swedish art. In co-operation with the Swedish Society of Industrial Design (See below) a "Beautiful weekday" was arranged with model flats, furniture, interior decoration and graphic art. 275 exhibitions were held at 200 places and attended by 100,000 adult visitors, and about 50,000 schoolchildren.

From 1947 until the end of 1954 the Art Association had arranged 1,110 exhibitions which were attended by more than half a million visitors. In the same period some 450 different graphic prints had been issued. As a rule, each lithographic print is issued in 250 copies, other techniques somewhat less.

In this connexion it might be interesting to note, that the National Council generally exhibits in fairly large cities, whereas, the Art Association generally tends to small towns and remote villages. 60 per cent of the exhibitions were shown in places with less than 3,000 inhabitants. In many of these places, it was the very first time that good art was exhibited.

Selling art gives the Association a profit which makes additional activities possible. The Art Association thus publishes a bulletin with a circulation of 25,000 copies. It is the largest art publication in the country, and contains art historical and pedagogical articles on art, book reviews, interviews with artists etc.

The organization owns 14,000 slides, which are at the disposal of lectures study circles and other interested groups. Each year about a hundred circles use these slides as a basis for their studies. Study guides and correspondent courses, are published and seminars of varying length are arranged for group leaders. Special material for popular art propaganda by trade unions and other groups has been prepared for use and is very popular. (About the pedagogical activity of Art Association see below under Study circles in Art Appreciation).

During recent years there has been a growing interest in the artistic decoration of assembly halls etc. Special grants are available from a lottery, arranged by different organizations in support of cultural endeavor (i.e., stipends to authors). In the period between 1949 - 1954, art for about 60,000 Sw. Crs. has been purchased and placed in different assembly halls. Several organizations turn to the National Council and the Art Association for advice about the decoration of their meeting rooms.

Local art societies

The oldest art association in Sweden was established as early as 1932 and is still active under the name: The General Art Society of Sweden. This Society organizes a yearly art lottery among its members, and publishes a monograph on some artist. An annual fellowship is also given to an artist.

A number of local and regional art societies were later founded, using the General Art Society as a model. This type of organization gained popularity in the 1940's, when it became usual for the employees of an office or a factory to form art clubs among themselves. There are now about 400 such clubs and 100 art societies open to anyone interested. The exact number of members in these organizations is not known.

Most of these art societies arrange lotteries every year. The members then pay a certain sum in order to take part in the lottery. In this way, a large turnover is achieved. Although no reliable statistics are at hand, the art involved is estimated to be worth about three million Sw. Crs. annually.

Lotteries are the main and often the only type of activity of these societies. Some of them also arrange exhibitions, film evenings, or lectures, others study trips or visits to an artist's studio. A few societies have their own collections, which have become the beginning of local art museums.

The art societies, especially those organized among employees, have been subject to much criticism. They have been accused of doing more harm than good; that their concentration on lotteries appeals to people's greediness more than to their interest in art etc. Above all, it has been maintained that the societies do not carry on a sufficient educational programme to give their members an opportunity of developing their taste and improving their knowledge. According to the critics, art which is easy to understand, traditional, and for the most part naturalistic, is often favoured in the lotteries. It is maintained that a good many painters have realized this and adapted their styles accordingly; they will paint to suit the public - ("art society paintings").

As a result of this situation, such questions as "Are the art societies a danger to culture?" have become the topics of debate. What the critics above all desire, is a more extensive educational programme of lectures, exhibitions, literature, study circles etc. The National Art Council is endeavouring to be a co-ordinating committee for the local art societies, but only a minority of them

have joined. Societies in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo have formed co-ordinating committees making for considerably better programmes there than elsewhere in the country. The co-ordinating committee in Gothenburg publishes the magazine, "Konst-Perspektiv".

The Swedish Society of Industrial Design

The art associations discussed so far are concerned with art, pictures, sculptures, etc. However, there is also another organization, which should be mentioned; the Swedish Society of Industrial Design. This Society carries on art education in a wider sense, trying to improve the human environment as a whole.

The Swedish Society of Industrial Design was founded in 1845, primarily to preserve and develop the arts and crafts, which were threatened by the new industrial age. Later on, their programme was radically changed and now the Society is principally concerned with the products of industry, working with many different groups. It co-operates with manufacturers of furniture, textiles, household utensils, lamps, decorative arts etc. to attain better, more practical and attractive products. In co-operating with the manufacturers, the Society acts as an intermediary agency between artists and the industry. Artists are also made available for courses and conferences. The Society co-operates with business to eliminate undesirable conditions on the market, as well as to increase the sales of high quality industrial products for everyday use; for instance by arranging courses for salesmen. Finally the public is approached directly with an educational programme.

