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# POST

Daily Magazine  
and Comic SECTION

NEW YORK POST

## If It's Art, Tell It to Sweeney

By DOROTHY NORMAN

Once it became known that James Johnson Sweeney, Director of Painting and Sculpture at New York's Museum of Modern Art, had resigned from his post this autumn, America's finest artists raised their voices in protest. . . .

Small wonder, for you don't find many figures in the art world equipped to carry out the kind of advanced program Sweeney has been conducting at the Museum. . . .

There is no mystery about why he resigned: When he joined the Museum's staff in 1945, it was clearly understood that he was to be in complete charge of the Department of Painting and Sculpture. Now that there has been a change in the Museum's administrative structure, he suddenly found his original agreement was to be altered.

You don't arbitrarily alter matters involving direct and clear responsibility with such a stickler for perfection as Sweeney without running into protest. . . .

Here is a tall, stalwart young American—a former football star and shot-putter of Georgetown University, a crack sailor, who does not look upon art as an extra-curricular activity outside the mainstream of life, or as something for the effete, but declares firmly that "to care about art is to live more fully."

To Sweeney an artist is not one who merely expounds art theory but one who has attained the "quality of full living." His Books Aim at Getting The Reader to Look

Although he has written numerous outstanding books on art, their modest aim is not so much to get the reader to "listen" as to "look." . . .

"What I seek is to arouse interest in what is behind the expression in a work of art; to urge people to understand the influence of the life responsible for its creation. . . ."

His Mother Guided Him In the Path of Art

Born of Irish parents—in Brooklyn, in 1900—Sweeney was taken to Ireland to visit as a small child.

His mother, who died quite young, was deeply interested in

painting, and from his earliest years made him conscious of its existence. . . .

Even though the Sweeney house was filled with paintings, and young James was taken to museums all over Europe as a child, modern art failed to make much sense to him up to the period when he went to study at Cambridge, England, after graduating from Georgetown.

A Scotch teacher played an important role at this point. . . . He recommended books on painting and introduced Sweeney to Roger Fry, the leading British art critic of the times. Subsequent and copious reading, plus contact with such widely diverse figures as AE (the great Irish poet), I. A. Richards, Dr. Albert C. Barnes, Edward Alden Jewell and others of similar interests soon served to quicken his perceptions and led to the beginning of his own attempt to write down his evolving ideas about the arts, modern art and literature in particular.

He majored in literature while at Cambridge, writing some excellent verse; he traveled in France and studied Italian with an Italian priest in Sienna—trying to read Dante, he admits, before he could safely order lunch in Italian. . . .

Upon returning to America, he wrote a "New York Letter" on art criticism for the Chicago Evening Post, he lectured in Chicago, arranged an important exhibition of African-Negro art in the mid '30s for the Museum of Modern Art; lectured at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and from 1933 to '37 was Assistant Editor of the advance-guard quarterly magazine "Transition," founded in Paris. He began to write voluminous-



SMALL WONDER he resigned.

Post Photo by Calvaca

ly on the arts before finally taking the post at the Museum of Modern Art, and while there prepared one of the most interesting documents of our time: a series of detailed and careful interviews with 11 outstanding artists who spent the "Hitler" and war years as exiles in America, and with whom Sweeney had been closely associated during that troubled period.

This unique bulletin, published recently by the Museum, includes

first-hand accounts of the credos of such diverse artists as Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Leger, Amedee Ozenfant, Marc Chagall and Piet Mondrian. . . . Another outstanding Sweeney contribution has been his constant effort to have artists receive just compensation for reproductions of their work published in magazines that can well afford to pay. . . . And during his directorship at the Museum a greater percentage of its budget was spent on acquiring

Close-up  
November 18, 1946

art than ever heretofore. . . . Certainly an outstanding achievement. . . .

He was responsible for the Miro, Calder, Mondrian, Chagall, Davis, O'Keefe and other outstanding exhibitions there, and is now characteristically at work both on a book on T. S. Eliot, and on the catalogue for the Henry Moore show soon to be held at the Museum. In addition, he is writing a book in which Marcel Duchamp will serve "as a kind of magnifying glass through which it may be possible to see and to understand more clearly that great period in modern art—American and European from 1911 to 1927."

Another Football Name

In the Sweeney Roster

The Sweeney apartment, high above the river on East End Av., is a feast for the eye. Severe and simple in decor, it is one of the most distinguished modern apartments in New York.

At least one of the Sweeneys' five children is following in his father's footsteps by playing football, and all of the Sweeney children—with the exception of two-year-old Ciannait—join their parents in their love of sailing at Cape Cod, summers. (The other Sweeney children possess poetic Irish names too: Ann, Sean, Siadh and Tadhg. . . .)

Sweeney's eye for color causes him to be one of the most pleasant of all people to come upon in New York: You can always count on his wearing marvelously colored ties and socks, plus superb tweeds.

How good it is to hear a man who loves painting so much that he has no special axes to grind, no "favorite" painter. . . . "It is the tradition of painting I love," he explains. "Sometimes there is the appetite for one kind of contribution, sometimes a quite opposed school of art will satisfy. . . . But the main thing is the tradition of painting, to foster it, to see that people see it. . . ."

## Hollywood Is My Beat. . . . By Sidney Skolsky

The Week in Review

Town notes of the week: It rained for several days this week, regardless of what the Chamber of Commerce might say. It rained.

A picture studio becomes almost a different place during a rain storm. Boards have to be placed near various entrances so people can avoid huge puddles. For the studios don't repair the sidewalks. . . . With many of your favorite actors and actresses not leaving the studios because of the rain, hundreds of messengers with hundreds of containers of muddy coffee scoot from restaurants to the glamour lands.

Ida Lupino, speeding from Make-up to the sound stage, trying to protect a new hair-dress with a fan magazine. . . . Lana Turner attired in a cellophane

raincoat, looking like a neatly wrapped package of goodies. . . . And, of course, every clerk in every shop greeted every customer with, "A great day for ducks." . . . S. Z. Sakall and his St. Bernard strolling along Sunset Strip during a stretch of sunshine, and people commenting on how Sakall and his dog resemble each other.

Movie boner of the week: The best movie boner is supplied by Harold Sabinberg, of New York, who writes that in "Easy To Wed" there is a scene in which Van Johnson is on a duck hunting trip. Van is shown in a row-boat, alone, when the boat overturns, and besides Van, his hunting equipment and his lunch fall into the water. However, the next scene shows Van Johnson again in the boat, his clothing is dry, his duck hunting equipment is good enough to use, and even his lunch is okay. If you see a movie boner send it to me.

Reading of the week: Bob

Hope's "So This Is Peace," which is Bob's latest book and done in typical Hope fashion.

Hope doesn't tell of his adventures without using a Bing Crosby yarn. "Of course, London, being the home of the well-dressed man, Crosby created quite a furore.

"One night Bing ducked down to a little restaurant in Soho for a midnight snack, and before he'd blown three choruses of 'Blues in the Night' to cool his holler-there was a mob outside coming in and said, 'Igh sigh, sir, you 'ad better go to the window, sir, an' show your bloomin' face.' So Bing went to the window and the crowd started screaming: "Ows for a song." . . . Bing said, 'If I break one number for you I will you break bag?' Right me hang on the feed bag? Guvnor, you are—right you are, Guvnor, you like to hear?" The same cock-you like to hear?" The same cock-

ney looked up and hollered, 'If it ain't too much trouble, Guvnor,

'ow's for singin' your theme song. . . . "Thanks for the memory?" . . . You see, reading this book is just like listening to a Hope program.

