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You might say that I am trying to create something instead of copying something, when I set out to paint a portrait. To me, a sincere artist is not one who makes a faithful attempt to put on canvas what is in front of him, but one who tries to create something which is a living thing in itself, regardless of its subject.

Another peculiar thing said about the picture was that it was "typical of degenerate modern art." I don't know what this means. In fact, I'm not interested in the word "modern"—I think it's badly used in cases like this. To me, art is a continuous development, and the best way to learn is to go back and learn from the big men of the past.

My own particular love has always been Rembrandt, but I have learnt a lot from such men as Goya and Tintoretto. Coming nearer to the present day, Renoir and Ingres have taught me much. Throughout my student days in London I learnt to admire the thoroughness of Van Gogh.

I have been trying to develop a style of my own derived from the Old Masters. The leaders of the so-called "modern" movements have done the same—although they have developed in different directions. Picasso is an example. He is a splendid classic draftsman, and he would be the first to admit his debt to the past.

I think that art has a good future in Australia. There is very good material among the students and they are delving more than ever before into the real history of art. They are more conscious than ever of the necessity for good draftsmanship.

Promising Students

As well as promising students, we have some younger artists who are already well established. They not only have something to say, but they are saying it with considerable technical ability. Among them are Russell Drysdale, James Gleason, Donald Friend, Jean Bellette, Eric Wilson, and my friend Joshua Smith, to name only a few. Their work varies greatly, but they are all sincere artists.

However, we suffer from the lack of really informed art criticism in Australia. No one is able to take up criticism as a profession, and few of the newspaper critics have made a deep study of the subject. Some of them seem interested only in the artists who flourished in Australia between about 1880 and 1930, and know very little of what has happened overseas.

Of course, we have had great artists in Australia. My own favourite is Charles Conder, who attracted little attention here but was very highly thought of in England and on the Continent. He was not born in Australia, but he spent a number of years painting here. I saw a number of beautiful pictures by him in Europe. The Sydney Gallery has a fine example of his work, "The Departure of S.S. Orient."

I should say that the best of the others so far have been Sir Arthur Streeton, Elioth Gruner, Tom Roberts, and that wonderful technician G. W. Lambert.

Scope for Mural Decoration

I have been asked to give my opinion of the various Australian Art Galleries. I can only repeat what is a well-known

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