

Art: Conservative Realism Resurgent

Other Shows Eclipsed by Hartford Opening

By **STUART PRESTON**

THIS was the week that was in the New York art world, with the opening of Huntington Hartford's gleaming new museum, the Gallery of Modern Art, in Columbus Circle, eclipsing all other events. By now, the support it gives to conservative realism of both the 19th and 20th centuries, throwing down the gauntlet to international abstraction, must be known to all.

Tradition's champions here are the English pre-Raphaelites, some wildly unfashionable French Salon painters, Sargent, Rodin, Epstein and others, concluding with two of Dali's most spectacular recent efforts, about which opinion agrees to disagree.

Along with the above works of art, a permanent part of the Hartford Collection, is a splendid and comprehensive loan exhibition of paintings and drawings by the late Pavel Tchelitchew, whose hauntingly personal work stands at the center of this century's neoromanticism.

A major annual exhibition of work by contemporary painters, sculptors and printmakers is that being held at the Art Gallery of the American Academy, Broadway and 155th Street, presenting candidates for awards of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

At the Israel Discount Bank, Fifth Avenue and 43d Street, is a showing of paintings by Marc Chagall, including several not previously exhibited.

Among other shows are the following:

William Thon (Midtown Gallery, 11 East 57th Street): The field of vision in semi-abstract landscape oils and water-colors is veiled in a shimmer of unreality, giving

these scenes a decidedly theatrical character. In this new work, more substantial and less ethereal than in the past, Mr. Thon is much concerned with paint textures. Some persons may object to the wealth of technical concoctions employed here on basically straightforward subjects, but their finesse is undeniable. His gifts as a colorist come through most strongly in the attractive water-colors.

Mary Bauermeister (Galeria Bonino, 7 West 57th Street): This remarkable and fascinating show of nonfigurative paintings and constructions is notable for the brilliant exploitation of out-of-the-way materials such as pebbles, torn linen and driftwood, which suffer a sea-change at her hands. She also shows some more or less geometrical constructions of extreme cunning, as well as drawings whose myriad linear markings might have been spewed forth by a computer-run wild. All in all, an occasion to make stop in their tracks those who condemn experimental work out of hand.

Les Animaliers (Bernard Black Gallery, 1062 Madison Avenue at 80th Street): A good selection of 19th-century French animal sculpture in bronze, once so prominent in Victorian parlors, by artists, such as Barye, who were superb craftsmen as well as sharp observers.

Doris Seidler (RoKo Gallery, 867 Madison Avenue at 72d Street): Admirable non-figurative color etchings by a printmaker whose technical abilities exceed in interest what she has to express with them.

Berta Margoules (Forum Gallery, 1018 Madison Avenue at 79th Street): Traditional figure sculpture of distinctly emotional character, worthy of respect. She excels in conveying moods of pensive resignation, but fails in more expressive subjects through

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an inability to dramatize convincingly.

Joseph Pollet (Schoelkopf Gallery, 825 Madison Avenue at 69th Street): This artist is a brave man in this day and age to paint and portray figure subjects in a sentimental and timid style that might be a discreet Victorian adaptation of Titian's,

Jeanne Reynal (PVI Gallery, 173 East 73d Street): A contemporary mosaicist revives an ancient technique, applying it to the making of abstract sculpture in contemporary veins. Manually and texturally she achieves some rich and interesting results, although the pieces of sculpture themselves are lumpish and lack eloquence of form.

Leon Bonhomme (Chapelier Gallery, 21 East 75th Street): Figure and landscape paintings by a French artist (1870-1924) who worked agreeably, but utterly derivatively, in the orbit of greater men, notably Cezanne and Rouault.

Mitzi Melnicoff (RoKo Gallery, 867 Madison Avenue at 72d Street): Considerable vigor and expressive power in portraits and conversation pieces by a painter who, with sensuous gusto, identifies herself with the life and natural development of her subjects.

Duvillier (Byron Gallery, 1018 Madison Avenue at 79th Street): Very smart performances by a contemporary non-objective French painter who has a mastery of spirited brushwork at his fingertips. Compositions are controlled but explosive, and medium is laid on with the expert assurance and ease of Soulages.

Nebel (Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Gallery, 21 East 57th Street): Feeble stabs at picturesqueness are made in touristy oils depicting French landscape.

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