The Society has arranged some exhibitions of considerable size, the latest one, H55, was held at Hålsingborg in 1955. The objective is to introduce a greater public to a high level of functional and aesthetic standard in homes, public buildings, schools, restaurants etc., and to arouse their interest.

Strictly for educational purposes, a number of easily transportable exhibitions have been arranged and shown all over the country. Study material for women's and youth organizations, study circles and other groups have been prepared. The material includes designs and models of flats, furniture cut-outs, models of furniture, samples of textiles and wallpaper, slides and furniture catalogues. In the adult education organizations, this material has been of great use and many study circles have studied "home-making" and interior decorating from a functional and aesthetic point of view. The Society has also received a special Government grant for a guidance programme intended for young people who are about to set up their own home. A limited number of courses are held for teachers and home counsellors.

The Society receives a yearly Government grant of 50,000 Sw. Crs. Beginning in 1956 a special grant of 30,000 Sw. Crs. has been made available for a study counsellor who will commence work this autumn. The counsellor will be placed in the Central North of Sweden and will within a limited region carry on an educational programme in study organizations, schools and other interested groups.

The Swedish Society of Industrial Design also publishes a magazine called "Form".

The Society is a continuation and development of the ideas of such people as William Morris and John Ruskin in Great Britain, (the Red Brick House), and Gropius in Germany, (the Bauhaus). Inspired by a democratic and aesthetic pathos the Society has tried to find ways by which industry may produce high quality products for the benefit of the greatest possible number of citizens. The conception of beauty is radical and, with considerable success, the Society has upheld simple, modern ideals of style. The products of industry ought to look exactly as such and not pretend to be the exclusive and ornate products of craft. Every kind of imitation in style has been combated. The president of the Society, who has been in office for many years has expressed its philosophical and social principles in a programme for the Stockholm exhibition of 1930 as follows: "It is much more important to make good everyday commodities available to the people than to produce a rare master-work. It is more important to work thoroughly at the vast multitude of goods, with which we come into contact in our physical environment and of which comparatively few could be called home furnishings in an artistic sense, than to compose a single room of luxury". By following this programme the Swedish Society of Industrial Design has contributed greatly to the creation of a pruer, more attractive and more practical social environment.

In this connexion, "Folket i Bild" (The People in Pictures), a weekly paper with literary, social and cultural ambitions should be mentioned. Although owned by the Social-Democratic Party, "Folket i Bild" is an independent magazine and not an organ of the Party. The paper has been a pioneer of inexpensive book and has sold more than 10 million volumes of good fiction (novels and short stories) by modern Swedish and foreign authors as well as other types literature. For some years now, "Folket i Bild" has also been sponsoring an art club which issues graphic art in black and white by modern Swedish artists. This art club has organized groups throughout the country, the members of which usually pay a certain sum per month entitling them to one or several prints at the end of each year. Exhibitions are also part of the programme and are held both within organizations and for the general public. The art club issues a bulletin as well as some art literature (in connexion with the Rembrandt exhibition at the National Museum in 1956 an attractive book about Rembrandt's etchings was published).

Thus, there are many exhibitions of good art besides those of the traditional centres of culture. In a country like Sweden this involves some difficulties. The long distances involved, frequently makes for high costs of transportation, an even greater problem, however, is the lack of suitable localities. In the small towns and communities, where most of the travelling exhibitions are shown, there are usually no special localities built for art exhibitions. Consequently, the art collections have to be hung in various localities built for entirely different purposes. Exhibitions have been arranged in churches and chapels, the temperance movement's assembly halls, Labor Halls, barracks, lunch rooms, corridors, schools, court houses, town halls, gymnasiums etc. In such places the light is often imperfect and it is usually difficult to hang the pictures in a satisfactory way.

III. Adult Education Organizations and Art

In the Swedish adult education organizations, more than 45,000 study circles are active each year with almost half a million participants. As a rule, the circles begin in the autumn and continue through the winter season. During this time, an average of 15 meetings are held. Every circle has about 10 participants. The circles use different methods. The classical idea of a study circle is a group of people who regularly meet to discuss a given subject. The idea is that

the participants should have approximately the same amount of education and outlook. All participants are expected to contribute actively to the work of the circle. Free conversation is the most important aspect of the study circles; the discussion is led by a member of the groups.