Hope is on: "Only the other day when I met Marlene Dietrich at Paramount, her immaculate self again, I thought how she had slogged all over Europe. . . . Marlene tells me that peace has forced her to get conditioned all over again to what we know as modern convenience. She told me she'd been back six months before she started looking around for signs reading 'Powder Room' . . . Reading this book is just like listening to a Hope program.

Hope is on: "We were still traveling in Piper Cubs when we landed in Czechoslovakia and did our show in the center of Plisen's Town Square. It was wonderful to hear the MP's telling the GIs that Bob Hope was on the square." . . . It's like I said, reading this book is just like listening to a Hope program—which should please millions of people.

Entertainment of the week:

Felix Jackson and Deanna Durbin will form their own independent producing company and continue to make pictures together.

Tommy Dorsey and Charlie Barnet, the bandmen, are feuding. . . . The best floor show in town is at the Black Watch for a great cast of characters gather there nightly. . . . The movie celebrities along Sunset Strip are now gathering for luncheon at Dave's Blue Room. . . . Arthur Murray says he was at a party where, at the start of the evening, they played "What's My Name?" and by midnight they weren't fooling.

Hollywoodiana of the week: A certain producer was discussing a novel he had purchased and was going to make into a picture. "There's only one man who can write this scenario," said the producer, "and that's Billy Wilder and Charlie Brackett." But don't get me wrong. I love Hollywood.

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**A CRITICAL  
COMMENTARY ON  
PEOPLE AND  
EVENTS  
IN ART**

15¢

**MKR's**

*art outlook*



**SUSPENSE:** Painting by Guy Pene du Bois from his one-man exhibition at the Kraushaar Galleries. *Suspense* will be shown also at the Whitney Museum in its painting annual, opening December 10.

## Nice While It Lasted

**Another Shift in Administrative Policy  
Forces Out Another Head at the Modern**

IT SEEMS THAT THE RAPID GROWTH of the Museum of Modern Art caused the Board of Trustees to meet and consider how now, post-war, "to realign the organizational structure to meet administrative complexities."

A new plan was instituted September 30 under which the Executive Committee continues to act as the governing body of the Museum on behalf of the Board of Trustees; and the recently organized Coordination Committee takes

administrative responsibility for the Museum's five main divisions of activity: Research, Curatorial, Program, Secretarial and Business. They say this scheme is working well.

All this is in explanation of the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture (see issue **No. 19**). Nelson Rockefeller's statement goes like this:

"Mr. Sweeney's resignation was tendered immediately following the reorganization on the grounds that the new administrative structure altered the conditions under which his appointment had been made. Although Mr. Rockefeller discussed the matter at length with Mr. Sweeney in the hope that he might withdraw his resignation, Mr. Sweeney felt that it was impossible to do so

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THE STORY OF TONDELYS: Painting by Hieronymus Bosch in an exhibition of four centuries of art at the galleries of Paul Drey.

within the framework of the new administrative structure . . . and could stay only if the conditions under which he was originally appointed were restored. The Trustees, however, felt this would be incompatible with the design of the new administrative structure. Therefore at its regular meeting this week [November 4] the Executive Committee regretfully directed that Mr. Sweeney's resignation be entered in the records of the Museum as of September 30."

Who will replace Mr. Sweeney as Director of Painting and Sculpture? No one seems to know who the museum has in mind for this post. From the terms of the surrender, one may infer that the museum prefers to be committee-run, obviating the necessity for *direction*. It is just possible that with its record of demotion, its frequent shifts of policy, if not outright lack of policy, it will be forced to go undirected. The Modern seems inclined to take an amateur and inoculate him with a sense of importance rather than to confide in a man of proven worth the nature of their many problems and give him a field in which to function with dignity.

Retroactive resignations are a dour program to look forward to after sixteen years of life as an established institution.

(Continued on page 8)

#### TWO NEW YORK GALLERIES GO WEST

The Vanbark Studios in Studio City, California, agents for the Downtown Gallery of New York, has opened its first one-man exhibition in a new gallery. The exhibition is an illustration of the development of Bernard Karfiol, so often shown under Downtown auspices. The Vanbark Studios has also on view representations of the other painters and sculptors of the Downtown group as well as some of its American Folk Art.

The Midtown Galleries of New York has opened a branch gallery, called the first *permanent* contemporary American branch gallery on the West Coast, in San Francisco. First show is of a group including recent paintings and sculpture by Isabel Bishop, Julien Binford, Paul

Cadmus, Gladys Rockmore Davis, Guston, Peirce, et al. The Galleries are located in the U. S. Marine Corps Building and were designed by architect Charles Porter. It is smart but informal and intimate in atmosphere, according to papa Gruskin. Two San Franciscans are in charge: Mr. Jack Kleiser and Miss Lorraine Porter, enthusiastic clients of the New York Midtown Galleries.

### Letters to the Editor

#### ARTIST IS FED UP WITH BORROWED FORMALISMS

Dear M. K. R.:

Your editorial in the October 28 *M.K.R.'s*, *Thirty Years Ago and Now*, interested me no little, especially that part concerning itself with the future of art in this country. More and more do I hear discussions and opinions expressed relating to an ultimate indigenous American art. The idea of a native art is as yet nebulous but it is in "the air," probably as a result of being "fed up" with borrowed formalisms, good and great as they might have been originally.

Native culture is important to the growth of any country. I don't believe in an autarchic art, in self-sufficiency. We should learn and we have learned from others and we have assimilated a great deal. A native art is not "nationalistic" in a narrow sense. A native art must possess universal values.

But must we go on plagiarizing and imitating *ad infinitum*? Just as the Romans haven't created better Greek art, so no American artist has ever created better French or German or Mexican art. We have painted English portraits and landscapes; French impressionists; Cezannes, Picassos and Braques; futurists, cubists, and surrealists. We have succeeded wonderfully well in academicising European moderns. Now what?

It is time to begin thinking in the direction of our own native expression. It is your opinion that "Seeing no new form indicated as near realization, we therefore expect a major revolt of subject . . .", and "It will have to do with this age of invention, alloys, plastics and explosives." Could be. I don't know. No one can foretell or even speculate with any degree of certainty on the form art in this country will eventually take. Time, sincere, honest work, willingness to try will determine the form. The overtones of our country's life have to be made audible, intelligible. From the plantations in the South to the fisherman's shacks in Maine; from the Golden Gate to the mines and factories in the East; from the hot-dog stands on the road junction to the tenements on the East Side there is a great life breathing, vibrating. Our literature has found means to express this, our music, our dance and architecture. But our art . . . ?

I agree with the following quotation from your article: "I think we may develop an individual before we will mature a movement." Sure. But the individual has to be encouraged by those who are in a position to do so and

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(Continued from page 2)

**NICE WHILE IT LASTED**

method which, I hope, will establish a private relationship between the artist and the Addison Gallery.

Charles Sheeler, the first "dinner guest," has been with us this past month. We have just opened a survey show of his paintings, drawings and photographs to introduce him to the people of this community. He is represented in the Addison Gallery collection only by one print. Rather than follow its usual procedure of recommending for purchase another example of the artist's work, the Committee has approved the following plan:

Mr. Sheeler will reside in Andover for a brief period on invitation of the Gallery. From the creative results of this term of residence the Committee expects to select and purchase for the collection a painting stimulated by our particular environment but dictated in no way by us. The work will thus bear a direct connection to Andover and, if the plan operates similarly for other artists, there should grow year by year a small collection possessing for the surrounding community a special interest as well as aesthetic validity.

The plan is motivated by the observation that an artist rarely creates without purpose but that oft-times a purpose is difficult to realize for want of an intimate association with the people for whom he paints. Inertia functions in art as in science; an action is essential to a reaction. America's most inventive artists—the architect and the industrial designer—perform at the instance of social and individual need. The contemporary painter, on the other hand, is usually expected to work for an obscure and often unsympathetic market. Imagine an actress playing her best before an empty or even hostile house.

