

## Academies of United Arts.

(Diary Leaves.)

By NICHOLAS ROERICH



HAT we said about schools and co-operation refers first of all to our Institute of United Arts. Outside of the existence of various studios and classes in the different domains of art, we should think about the expansion of the Institute into outside fields of usefulness. Not by accident is the establishment called an Institute rather than a studio. The concept of a group of studios would consist precisely of the labors within them, whereas the Institute acts both within and without.

Our internal programs have already been spoken about in the proper place. They should be carried out within the limits created by circumstances. If something, on account of circumstances beyond the control of the Institute, cannot yet be brought to life, this still does not mean that it has been abandoned in general. Of course it has not been abandoned, it merely awaits the nearest opportunity.

Now is the time to reflect still more systematically about the outside work of the Institute.

It has always been cause for rejoicing to hear about the lectures of the director and deans of the Institute in outside institutions. In the archives of the Institute is kept a lengthy series of expressions of gratitude, inquiries and proposals regarding such appearances.

Likewise it has been joyful to hear about the formation of student guilds and certain other internal groups united by useful ideas.

On the basis of what has already been done, it is particularly easy to bring the outside work of the Institute into a systematic development, which would be reflected both in current reports and in future plans of the institution.

Both from among the teaching staff and the former students should be prepared cadres of instructors. These mobile bearers of the fundamentals of creativeness in different domains of art and knowledge will appear in all kinds of educational, industrial, and business establishments with the living word about the tasks and problems of creativeness and of cognition. It is natural, in those cases where the word can be accompanied by musical, vocal, or any other presentation, that such will always be useful. The question of remuneration will of course be an individual one, depending upon the nature and circumstances of the inviting institution.

I repeat that much has already been done along these lines and this only confirms the urgency of systematising such outside work of the Institute. Such labor, aside from its absolute usefulness, can create all sorts of other constructive possibilities.

Among the existing classes is one in journalism. It is desirable that side by side with journalistic practice should be taught the fundamentals of public oration. Such training is absolutely necessary, because those experienced in it acquire that convincing quality and enthusiasm which is so needed in personal appearances for enlightening people.

This outside work of the Institute, into which can also be invited people who do not figure either as instructors or students, can be made an important part of the Institute's program. To bear the light of cognition and to affirm the fundamentals of creativeness is always joyful work. Therefore one can picture to oneself that through systematic work, this part of the occupations of the Institute will find its sincere enthusiasts.

During the years of the Institute's existence, besides the active cadres there have been in its organization an important number of graduated students; precisely from these could be drawn useful workers for instructional outside activity. Whether in the public schools or hospitals or prisons or churches or remote farms—all this will be those highly useful sowings which enter into our common obligation. Since we have already seen that physicians assist such activity with good-will, since we have made many appearances in churches, likewise travelling in remote farmlands with the torch of creativeness will be welcomed by agricultural officials.

Outside of new acquisitions of knowledge, these discourses can lay the foundation for the revival of household handicraft, of domestic manufacturing. Each rural establishment has seasonal periods of time when any home industry productions would be manifested as a splendid auxiliary. Entering the old home of a German or French peasant we are struck by the distinctive style of the household objects. These old-fashioned works of rural home-craft have a great value just now among antique dealers. And of course these objects were created in hours of leisure time from farm work. In them has been incorporated an inborn feeling of creativeness and home-building. Its self-made beautiful hearth was created in place of running into the empoisoned cities. One may easily imagine how much such artistic-industrial emissaries will be welcome guests on the work farms. So much refinement of taste and quality of labor can be brought about so easily and naturally.

When, then, we are concerned about preserving cultural values, such excursions through all parts of the state will be the living custodians of the traditions of Culture. Where instead of destruction born of despair there is awakened a living home-building, there blooms also a garden of beauty.

What has been said is no abstraction. These affirmations have been tested by many experiences in different parts of the world. Everywhere the human heart remains

a true heart and is fed by the beautiful nourishment of Culture.

I recall a beautiful Persian story. Several artisans on a journey had to pass a very wearisome night in a wild locality. But each one had with him his tools and in some ruins was found a fallen beam. And here, during the watch hours, each one of the craftsmen applied his own lofty art to dressing the piece of wood. A wood carver executed the figure of a beautiful girl, a tailor fashioned a garment. Then she was adorned in every way, with the result that a spiritual person with them inspired life in the beautifully created image. As always, the tale ends in full happiness, at the basis of which lay craftsmanship in various domains.

Another story tells how one of the caliphs, being taken captive and wishing to convey news about the place of his imprisonment, wove a rug with conventional signs, as a result of which he was liberated. But for this means of rescue the caliph had to be a skillful weaver.

Yet again I recollect a wise covenant of Gameliel, that, "Not having educated his son in arts and crafts, he prepared him for brigandage on the highway." We need not recall the multitude of other highly poetic and practical covenants, but we urgently direct the attention of the Institute to such possibilities of highly useful outside work.

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