

TEKST-FRAGMENT UIT

"Chapitre Premier, de la Platte Peinture" uit Brussels
Manuscript uit 1635 van Pierre Le Brun, schilder.

=====

Bijlage bij webpagina over het opzetten van olieverfpaletten
vanaf de 17e eeuw van Jaap den Hollander op internet.

=====

Mary Philadelphia Merrifield, née Watkins (1804/5-1885)
Original Treatises dating from the XIIth to XVIIIth Centuries
[o]n the Arts of Painting ... London: John Murray. Vol. 2
(1849)

B R U S S E L S M A N U S C R I P T ,

ENTITLED

" RECUEUIL DES ESSAIES DES MERVEILLES
DE LA PEINTURE."

BY

PIERRE LEBRUN, PAINTER,
1635.

blz 759 t/m 765

B R U S S E L S M A N U S C R I P T .

=====

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

The following pages are copied from the commencement of a MS., preserved in the Public Library at Brussels, numbered 15,552, written in 1635 by Pierre Le Brun, a painter. The MS. is in small octavo, the writing extremely small and difficult to read, and the ink very pale. It appears to have been intended for publication, as it contains many drawings. The part of the MS. uncopied treats of Sculpture, Architecture, and Perspective.

It appears from the MS. that Pierre Le Brun was contemporary with the Carracci, with Rubens, Laurens Dubry the Fleming, and Vouet; and the scattered notices he has given relative to painting in oil must be considered as indications of the practice of this art in France, or rather at Paris, during the middle of the seventeenth century. The manner in which the author speaks of contemporary artists shows that he was living at Paris when the MS. was written.

The object of the author in writing the treatise seems to have been to give amateurs such a knowledge of the mechanical parts of the art, and of technical terms, as

would enable them to speak on the subject of painting with propriety, and without incurring ridicule.

In the first chapter, therefore, he describes the implements used in the mechanical part of the art, and then recapitulates a number of technical expressions, some few of which he explains, especially those relating to the light in which a picture should be viewed. This part of the work bears much resemblance to the Treatise of Bulengerus, *De Pictura, Plastice, et Statuaria* lib. ii. cap. ii., a work which must have obtained some reputation, since it has passed through three editions, and has been translated into English.^{1a)}

The author then treats of painting in distemper and in fresco; and he cites, as authority for the rules he lays down for fresco-painting, Father L'Ange and Father Antoine the Capuchin, and M. Thierson, a painter. The latter he mentions frequently in the course of the work.

The fourth chapter treats of painting on glass; and I find, by comparing this chapter with the second part of Le Vieil's *"Art de la Peinture sur Verre,"* that the method described in the MS. was that which was generally followed in France. The practice of the art, therefore, appears to have changed but little from the time of Le Brun (1635) to the date of the work of Le Vieil, 1774.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, Le Brun treats of the proportion of the human body and of the beauty of the face, and in the seventh he teaches the nature and composition of colours. He describes six kinds of azure, the first of which, called *Cerulée* or *"Turchino,"* is the azure of Pozzuoli, of Vitruvius, and the smaltino of the Italians. The second, formed of mercury, sulphur, and sal ammoniac, has been called Venetian azure. The third, which is called *"Ultramarine,"* is said to consist of calcined silver, aqua fortis, and sal ammoniac. The fourth is the Carbonate of Copper, mentioned in the first chapter under the name of *"La Cendrée."* The fifth is Indico, composed of the scum of woad, starch, &c. ; and the sixth is the true Ultramarine.

The eighth chapter, entitled *Secrets in Painting,* consists of detached hints relative to the technical part of the art. From these it appears that white was to be excluded from shadows (see No. 1), which we know was in accordance with the precept of Rubens.

In No. 42, Umber and Lake are mentioned as forming a beautiful colour for shadows. The directions given in No. 7, *"Il faut fort ombrer en esbauchant,"* and the reason given for it, *"cela ayde a parachever avec plus grande facilité,"* appear to me to recommend

the Flemish practice of getting in the subject in *chiaroscuro*, after which it was necessary merely to apply the lights and local colours, leaving the deep shadows free from solid or opaque colour. In No. 10 it is recommended not to use umber in the grounds because the colours sink into it. No. 19 shows that the colour of the grounds was generally of a yellow colour, the method of preparing which appears to be described in Chapter I. In No. 32 a process is mentioned by which a canvas can be prepared so quickly that a person may paint on it the same day. The author also advises the use of mineral colours, which were to be previously ground with oil (see Cap. I.), and recommends that paintings should be exposed to the air. Nos. 23, 24, and 25 describe the method of preparing both drying and fat oils, which were to be used for promoting the drying of certain colours, among which we find white lead which is not usually placed among the slow dryers. Ground glass and verdigris are also said to be mixed with colours to make them dry.

The method of applying the azure in powder, described in No. 39, is curious, but not uncommon, since it is mentioned several times in the MS. of De Mayerne 1b) in the British Museum.

No.40 shows that even so late as 1635 statues or bassi rilievi were painted with colours.