The fact that the study circles have actually developed into a popular movement, has, of course, entailed fundamental changes in the nature of the circles. Nowadays, study circles have completely lost their uniformity of approach. There are still many working in accordance with the old concepts. Most of the circles, however, have lost the characteristics of informal fellowship and changed into a type of educational activities looked upon by most of the participants as a way to learn certain facts. They do not come for educational conversations with friends, but for something definite and a wish to learn to know a special subject. This puts a new demand upon the circles and their approach. A more definite programme has to be worked out, qualified teachers must be employed and carefully prepared study material placed at their disposal. New educational methods have been tried, some of which closely follow those used in the schools. Now, lectures and regular text books are more commonly used, and documentaries, filmstrips and other pedagogical aids have become more and more frequent.

Regardless of these changes a study circle is to a large extent still a project of the participants themselves; one in which the aims and methods of work as well as its success are determined by the members' own work and interests. In middle sized and small communities, especially, study circles are still characterized by a spirit of fellowship that is hardly to be found in other types of education. Often, the teacher is merely the organizer and leader of the group; he helps the participants to reach their own conclusion without telling them what to learn or to think.

The rapid growth of the study circles has been due to public support received ever since 1948. Nowadays, study circles can obtain contributions from the Government for study material and the salaries of instructor teacher or leaders. However, the contributions only go to approved study circles, which may obtain as much as 7:50 Sw. Crs. per hour of study; 300 Sw. Crs. for one season of study is the limit.

The Fine Arts, are the most popular subject in the study circle (23 per cent). The majority of these circles are in music (8,000 circles). Art has previously attracted very few, and is still one of the minor subjects. In the last ten years, however, interest has grown continuously. In 1954, 1,350 circles studied art; of these 1,050 were practical amateur groups, the rest, 300, studied art appreciation. Another category which may be mentioned here includes arts and crafts, china painting, woodwork, textile sewing, interior decorating and home improvement. In the following chapter, however, only those circles are discussed which deal with art in a more restricted sense (painting, drawing, sculpture, graphic art etc.).

The most extensive work in this field is done by ABF, which in 1955 had 130 theoretical circles and 700 practical ones with a total of almost 9,500 participants.

Study Circles in Art Appreciation

These circles are primarily concerned with modern art, that is, art from the early time of the international impressionism up to modern times. Swedish art is often the basis of approach, and is studied against its international background. This concentration on art created in the last hundred years has been considered well grounded for several reasons. It is chiefly with this type of art that the

general public is familiar. At the same time, it is to modern art that many people feel least akin. Those who have grown up and lived in an environment where art was not considered important are often strangers to the types of expression of modern art. This unfamiliar feeling often results in an aggressive contempt of what is modern.

The lack of sympathy, even hostility towards modern art was especially predominant in the latter part of the forties, when art studies in adult education work began to expand. This was the reason why the study circles took up modern art to such a great extent. The first task of the study circles was thus to convince the participants that modern art held great values and deserved to be taken seriously. It was necessary to explain why the artists paint the way they do, how an older tradition has been broken and replaced by new, not yet stabilized modes of expression. "Why is art the way it is" was a theme often under discussion not only in study circles but also in courses, lectures and debates etc. This situation changed within a few years. Now, in the middle of the fifties, modern art is widely accepted. In the study circles there is no longer any need to defend and explain modern styles. The participants come already with a positive view.

Very recently, a new interest to art from other periods had been noticeable. In 1955-56 quite a number of the study circles took up the study of Rembrandt, his time and art. This study got inspired by the great Rembrandt exhibition arranged by the National Museum in the beginning of 1956. Special study material consisting of slides and a comprehensive study handbook, was prepared by the museum in co-operation with the educational organizations. A series of slides with running commentaries was also prepared and has been frequently used. It is likely that about 75 study circles have studied Rembrandt during 1955-56.

The training of study directors and the preparation of study material has been of vital importance to this rapid development of art education. By the Popular Movements' Art Association's close affiliation with the adults education organizations and other popular movements it has been well equipped both to influence these groups to pay more attention to art and to guide them in the work and furnish them with material.