Museums cannot provide the artist with a livelihood; they can help give him a needed confidence and aesthetic security.

BARTLETT H. HAYES, JR., *Director*  
Addison Gallery of American Art  
Andover, Mass.

(Continued from page 3)

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR****MAKES FOR BETTER INCOME**

Dear M.K.R.:

Tell the State Department when they start buying sculpture to pay the gallery price. The Government doesn't let us chisel an income tax. Regards,

DAVID SMITH  
Bolton Landing, N. Y.

From the New York Times of November 17 we reprint in part Mr. Sweeney's letter of thanks to the artists who wrote in his behalf to Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, President of the Museum of Modern Art (see issue No. 19). Wrote Mr. Sweeney:

"... It was a decision I found very difficult to make. But, as I had agreed to accept the post in January 1945 only on the condition specifically stated in a letter to Mr. Stephen C. Clark, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, that I be delegated 'adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed,' I could not honestly stay in the

# PLAZA

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position after the powers granted me at the time of my appointment had been abrogated.

"... The conditions I outlined in my letter to Mr. Clark were taken up and voted upon by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of January 11, 1945, and the terms of my appointment were stated in a resolution passed by the Board and available through the minutes of that meeting to all Trustees, present or absent. The resolution stated:

"Mr. Sweeney is placed in charge and responsible for: All acquisitions for the Department of Painting and Sculpture, any disposal of the Department's material from the Museum Collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the Museum in this field (and related educational activities such as films, docent talks, etc.) and the publicity concerned with painting and sculpture or the activities of that department. In addition, the Director shall have the right of veto in all decisions concerning any of the above stated activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture."

"On September 30, 1946, when it was announced to the Museum staff that the Trustees had appointed a new 'coordinating committee composed of five key staff executives,' omitting the Director of Painting and Sculpture, but including a newly created officer,—a Director of Curatorial Departments to administer and coordinate the organization's curatorial programs,' it was clear that the responsibility for the broader activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture had been removed from the Director and the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art had been abolished, all save in name and salary.

"I am confident that you will agree that the Director of such an important unit of an art museum should not be placed in a position where he might possibly be constrained to employ the activities of his department—purchases, exhibitions, publications—as part of a 'curatorial program' with which he does not in conscience agree.

"I sincerely hope this letter may clarify the grounds on which my resignation was based."

# WATER-COLOR NOTES

## Pennsylvania Academy Holds Its Annual Survey—Religious and Social Themes

By EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL

At the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia the combined forty-fourth annual of the Philadelphia Water-Color Club and the Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters is now being held, continuing through Nov. 24.

The Philadelphia Water-Color Prize of \$200 to "Midsummer Caprice," one of Charles Burchfield's large fantasies; the Dana Water-Color Medal to "Sand Mountains" by Zoltan Speaky; the Dawson Memorial Medal, offered "for distinction in painting or drawing of flowers or of gardens," to Xavier Gonzalez's abstract "Landscape No. 2"; the Wheelwright Prize of \$100, "for the best work in tempera or gouache," to "Interior" by Karl Zerbe.

There were two awards in the print division, the Alice McFadden Eyre Medal going to "Hermis's Prayer and the Widow's Tears," a lithograph by Poppino Mangravita, and the Pennell Memorial Medal, "for achievement in illustration or in the graphic arts," to Mitchell Siporin's drawing, "Bivouac."

The Miniature Society Prize of \$100 went to "Profile" by Frances C. Ely, and the E. J. McCartney Prize for Miniatures to Maitha Hassler's portrait, "My Wife."

**Water-Color Trend**  
It seemed to me as I walked through the rooms in which the 1946 collection of water-colors is displayed that a rather radical change had come over American work in this medium. One may, indeed, never feel quite safe in predicting an altered direction, however manifest, upon the evidence of a single exhibition, since there is always the chance that a particular jury of selection has gravitated toward work of a certain type as opposed to that of other categories.

But even were we to consider the possible influence of specific jury action, there still would be a measure of validity in whatever trend might appear. Thus I am inclined to think that we may take as symptomatic the Philadelphia evidence. First of all, it is directly in line with a trend that has already showed itself in realms of oil painting and sculpture; a trend more or less violently away from the simpler, more obvious forms of "representation."

Of course a solid segment of by no means negligible size still exists, as exemplified by the Allied Artists of America, Inc., now exhibiting in the galleries of the New York Historical Society here. Hundreds of artists hold stolidly to the old right-wing academic faith. But more progressive painters, by whom alone new faiths, new creeds and procedures, are proclaimed, have turned their backs on all that.

**Idea vs. Representation**  
Not so long ago our big water-color annuals were wont to be characterized by, so to speak, a bold, free, fluid collective splash. That had come to be looked upon as the American way in water-color painting. Picturesqueness combined with a kind of basic fidelity to natural appearance bulked large about the walls. The approach to nature was fairly direct, despite all the liberties that might be taken in behalf of a special use of the medium. The prevailing color scale would be notably high, and fluent "wetness" was the rule.

The change now apparent isn't too easy to describe though it could scarcely, I should say, be missed. Of water-colors done strictly in the manner above referred to there may be a scant dozen in the 1946 Philadelphia annual. Considered in its over-all aspect, the exhibition is key-ward to the point of darkness. Nor is it merely that artists now tend to shun color's upper octaves. Their technical handling of the medium seems in large part responsible.

### In Current Shows on Related Subjects



"Ecce Homo, 1946," by Umberto Romano, at the galleries of the Associated American Artists.



"And Out of Their Mouths Issued Fire," by André Girard, at the Bignou Gallery.

### ARTISTS UPHOLD SWEENEY

IN connection with the recent resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art and pending announcement of official action on the part of the museum, a group of American artists has given expression to its sentiment in the following communication:

"In response to the information, now widely current, in regard to James Johnson Sweeney's submitted resignation as director of painting and sculpture, the undersigned artists are moved to express their hope against its acceptance. Without comment on the questions involved in the situation, our concern is that a man of Mr. Sweeney's special qualifications for that position is constrained to resign. It is the Museum of Modern Art, as leader in public education in modern art, has had in Mr. Sweeney one who is foremost in its interpretation. In the activities of the museum which have specific reference to contemporary painting and sculpture, we feel that Mr. Sweeney's abilities to give meaningful direction are rare. The absence of his knowledge and vision would be a source of great regret to us, and to many others, artists and laymen alike."

### WATER-COLOR CONTRASTS

WATER-COLORS were much in evidence in the shows opening last week. Three English artists are represented at the American British Art Center—Cecil Richards, Leonard Bagnall, and a group of European impressions at the Frazer's, ranges the Frenchman from Lisbon to Stockholm and Vienna. These are quick, deft, objective, frankly picturesque sketches.

### BY GROUPS OR SINGLY

The New Shows Include Very Diverse Events

By HOWARD DEVREE

A NEW group exhibition at the Kraushaar Gallery brings together some highly diverse and stimulating work by fifteen painters and sculptors. Henry Schnakenberg's "Flowers and Stormy Sky" is one of that artist's peak achievements. John Kellner's "Maine Rocks" strikes a mood of somber dignity. Russell Cowles with sureness depicts satirically a domestic episode in his rather devastating "Martyr." Bernard Arnest's "Euclyps" is a beautiful tonality study. Susan, an engaging child portrait by Esther Williams, is one of her subtlest and most skillful canvases, masterly in its restrained color. The sculptor includes Humbert Albrin's "Penguins," Koren der Haroutian's "Crowned with Thorns" (both in stone) and Robert Laurent's "Hero and Leader" (wood).

