

KIDNAPED - A MUSEUM!

..... 1000 paintings gone..No ransom note.. Motive unknown.. To whom apply for help? There are no G-Men of Art...

There should be. To protect things whether of material or spiritual beauty from alteration, defamation, destruction and complete annihilation, like the disappearance of a whole museum.

We all know of art shrines destroyed by fire; we all are horrified at the ravages war makes in art. But, who ever heard of a museum's vanishing overnight, and in normal times? No earthquake, no revolution, no hurricane or flood..#310 Riverside Drive is standing as firmly as ever with its 'Lighthouse of Art, towering above the world's vulgarity and commercial indifference'\* - only that lighthouse is dark, deprived of the eternal flame of its paintings.

There are much higher skyscrapers in the city, but none with higher aspirations and loftier aim when erected. For almost a decade, that skyscraper has housed a Museum, Art Societies and an Art School. Scores of people who rented or owned its apartments, had the unique privilege of having an Art Center, as co-tenant. They could call on that neighbor whenever they had a spare moment and the urge for a glimpse of beauty. They had the same opportunity to enjoy art. as the fortunate millionaire with a private collection.

Alas, one fine morning - there was no Museum. It took a few hours to destroy what took a lifetime to create. The museum was not closed for alteration or repair, nor for a summer holiday. It just vanished; several desolate rooms.. Lighter spots on empty walls, still holding the shape of the paintings.



Gone! Why and where - two questions still unsolved. Nobody knows, yet is it possible that among New York's seven millions, nobody cares to find out? Or, perhaps, the foundation of that museum was such an indifferent venture, that it really did not matter. If so - how could that venture not only start, but also steadily grow in size and significance?

One can argue forever and at a standstill on artistic values. No pair of eyes sees things in the same light, while many sharp-sighted individuals need a 'Seeing Eye' to appreciate art. However, in the case of the Roerich Museum, ~~xxxx~~ the purely artistic merit was combined with another great achievement.

It was its educational wealth, which made its location within an Art School so proper and harmonious. Almost every picture had a historical or ethnological background. Shrines and legends of Ancient Russia, the Grand Canyon's enchanting panorama; the weird beauty of the Tibetan and Himalayan series, conceived and created during an expedition in regions unknown, made the Roerich Museum an Art Shrine that cannot be duplicated. There, one could study art, nature, religion, history. In spite of his magnificent imagination and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ creative ability, Roerich never gave the public just his fancy. And this in an Age, when Art has adopted as many doleful (Isms', as modern politics. Can one imagine Roerich exhibiting a combination of atrocities catalogued 'Motherhood' or 'Boys playing baseball'; or a large canvas with a few rainbow sticks, labelled (Old guitar with Young Girl' or 'Watermelon and Horsehead'? Yet, such creations are gracing, or better disgracing many a gallery, safe and secure under the protective banner of Art.



All of Roerich's work possesses even more than mastery of brush and marvelous subjects. It has a deep inner meaning; a mystic aura, which appeals to the soul as well as the eye. And even those, whose make-up is entirely devoid of the spiritual, cannot fail to be charmed by the richness and beauty of colors. The 'Roerich Blue' cannot be copied; it must be created.

We have in America unions for everything and everybody. Surely, there must be a Union of Artists-Painters. If so - how can it be possible that no protesting voice was heard from such a Union, especially when the Roerich Museum was dedicated to the citizens of New York City.

There are signs in every public square and park, in all forest reservations. ' Do not injure trees and bushes. Don't pick flowers -  
- Others might like to enjoy them.'

Well.. what shall we do to protect our Art?

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