In earlier study of art, there was a tendency to discuss different schools of art in theoretical terms. This inclination was natural, since the technique of reproduction was not as well developed as it is now, and there was a scarcity of pictures, especially colour pictures. A marked tendency, recently, in art studies has been relating the study of art to pictures thus avoiding abstractions and general terms. The Art Associations and the National Museum own extensive slide archives mentioned above, which are used by lecturers for research etc. at a very low cost.

To facilitate and systematize the use of slides the art associations have prepared special series with comments, some of these series are adequate material for a whole course of study. The pictures have been arranged into groups: historical, stylistic, technical etc. One set of slides may contain up to 200 pictures covering one term of study. The circles may order slides at the beginning of the autumn term. The pictures are delivered each week in boxes of about twenty, and circulated, so that in a short period of time, several study circles can use the same set of pictures. The study leader gets the slides a few days before the meeting, to enable him to go through the material himself before showing it to the members of the group.

When the study circle meets, one member of the group may be chosen to give a short introduction about the predominant style of a certain period. He will then describe the general background and present the outstanding features of the style. The slides are then shown, with comments by the speaker (or group leader) and discussed by the group. The discussions are often so animated that only about ten slides can be dealt with in one evening.

The study circles also use coloured prints, exclusively or to supplement slides. Slides are, however, considered more suitable than reproductions: the details of a picture are more easily noticed, when the slides are projected on a wall. Everybody can see well, whereas a print shown at one end of the table cannot be studied satisfactorily by those at the opposite end. Slides shown in the dark also make for better concentration compared to using prints. In the latter case, other objects are likely to distract the observers' attention.

Picture analysis is subject to much consideration in Swedish adult art education. When people "do not understand" it is known by experience that they have rarely actually looked at it properly. They have glanced at it, been repelled by its unfamiliar style, but soon given up. Therefore, it has been necessary to find a method of systematic picture study for people who are not used to looking at art. At an early stage ABF and the Popular Movements' Art association experimented with a short guide to picture analysis to be used, primarily, in training courses for study directors. As one of the first, more complete study guides may be mentioned "Konsten och i" (The Art and We) issued by the Art Council. Later on this method of analysis has been improved especially by a couple of correspondence courses, and the schedule of analysis may therefore be of interest here:

1. General analysis: Describe the picture, and its contents. What happens in the picture? When and how does it happen?
2. Do you think that there is any special feeling attached to the picture? If so, describe it!
3. Describe colours and form. The colours may be light, dark, bright, soft, warm, cool; the different colour fields may be similar or contrasting, the picture may or may not have pronounced depth of perspective. The form may be firm and determinate or loose. The linear characteristics may be striking.

In addition, the picture may or may not give an impression of movement and it may consist of many or few "parts".

4. Describe the type of painting! The strokes of the brush may be more or less visible, the method of handling the brush more or less even, and vary in width and power.
5. It is also possible to investigate the painter's attitude towards the motif, if he describes it dispassionately and objectively, if he is emotionally involved in it and distorts the forms for the purpose of expression, if he looks upon the motif as the point from which he sets out to do a free composition in colours and form etc. The motif may be taken from the surroundings, it may be pure imagination or again a tale, or myth.

The increased supply of art films has been of great importance not only to the study circles but to art education as a whole. Ten years ago only a very few acceptable art films were available. Now the situation has changed. In the lists of art study material published by ABF, there are 34 16-m.m. art films, which by their type and quality have all been considered suitable for adult education purposes. Several of these motion pictures have been produced in Sweden, where the Art Council has shown special interest in this activity. In the same manner, as the slides, art films help to make a difficult art easier to understand by penetrating into the particulars, by bringing out details and forcing the audience to concentrate. The films are sometimes shown to the general public, since the study circle often cannot bear the cost.

The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation has made a valuable contribution to art education and art study circles. During the last six years, four programme series of art, three of which dealt with 20th century art, have been broadcast. The first series was of special importance to the study circles. It was devoted to pioneers of modern art in the northern countries and consisted of a series of lectures by one of the most appreciated art educators in Sweden. In connexion with the broadcast, a collection of coloured reproductions and a study guide were published, and sold at a low price, as well as a manual. In the year when these programmes were broadcast, the number of ABF study circles in art appreciation increased from 84 to 171. Undoubtedly, the increase was mostly due to the radio programmes, which supplied the circles with new, interesting material. Later series have not been as successful, probably because they have not been equally well adopted to study circles and also because there are now more study material and teachers available to the study circles.