Work in many media by a score of artists makes up the group exhibition at the New-Age Gallery. Among the oils are Zoltan Hecht's "Homecoming," Europe, 1945, and Helen Ratall's "At the Opera," and John Mechings' "String Quartet" (wash and ink) and Florence Kawawa's water-color, "Waiting for the Concert" are other inclusions well deserving citation.

### Three First Shows

Paintings by Ferdinand Warren have become familiar to gallery goers through group shows; for years he has painted at the Mûch Gallery. His work has been presented in a one-man show. Warren's painting has sweep and power; it is gathering direction but is at times somewhat undisciplined. The architectural "Fog Horn, Monhegan," and the small marine, "Gentle Breeze," are decidedly arresting; and "Winter in Brooklyn" is well integrated and strikes out authentic mood. "Dining at the Margaret" is good satire. But "Communism" is a sentimental mistake in this otherwise vital and colorful work.

A young sculptor's first show usually bears unmistakable imprint of other sculptors' work. The stone and terra cotta figures by Lillian Landis at the Bonestell Gallery are exceptionally free from such suggestion and the style information is already quite personal. "Athena" is duly classic; a green marble head is heroic; the slender adolescent figure and a standing figure are other pieces that show steady and pronounced advance over earlier, more frankly decorative work. The small terra cotta group of a standing and a seated figure calls for being worked out on a large scale. The mother-and-bending modern and traditional with excellent results. Drawings in quiet tonalities are highly individual.

In her Mexican subjects, Tommy Berc, at the George Bine's Gallery, captures the wide-eyed poignancy of the articulate people of the soil. As yet her color is more persuasive than her forms. Tenderly, fantasy and a vein of gentle satire alternate in her work. "Inquisition" is the mother-and-child painting called "Harbor" are among her best reports.

### Pre Modernists

Fortnightly romantic paintings by John Wallerford are being shown at the RoKo Gallery. These landscapes and seaside scenes with figures are vigorous, thrashing compositions, the predominant palette enlivened by touches of light color. "Water's Edge," "Off Shore" and a still-life, in addition to the portrait, "Sister," are outstanding in this direct and sturdy style.

Dolla Lorian's paintings, at the Bignou Gallery, are basically abstract but she never quite abandons representational elements. In such examples as "Smoke, Sky" and "Sky, Sand, Grass" she is remarkably suggestive; and "She Emerges" might symbolize hope's unfortunate delivery from the clutches of war and terror. "My Environment" might be said as a cartoon for a project in lead glass. Most of the compositions are sketchy and sure and give unusual feeling for movement.

### PAINTING

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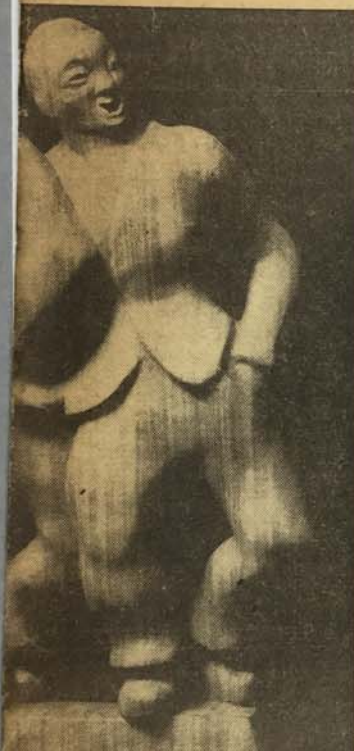
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AM. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1946.

11

## Rimmer's Work Tells His Story



"a sculpture by Nat Werner included the A. C. A. Gallery.

A fabulous story and an extraordinary talent are unfolded in the new Whitney Museum presentation of sculpture, paintings, drawings and prints by the American 19th century artist, William Rimmer.

Rimmer was a Boston doctor, entirely self-taught although formally licensed, who believed himself (and for fairly impressive reasons) to be the grandson of no less illustrious a pair than Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. He was also a most gifted sculptor, a brilliant draughtsman, a painter of very real ability, and a great art teacher. Yet he died in poverty in 1879, and today his work is seldom seen and his name is almost unknown to the public.

The Whitney Museum, in collaboration with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which will present this show in January, has assembled for the occasion six of his sculptures, 20 of his paintings, 60 of his drawings and six etchings and lithographs. Together they make a stunning exhibition and spell out the tragic biography of a man whose frustration and bitterness combined with his truly amazing technical and anatomical skill in an art which stands out for its individuality and power even today. In its own era of sweet sentiment and all cold classicism in art it was anomolous.

His drawings alone are breathtaking. They suggest Allston and Blake in their romantic and mystical qualities (Blake comes to mind in Rimmer's sketches).

line, puts one in mind of the present-day Darrel Austin.

The most distinguished item of all is the Boston Museum's deeply moving oil and sanguine drawing in which a magnificently handled figure of a winged man descends Icarus-fashion, into the sea.

Of the paintings in the show I found the portraits most arresting in their characterization and unconventional in approach, although the beautifully lighted "Juliet and the Nurse" is also interesting. The sculptures are expertly and powerfully modeled pieces in whose tortured outlines one feels Rimmer's own heart-breaking struggles.

### Three Solo Shows.

Three modern sculptors of interest are having one-man shows this week. One is Nat Werner, at the A. C. A. Gallery, whose work has long been notable for his remarkable ability to capture the joyous lilt of song and the spirit of the dance in heavy figures cut from wood or stone.

In several of the new pieces, notably his "Tap Dancing Brothers," portrait of Jimmy Durante, and "Swing Your Partner," the same qualities, combined with a delightful good-humor, are still paramount. But in others you feel a new dignity, a monumental Biblical quality. Especially commendable among these are "Jacob and the Angel," and "David Laments Jonathan."

### Uses Biblical Subjects.

the Clay Club, also turns to the Bible for his subjects. Among them are several versions of St. Francis, "La Vierge," "Head of Christ," "The Shepherd." De Marco's religious conceptions are gentle rather than strong, lyrical instead of epic. In their plastic handling they are as distinctly modern as Werner's. Along with the Biblical themes are several nudes, and these are as earthly, warm and supple in their modeling as the St. Francis studies are austere restrained.

### Sculpture on Metal.

Jose de Rivera, showing his sculpture at the Mortimer Levitt Gallery, is an abstractionist using brightly painted curved sheets of aluminum and steel to create twisting propeller-like shapes that are handsome standing alone (each composition actually consists of several separate but harmoniously and closely related units) and at the same time, in the opinion of such a noted architect as George Howe, would be wonderful used architecturally.

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onward, is steadfastly French. Indebtedness to Monet in particular is evidenced, although other French painters appear to have been an influence too, among them Pissarro.

Often painfully unimaginative (as in the big "Vachère" and other canvases with their stiff centralizing of figures, Robinson could sometimes paint real poems—for instance the charming small "Sea.") And that he did not dedicate himself unremittingly to the impressionist absorption in problems of light on surfaces is attested by architectonic designs such as those distinguishing the strong "Boats at a Landing," "April: Giverny" and "Farm Among Hills."

In my opinion William Glackens, though influenced so manifestly in most of his work by Renoir, was a much more vigorous American artist than Robinson, and, all in all, a great deal more personal in his application of French impressionist theories. Another annual, by the way, nine memorial series presented by Glackens in her home at Ninth Street, is current Dec. 1 (daily, including Sundays and holidays, from 2 to 6 P.

**Modernism in Paint**

The remainder of the new of painting with which I am concerned all are modern in flavor.

Recent work by Leonid, Berman's elder brother, is in at the Julien Levy—Leonid American show since the harding war experiences engulfed. In the course of a poignant little catalogue preface I am well and happy in New Life is wonderful. . . .) remarks: "After the long due to the war I was not still able to paint. . . . ing up my paint brush after liberation [of France] I know if I could still express self." The exhibition is a cent answer.