In order to preserve pictures from dust and fly marks, it is recommended (No. 22) to wash them with white of egg, and the reason for using this is stated to be that it may be easily washed off with a damp sponge. It is added, "this cannot be done with varnish". From this then it appears that it was not always usual to varnish paintings in oil, and this certainly implies that they were painted with a vehicle which rendered varnishing unnecessary; thus affording evidence of the truth of Vasari's statement that pictures painted in the manner of Van Eyck did not require varnishing.

The MS. contains no directions as to the vehicle ; it is merely stated that the colours were to be ground with oil, and that certain colours were to be used with drying oil, in order to make them more siccative. In No. 14, Oil of "Camamine" (Chamomile) is mentioned,1c) but on account of the difficulty of deciphering the MS, it is scarcely possible to distinguish whether Le Brun has written "bonne pour peindre," or "bonne pour prendre." The supposition, coupled with the conclusion of the sentence, "it is as clear as rock water," is certainly in favour of the first reading, whence we may suppose that oil of chamomile was used to dilute the colours in the same manner as spirit of turpentine is now used.

With regard to the varnishes described in the MS., it will be observed that they are not oleo-resinous. The first varnish for pictures consists of mastic and "huile de sapin," which appears to be synonymous, or nearly so, with the "olio di abezzo" of the Italians. The second consisted of turpentine liquefied over the fire, thinned with oil of spike. The "Vernis Gros" ("vernice grossa" of the Italians) or common varnish was made of turpentine, oil of turpentine, and resin melted together. The two former, at least, were probably light-coloured varnishes; the colour of the last seems doubtful. A passage in Chapter I. (No. 16) suggests the idea of a high-coloured varnish having been used occasionally "to lower the brilliancy of the colours." This may have been a relic of an older practice, and appears more applicable to an oleo-resinous varnish than to one of those described in the MS.

Chapter IX. teaches how to speak of beautiful paintings; and Chapter X. is an account of the greatest painters in the world. The author commences this chapter with an extract from Quintilian (ch. 16, 1. 12), giving a brief account of a few of the great painters of antiquity. He then speaks of the moderns, among whom he mentions Michael Angelo as a distinct person from Buonarrotti. From the painters of the cinquecento he passes to the artists who were contemporary with him, among whom he enumerates the Carracci, Rubens, and Simon Vouet, and he concludes this part of the work with observing that his friend M. Thierson, to whom he was indebted for many hints for his work, "is also a very clever man."

Chapter XI. treats of the various methods of gilding, and the work concludes with the recipes for varnish before mentioned.

1a The first Latin edition was printed at Leyden in 1621, and the English translation in 1657. The work is mentioned in the letters of Rubens, who merely states that he had received the work, but had not had time to read it. It appears from the explanations of many of the technical terms being in French, that the author was a Frenchman. His name, probably, was Boulanger.

1b See Mr. Eastlake's *Materials, &c.*, vol. i. p. 455, 456.

1c The distilled oil of chamomile (*Oleum Anthemidis*) is sometimes of a blue colour: that which is found in the shops is generally foreign, of a yellowish or brownish yellow colour, and becomes viscid by age. -*Brande's Dictionary, &c.*

COLLECTION OF ESSAYS
(etc.)

COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON THE WONDERS

OF PAINTING,
BY PIERRE LEBRUN, PAINTER,
1635.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

When Alexander the Great visited Apelles the Great, and began to talk of colours and paintings, the apprentices burst into a loud laugh, so that their master was frightened and ashamed of them, and whispered to Alexander, saying, "Sire, I entreat you will not speak of the profession, for the boys who are grinding the colours are bursting with laughter at the mistakes you make: you are good for conquering worlds, we for representing them on pictures; your sword and our pencils in the same hand do not agree, and, to do well, every one should speak of his own trade, otherwise he furnishes a subject of laughter in the whole company." Alexander was silent, and laughed. Reader-my dear friend, I desire to free you from this annoyance, and from the fear that your ignorance should be the subject of derision, when you speak of painting on a flat surface, one of the most noble arts of the world. The greatest deceiver in the world is the greatest painter of the universe and the most excellent workman ; for, to tell the truth, eminence in this art consists in a deception, innocent, and full of enthusiasm and divine spirit. Poets have their inspirations in the head, which is the seat of the poetic nerve; painters in the tips of the fingers, and in the flowing point of the pencil. But the eye must be deceived, or the picture is worth nothing ; this must appear hollow and concave, that swollen and convex ; this appear to project and stand out from the picture, that must appear distant a good league ; this of a prodigious height, that perforated; this living and full of movement. Let the horse gallop and foam at the mouth through its hard breathing ; let the dog bark loudly ; let the blood flow from the wound ; let the clouds really thunder and be torn to pieces by frequent flashes of lightning ; let this dying man appear with his soul issuing from his lips; let this bird tire his beak by pecking at the grapes ; let the spectators call for the curtain to be raised, so as to see what is behind; yet there is no reality in this, for the surface on which the objects are represented is flat, and truth is imitated so artfully that nature appears to have animated the picture in order to assist painting to deceive us, and to laugh at our folly; hence it is that one painter wrote in his works "res ipsa" -it is the thing itself; not the imitation; and another, "fecit Apelles," which that great artist wrote on three works in which he surpassed art, nature, and himself; on the others he wrote "faciebat," that is to say, "he was doing it." He would not finish his designs lest he should make Nature blush, for she had already acknowledged herself conquered by genius and art,--not like those simpletons who were such fools as to paint an ox or an ass for a horse, and so wretchedly was the imitation daubed, that it was necessary to write under it in large letters, "Gentlemen, this is an ass ;" or, "Gentlemen, this is an ox ;" but