Most of the study circles in art have no teacher in the real sense of the word; the teacher's job is mainly to lead the discussions, refer the members to the proper material and to furnish necessary information and explanations. The teacher need not be an expert on the subject, but must know where to find knowledge, he must be capable of keeping the members active, holding the interest alive and discussions going. Because of the geography and economic structure of Sweden, it is only in a few places one can expect to find professionals in art education, or experts in field of art. Furthermore, those who are competent are often unfamiliar with the methods of study used in education work and are therefore not suited as - or interested in becoming - study leaders in art circles. Thus, the training of study leaders has been basic in the development of art studies. In recent years, ABF has been leading in the systematic training of leaders. Since 1949 they arrange a two week course, which has been arranged each summer in co-operation with the Popular Movements' Art Association. The programme includes instruction in the subject (principally Swedish modern art) as well as in study methods. Each course has about thirty participants and so far a total of about 200 study leaders have been trained. Most of the participants have become active as leaders of study circles and contribute in other ways as well; by arranging exhibitions, by finding new members for the Popular Movements' Art Association, by selling art literature, arranging lectures etc. Some of the other Swedish adult education organizations have lately also begun to arrange art courses for study leaders, which as a rule are one week courses,

The participants come from different parts of the country but have at least two things in common: an interest in adult education and also some knowledge of art. Many are or have been amateur painters. Various trades and professions are represented: industrial workers, transport workers, housewives, office workers, elementary school teachers etc.

In 1955 the course was located in a small town close to Gothenburg. The programme of this course is included here to illustrate the type of training offered:

<u>1st day</u>	Arrival. Social evening with one or two art films
<u>2nd day</u>	Orientation. Lecture on the methods used in study circles. Practical training - hanging pictures
<u>3rd day</u>	Comments on art films. Lectures on Swedish modern art. Group work. Films
<u>4th day</u>	Lecture on visual aids (slides, reproductions etc.) in art education. Lectures on Swedish modern art continued. Group work
<u>5th day</u>	Continued discussion of the study circle. Final lectures on Swedish modern art. Group work
<u>6th day</u>	Group work. Lecture: "What is colour?" Group work on colour problems
<u>7th day</u>	Visit to the museum of Gothenburg
<u>8th day</u>	Films
<u>9th day</u>	Lecture on the composition of a picture. Group work
<u>10th day</u>	Group work. Lecture on the -isms in art. Group work. Films
<u>11th day</u>	"Excursion into ancient times" (rock-carvings)
<u>12th day</u>	Presentation of slides. Group work
<u>13th day</u>	Presentation of ABF and the Popular Movements. Art Association. Discussion about objectives and means of art education. Group reports. Criticism of the course. Social evening
<u>14th day</u>	Departure

In addition, a number of weekend courses in art are arranged each year by the Art Council and the Art Association. This latter association has arranged about 75 such courses in the last eight years, most of them in co-operation with ABF. A weekend course usually includes four to five hours of lecture on modern art (always illustrated with slides), two to three hours of group work on a collection of pictures, arranged in advance, art films, information about study material, exhibition facilities and a general discussion of what should be done to stimulate people's interest in good art. Most of the participants in the two week courses for study leaders are recruited among the students of these short courses.

Amateur Activities

In Swedish adult education circles it is a long standing topic of discussion, whether and to what extent amateur work in art subjects should be encouraged and be included in the programme. In theatre and music, amateur work is nowadays

completely established and accepted as a valuable part of the adult education work. As regards art, the situation is different. Here, it is still being discussed whether amateur work is harmful or favourable to people's interest in art.

Amateur painting (used here also to denote sculpturing and similar activities; oil painting is by far the most popular field) has lately gained considerable ground in Sweden as in many other industrialized countries. Many amateur painters have found their way to adult education organizations to meet congenial people, receive guidance etc. However, adult education associations, as a rule have not - except locally - carried on any active propaganda to recruit amateur circles. Circles have been started, when there has been a pronounced desire to do so, but, in many cases, it appears that the adult education organizations have not felt obliged to sponsor them. In spite of this offhand attitude towards amateur art, the number of circles has grown steadily during the last ten years. Last year, there were 1,050 such circles within the 13 adult education organizations.

Those who criticize the amateur circles, maintain that, to a great extent, they attract people who are not really interested in art; people who attend the circles not to gain an understanding of good art, but rather to paint pictures. They have also been accused of having no competent leaders and lacking the kind of guidance that would enable the students to understand the nature of their own talents and at the same time increase their respect for truly great art. Finally, it is maintained that the large study organizations have no definite policy as regards amateur work. For one thing no clear philosophy of objectives has been worked out: should it be only a hobby giving the students something to do in their spare time? Is the intention to make the participants artists? Or is it that they should learn to understand art in general?