Leonid's present style that with which we were though certain changes noted. The subjects are for the most part hazy tidal flats, with their vast distances and wispily skies. But these scenes are in a generally lighter key clear color furnishes accelerating a characteristic tendency toward monochrome.

I thought especially fine a couple of smaller canvases: "Sinagot" and "Barque de Pêche." Also to be signalized is the vividly caught little boat-launching foreground group in "Le Sillon à Camaret." It is indeed a pleasure to have Leonid back again.

**Off the Deep End**

From serene and comparatively limpid representational modernism such as this we proceed to phases far more challenging.

There is Reuben Tam at the Downtown. His second show indicates some progress in the way of clarification. Matter-of-fact titles still would lead one to expect, in

don't know quite what you will make of it all, though Gattorno paints with informed assurance.

Peggy Guggenheim presents at Art of This Century the abstract work of two artists: Rudi Blesh (author of the new book, "Shining Trumpets, a History of Jazz") and Virginia Admiral. The latter, represented by six canvases, is a not too tidy lyricist with an often pleasing color sense. Blesh (whose painting, as Harriet Janis puts it, "may be considered as a part of a larger activity or as an end in itself") is a nonobjectivist. Making patterns in either event, the shapes stay quietly put or engage in weird little conflicts. His color seemed to me quite uninteresting.

**The Etchers' Annual**

I have taken up the Society of American Etchers annual last so as to avoid mixing media. It might better, at least arguably, have come first, for it is outstanding.

of sym- I presi- at "we, and all seek to at "the s a sup- ductions ipromis- as uni- sts; and under- ose who ee with of sym- ping to e. The makers on the quality. observe rise, of t does ase), hing ap- en-

and aesthetic pro- All this makes for a balanced survey. While in both categories there are dozens of humdrum prints, the level of excellence seems this year uncommonly high. Just a few examples may be cited: "Morning in the Mountains," by Carl M. Schultheiss; the "Light and Shade, Taxco," by Mr. Arms; "The Wake," by Edgar Imler; Stella Drabkin's novel "Phantoms"; "The Hungry and Homeless," by John Costigan; Armin Landeck's "City Lane," Blanche McVeigh's "Signal Stop," Fermin Rucker's technically interesting "Broken Tree," Harold M. Hahn's "Crosstown," and abstractions by Ellen Abbey, Letterio Galapai, Alice T. Mason and Alfred Russell. Among the miniature prints, "Rehearsal," by Stephen Csoka; "Abstraction," by Dorothy W. Hutton; "Old House," by Lucile McIntyre, and Mr. Hahn's "Novelty, Ohio." An invited group of lithographers and wood-engravers enlarges the scope of this print annual.



"The Traveler Palm," by Ogden Pleissner, at Macbeth's.

**MR. SWEENEY EXPLAINS**

**A** CONCLUDING chapter in the unhappy drama of resignation that has stirred widespread comment and saddened the art world is furnished by the following letter from James Johnson Sweeney to Stuart Davis, in which the reasons making urgent Mr. Sweeney's action are further clarified:

I want to thank you and all the artists who signed your warm letter to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art in the matter of my resignation as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture. It was a decision I found very difficult to make. But, as I had agreed to accept the post in January 1945 only on the condition specifically stated in a letter to Mr. Stephen C. Clark, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees, that I be delegated "adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed," I could not honestly stay in the position after the powers granted me at the time of my appointment had been abrogated.

As I explained to Mr. Clark in that letter, I felt that "the Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture should assume full responsibility for the quality of performance of his department in all the Museum activities in which it is involved"; and that adequate powers to protect the responsibility assumed "can only derive from a delegation to the Director of a full right of veto in any decision concerning his department"; and that "without such a right to protect his plans, a director cannot undertake any serious long-term program."

The conditions I outlined in my letter to Mr. Clark were taken up and voted upon by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of January 11, 1945, and the terms of my appointment were stated in a resolution passed by the Board and available through the minutes of that meeting to all Trustees, pres-

ent or absent. The resolution \*\*\* stated: "Mr. Sweeney is placed in charge and responsible for: All acquisitions for the Department of Painting and Sculpture, any disposal of the Department's material from the Museum Collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the Museum in this field (and related educational activities such as films, docent talks, etc.) and the publicity concerned with painting and sculpture or the activities of that department. In addition, the Director shall have the right of veto in all decisions concerning any of the above stated activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture."

On September 30, 1946, when it was announced to the Museum staff that the Trustees had appointed a new "coordinating committee composed of five key staff executives," omitting the Director of Painting and Sculpture, but including a newly created officer,—"a Director of Curatorial Departments to administer and coordinate the organization's curatorial programs," it was clear that the responsibility for the broader activities of the Department of Painting and Sculpture had been removed from the Director and the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art had been abolished, all save in name and salary.

I am confident that you will agree that the Director of such an important unit of an art museum should not be placed in a position where he might possibly be constrained to employ the activities of his department—purchases, exhibitions, publications—as part of a "curatorial program" with which he does not in conscience agree.

I sincerely hope this letter may clarify the grounds on which my resignation was based.

**A PROVINCETOWN SELECTION**

**S**OME thirty-five artists are represented by two examples each at the Jacques Seligmann Gallery in the group show of selected work from the 1946 Provincetown Art Association Exhibition. It is a most catholic event with work ranging from the exotic mural-like Jamaica subject by Keren der Hatootian to an abstraction by William L'Engle, whose second entry, "Plane Spotter," is an airy seacoast landscape with figure. Charles Heinz's harbor panorama; Lucy L'Engle's satiric study in American rococo nut architecture, and her powerful semi-

abstract "On the Jetty" (both water-colors); John Noble's grim interpretation of a floating hulk; George Yater's street scene with abstract use of light and shadow; Florence Peers' meticulous still-life and a careful textural water-color by Ruth Cobb are among the outstanding pictures. And there are two beautifully modeled heads by Hélène Sardeau.

Other artists represented include George Biddle, Ross Moffett, Philip Mallicoat (whose "Apple Trees" is an essay somewhat in the Edwin Dickinson manner), and Jane Peterson.

H. D.

# WEEK in

By Emily Genauer

## Sweeney Resignation Explained

It was possible this week to pry open a little the iron curtain which has closed around the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of the department of painting and sculpture.

Originally revealed in the World-Telegram Oct. 4 (although his resignation was announced by the museum itself a week ago), the resignation has resulted in considerable public world attention, and has been followed by a series of ambiguous press releases, has dropped around the resignation of James Johnson Sweeney as director of the department of painting and sculpture.

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### Head of Department.

Could the museum's present-day be reasonably have expected that Mr. Sweeney to remain on, when his original letter of appointment specifically provided that as head of the department of painting and sculpture he would be "in charge of and responsible for all the acquisitions for the department, and disposal of the department's collection, the initiation and content of exhibitions, the preparation of sculpture and graphic arts, publications concerning these arts, lectures sponsored by the museum in this field." (and) have the right



"Tap-Dancing Brother" is a sculpture by Nat Werner included in his one-man exhibition at the A. C. A. Gallery.

## A Spectacular Event Among Gallery Exhibitions

There are only 24 pictures in the new Knoedler Gallery exhibition. But it is one of the season's most spectacular events. It is a collection of two great, great paintings, two of the greatest of the century, by the French Impressionist, Paul Gauguin. The two are "Moulin de la Galette" and "The Yellow Christ." The first is a scene of a Parisian dance hall, the second is a scene of a tropical island. The two are of the highest quality of art, and are of the highest quality of art, and are of the highest quality of art.

