

ITALIAN CRITIC COMMENDS ZOIR

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Zoir strives for creation of thought, rather than for mere importance of passing sentiment or preoccupation with beautiful shadings of light.

"It has been said that Emile Zoir despises colors, but this is untrue when one contemplates his canvasses. I admit that color with Zoir in general stands subordinate to form and that to a certain extent with Zoir lines are a means to expression. Zoir shows his ability to strike a color chord whose originality is unquestionable. His 'Crucifixion' is a case in point. Here Zoir has in beautiful line and touching simplicity painted the well-known tragic story of Christ from 'Gethsemane' to 'The Entombment.' The central panel of this triptychon, 'Crucifixion' is a masterpiece,—exhales the pure, austere odor of religious poetry. It concedes from the critic, no less than the layman observer, that claim to admiration and sympathy difficult to express in words.

"The psychological atmosphere wherein Zoir's figures move is often sombre, and he is at his greatest, perhaps, in the depiction of melancholy. His other great triptychon, 'Misery,'—a composition entirely dependent upon lines of color, creates inevitably the feelings of sorrow and gloom which even the ordinary observer feels and is able to share through experience. It proves distinctly the artist's deep sympathy with life, where every phase gives him perception of the hidden sources. And as these are often only perceptible to the onlooker through a slight ripple on the surface of events, a fleeting shadow, so does Zoir likewise reveal by a line swift and pure the possibilities behind the situations he portrays.

His "Creation"

"The same may be said about his great cycle 'Creation.' Every thought which such a stupendously conceived series imparts belongs inevitably to the work itself. Therein lies one of Zoir's merits. Nature, no less than art, can only show us what we are able to apprehend with our spiritual insight; everything comes, in a certain respect, from ourselves. The artist possessing the creative power shows us, as in a looking-glass, the works of his genius reflecting life itself, but translated from his viewpoint. Our own conception of any special work of art, on the other hand, depends upon the standpoint of our own conception. Zoir utilizes to the full this truth in his paintings no less than his etchings. His works are works of poetry,—melancholy sometimes, but always grand; remindful always of the grandeur of human destiny despite its earth-bound experience. Zoir delves deeply into life, but never loses sight of its infinite rhythm. While his greater canvasses discern this idea of his profoundly, his Italian studies give us joy and color and freshness of conception, placed on the canvass by a master's hand. Such, for instance, are his studies of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at Rome as well as his studies after Raphael and Rembrandt.

Possesses Inspiration

"Emile Zoir undoubtedly possesses the inspiration which characterizes

the great artist. During a period when humanity allows itself to be shaped in the same uniformly mediocre mould, it is a good sign that such an artist has appeared, willing to give his soul for his ideal. Take his etchings, for instance; it is not without reason that the art of etching is called 'the difficult art.' For in etching an original conception is vital, and great technical skill and experience absolutely predicated. Only a master can handle the etching needle in such a way as to give results above mediocrity. On this basis Zoir's etchings must be classed

as superior to anything in our modern art. Every line therein shows that Zoir, the master etcher, possesses a soul great in every sense of the word.

"It is always interesting to perceive the progress of genius, and especially so when that genius is out of the ordinary. Emile Zoir possesses a fund of poetical inspiration from which he pours with lavish hand. Few artists nowadays have equalled Zoir's inspiration and power to fight for his faith in his ideals. And it was justifiable. His works have a swinging rhythm; he possesses an

extra-ordinary faculty for holding a composition together, and he handles the etching needle with the same sureness of liberty and power and with the same bewitching results as when he paints. If genius is a power which in inspired moments waves its magic wand and commands 'Let there be light,' Emile Zoir is without comparison the most outstanding artist of Europe. As Doctor W. Burges, the famous German critic says, 'he is a Titan who has stolen the fires of heaven and who comes from the Northland pouring out the rich poetry of his mystic vision.'

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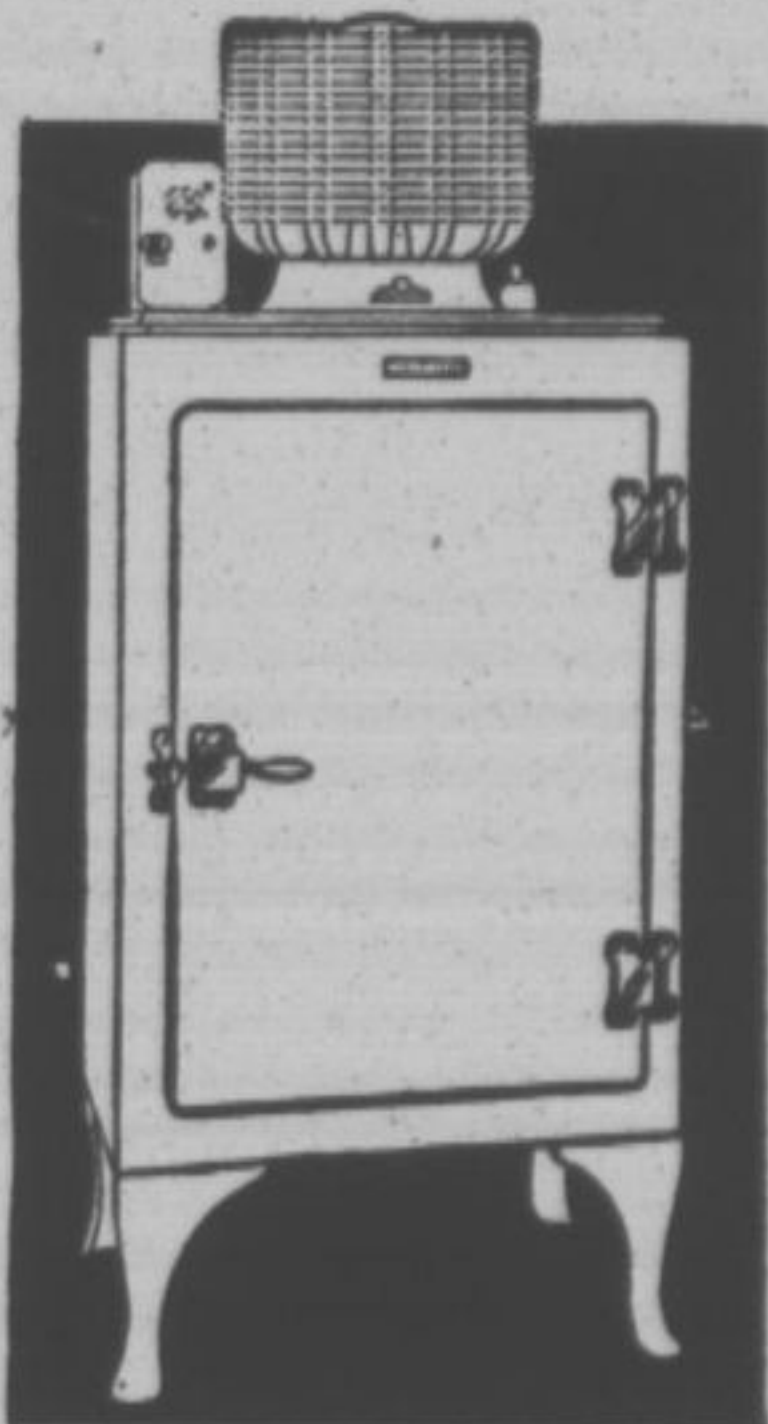
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