Two main arguments are commonly used in its defence:

- (1) Regardless of the artistic value of the paintings produced by the amateur, such work can be of great psychological importance to the individual in a highly civilized society. The reason being that most people are forced to do work which gives them no direct personal satisfaction.
- (2) People, trying to create artistic forms themselves, often become generally interested in art; their own practical experience produces an interest in great art; their own frustrations make them respect the artist's work. Amateur work may thus be a way of learning to understand art. In support of this opinion, there is the fact, that many of the most active spokesmen for good art throughout the country and many of the best study leaders in art appreciation groups are or have been amateur painters. Of course, there are also examples to the contrary: amateur painters who never participate in a study circle, never visit an art exhibition in the proper sense and never read periodicals or an art book.

Perhaps the most severe criticism of the amateur painting, within adult education work or elsewhere, comes from the professional artists and their organizations. They contend that the amateur painters are a threat to real art because they exhibit and sell their pictures, thus spoiling the market for professional artists. Amateur groups and adult education representatives have objected to this criticism, partly because it is not possible to classify artists

according to their ability and the quality of their work - professional and amateurs, partly because to a great extent it is the professional artists' own fault if the amateur groups do not always produce good art. As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for professional artists to refuse teaching in amateur groups with the explanation that they do not wish to encourage amateur work. The result is that the groups sometimes have to get on without qualified guidance.

No extensive central measures have been taken by adult education organizations to encourage amateurs. Some years ago, ABF and the Popular Movements' Art Association arranged a conference, where educators, artists, art historians and other interested persons were invited to discuss the matter in order to draw up a plan for positive measures, but, unfortunately, no definite results were attained. In co-operation with a travel organization, a number of summer courses have been arranged for amateur painters, however, not specifically for the purpose of training teachers. The educational organizations have been hesitant to invite amateurs to such pedagogical courses, one reason being that after having attended a course the amateur would be able to refer to their "training in Stockholm" etc. in order to help their sale.

A way which has been much discussed to improve the amateur work, is to make it more varied as regards techniques and material. At present, most of the amateur groups do oil painting, and occasionally drawing, although oil painting is perhaps the most difficult and most demanding technique and therefore least suitable for laymen. It has been recommended that the amateur groups should do more work with handicrafts: woodcarving, pottery making, monotypes, textiles etc.

Another way is to include theoretical education in the programme of every amateur group. This is also necessary if the circles are to receive government support. The theoretical training can consist of lectures, showing of slides, picture analysis, study trips etc. The problem is, however, to make this theoretical training a part of the rest of the course, to integrate theory with practice. This does not always turn out quite successfully. The lectures - or whatever may be the prescribed theory - may be looked upon as a necessary evil. It happens, that the students tell their ambitious teacher that they have come to paint and not to listen to lectures on ancient art or look at pictures. Sometimes students who take little interest in art will simply stay away from the meeting the day of the lecture.

Probably the most ambitious and most successful project to improve amateur groups was undertaken in one of the ABF districts. In that particular part of the country, there is a strong and living art tradition of a rather conventional type; what is known as "tourist painting" has flourished. In the absence of qualified local teachers the local ABF group decided to send for a competent teacher from Stockholm. An agreement was made with the Director of a well known art school that he should tour the district during a first trial season, visiting every circle on five occasions. Another person was sent to the same place to give lectures on modern art styles illustrated by slides. On a few occasions the students were invited to courses lasting three or four days, to do more concentrated work under the guidance of the teacher. Started in 1952 the project now also includes study travel to foreign countries, art exhibitions and art lotteries etc. The less interested amateurs left, others have been added and those most interested have continued year after year. A decided improvement of the quality of the work and a marked increase in the general art interest have occurred. As a result a permanent

art school has been established in the largest city of this district. They intend to apply for public support to be able to maintain this art school which will be the first one north of Stockholm.

It is difficult to state anything in general about amateur painting in adult education work as there is no person who has thoroughly investigated the work of the circles and their results. Yet it appears obvious that in recent years, interest in art has grown among amateurs. They have become less sure of their own talents and more humble to great art. However, there is still lack of firm lines of action, material, study guides, leader training etc. for amateur work in the adult education work.