It is not surprising that artists and the public alike 113,000 of the latter are museum members and will over a half-million visited it last year) should be deeply interested with the internal affairs and directing personnel of the museum. It is interesting to note that the country's foremost institution in promoting understanding and appreciation of modern art, which is the city's most remarkable exhibition. It is interesting to note that the country's foremost institution in promoting understanding and appreciation of modern art, which is the city's most remarkable exhibition.

Mr. Rockefeller described the making and turning of the co-ordination committee which has been set up to act with the existing seven-member advisory committee consisting entirely of trustees and outside members as the museum's governing body on behalf of the entire board.

Under the Hammer

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## Rimmer's Work Tells His Story

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Three Solo Shows.

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## Art

The widely publicized resignation of James Johnson Sweeney from the post of Director of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art well merited the general protest voiced by artists and critics against the conditions within the Museum that brought it about. Not that there was any lack of esteem for Mr. Sweeney and his ability on the part of the Museum's trustees, an esteem shared generally by persons of discriminating taste.

The point at issue was a more vital one and affected his ultimate and best functioning in his post. It involved his control of his work, and the free exercise of a judgment that is rather rare in this country. This rarity must have seemed well worth while to the trustees when he was tendered the post in question, which he accepted under the proviso that his decisions were to be final. A later re-organization of the administrative set-up of the institution promised to nullify this condition and forced his resignation, which the Museum authorities, after prolonged delay, accepted.

Aside from the fact that the loss of this director to the Museum is of a serious nature, this whole occurrence has another and more general significance. It is not, as is often the case, merely a clash of temperaments within an institution. For art curators, in the main, are persons of social inclination and ability, with an overlay of art knowledge that is acquired rather than instinctive. They are the courtier type of persons, adept at the shades of deference to be paid to people of varying importance, financial and social, as these have weight in the control of a particular museum.

Their tint, as one might say, is necessarily neutral, and their decisions of an artistic kind also take on this predominant tone. They rarely advance beyond the stage of acquiescent assistants to the financially important trustees who like to play with art. If the harried museum director escapes this onerous roll he is supposed to play, it is only by a political type of adroitness that is scarcely compatible with self-respect.

This was a role that Mr. Sweeney refused to enact, even though his path, undoubtedly, promised to be made an easy one by sufficient social patronage of a temperament-soothing kind. As a

person of distinction in his own right, possessed of scholarship allied to creative ability, and with the logic that accrued from his Jesuit training, he could scarcely involve himself in a game which museum trustees insist on playing. And that game has much of "make believe" about it, a fact that has promoted the orchidaceous character of such institutions but which the Museum of Modern Art has sought to escape. Their loss in this instance constitutes a set-back, for Mr. Sweeney's work exemplifies his statement in one of his early books, that criticism becomes



vital to the extent its content is creative. His arrangement of an exhibition, as an instance, becomes another and separate artistic performance, based on the art works included in it; and his writing, while occasionally obscure and esoteric, is genuinely perceptive and profound.

While this is a case of Sweeney among the trustees, rather than "among the nightingales," the results are rather depressing for these will not be singing at the Museum of Modern Art.

BARRY BYRNE

## Parade

Had the shore-to-ship telephone service been in operation in past centuries, scenes illustrating the service would undoubtedly have been incorporated in literary works of the long ago, scenes somewhat like the following. . . .

(General offices of Shore-to-Ship Service . . . Signal light flickers on switchboard of Operator 28) . . .

*Operator 28:* (answering call from ship at sea): Office of Shore-to-Ship Service speaking.

*Voice:* (coming from far-off sea): I'm a sailor on the schooner Hesperus. I used to sail the Spanish Main.

*Operator:* What can I do for you?

*Sailor:* Prevent a wreck. There's going to be the wreck of the Hesperus unless you can do something.

*Operator:* State the facts, please.

*Sailor:* The skipper's heading into a hurricane. He's a stubborn man, sir. I just said to him: "I pray thee, put into yonder port, for I fear a hurricane. Last night, the moon had a golden ring, and tonight no moon we see."

*Operator:* What was his reaction to that?

*Sailor:* He blew a whiff from out his pipe and a scornful laugh laughed he. And while he laughs the snow falls hissing in the brine, the billows froth like yeast, and the vessel shakes like a frightened steed and leaps her cable's length.

*Operator:* That sounds bad. Very bad.

*Sailor:* And worst of all—he has his little daughter on this wintry sea to bear him company. Blue are her eyes as the fairy-flax, her cheeks like dawn of day.

*Operator:* Is she afraid?

*Sailor:* That she is. He just called to her: "Come, hither, my little daughter, and do not tremble so, for I can weather the roughest gale that ever wind did blow." She's clasping her hands and praying that saved she might be. She's praying to Christ Who stilled the waves on the lake of Galilee.

*Operator:* Put the skipper on the phone.

*Sailor:* I will. Please warn him, sir, he's heading for the reef of Norman's Woe and death. (Skipper's voice comes on phone) . . .

*Operator:* Skipper, this is Shore-to-Ship Service. Now listen closely. I order you to change your course, and seek the nearest port. You're headed for Norman's Woe. You don't want your daughter found dead on a bleak sea coast, do you?

*Skipper:* No, oh, no.

*Operator:* You don't want to go into history as the man who caused the wreck of the Hesperus in the midnight and the snow, do you?

*Skipper:* No, no. May Christ save us from a death like that on the reef of Norman's Woe.

*Operator:* Christ will aid you, if you do your part. Run fast for the nearest port.

*Skipper:* I will. I will. . . .

*Sailor:* (several days later): *Operator 28.* This is the sailor on the Hesperus. We're safe in port, thanks to you. Thanks to you, the cruel rocks did not gore the ship's side like the horns of an angry bull. Thanks to you, the little girl is not lashed to a mast and drifting to her death. Thanks to you, there is no wreck of the Hesperus.

*Loudspeaker:* (in general headquarters of Shore-to-Ship Service): Attention, please. Our Service has just prevented another wreck—the wreck of the Hesperus. Congratulations, *Operator 28.*

JOHN A. TOOMEY

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, SA

# THIS WEEK in ART

By EMILY GENAUER

## What's Going On Behind Scene

I see by the sports pages that from now on baseball writers are to be barred from the Yankee dug-out and clubhouse. Seems they're very unhappy about it too, not because they're going to miss the stimulating company of ball players who generally are beyond their mental depth when they get past the comic strips, but because they feel the public has a right to know what goes on behind the scenes of baseball and they regard themselves as the public's watchdogs. At any rate, nobody in the Yankee camp has been able to answer their hurt "how-comes?" intelligibly, and the boys are bewildered and angry at this unprecedented kicking-around they're getting from men whose exploits, egos and paychecks they have inflated.

They should work in my corner of the office. The better part of this week I've spent trying to find out what's behind the latest announcement from the Museum of Modern Art, a bland, brief statement from Nelson Rockefeller, president of the museum, that Alfred H. Barr Jr. has been appointed "director of the museum collections."

You think all the double-talk in art circles has to do with the chiaroscuro of it all or the plastic relations between significant forms, etc., etc.? You should have heard the weasel words I got when I tried to learn how come a man who had been director of the museum 15 years and "retired" four years ago "to devote his full time to writing" after nationwide criticism of the museum's capricious, cultist policy came to a head, was back in the saddle again.

