



"Jonathon, Esther and Charlie Out Back of the House," by Robert Harvey at the Krasner

Art: 'Snapshots' by Robert Harvey

Painter Displays Recent Works at Krasner's

By JOHN CANADAY

ROBERT HARVEY, who has a show of recent work at the Krasner Gallery, 1061 Madison Avenue, at 80th Street, is exceptional as a painter who adopted the photographer as a brother without ending by getting thrown out of his own house. Working from old snapshots of the family-album type and in a near-monochrome suggesting the yellowish brown fading of old prints, he has given us pictures of people in outdated clothes with such titles as "Brother Home on Leave," "The Twins Near Winfield," "Baby's First Day at the Chicken Run" and "Jonathon, Esther and Charlie Out Back of the House."

It sounds awful. But Mr. Harvey, from this suspect point of departure, developed a style flatly factual (in the naturalness of pose, the naturalness of relationship of figures to one another and to a background of the accessories to daily living) but removed from reality (details blanked out, including whole faces, as if victims of mismanagement in the operation of a 2-A Brownie Kodak, and home developing).

It still sounds awful. But all the pictures listed above, with the exception of "Brother Home on Leave," are in the current show, where they can prove for themselves that Mr. Harvey has given them a presence so persistent that only the friendly normality of the people represented keeps the presence from being sinister in its strength.

As it is, the paintings have a half-enchanted quality in spite of the commonplaceness of their subjects. The captured moment of the tiny snapshot, enlarged to the dimensions of a sizable painting, has been subjected to so many shifts of accent that the expected connotations are stripped away and the remembered world is replaced by one we seem never to have known—but in which we see ourselves on record as having lived.

In his newest paintings Mr. Harvey has partially shifted gear. His figures, instead of existing in a harmonious habitat of tonalities corresponding to their own, are played in contradiction against boldly defined geometrical patterns. He has also stopped working from snapshots (I am told) in favor of models. He is more of a painter nowadays—although a more conventional painter as well. The good thing is that he has brought off the improbable feat of retaining that quality of presence, of undeniable presence, in his shadowy people even while subjecting them to the competition of emphatic backgrounds. In his

special way he is proving again what good painters have always proved—that the reflection, in the hands of an artist, is more true than reality.

Among other exhibitions this week, two are discussed at length in tomorrow's New York Times — drawings by Juan Gris at the Saldenberg Gallery, 1037 Madison at 79th Street, and drawings and sculpture by Leonard Baskin at the Borgenicht Gallery, 1018 Madison, at 79th Street. Other shows include:

John Marin (Knoedler, 14 East 57th Street): Marin, whom we are likely to think of in terms of his angular energy, somehow looks very quiet in this selection of oils and water-colors. Perhaps this is because all are from the collection of Duncan Phillips, whose eye, while faultless in its perception, served a temperament that was most sympathetic to classical, lyrical visions of the world. The small, excellent show is a benefit for the Dalton School at an admission fee of 50 cents—with another 50 for the catalogue if you want one.

Jean Ipousteguy (Frumkin, 41 East 57th Street): This exhibition consists of a single sculpture, "La Femme au Bain," life size (and it's a big woman) in highly polished bronze. It is a curious work. The bathtub in which the woman lies serves as a sarcophagus, and beneath the mask of her face a skull (cast from an actual one) is visible. In this complicated sculpture, composed of many independent parts that interlock for assembling, and overlap one another, the tub-sarcophagus, face-skull, real-unreal contradictions are omnipresent. But to try to fit all the suggestions into a symbolical program would be risky—and, worse, unfair to an arresting work of art that would be reduced to a tour de force if fully explicable. Its power lies in its tantalizing ambiguity.

Frank Roth (Jackson, 32 East 69th Street): Young Mr. Roth, an alumnus of Abstract Expressionism High who took post-graduate work at Hard Edge U., has now emerged as a fantasist, independent except for the thread-iest of pop and op connections. His new paintings, most of them quite large, are tight, smooth renderings of uncompromisingly defined objects that might have been done as advertisements for unidentifiable technological products developed by a civilization that split off from ours about 1900 and followed an aberrant course. The colors are thin, shrill and acid. The total product is commendable but not, for this observer, enjoyable.

Minoru Yamasaki (Staempfli, 47 East 77th Street): This densely packed show plays the theme of sculpture as a part of architectural design. The architect, Mr. Yamasaki,

Among Other Shows, Marin at Knoedler's

is represented by some bang-up models of his major structures, including the controversial designs for the World Trade Center, and many photographs. The sculptors whose work he has incorporated into his schemes are represented sometimes by models of those works, sometimes by examples of their other work. This is not a show to pass up, whatever you think of the World Trade Center. The model by itself is an unassailable esthetic argument in its favor, whatever the other arguments for or against may be.

Sarah Grilo (Byron, 1018 Madison, at 79th Street): With a deft brush and a handy lettering kit, Miss Grilo conceals large paintings that resemble sections of scaling walls liberally disfigured with graffiti and the remnants of posters and broadsides. These disfigurements she synthesizes into patterns of considerable visual appeal. So far, so good. But these pleasant panels are asked to carry a burden of social comment (under such titles as "What the World Needs Now," "Mr. President" and "The City of Man") that is too heavy for them. The messages are in no way articulated with the esthetic character of the painting, which is graceful and fluent. Take the painting, let the message go.

Masuo Ikeda (AAA, 605 Fifth Avenue): New etchings, and some lithographs as well, by this artist, whose exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art a couple of summers ago established him at the top among print-makers today. However, even though the print is his medium, he need not be thought of first in that category. Simply as an artist, he combines some of the bounce of pop art, some of the flair of Dubuffet and much of the eeriness of Klee in an expressive style that, for all these comparisons, is all his own.

Pierre Alechinsky (Lefebvre, 47 East 77th Street): This is easily the brightest, liveliest and happiest show that this artist has held in New York. And since brightness and liveliness are virtues undeniably his, while his hold on more profound ones is sometimes tenuous, this is also his best show to date. Last day.

In the Window (Kleiman, 982 Madison at 76th Street): Here are a dozen or so beautiful little sculptures in wood, metal and ivory from Africa, India, ancient Egypt, medieval France and other times and places, a delightful congregation celebrating a concurrent event that you are left to identify for yourself. Since the miniature exhibition is visible only from the street, Sunday is a good day if you are in the neighborhood.