even in this they lied, for there were two asses; he [the painter] was the first, and the brute he had painted the second. Therefore, to know how to discourse on this noble profession, you must have frequented the studio and disputed with the masters, have seen the magic effects of the pencil, and the unerring judgement with which the details are worked out by the [....]..... of the wonders of nature by René François, the King's preacher.

1 The words omitted are illegible in the MS.

BRUSSELS MANUSCRIPT.

CHAPTER I.

OF FLAT PAINTING.

1. The muller (that is, the stone with which the colours are ground) must be of flint or whetstone, so as to grind the colours on the porphyry and to incorporate them better with the oil. The amassette 1) is of horn, and with this the colours are collected after grinding, and spread upon the stone.
2. The scaffold or easel of the painter is used to support the paintings for working.
3. The pencils are made of a soft kind of hair, but which has sufficient resistance to keep itself straight, and to make a firm point for painting; the hairs of bears are very good, so are those of martens and similar animals. Small brushes made of hogs' or pigs' bristles are also used, and pencils of fishes' hair 2) for softening.
4. The pinceliere is a vase in which the pencils are cleaned with oil, and of the mixture of oil and dirty colours is made a grey colour, useful for certain purposes, such as to lay on the first coats, or to prime the canvas. The pincelier is a vase containing oil, in which the pencils are placed that they may not dry.
5. A palette set for painting flesh colour must contain terre verte, cendre verte et bleue, brown pink, yellow ochre, vermilion, red ochre, lake, umber, bone black, and charcoal black, with white lead in the middle.
6. The painter's palette is the mother of all colours; for, from the mixture of 8 or 4 principal colours, his pencil will create, and, as it were, cause to flourish all kinds of colours. They say to set a palette for the carnations (that is to say, to make the flesh colour), with green, &c.; and this is the work of the boy. The principal colours are, 1st, white lead (so called because it is found in lead mines); 2ndly, fine azure and ultramarine; 3rdly, Venetian lake, which makes a most brilliant flesh colour and scarlet; 4thly, Spanish vermilion; 5thly, la cendrée; 6thly, charcoal black; 7thly, massicot, which serves for the fine yellow; 8thly, "verd de terre"; 9thly, dragon's blood; and, 10thly, "la rosette." 3) These are the florid colours, the others are common.

7. The canvases are covered with parchment glue or flour paste before they are primed with potter's earth, yellow earth, or ochre ground with linseed or nut oil. The priming is laid on the canvas with the knife or amassette to render it smoother, and this is the work of the boy.

8. To take the portrait of a person, or to draw from the life. Anciently, the art did not extend beyond drawing the outlines; in later times the outline was covered with a single colour. To give expression and character; to open the mouth, the eye; to give a smile; to paint the soul, the character, the passions, &c.

9. To paint the portrait after the life, to leave the work at the discretion of the pencil, and to the chance of the hand; to heighten and relieve the colours, i. e. to give the colours lustre and light; item to varnish, and cover with varnish to produce lustre.

10. Outlines, gestures, symmetry, proportions, expressions, and character, give renown to the pencil, and are the principal points to be aimed at. The inner part is easily done; but the outline, the finishing touches, and the roundings off of the different objects are difficult.

11. To shade or shadow the works, put in the darks and shadows, to give prominence to some parts, and make others recede, and to throw back the landscapes to a still greater distance, and compress them into a small space. The light and shade should be intermixed so that the diversity of colour may heighten and give roundness to both.

12. Besides the light and the shade, there is the half light, 4) which is something between light and shade, and is a colour composed of a mixture of the two, and is that which separates the colours; it is called "dejettement," and in Greek "armoge."

13. To paint landscapes on a flat ground in architecture, in the air, and as if among the clouds, covering but a small surface of canvas; the ancients had two sorts, and afterwards three, the Ionic, Sicyonic, and Attic. To make figures, flowers, fancy subjects, rivers, to raise mountains, and tempests, &c.

14. To paint landscapes, grotesques, arabesques, rustic scenes, fancies, chimeras, vignettes, tufts of trees, precipices, falls of water, sea pieces, storms, with a thousand poetical inventions of the kind.