### Public's Watchdogs.

Art writers feel the same way baseball writers do about being the public's watchdogs. They've no particular yen to spend time socially with the museum authorities (though these are Dall devotees rather than comic strip connoisseurs). But they feel the public has an important stake in the Museum of Modern Art and a right to know what goes on behind its shining facade. Over a half-million visitors paid 35 cents each to visit the tax-free museum last year. Its roster of officers and trustees, studded with names like Rockefeller, Whitney and Ford, gives everything it sponsors

### Rothko's Works Personal, Mature

Mark Rothko's pictures bring to the Betty Parsons Gallery a fresh variation on the abstraction which is personal and mature. On first glance one is inclined to put these surrealist-abstracts down as expressions of escape. He has filled his canvases with primitive symbols and motifs threaded into pale grounds. But then, as one studies them a little longer, admiring their delicate patterns and evanescent colors, it seems that these do not represent escape from the present at all, but rather an attempt to see the present meta-physically, to probe into an international ancestral heritage of culture, religion and myth, to trace our common roots and relate them. There are in these canvases fleeting suggestions of archaic Greek forms, of Egyptian architecture, of American Indian motifs, all loosely organized into compositions as mysterious and confounding as they are interesting and, in most cases, aesthetically satisfying.

### Under the Hammer

The jewel-colors of fine early (1770) are among the pieces to be

an air of great authority and rightness. Its support of individual American artists and particular art trends can be an enormously influential factor in determining the whole course of our contemporary culture. Besides all this there is the little matter of \$3,650,000 the museum is seeking from the public right now for a building fund.

But the museum goes on its whimsical way, without a director for four years, and for four months without even a director of its painting and sculpture department. There never was a new director appointed after Barr retired to write (they gave him a little cubby hole to work in behind the museum library). A director of painting and sculpture was appointed, James Trail Soby, but he too resigned after a brief period.

### Sweeney Appointed

Then James Johnson Sweeney was appointed new director of the painting and sculpture department and, after a few weeks had passed, everyone (outside the museum, that is) relaxed. A new and unprecedented era of good-will set in between museum, artists and the press. There were good shows. There were intelligent acquisitions, and, just as important, there was acknowledgement of the museum's public responsibility in its troubling to explain these purchases.

But then, four months ago, came a new bombshell. Sweeney, too, was "resigning." Nelson Rockefeller announced a "revised administrative program" with a new co-ordinating committee to run the show. Sweeney had no place on the new committee. Rene d'Harnoncourt, long associated with Mr. Rockefeller on his projects as the State Department's co-ordinator of Latin-American affairs, was placed there, however, in charge of curatorial departments (which meant Mr. Sweeney's, of course). Mr. Barr had a place on it, too, under the head of "research."

Now, a brief four months later, comes this latest broadside. Mr. Barr is now "director of the museum collections." He will be in charge of all the museum's acquisitions (under the trustee's own committee). He will also be in charge of the planning, organization, care and use (including publications and display) of the collections as a whole.

"Under his general supervision the heads of the curatorial departments will assume responsibility for their respective sections of the collections and they will initiate and carry on the wide-related activities in their fields. However, the director of the collections himself will conduct activities pertaining to the acquisition of painting and sculpture for the museum collections."

### Czar Baar Again.

So it's Czar Barr again, without the title "director of the museum," but apparently with more power than he ever had before. The only function not expressly given to him is the important one of arranging exhibitions of material assembled from outside sources. That goes to the "acting director of the department of painting and sculpture" who is, however, Mr. Barr's subordinate in curatorial functions and must work under his general supervision. The line is a very thin one here. As a matter of fact it sounds like one that could have been written by Gilbert and Sullivan's music.

Was all that complicated set-up

of four months ago (whose absolute necessity for the smooth operation of the museum meant Sweeney had to go), leading to this? What's d'Harnoncourt's role to be now? Why has no museum director been appointed? What happened to give Mr. Barr more time and spirit for the museum's active functioning now than he had before, and to change the trustee's outlook on things generally?

There's nobody home at the museum to answer any of it. Or even to protest, as happened before, the validity of a statement I made four years ago in a Harper's Magazine article examining the museum's history and policy. Despite Barr's "retirement," after museum policy became a public scandal, his was still, I said, "as it has always been, the determining voice in its councils."

After four years of retirement it may turn out to be a good voice. But we ought to be permitted to hear what it's saying.

## Design Academy's Exhibit

This year the National Academy of Design divided its annual exhibition into two parts. The first was an invitation and jury show, with both members and outsiders having to go through the jury ringer. The second part—it opened this week—is an open affair, with all members of the Academy entitled to be represented.

Well, you know what happened. The first show went on a few months ago and it was a honey, one of the best and most representative surveys of American present-day painting the city has seen all season. The second is a kick-back to the old Academy in the days before younger men took over the reins and tried to direct it down less lime-worn, rutted paths. All the old boys are at hand (and I don't mean old in years, necessarily), among them Allyn Cox, DeWitt Lockman, Hugo Ballin, Alphaeus Cole, F. Ballard Williams, Karl Gruppe, Georg Lober, and the others are represented by the kind of pretty, naturalistic painting and decorative sculpture they've always done. There are snowscapes heavy with blue shadows, nymphs dancing in bosky dells, elegantly dressed horsemen relaxing in the glow of a bright fire.

I don't happen to like this kind of art. To me the show is saved from being a complete waste by the wholesome presence in it of some of the younger artists who stormed the academy citadel with-



Robert Brackman's portrait of the second half of the newly opened National Academy.

in recent years to become actual members, among them Robert Philipp, Hilde Kayn, Ogden Pleissner, Ferdinand Warren, Jon Corbin, Lu Duble, Andrew Wyeth. Nevertheless I'm glad this sort of show is on. Because painting and sculpture of the older sort is no longer tolerable to progressive museum directors (although the larger part of the general, non-gallery-going public doubtless still prefers it) it would be too bad if it were denied a chance to be shown anywhere, and if the public were not to have the opportunity to see it. How will art fanciers ever come to appreciate the vital, provocative art of today if they never

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Henry Moore's  
Art Works Put  
On Exhibit Here

Sculpture and Drawings  
of Briton Are on View  
at Modern Art Museum

By Carlyle Burrows

An exhibition of the work of the English modern artist, Henry Moore, who was invited from Great Britain, opened last night with a preview at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street.

Consisting of sculpture and drawings, it will be shown to the public beginning today and continuing through March 16.

The museum, Mr. Moore, who arrived here recently, and the Arts Council of Great Britain have collaborated on the display, one of the largest given for a foreign artist at the museum since the start of the war.

The exhibition is installed throughout the third floor of the museum, and is complete with samples of Mr. Moore's work from the early 1920's to the present. Fifty-eight pieces of sculpture and forty-eight drawings are included.

Preponderantly modern and non-objective, his sculptural work is to a large extent creative, though both sculpture and drawings show basic human forms and ideas which the artist imaginatively elaborates.

Beginning with small figures and groups, which include items lent by English collections, the exhibition ranges to larger figures, some of which are in stone while others are carved from natural wood.

Among the drawings in pen and ink and gouache is a series of fifteen from life in the London air-raided shelters during 1940-41, when Londoners jammed themselves into subways and other excavations for protection.

The exhibition was selected by James Johnson Sweeney, former executive of the museum, and he has written a book, published by the museum, covering the different aspects of Mr. Moore's work.

"The carving approach," writes Mr. Sweeney, "is the basis of the most characteristic features and qualities of Henry Moore's work. In his art he strives primarily toward an organic condition. His object is liveliness of form, not life-likeness."

Lenders to the exhibition include both English and American owners; the City Art Gallery, Manchester; Mrs. Leonard K. Elmhirst, the Zwenmer Gallery, London; Sir Kenneth Clark, the Buchholz Gallery; Washington University, St. Louis; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Lady Keynes, Gordon Onslow-Ford and numerous others.

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## Picasso as Symbol and Challenge

PICASSO. *Fifty Years of His Art.* By Alfred H. Barr Jr. 314 pp. New York: Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Simon & Schuster. \$6.