The Museums and Adult Art Education

The Swedish museums of Art have not the same pronounced educational approach as those in some other countries, especially the United States of America. As a result, the museums have generally not played a dominant rôle as regards the increase of popular interest in art, which has occurred in the last 10 - 15 years. Instead, it is the specialized art organizations with their exhibitions, and the adult education associations, that have been instrumental in this development. For the most part, the Swedish museums are not equipped to carry on adult education in the proper sense; they lack locales, personnel and special funds for such work. This is above all true about the National Museum, which has not established a popular pedagogical tradition, founded, as it was, at a time when educational work for the general public was not considered a proper task of the museums. A quote from the annual report of the National Museum for 1899 illustrates this point: "When teachers or principals of schools have asked permission to take their classes or larger forms to the Museums, such requests have not been refused".

Since then, the National Museum has quite naturally become more markedly sympathetic to adult education. Above all, however, there has been successful co-operation with the schools. In 1953, the National Museum was visited by 785 groups from various schools; 350 of these groups were shown around by a guide sponsored by the Museum. During this year, 45 guided tours were arranged for adults. A special room is available for interested study groups and is occupied most evenings of the week during the winter. Three study circles and about ten lectures are, as a rule, arranged each year by the Museum itself.

The Museum also prepares travelling exhibitions which are shown to adults and schoolchildren. These circulating exhibits are shown in various places all over the country. As an example may be quoted the exhibition of late 18th century Swedish art - paintings, drawings, sculpture and decorative arts - which travelled September 1952 to September 1954 to 15 places and gathered 33,600 visitors. When the Swedish Art Council was founded, the initiative was taken by the Museum, and for the first 19 years one of its department directors was also the Managing Executive on the board of the Council. In 1945, an exhibition was arranged in the museum at the initiative of the national organization of the Labour Halls and others. The exhibition was called "Good Art in Homes and Assembly Halls" and launched the inexpensive chromolithographs as a means to combat low quality art. The success of this exhibition led to the founding of the Popular Movements' Art Association, although this was not inspired by the Museum as such. In 1919 the National Museum also produced the first Swedish art film, which was to be followed by two productions in the 1930's.

The only official with strictly educational duties within the National Museum is employed by the City of Stockholm and not by the Government, which otherwise finances most of the work done by the Museum. The official only works part-time and is mainly employed to show the collections to school classes. In this respect, some other museums are better equipped to do educational work. The museum of Malmö e.g. employs two officials in a chiefly educational capacity,

Most Swedish museums of Art do very little publishing. The National Museum sells some reproductions of the pictures in its collections, publishes an annual calendar etc. For economic and other reasons, it has not been possible to put out an extensive number of publications in the manner of many foreign museums.

The Swedish museums are open four hours a day on an average, somewhat less on Sundays. As a rule, they are not open in the evenings, which has been subject to much criticism. It has been pointed out that it is unreasonable to keep the museums open in the daytime, when most people have no chance to visit them and closed in the evenings and on Sundays, when people are off from work. The museums, again, maintain that the lack of funds makes it impossible for them to be open in the evenings and that when this has been tried, public interest has not been very great. To this, the critics have replied that just keeping a museum open certain hours of the day is not enough; the museum must also make itself known and arrange programmes that will attract new visitors and ensure renewed attendance by those who have already been there. On the whole, the opinion is frequently voiced that the Swedish museums are not sufficiently active. They have good collections, but much too seldom are there any special arrangements made to attract the public. The situation elsewhere, as in the United States of America, is referred to as an example; there the museums are constantly arranging discussions, film showings, concerts and other programmes, which all serve to draw attention to the museums and make them a natural gathering place for culturally interested citizens.

It should be pointed out, however, that in Sweden, museums attendance is quite high. It is estimated that during one year, 25 per cent of the population visit the museums of Art and of Culture.

There are also some towns, where the museums play an active and leading rôle in local art education. This is true about Malmö and Gothenburg, and, perhaps especially, Norrköping (an industrial town of about 85,000 inhabitants). In Norrköping, practically all art education is in some way connected with the Museum and the officials of the Museum themselves are active as lecturers and study teachers in art circles. In co-operation with the strong, local ABF, the Museum has achieved an increase of 100 per cent as regards the local art activities. One of the latest joint projects to be tried is a programme about Greece and Greek Art (slides with tape recorded comments) prepared by the Director of the Museum; through ABF, this programme is available to various groups and associations and has been greatly appreciated. (In this town, ABF has its own art gallery which is lent to young artists, at a low cost.)