15. To paint draperies, and clothe the figures, that is to say, to dress them with drapery, always using more than one colour, but there must be a mixture of colours. There is simple drapery, and there is drapery damasked and embroidered with historical subjects; there are robes tucked up and with folds, which the painters cover with crape, and which are visible through the veil and the transparent gauze; others which are broken with shadows in order to lower the brilliancy of the colours.

16. To lower the too great brilliancy of the colours with var-

nish, which is like talc or crape spread over the painting; to infuse into the painting the soul, the affections, the conceptions of genius (the inimitable invention of Apelles), in fact to paint that which cannot be painted, such as thunder, lightning, the voice, the breath, &c. To lay on the colours with cleanliness, with harshness.

17. Ceruse is made of lead and vinegar; it is good in the flesh colour and similar things. burnt ivory, which was used by Apelles, is a most excellent black, for if it is dissolved in vinegar and dried in the sun it cannot be effaced. There are some works of powerful colouring, other feeble; the latter, after the first painting, must be heightened with vigorous colours.

18. A good picture should possess great invention, well observed proportions, pleasing and natural colouring, lively flesh colour, rich drapery, distant landscape, accurate perspective, and tints so natural that the eye may easily be deceived.

19. The heightenings are produced by throwing lights upon them, the hollows and retiring parts are produced with the shades, and thick darkness must be surrounded with light. Softening is that tender union of the colours by which one colour is almost lost in the other. By glazing is meant the last thin coat [of transparent colour] which softens and gives brilliancy, by glazing the white, the purple, the green, the yellow, &c.

20. The painting should be placed in its proper light or in a full light, and concerning this you must know that all painting supposes generally that the light comes from the right towards the left; the false light is when the light shines from left to right, and in this case all the shadows are on the opposite side. Therefore, to place a painting in its proper light is to expose it to the light whence the painter supposes the light to come, turning it towards the window, so that all the parts may appear as if hidden behind that part of the body which is illuminated. It sometimes happens that the light falls from above; when this is the case the head, face, and nose are highly illuminated, and the rest of the neck, body, and person do not participate in the light except in a few places where streaks or rays of light fall on the folds and other parts which appear to swell and project out of the work. Again, it sometimes happens in the opposite manner, when the light shines from below, and in this case the figures would be raised very high, and the knees and other prominent parts would be strongly illuminated, while the face and other parts would be half eclipsed. The light must therefore always be suffered to enter on the side whence the painter supposes it to shine, that is to say, the shadows must never appear to be thrown towards the window.

21. In a painting there must be the point of sight, the vanishing point, the hollows and retirements of the members, the perspective, the receding and approaching parts, the feints and

deceptions; there is even the movement of the eyes, which, by a miracle of the pencil, are made to appear to be looking everywhere, which they never do in nature; they even appear to be moved by the eyelids; nothing is wanting to the figures but speech and life.

22. To take the proper light, or the false light, that is to say, the side light which the window affords the painter; the feigned light from another source, like the light on the angel in the Nativity; the full light, when the light shines on the front of the whole portrait, and in this case there is no shadow.

23. Foreshortening, retreating, or retiring, which causes some objects to appear distant. These parts must be painted tenderly, that is, with softness, for if the colours were too strong the objects would appear too near.

24. The shadows give roundness, the colours shade and give force to the work. The false light which appears where it should not; a concealed light, such as that of a flambeau, a lamp.

25. Drapery. To cast the drapery and to drape the figures, to add the ornaments, that is to say, to imitate the embroidery, or to paint vases or flowers on the robes which are of gold or of "dorage," that is to say, like fine gold; and there are several sorts of "dorage," according to the lightness or darkness of the colour.

26. To represent the death of a stag or other animal. To paint a landscape you must begin with the air, i. e., where there are no clouds, that it [the landscape] may appear nearer, and the rest behind. The foreground, that is, the ground which sustains the whole work, is to be painted with forcible colours.

27. To paint or represent a dark night pierced by a single ray of light; to round the figure, i. e., to make it appear in relief, which is done by means of light and shade. "Derober un jour," that is, to represent a rising or setting sun in a corner, behind a mountain or something similar, which gives light to the whole.

28. There are different kinds of light; the "jour de droit fil" is, when the light comes from the right side; "jour caché ou derobé," as when the sun is supposed to be behind a mountain, not yet throwing its golden rays on the surface of the earth, at the rising of Aurora, or when she has opened the gates of light to the beautiful son of Latona, to restore the agreeable day-light, and to show her golden wig to the habitants of this low universe, and this is called "jour derobé."

"Jour feint" is a light at midnight, as in the Nativity of Our Lord; and "faux jour" is when one cannot discern whence the light proceeds.

29. Distance of the works, when they appear distant, the colours being faint. Deception is the perfection of the art, deceiving the eye, which imagines it sees what in fact it sees not. To paint with black and white or in distemper, or with nut oil, which is the usual way, and the best, or in fresco.

30. To work with crayons or charcoal, to sketch, to outline, to make the first design, to draw a rough sketch, to put on the

first touches, to make the rough outline with crayon, chalk, charcoal, plumbago, vermilion, or to draw on the paper with ink.

