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ANDRÉ SALMON ON FRENCH MODERN ART

André Salmon was one of the premier art critics of his day and the author of two important eyewitness accounts of early twentieth-century art in France, *La jeune peinture française* and *La jeune sculpture française*. These works capture the revolutionary spirit of the period and include references to and jokes from a small coterie of artists and poets that included Picasso, Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Georges Braque, and Salmon himself. This is the first English-language translation of Salmon's first two books, which serve as the primary sources on the Fauves, the Cubists, and their avant-garde contemporaries. Beth Gersh-Nešić's translation includes annotations that expand upon the period, most notably the literary references that came so naturally to Salmon. His rapport with his peers becomes transparent, providing insight into the studio banter that gave rise to some of the artwork of that era, particularly Picasso's collages. The introduction calls attention to Salmon's main criteria as a critic and offers an understanding of his personal aesthetics, through which we gain a better sense of his ideas and prejudices.

Beth S. Gersh-Nešić is Director of the New York Arts Exchange. She is the author of *The Early Criticism of André Salmon: A Study of His Thoughts on Cubism* (1991).

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Translated and annotated by

BETH S. GERSH-NEŠIĆ

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521856584

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First published 2006

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Salmon, André, 1881–
 [Jeune peinture française. English]
 André Salmon on French modern art / edited and translated by Beth S. Gersh-Nešić.
 p. cm.

The first English translation of Salmon's first two books.
 Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85658-4 (hardback)

ISBN-10: 0-521-85658-2 (hardback)

I. Art, French – 20th century. I. Salmon, André, 1881 – Jeune sculpture française. English. II. Gersh-Nešić, Beth S. III. Title.

N6848.S27 2005

709'.44'09041 – dc22

2005017941

ISBN-13 978-0-521-85658-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-85658-2 hardback

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*To André Salmon and the artists mentioned in these pages –
to your idealism and belief that art may be our salvation*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Translation is a giant puzzle. And, like most puzzles, it is fun to work on them alone and with company. Denise Gaillaguet of Rhode Island and Gisèle Carruth, director of Alliance Française de Westchester in White Plains, New York, were indeed my cotranslators and splendid company in this enterprise. They are both French and were French teachers before retirement. Without them, this translation would not have been possible. Each read through my flawed manuscripts at different stages of the work (Madame Gaillaguet in 1994 and Madame Carruth in 1999–2000), and each corrected numerous errors – some egregious, others subtle nuances. Their work was scrupulous. Any errors that remain are my own – having tinkered with the manuscript since their collaboration.

In addition, professional translator Wendy Shefferman-Skolnik worked with me early on to assemble a proposal for an NEH grant, and art historian Dr. Paul Werner of New York University, Orange Press, and *WOID: A Journal of Visual Language* contributed during the final months, helping to liven up a few awkward phrases. Art historian Marion Wolf, after reading the first chapter of *La jeune peinture française*, showed me how to strive for more fluency, let go of the leaden fidelity to the exact wording, and impart meaning with spare sentences (wherever possible).

Thank you so much, Madame Gaillaguet, Gisèle, Wendy, Paul, and Marion for generously giving of your time and expertise. You have all provided me with a much appreciated French-language education.

