

Letter from Paris

By Our Own Correspondent

Image in Art.

PARIS, Sunday.

Between France

Old Hats and New

I don't suppose that he would find much joy at the Fourth International Biennale of Young Artists, which has just opened at the Musée d'Art Moderne, under the patronage, needless to say, of M. Malraux and M. Couve de Murville.

Notices in the Paris newspapers show that the almost impossible has happened—even avant-garde critics have refused to have their legs pulled this far.

France Soir found it "a paradise of the useless, the absurd, and the aesthetic trick." I found some of the exhibits, such as multicoloured ceramics of hideously deformed fetuses, plain nauseating. Light relief is obtainable in the section devoted to works of art which consist of electric light bulbs flashing on and off on a sheet of black metal, or pieces of white cardboard being whirled round mechanically on the end of bits of string.

At the Biennale of 1963, one *pièce de résistance* was an enamelled chamber-pot on a stand. For the young international artist of today, such an exhibit would be *vieux jeu*: it would be difficult to equip with flashing light bulbs.

Gissing Again

MY reference in August to a plaque to George Gissing, on the wall of the house in which I live in Passy, has brought me some interesting letters from both sides of the Channel. Mr. Norman Willox, City Librarian of Wakefield, where Gissing was born, tells me that the city has an extensive collection of Gissingiana. He adds that Gissing and Gabrielle Fleury lived in the Paris house in 1900.

A French professor, M. Lesire, sent me details from Yssingeaux that enabled me to locate a cousin of Gabrielle Fleury, Mme. Le Mallier, whose mother was English. She tells me that Gabrielle Fleury, then a very old lady, died at her house in Auteuil some years back. She was never able to marry Gissing, who up to the time of his death in 1903 had a wife living in England.

Mme. Le Mallier also has a collection of Gissing relics.

Long Shorts

AN indignant typescript notice on the headed paper of the Government Department of Culture informs visitors to Versailles that they will under no circumstances be permitted to enter the apartments (apparently regardless of age or sex), if wearing "shorts above the knee." This, it adds, is "in the interests of common decency."

Shorts below the knee, I should have thought, would be almost an anomaly. And I wonder if the Department has consulted the French *couture* industry, which has been busy for 18 months trying to make girls wear skirts well above the knee. Possibly common decency does not apply to export industries.

Extract from
Western Morning News, Plymouth

27 SEP 1965

British art in Paris

BRITAIN will be strongly represented at the Paris Biennale des Jeunes, the international exhibition for artists under 35, which opens at the Musée d'Art Moderne tomorrow. Fifteen British artists and sculptors will be represented, the youngest being Derrick Woodham, who is 25. In addition to the official section from this country, a British artist, Allen Jones, is having a special one-man *hors concours* exhibition, accorded to him at the Biennale of 1963 in recognition of his winning the Prix des Jeunes Artistes.