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Baudelaire's Article on the Universal Exhibition in Paris and its Influence on the Moderne Arts

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In the article on the Universal Exhibition of 1855 in Paris, Charles Baudelaire (1821-67) stated a necessity for a cosmopolitan attitude to artistic beauty. From this point of view, he praised some Chinese products in this Exhibition, and asserted that the Occidental sense of beauty at that time was narrow-minded. And following Edgar Allan Poe's view, Baudelaire went so far as to say that beauty always has an element of strangeness. Furthermore, he lauded Delacroix's paintings as if they were abstract arts or the works of "surnaturalisme" that express some supernatural world or opium dream. These comments are certainly eccentric arguments. Some later critics, however, used them to defend the novel arts such as a vague picture by Cézanne and some strange figures by Hokusai. And when Guillaume Apollinaire coined the term "surréalisme", he must also have borne the term "surnaturalisme" in mind. We may say that Baudelaire's article on the Universal Exhibition had been promoting the new tendency of the moderne arts.