After completing the translation, I turned to Professor Jacqueline Gojard of the Department of Literature, University of Paris, Sorbonne III (also the executor of the Salmon estate), who has produced the most comprehensive and insightful literature on André Salmon. She generously provided me with copious resources – her own numerous articles, papers, and dissertation – which would have been unavailable to me otherwise. Her bibliography of Salmon's works, completed with her husband, Jacques Gojard, and her essay on Salmon's nominalism, published in *André Salmon*, number 9 *Quadarni del Novecento Francese* (1987), influenced both my first book on Salmon and this translation. During the writing of the introduction and the notes for this translation, Professor Gojard's more recent essays and her correspondence (answering numerous questions I posed in every letter) corrected errors and supported my analysis, which helped me see the project through. I am infinitely grateful for her clarifications, gifts of her work, and encouragement. It is an honor to share this world of Salmon research and interpretation with her, as well as with other exceptional scholars who have been sources for our work. Along with Professor Gojard's generosity, I am greatly indebted to Professor Gojard's daughter, Sévèrine Gojard-Desgranges, who found my e-mail address through the Internet and renewed contact between her mother and me. Correspondence with Ms. Gojard-Desgranges has been delightful and greatly appreciated as she facilitated more rapid exchanges and helped solve unexpected airmail problems. Thank you, Professor Gojard and Sévèrine Gojard-Desgranges, for your congenial and prompt responses.

For contributions to specific areas of inquiry, I would like to thank art historian and artist Dr. Richard Kendall, Degas specialist, who responded to my e-mail queries regarding Salmon's Degas quotation in *La jeune peinture française*. I would also like to thank Professor Amy F. Ogata of Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, who responded to my e-mail query regarding Victorian gazing balls, which Salmon cited as the epitome of infuriating popular bourgeois taste. For more information on gazing balls, consult your favorite search engine.

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This brings me to some of the most indispensable resources for this project: search engines and libraries. Of the search engines, I relied most of the time on Google and Dogpile. Among the libraries that were most helpful, I would like to thank the New York Public Library, Thomas J. Watson Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, the Fonds Doucet, and the Bibliothèque d'Art et l'Archéologie (Fondation Doucet) of the Universités de Paris, John D. Rockefeller Library at Brown University, Purchase College Library, and the Westchester Libraries System.

Also of considerable value were the photocopies of Salmon's articles that came from Dr. Lynn Wissing Gamwell's research notes on Cubism. Dr. Gamwell, director of the Art Museum of the State University of New York at Binghamton, allowed me to look through her handwritten copies of Salmon's articles for my dissertation, and I am still indebted to her for those copies of articles that have bearing on his books.

With all the information at my disposal, there were also the opportunities to share my ideas with my peers. Thank you so much, Professor Liana De Girolami Cheney of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, for accepting my papers on Cézannisme and Picasso's *El Guitare* for the art history panels at the Mediterranean Studies Association conferences (Aix-en-Provence in 2001 and Barcelona in 2004, respectively); thank you, Professor Benjamin Taggie of the University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth and Professor Richard W. Clement of the University of Kansas, who founded the Mediterranean Studies Association and organized the conferences, for accepting my proposals; and thank you, Dr. Alicia Craig Faxon, Professor Emeritus of Simmons College, for inviting me to join the Mediterranean Studies Association, which has provided a forum for collegial discussion over the last few years. In this regard, I would also like to thank Professor Rose-Carol Washton Long, my dissertation advisor, who introduced me to André Salmon in her seminar on Cubism at the City University of New York Graduate and University Center and encouraged me to finish this translation.

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Most important of all, before there were cotranslators, scholarly colleagues/consultants, and anonymous Internet data providers, there was Dr. Beatrice Rehl, senior editor of Classics and Art at Cambridge University Press, who recognized the genuine need to make Salmon's work available in English and did not give up on this project through these fourteen long years. Thank you, Beatrice, for your patience and support from day one.

Finally, and with gratitude beyond words, I thank Jill M. Sitkin, who guided me through the last eighteen months of "the Salmon book." I could not have gotten to the point of writing these acknowledgments without you, Jill. Thank you so much for listening and caring.

And thank you, Dusan and Natasha Nešić, my husband and daughter, for giving me the time and privacy to work (especially that father-daughter trip to Serbia), and thank you for respecting my need to get the work done. Plus, thank you, SJ Ranch, that wonderful sleep-away camp for horse lovers, which enticed Natasha for weeks at a time during the past three summers – those sojourns gave me much-needed days of uninterrupted work, which resulted in the completion of this book.