To sketch the first thoughts on the canvas, then at leisure to search for perfection and particularize all the parts; to draw the subject, to rub out the false touches of the rough sketch; the "maistre trait" still remains to guide the sketched work.

31. To represent a full face, that is, all the face; thus-----

[This part of the work is illustrated with drawings.]

32. To paint the outline or profile, i. e. the half or side face,

33. To paint back views, i. e. backwards, when only the hinder part is painted.

34. To paint with glories, as they paint saints.

35. By "ordonnance" and design are meant the first touches, for painting refers to the colours which are applied upon the portrait. The size of the picture may be increased or reduced to a small scale; it may be pricked and laid on the ground and outlines, and pounced with pounce. The design thus executed is called "poncif," but it is the work of the apprentice.

36. The colouring is very forcible, the colours well arranged; the lights disposed in their proper places; the drapery well cast; the painter has a good touch, i. e. he paints the flesh well, i. e. the flesh colour of the face, hand, and foot, for the other part of the body is clothed.

37. Moresques are pencils or horns drawn round a painting, and they are made of gold on a ground of the colour of gold.

38. Grotesques, in addition to these, contain figures.

39. Arabesques consist of foliage and flowers.

39a. Estampes (engravings) are copper plates. The word comes from estamper, which signifies to print in Italian.

40. Cartouches are almost the same things, except that the "quartouche" 6) partakes of the grotesque.

41. Terms are figures which are placed under brackets or cornices, which they support by their heads, like pilasters; they have the form of human beings down to the waist, the lower part being shaped into columns or pillars.

41a. Busts or models are generally half-figures; such, generally, are portraits.

42. Cameos are figures composed of black and white or red, or some other colour.

43. The design of Michael Angelo, the colouring of Raffaello, the invention and boldness of Parmigianino, and the night scenes of Bassano united, would present to an artist the beau ideal of good painters; they constitute the four elements of a perfect painter.

1 Amassette - instrument with which the colours are collected and scraped together on the stone.

2 Probably seal's fur

3 La Rosette. See Chap. VII. No. 11

4 Millin gives a different signification to this term. He says, that in

painting a picture, it is said to be in a false light, when it is placed in an apartment in such a manner that the natural light enters on the side opposite the artificial light which is supposed to illuminate the objects in the painting Millin. Dict. des Beaux Arts.

5 This is now called Faux jour. See Millin, Dictionnaire des Beaux Arts.

6 Cartouches were ornaments of painting, sculpture &c. They represented scrolls of paper, rolled or twisted. Their principal use was for inscriptions. The word " cartouches " was derived from " charta."

RECUEIL DES ESSAIES DES MERVEILLES
DE LA PEINTURE,
DE PIERRE LEBRUN, PEINTRE,
1635.

PREFACE AU LECTEUR DE LA PEINTURE.

Quand le grand Alexandre visitant Apelles le grand voulut parler des couleurs et des peintures, les Apprentis esclattèrent si fort de rire que le maistre en eust peur et honte. Sire (dit-il tout bas) ne parlez point de le mestier car les garçons qui broient les couleurs crevent de rire vous entendant ainsi begayes: vous estes bon pour conquerir les mondes, et nous pour les coucher sur nos tableaux. Vostre espée et nos pinceaux ne s'accordent pas bien en une mesme main, et pour bien faire chacun doit parler de son mestier autrement on appreste à rire à toute la compagnie. Alexandre se teut se print à rire. Je desire lecteur mon grand amy, vous delivrer de ceste peine, et de la peur qu'on ne se gausse de vostre niaiserie quand vous voudrez parler de la platte peinture, l'un des nobles artifices du monde, le plus grand trompeur du monde c'est le meilleur peintre de l'univers et le plus excellent ouvrier, car à vray dire l'eminence de le mestier ne consiste qu'en une tromperie innocente et toute pleine d'entousiasme et de divin esprit, les poetes ont leurs inspirations dans la teste ou est la nerve poëtique, et les peintres au fin bout des doigts et à la pointe scarante du pinceau. Mais faut tromper l'oeil ou tout n'y vaut rien: il faut qu'on croie que celà et creux et enfoncé, cela enfié, et boursofflé, cecy hors d'oeuvres et qui se jette entièrement hors du tableau, cecy esloigné d'une bonne lieue, cela d'une hauteuse extrême, celà perce à jour, cecy tout vif et plein de mouvement, que le cheval court et escume à force de souffler, que ce chien jappe vivement, que le sang coule de la plaie, que les nuées tonnent en effet, et que les nuages soient tout descousus à force d'esclaires qu'on voie sortir coup sur coup; que cest homme rende l'esprit, et qu'on voie l'ame sur ses leuvres, que les oyseaux bequettent ces raisins, et se lassent le becque, qu'on crie haut qu'il faut oster le rideau afin de voir ce qui est chaché, cependant il n'y a rien de tout celà, car tout celà est

