Round the London Art Galleries

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HE present exhibition of Expressionist paintings and drawings at Roland, Browse and Delbanco's inevitably tempts one to divide artists into categories. A debate ensues in which one's casual, illogical self urges 'Ignore categories; treat your pictures as manifestations of individual attitudes of mind'. To which one's analytical self replies, with some justification, 'The understanding of attitudes of mind must precede the understanding of the works of art that express them. How can one enjoy an Expressionist picture with-

out knowing what Expressionism means?' As a conscientious critic I am inclined to accept any suggestion made by my analytical self.

One can make a rough division of artists into Expressionists-men who externalise their feelings-and Impressionists - men who depend upon their eyesight. Monet, we agree, paints what he sees, Kokoschka what he feels, and it is stupid to complain that the latter is too frenzied or the former too literal. But labels are only helpful in extreme cases. What interests me, in touring the numerous current exhibitions, is to decide about borderline cases. What attitude of mind, for example, lies behind the colourful of organisations Hitchens at the Leicester Galleries? Of the pictures by Alan Revnolds at the Redfern Galleries? Affandi's (a young Indo-

nesian painter) at the Imperial Institute? Of Tirzah Garwood's at the Arts Council Gallery in St. James's Square?

I have picked these artists from the mass of contemporary painters now exhibiting in London because each of them presents his own problem in an extreme form. Each has something definite to say, each says

it with considerable conviction, and each demands from the spectator a sympathetic understanding which the critic must be prepared to define. In the absence of such definition the work of art may fail to produce

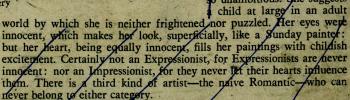
its full impact.

an artist whose feelings dictate his form. There is nothing here of okoschka's frenzy or Hitchens' lyrical elegance, but a dogged deter nination to reject inessentials and to seize on essentials and reduc sem to a formalised organisation in space. The result is a stark, rather viry world but a convincing one which the eye can explore with con siderable satisfaction. Mr. Reynolds is young and his range of expres sion is limited, but I have the impression that here is a creative min working tentatively at present, but full of potentialities and capable

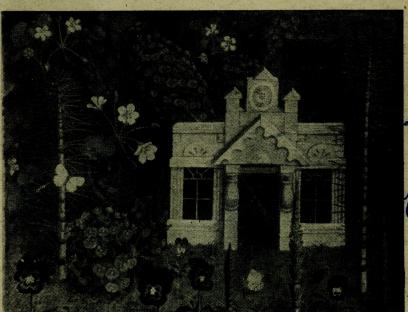
of growth.

Affandi, at the Imperial Institute, is a Javanese artist but with no perceptible Indonesian tradition behind him. Self-taught, wilder even than Kokoschka when excited, as human and as passionate as van Gogh, painting recklessly from the heart and ready to paint whatever moves himlandscapes, animals, friends, relations; chance-met personages—his drawings (powerful, his paintings vary from the painfully undisciplined to the restlessly volcanic. He is the perfect example of the Expressionist, capable of falling into every Expressionist trap and of scaling a good many of the Expressionist heights.

The late Tirzah Garwood (Arts Council Gallery) possessed one of those little talents that are precious because they are so simple and unambitious. She suggests



Among the numerous mixed exhibitions two deserve special mention. One is a collection of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French



'Wee Wack's Kitten', by Tirzah Garwood, from the exhibition at the Arts Council