Most museums also have collections of slides, which, to some extent, may be used by lecturers and others. The collection owned by the National Museum contains 32,000 slides and is mainly used by the staff of the Museum for their lectures but is also at the disposal of the public - free of charge.

Finally, it should be mentioned that most Swedish Museums charge a small entrance fee, usually 50 öre per person and visit. This is mainly done because of the economic conditions of the Museums - they need the income - but is also considered psychologically justified, the argument being that people have more regard for things which cost money than for those that are free of charge.

Public Support of Art

The types and extent of Public support of art in Sweden has been mentioned in previous chapters. In summary, this support is given as follows:

Grants to specialized art organizations

Grants to the adult education organizations for study circles, lectures etc.

Grants to the museums

Grants to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and some other art schools

In addition, there is another type of support, deserving a more detailed account. This concerns the official engagement of artists, to enrich, with their work, the interiors of public buildings.

In 1937, a widely approved and radical step was taken by the Swedish Riksdag: it was decided that, in principle, all Government buildings should be enriched by art and that a certain amount of the building grant should be reserved for this purpose. Not all buildings, it was said, could be considered suitable places for art, but art was to be added wherever it would make for improvement. In principle, about 1 per cent of the building costs was set aside.

Special permission and grants from the Government or the "Riksdag" to engage artists was not to be required of the official body in charge of a Government construction project. It was considered just as natural to have art in the buildings, as it was to have ceilings and doors. This was a bold idea. It meant that the artistic decoration could be planned from the beginning, and not, as so often, afterwards, when the artists must try to place murals, sculptures etc. on wall sections and in places which have been "left over" by accident. Among artists, this decision of the "Riksdag" was enthusiastically received. It was considered especially valuable that from the very start, public support of artists was definitely not conceived of as a relief project; instead, art was looked upon as naturally belonging in a modern, progressive democracy.

The principle of this decision was, however, not long adhered to. The Second World War necessitated economic restrictions in various fields; art among others. The Government could no longer afford to support art as it had previously. In 1947, the idea of ten years ago, was taken up again, but in a different and less ambitious manner. The intention was still to put money into making schools, offices, and other public buildings beautiful, but artistic decoration was no longer included in the building programme. A special grant of 100,000 Sw. Crs., was made available for one year, and special application was needed in order to receive support.

This new arrangement has aroused strong criticism among artists and other interested groups. It is not only a matter of money, but also of principle, art should be accepted as naturally belonging to society. The annual grant for art is now 200,000 Sw. Crs., but the approach of 1937 has not been re-established. Estimates show that the complete application of the thoughts of 1937 would cost about 1,000,000 Sw. Crs. a year. In the severe economic conditions of the post war period such an expense has not been considered justified.

There are also other types of public employment of artists. It is becoming increasingly more common for municipalities to commission artists to furnish old age homes, schools, town-halls and other buildings with monumental art, sculptures, oil paintings, or other types of art. Such organizations as the Co-operative Housing Associations are also of considerable importance in employment of artists. Sculptors, especially, are greatly dependent upon the income they receive from commissions of this kind.

These questions concerning art are not always handled in a way that is complementary to the organs of government. Artists and other spokesmen of art have remarked that frequently, the type of art favoured, is smooth and easy to understand and that in dealing with these questions, the expert will very often suffer defect to the powerful political institutions. This matter has been discussed in an editorial article in "Perspective", a cultural magazine, published by the Farmers' Co-operatives, from which the following passage is quoted:

"It is a constant, unreasonable demand of the politicians to expect their word to carry more weight than the word of those who have devoted their lives to refining their taste and sharpen their sensitivity. Subjects of culture must not be settled by ballots; for in art, quantity is not a mark of quality. Fifty like-minded members of a City Council, who have spent a few hours of their active lives, contemplating about a piece of art, should not be endowed with the power to sabotage the carefully considered decision of five people who are devoted to art. When a music critic had ventured to attack the commercialized and vulgar types of religious music, the argument, (by "Pagen", a daily newspaper) that these songs had become "so well liked by the general public", was based on the false notion that the strength of art can be measured by its popularity. Quite to the contrary, it may be said that the public of fighting art has in all times been a small circle of selected and like-minded people. If democracy, in a strictly political concept, were to be made the principle in cultural politics, it would lead straight to barbarism."