plat, pris bas mort et contrefait si artistement qu'il semble que la nature se soit couchée la-dessus pour aider la peinture à nous tromper finement et se moquer de nostre bestise, de la vient qu'un deus escrit en les ouvrages res ipsa, c'est la chose même non pas la peinture, et l'autre .fecit Apelles; ce qu'il mit en trois pièces ou il surmonta l'art, la nature et soy-mesme, aux autres il mettait faciebat, c'est à dire il faisoit, et à dessein n'a point vouluz achever de peur de fair rougir la nature qui se fut confessée vaincue par l'esprit et par l'art, ce n'est par comme ces badeaux qui étaient si niaiz que pour peindre un cheval ils faisoient une asne ou un boeuf et encore si mal fagotté qu'il falloit escrire en gros cadeaux: Messieurs cecy est une asne, cecy est un boeuf, encore mentoient-ilz, car ilz estoient deux, luy le beau premier, et celuy qu'il avoit peint l'autre; Pour scavoit donc parler de ce noble mestier, il faut avoir esté à la boutique. disputé avec les maistres, veu le traint de pinceau, et le jugement asseuré pour esplucher toute chose par le menu.

. . may des . . . merveilles de nature par René François
Predicat. du Roy.

DE LA PLATTE PEINTURE.
C H A P I T R E P R E M I E R.
DE LA PLATTE PEINTURE.

1. Il faut que la moulette soit de caillou (c'est 'a dire la pierre à broyer) de gré ou de queux, afin de mieux broyer les couleurs sur le porphir et les mieux incorporer avec l'huile. L'amassette est de corne, et amasse la couleur broyée, et éparsé sur la pierre.
2. L'Estodi, l'eschafaux ou chevallet du peintre, c'est sur quoy on posse les tableaux pour travailler.
3. Les pincaux sont fait d'un poil doux toutefois qu'il ait une resistance pour se tenir droit et faire une pointe assez ferme pour peindre, les poils d'ouris [ours] y sont tres bons, moustoil, foines et autres semblables; on se sert aussi de petite bruissette fait de soye de pourceau (ou cochon). L'on a aussi des pincaux fait de poil de poisson pour adoucir.
4. La pinceliere est un vase où l'on nestoie les pincaux avec l'huile, et de ce meslange on fait un gris et bon à certains ouvrages comme à faire les premières couches ou imprimer la thoile. Le pincelier est un vase où l'on met tramer les pincaux dans de l'huile, de peur qu'il ne se seichent.
5. Une palette de carnation est du verd de terre, cendre verd et bleuse, stil de grun [grain], ocre jaune, vermillon, ocre rouge, lac, terre d'ombre, noir dos et de charbon, avec blanc de plomb au milieu.
6. La palette du peintre est la mère de toutes les couleurs, car du meslange de trois ou quatre maistresse couleurs, son pincau fait naistre et comme fleurir toutes sortes des couleurs,

on dit préparer une palette de carnation (c'est 'a dire, pour faire la charnure) du verd, &c. Et c'est l'ouvrage du garçon. Les meres des couleurs sont premièrement le blanc de plomb (à cause qu'il se trouve en mine de plomb). 2 le fin azur et l'outremarin. 3°. la lacque de Venise qui a un incarnat et une escarlatte fort vive. 4°. le vermillon d'Espagne. 5°. la cendrée, 6° le noir de charbon, 7° le massicot qui est le fin jaune, 8° le verd de terre, 9° le sang de dragon, 10° la rosette: voilà les couleurs gayes, les autres sont rudes.

7. Les toilles s'encolles avec colle de parchemin ou de farine auparavant que les imprimer; on les imprime avec terre de potier, terre jaune ou ocre broyés avec huile de noix ou de lin. La dite imprimure se couche sur les toilles avec un couteau ou avec l'amassette pour les rendre plus unie, et c'est l'ouvrage du garçon.

8. Pourtraire et enlever au vif une personne, du commencement on ne faisoit que porfiller, puis après on couvrit le pourfil d'une seule couleur. Donner contenance, sans images et bonnes mines, ouvrant la bouche, l'oeil, le rire, &c., peindre l'esprit, les moeurs, les passions, &c.

9. Faire le pourtrait au naturel, laisse l'ouvrage à la discretion du pinceau et au hasard de la main, rehausser les couleurs et relever l'ouvrage, c'est donner le lustre et le jour aux couleurs. item vernisser et coucher du vernis pour faire esclate.

10. Les pourfils, les gestes, les simmetries et proportions, et mines et bonnes contenances sont celles qui donnent bruit au pinceaux; et le point principal de tout c'est cela. Le dedans se fait aisément, mais le pourfil, les derniers traits, et l'arrondissement de la besogne est mal aisée.

11. Ombrer ou ombrager les ouvrages, faire des nuits, des ombrages pour faire esclatte, les autres reculer, les paysages bien loin et en petit volume. L'ombragement et le jour s'entremeslent afin que la diversité des couleurs facent rehausser et arondir l'une et l'autre.