PICASSO. *The Recent Years, 1939-1946.* By Harriet and Sidney Janis. 211 pp. New York: Doubleday & Co. \$7.50.

By WILLIAM GERMAIN DOOLEY

THERE is no parallel in literature for Picasso, unless it be James Joyce, or in music, except Stravinsky. In fact there is no close parallel for Picasso anywhere. Imperturbably alone, his hydra-headed art has flourished, twisted and doubled back on itself, shattered the canons of representation and then explored and rearranged the fragments. Like a Pied Piper his career has attracted a continuous following of explainers and narrators. They are not always so well-informed as these two most recent publications, Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s fifty-year survey, and the war years' ecstatic appraisal by Harriet and Sidney Janis. Explaining Picasso is a large order, for his world is not our calendar art of cosy red barns, pretty petunias, nor the genre of everyday life.

If he bothers to borrow from classical or traditional heritage (which is oftener than you might think), he puts it in his own space-time conception with isolated melancholy. His savage grotesqueries are the more devastating for being coldly intellectualized. Ten years ago his horror at the bombing of Guernica foreshadowed John Hersey's study of Hiroshima. Hersey's is a sympathetic parable of mankind stunned; Picasso's mural is the icy rage of a spectator from Mars, viewing the mess modern man has made for himself. If the world is going to hell in a

handbasket, Picasso is the one to show us just how the process looks.

His undisputed brilliance of talent refutes those who call him a blundering fake, and his tinge of what might be charlatanism confuses but never defeats his most fervent followers. At any rate he has been at it now for a half-century, and the event has been observed by Mr. Barr with a careful scrutiny of his work that has the calm enthusiasm of a skillful autopsy.

The author presents a balanced, condensed survey of Picasso's art as a running commentary closely integrated with 300 illustrations. After this there are pages of documentation, checklists of his book illustrations, designs for the ballet, a chronology of exhibitions from 1897, what works are owned by American museums, where he has lived and when (including street addresses), a bibliography and an index. The bibliography purposely omits hundreds of routine reviews and journalistic notices, yet it records over 550 items, of which forty-six are good sized monographs. This is microscopic study.

FOR instance statements from the master have been divided into four categories, shading from authentic revelation to downright error. These are: those "presumably written by Picasso himself;" those "said to be approved by Picasso \* \* \* written by others following conversations with him;" "statements apparently not confirmed by Picasso following interviews;" "statements said to be rejected by Picasso as false." Every line has a modifying word. "Presum-

ably," "apparently," and other hedges seem to stem from a documentation note about Picasso and his crony, Gertrude Stein: "the memory of neither is dependable." I will venture a guess as to this obscurity. Picasso is a brilliant genius but a very earthy man like his predecessor, Rabelais. To the good-willed and high-minded young scholars who want to record and rationalize his every step, he perhaps would like to say "Go away, don't bother me. You make me feel like an archaeological excavation."

NOW this is not fair, so far, to the author, Mr. Barr, for this is by far the best book yet about Picasso. He has kept the text clear (except for the incredibly bad use of illegibly small italic body type) so that at each step in a pyrotechnic career, what happened and where is recorded in simple lucid prose. A thorough analyst, Mr. Barr has cleared away a mass of error and confusion, and the ground covered will not have to be worked over.

There are color plates that further testify to the versatile perception of this century's most agile talent. Picasso can draw like Ingres, model like Bourdelle, and color like no one else. His periods, from Blue to Bones, have succeeded and repeated each other so rapidly that most followers become sadly confused. Not Mr. Barr, however, who has unerring skill. If Picasso's work was once said to look like an organized accident, the commentator did not realize that he is a seven-letter word for atomic fission.

Now Harriet and Sidney Ja-



"Coq," Paris, 1943. From "Picasso, The Recent Years."

nis have not the detachment of Alfred Barr. They are devotees of the closest sort and have for some time expressed their intention to do "The" book on Picasso and his art. The five years of occupation and the confusion since have only begun to clear away and his work of that period emerges, as it always would, as a fresh shock. Thus it seemed

imperative to the authors to set aside their larger plans and concentrate on the war years. The present book is a richly illustrated, well-printed account.

For almost half a century Picasso has been in art the symbol of the challenge which the concept of the word "modern" creates. His personal and artistic

(Continued on Page 13)

## Marc Chagall: Two Viewpoints on His Life and Works

BURNING LIGHTS. By Bella Chagall. 268 pp. New York: Schocken Books. \$3.

MARC CHAGALL. By James Johnson Sweeney. Illustrated. 102 pp. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. \$3.

By ALFRED WERNER

ON JUNE 21, 1941 the Chagalls, refugees from Nazi-dominated France, arrived in

New York. On the same day the Hitlerites invaded Russia, and only a short while later virtually obliterated the ancient White Russian city of Vitebsk where Marc and Bella were born in 1889 and 1895, respectively, and where they had been married in 1915. Yet the beloved image of the "sad and joyful city," as the

painter described it in his autobiography, "Ma Vie," continued to live in the minds of its faithful children, each of them having taken with him, "in place of his vanished inheritance \* \* \* like a piece of his father's shroud, the breath of the parental home."

THE painter's wife began writing her memoirs after having revisited the old country in 1935. By the time of her death in 1944, she had covered only part of her life—thus the present volume constitutes merely a fragment of her unfinished autobiography. She wrote it in her mother tongue, Yiddish, that curious blending of medieval German, Hebrew, Russian and various other languages, an idiom lending itself superbly to the expression of tender thoughts and sentimental feelings. There is little action in the unpretentious twenty-five sketches of which the book is composed; they try, at times successfully, to recreate the strangely poetical atmosphere of a world long passed, of a traditional Jewish home with all its splendors and limitations.

Judging by this book, the Jews of Vitebsk seem to have been rather simple, somewhat superstitious and generally good-natured people. Religion played a

paramount part in their lives. There was the joyful Sabbath, ushered in by mother's lighting of the candles, and ending when father snuffed out the lights. There were the solemn holidays when the men would moan and sigh the whole day long in their white prayer shawls, but there were also less dignified festivals when all, including the children, would sing and dance and stomp, and father might even drink too much wine. There was the Purim festival when mother would distribute gifts among the family and the employes, and merry-makers would turn somersaults and show tricks; there was the feast of Passover when no crumb of leavened bread would be tolerated in the house, and when there would be kept a goblet of wine for the Prophet Elijah, and then finally the autumn festival of Succoth when the family would take their meals in a leafy tabernacle.

AS a child, Mrs. Chagall must have been a most sensitive person, enjoying equally laughter and tears. Tears and laughter also fill her memoirs which she wrote in a slow-moving, rather playful style. What the book

lacks in persuasiveness and vigor is balanced by Marc Chagall's masterly illustrations, expressing a wealth of emotion through a few bold lines, depending upon swift suggestion rather than upon precise definition.

ONCE, when Chagall wanted to express his love of Paris where he spent the better part of his life, he fondly, if oddly, resorted to the phrase: "Mon second Vitebsk." In his book Mr. Sweeney duly records the painter's indebtedness to his Jewish orthodox background and to his Russian traditions, but he stresses the influence which classic and modern French art, expressionism and cubism, had exerted upon Chagall before he created a style of his own. Skillfully the author unfolds the career of the young firebrand who, in 1910, arrived in Paris "with a ripe color gift, a fresh, unashamed response to sentiment, a feeling for simple poetry and a sense of humor." The book leads us up to last spring when Chagall, at the height of his fame, opened his most comprehensive retrospective one-man show at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Mr. Sweeney, who was instru-

(Continued on Page 12)

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!



"The Red Cock," 1940. From "Marc Chagall."

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