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THE ABSTRACT IN ART

(continued from previous page)

nothing recognisable in the ordinary sense of the term, but it will be a picture. A friend of mine who is a student of aesthetics, puts it this way: 'We must try for symmetry, harmony and rhythm, and hope for beauty.'

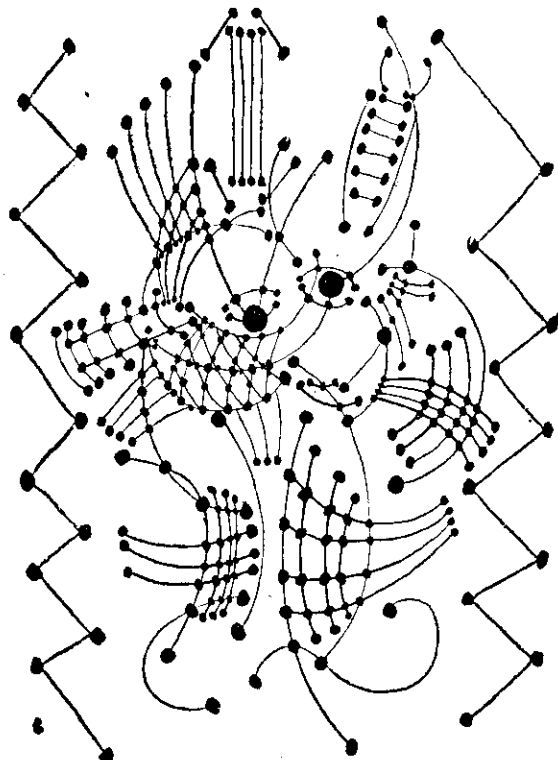
"But unless one is an artist or an aesthete, I doubt if this abstract painting means much. One weakness in it is that themes tend to be repeated over and over again. I must say that I tire of it. To see a few such pictures is one thing, but a whole building full of them, as you may find in America, is another."

Conversation turned to Mr. Hopkinson's particular line, portrait painting. Some artists, he said, ruled out portrait painting as an art, but he didn't agree with this at all. A portrait painter studied his subject from every angle and in all characteristics. "I once said in the presence of a psychologist that I was going to paint to please myself. 'You can't,' he replied, 'you're using a means of communication.' That's true, and the two factors have to be accommodated. The artist paints to satisfy himself, but also to please others. I have often wondered whether, if I were placed on a desert island by myself with painting materials, I would do much painting. But in painting a portrait I refuse to be influenced by anything outside. I won't take advice. The sitter's family doesn't come into it. It's my job and no one else's. I listen to criticism and

hope to get help from it as I hope to get help from any outside influence, but I must satisfy my own artistic conscience."

"Surely it matters whether the likeness is good or not?"

"I think that striving for a likeness (not a facsimile but what might be called a vivid description), puts a quality of force and sincerity into the finished work, and also makes it a valuable historical document. An artist I did not know well, but who knew the man I was painting, looked at one of my portraits carefully, commented on it, criticised many things about it favourably, and then added, casually 'And it's a good likeness too!' That is a good example of the way we artists look at pictures."



ABSTRACT ART: Ink drawing by Picasso (1926)

The Adventures of Perry Mason

"TEMPERAMENTALLY I think I have some natural qualifications as a lawyer, but I have absolutely none as a writer. I waded through a flood of rejection slips before my first success in the sale of fiction, and thereafter had to travel a long uphill road to a point where I became known as one of the quantity-producers of action-fiction in the U.S." This is what Erle Stanley Gardner, writing from California, has to say in explanation of how he came to write *The Adventures of Perry Mason*, now being heard from the 2B stations and 2ZA.

"At that time," he goes on, "I was ready to create the legal detective character I had been carrying round in my head and Perry Mason was the result. . . . Justice throughout the English-speaking world is founded on the English common law, a tradition which could only have been built by liberty-loving people. In the course of time, the procedure of administering justice

in the United States has departed somewhat from that of Great Britain. In the one instance the judge remains the supreme arbiter of the court room; in the other much more liberty is given to the attorneys who make the most dramatic presentation possible. But both systems give us just about the nearest possible approach to justice, and people are always interested in the dramatic. . . .

"Perry Mason' is always dramatic, but he is never made to lose sight of the fact that his ultimate goal is justice. This, I think, accounts largely for his popularity both in books and on the air. And it is with a deep feeling of satisfaction that I recognise my indebtedness to the English common law and the able legal minds who for so many centuries have realised that justice must inevitably be the corner-stone of any civilisation."

The Adventures of Perry Mason is being broadcast from 12B, 22B, 32B and 42B on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and from 2ZA at 7.45 p.m.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 14