12. Outre le jour et l'ombragement, il y a encore le faux-jour, qui tien du jour et de l'ombre et est un lustre composé des deux, ce qui sépare les couleurs, il s'appelle le "dejettemans" et en Grec "armoge."

13. Peindre en paysage, à fond plat, en architecture, en l'air, et comme parmy les nuees, peindre en petit volume. Les anciens estoient à deux sortes et puis à trois, à l'Ionique, à la Sycionienne, et à l'Attique. Faire les personnages, les fantages, les fleurs, les fantasies, les rivières, dresser des montagnes, soulever des tempêtes, &c.

14. Peindre des paysages, des grotesques, arabesques, la rustique, des fantasies, et des chimeres, vignetterment, touffe de bois, precipices, chutes d'eaux, baricanes, la marine, et les orages et

mille gentillesses et inventions poétiques de la même taille.

15. Faire la draperie, et drapper l'image, c'est l'habiller or en drappant, jamais on ne met une seule couleur ; mais il y faut du meslange. Il y a simple drapperie ; il y a celle qui est damassée, historiée à brodure, les robes retroussées et les replis puisurés (sic), les feintres les couvertes de cresse, et qui perçent le voile et la thuille desliée, les autres qui sont meurtries avec les ombrages qui rabattent le trop grand esclat.

16. Meurtrir la trop grande gayeté des couleurs avec vernix qui semble du talc ou du cresse ou de lairs espars sur le tableau; l'ame, les affections, peindre les conceptions d'esprit sur le tableau (invention d'Appellée inimitable), enfin peindre ce qui ne se peut peindre, comme les tonnerres, esclairs, la voix, la respiration, &c. asseoir les couleurs proprement, estre trop rude à charge des couleurs.

17. La ceruse se fait de plomb et de vinaigre ; elle est bonne pour incarner playe et chose semblable; l'isvoire bruslée fait un noir excellent dont se servoit Apeles, car s'il est desmelé et defait en vinaigre, et ars au soleil, il ne se peut effacer. Il y a des ouvrages de haulte couleur, d'autre blaffarde, mais après la première couche il faut donner la charge avec quelques couleurs vigoureuse.

18. Un beau tableeau doit avoir l'invention gaillarde, les proportions bien gardées, le coloris plaisant et naturel, la carnation vive, la draperie riche, les paysages fort esloigné la perspective bien observée, la teinte si naturelle que l'oeil soit aisément contrain d'estre trompé.

19. Les rehauts se font à forece de jour qu'on verse dessus, les enfondremens, les creux, les rentremens, se font avec les ombres et les nuicts espaisces ceint de jour et de lumière. L'adoucissement se fait par une si douce liaison des couleurs qu'elle se perde quasi l'une dans l'autre, glace, c'est mettre les derniers adoucissements et la couche dernière delicate qui donne l'esclat avec le blanc glacé ou pourpre glacé verd glacé, jaune glacé, &c.

20. La peinture se doit mettre à son jour, ou estre à contre-jour; surquoy il faut scavoit que tout peindre suppose d'ordinaire que le jour vienne du costé droite vers le gauche; le contrejour, c'est la gauche à droicte, alors tous les ombrages sont du costé opposé donc le jour vient; de façon que mettre une peinture à son jour, c'est la tourner vers le jour que le peindre suppose devoir estre le jour, à la tourner vers la fenestre en telle façon que tout les membres soient comme caché derriere la partie du corps qui est enluminée. Il advient aussi que le jour se donne d'en hault, et a l'heure la teste, le visage, le nez, sont fort esclairez; et le reste du col, du corps, et de la personne ne participes point du jour que par certains esclairs ou filet de jour qui esclate sur les replis et autres parties qui semblent s'enfler et se jeter hors l'ouvrage. Il y en a au contraire qui prennent le jour par en bas, et se doivent mettre bien hautes, alors les pieds, genoux, et autres parties bien éminentes sont fort esclairées le

visage et autre partie sont a demy esclipez. Il faut donc toujours donner le jour du costé que le peintre le suppose et jamais le contrejour, c'est 'a dire ne tourner jamais les ombrages du costé de la fenestre.

21. Il y a au tableau le point de jour, le tiers point, les en fondremens, rentremens de membres, la perspective, les esloignemens, les aproches, les fintes et tromperies; il y a mesme du mouvement des yeux par un miracle du pinceau qui fait que l'oeil regarde de toute part, ce que la nature ne fit onque; mesmes avec les paupières on fait remuer les yeux, il ne s'en faut rien que les images ne parlent et ne soient animées.

22. Prendre le droit jour ou le contre jour, c'est 'a dire le jour du costé que la fenestre le donne au peintre; le jour feint qui se prend d'ailleurs, comme 'a la nativité la clarté de l'ange, un jour de pleine face c'est à dire qui donne à tout le pourtrait un jour de front; et la il n'y a point d'ombre.

23. A racourcissement, rentrement, renfondrement, pour faire paroistre la peinture loing il faut que la chose soit peinte flouement, c'est 'a dire doucement, car si elle estoit rude et non pas floue, elle paroistroit de trop près.

