

THE EVENING WORLD
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Crowley the Village Artist:

**Painting Dead Souls with Eyes Shut Easy
for Subconscious Impressionist, Greenwich
Village's Latest Sensation.**

**Aleister Crowley, Englishman, Does
Weird Things With a Brush, but Objects to
Being Classed With Futurists or Cubists
as Anything Queer.**

A new artist has drifted into Greenwich Village.

His name is Aleister Crowley ... doesn't look at all like the average Village artist, having more of the ... appearance of a Wall Street ... His hair, instead of being ... with Bolshevik abandon is, ... cropped. Instead of shaving ... every three months he shaves every day. His clothes are neat but not gaudy and have the close-fitting and knobby lines of a fashionable tailor.

Mr. Crowley's studio, on the third floor of No. 63 Washington Square South, is far removed from the den of the average village artist of the well known "struggling" type. It is illustriously fitted with cavernous easy chairs, mahogany davenport, a fine rug or two, an expensive and many-pillowed divan, with here and there a rare rosewood antique.

Mr. Crowley is an Englishman who at the outbreak of the great war was in the confidential service of the British Government. In this service he was shot in the leg, he says. He then came to this country, late in 1915, on a special mission for the British, and later became editor of the *International*, a radical magazine published in Greenwich Village.

"I had been engaged in various literary pursuits all my life," said Mr. Crowley as he held a small glass of cognac up to the light.

"I have written forty books of poetry, among other things. There are some of my works on those shelves." He pointed to several rows of books over the fireplace.

"I had never studied art and had never drawn or painted a

picture in my life. When I tried to draw those covers I became so interested in the work that I gave up the editorship of the magazine and went in for art. What you see around you is the result. What sort of an artist am I? Oh, I don't know just what to call myself. I'd say, off hand, that I was an old master, because I'm a painter mainly of dead souls.

"My art? Well I don't know just what you'd call it. But please, whatever you do, don't call me a cubist or a futurist or anything like that. I guess you might call me a subconscious impressionist or something on that order. My art really is subconscious and automatic.

"I'll tell you why. When I found I couldn't paint a portrait I didn't decide to go abroad and study for thirty or forty years.

"Instead I walked up to a blank canvas one day and, standing very close to it, I placed the wet brush upon it and closed my eyes. I had no preconceived idea of what I was going to paint. My hand simply moved automatically over the canvas.

"I don't know how long I worked in that subconscious way, but you can imagine my astonishment when I found that I had painted a likeness of a friend whom I had not seen in many years. It was that person's dead soul I had painted. I have it about the studio somewhere.

"All my work is done that way. I never know or have a preconceived idea of what is to appear on the canvas. My hand wanders into the realm of dead souls and very frequently the result is the likeness of some living person.

"Now take that picture hanging over there, for instance. It is done in water color. It is entitled 'the Burmese Lady.' If you will look at it closely you will discover that it is none other than our old friend Arnold Bennett."

The painting indicated by Mr. Crowley did resemble Arnold Bennett as he might have looked if he blackened his face and donned a Hottentot's wig.

"Now over there you see a weird lady with something resembling a pig. The title of that one is 'Ellis Wheeler Wilcox and the Swami.' One of my best works, that.

"Of course my impressions are not always those of well known people. That one over there on the east wall isn't a bad thing. That girl's head. It is entitled 'Young Bolshevik Girl With Wart Looking at Trotsky.'

"That one with all the little figures? Oh, the name of that is 'A Day Dream of Dead Hats.' You see, it shows a lady asleep on a veranda, while the spirits of bygone bonnets pass across a mystic bridge on the heads of a dozen or so undressed ladies.

You'll probably admit that most women when they take a nap dream of dead bonnets.

"That fluffy one dancing on one toe is supposed to be the dead spirit of Eva Tanguay."

One of his pictures that Mr. Crowley likes best is that of Madame Yorska, the French actress. It shows the face of a woman, thrown backward in death, a bejeweled dagger through her throat.

"That large three panelled screen is called the 'Screen of the Dead Souls.' All those figures you see on it are dead souls in various stages of decomposition. That central figure in the middle panel is the queen of the dead souls. Of course you recognize the head looking over her shoulder. That's Hearst. Over her other shoulder is Oscar Wilde. I don't know how he got in there, because I really hate him. The parrot sitting on the head of the dead lady's soul in the third panel is Bob Chandler.

"Study art? Never have and never intend to."