24. Les ombrages font dejetter les couleurs ombrer et faire rude la besongne, faux-jour qui se fait ou il ne faut pas, clarté desrobée c'est une lampe, flambeau, &c.

25. Drapper, faire la draperie et faire le drap, faire l'enrichissement, c'est 'a dire feindre la broderie ou semer des corbettes, c'est à dire des vases ou fleurs sur les robbes qui se font d'or, ou de cirage [dorage?], c'est 'a dire comme de l'or fein; et il y a plusieurs sortes de cirages [dorages?] selon que la couleur est plus claire ou sombre.

26. Faire un atterassement de cerf ou autre beste; pour faire un paysage il faut commencer à peindre l'air, c'est 'a dire, ou il n'y a point de nuées, afin qu'il paroisse plus près et les autres derrière. la terrasse est fort rude, c'est 'a dire, la terre qui soutien toute l'ouvrage.

27. Peindre ou faire une nuict épaisse trenchée d'un petit filet de jour desrobé arondir la figure, c'est 'a dire faire qu'elle semble de relief, et qui se fait par le jour et l'ombrage. Desrober un jour, c'est faire en un coin derrière une montagne ou autre chose un soleil qui porte le jour, qui se leve, ou qui se couche,

28. Il y a divers sortes de jour ; le jour de droit fil c'est quand on le fait venir du costé droict, jour caché ou desrobé comme par supposition que le soleil fult derrière une montagne, ne jetant encore ses rayons dorés sur la surface de la terre, au lever de l'Aurore ou quand elle a ouvert les portes du jour a ce beau fils de Latone pour rédonner les agréables clartés et faire voir sa perruque dorée aux habitans de ce bas univers, et s'appelle jour desrobé.

Jour feint c'est un jour en plain minuit, comme a la Nativité de Nostre Seigneur, et faux-jour, c'est quand on ne peut

discerner de quel costé il vient.

29. Esloignement des ouvrages quand ils semblent loing, estant flouée ; feindre, c'est le haut point de l'art, trompant l'oeil qui croit voir ce qu'il ne voit pas. Peindre de blanc et noir, ou a destrampe, ou a huijle de noix, qui est l'ordinaire et la meilleure, ou a fresque.

30. Crayonner, charbonner, griffonner, porfiler; jeter la première ordonnance, figuer grossement, jeter les premiers traicts, faire le griffonnement avec crayon, craye, charbon, mine de plomb, vermillon ou figuer sur le papier avec l'ancre. Jeter des premières pensées sur la toile, puis à loisir en rechercher la perfection et particularisant toutes les parties, retirer la chose pourtraicte, effacer les faux traicts du griffonnement; le maistre traict demeure tout jours pour guider la besongne esbauchée.

31. Peindre de front ou en face ou en plain; c'est tout le visage ainsi.

32. Peindre de profil ou pourfil, c'est la moictié.

33. Peindre à dos c'est tout à rebours, quand on peint le derrière seulement.

34. Peindre en gloire, comme on fait les saints ou saintes.

35. On appelle ordonnance et dessein ces premiers traits, et pourtraire, car peindre c'est avec les couleurs qui surviennent dessus le pourtraict. Si on veut aggrandir on peut reduire le tout au petit pied, le piquant et l'appliquant sur son fonds, et le poncer avec la ponce, et ce dessein ainsi fait se nomme le poncif, mais c'est pour les apprentifs.

36. Le coloris est fort vif, les couleurs bien posées, et bien mises; les rehauts fait bien a propos, le drap bien drappé, le peintre touche bien c'est à dire fait bien la carnation du nud, c'est 'a dire de la face, de la main, du pied, car le reste est habillé.

37. Moresques sont des pinceaux et des cornets autour d'un tableau qui se font d'or sur l'or couleur.

38. Les Grotesques ont de plus de personnages.

39. Arabesques sont feuillages et fleurs.

39 a. Estampes sont tailles douces : ce mot vient d'estamper, qui signifie imprimer en Italien.

40. Cuiver (?) quarts touches sont quasi les mesmes choses, sinon que le quartouche participe de la grotesque.

41. Termes: ce sont figures que l'on mets sous trez ou poultries, ou sous corniches, les soutenans de la teste en guise de pillastres et portent visage d'hommes et de femmes et le corps jusques à la ceinture, le bas estant fait en forme de colonne et pillier.

41 a. Bustes ou modeles sont figures a demy, comme on fait d'ordinaire les pourtraicts.

42. Camaieux, ce sont figures faites de blanc et noir ou de rouge ou de quelqu'autre couleur.

43. Le profile de Michel- ange, le coloris de Raphael, l'inven-

tion et la hardiesse de Parmesan, et les nuicts de Bassan font
un peintre l'idée des bons peintres; ce sont les quatres
elemens d'un parfait peintre.

Einde "Chapitre Premier, de la Platte Peinture" uit Brussels
Manuscript uit 1635 van Pierre Le Brun.