

Chicago by Marilyn Robb Trier

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The effects of a European journey upon an established American artist, particularly one born and trained in the Midwest, are always watched with the greatest interest.

Osvers from Italy

After a year and a half in Italy on a Prix de Rome, Arthur Osver has shipped a group of paintings done during this time to the Fairweather-Garnett Gallery in Evanston. Introduced by an imaginary dialogue written to explain his new style, the work is exhibited along with some pre-Italian Osvers. The rich, floating *Colosseum*, the intimate *Cathedral Columns II* and the *Venice Nocturne I* seem like poetry opposed to the prose of his earlier work. However the question arises whether this marks a real change of heart or merely reactions to Italian scenery?

Italians from Italy

The Main Street Gallery has now followed its American première of Franco Centilini with a potpourri of the School of Rome including Mosca, Caffé, Quaglia, Faizoni, and Pagliacci. At the House of Arts are paintings by the Italian poet and critic, Franco Miele. Like Osver, Miele allows no humans to enter his lonely canvases. Yet clues of man's efforts in buildings or lamp posts are always given. Miele's temperament must be close to that of a book-keeper's. The subjects are entered, tight and neat, by means of brush strokes that are all vertical. The palette is limited and greyed with only azure air and water lending color intensity. Although Miele achieves something of

the mystery and melancholy of Surrealism, the ledgers are always balanced in favor of the real and visible world.

The local scene

The Arts Club opened its one gesture of the year to Chicago artists with its 34th annual exhibition by professional members. Like all "members shows" the quality is jagged, but it runs far below the level established by the small, local galleries. Perhaps in straining to keep its earlier pioneering reputation, the Arts Club has kept its eyes too long on the east coast and Europe. Outstanding, however, was Marie Zoe Greene's *Collage 1953*, a sensitive composition in torn paper set in a shallow glass box. It was well hung near Louise Stanton's *Bee Hives*, a low-key abstraction in cool tones which seems to have been designed by cutting paper squares and painting the resulting pattern. Ginc Odell's metal *Bull* is a humorous and beautifully defined description of the symbol of strength in a weakened condition. Abbott Pattison's *The Builders* in steel, first known at the Charles Feingarten Gallery, reaffirms its original impression of compartmented intensity.

Pattison is again seen at the North Shore Art League's Chicago Show [to May 17]. Unlike the Arts Club, the North Shore Art League with no pretensions to artistic leadership has assembled a group of Chicago artists of consistently high caliber. Since the list of Chicago artists has grown to the point where it was impossible to invite them all at the same time,

the league inaugurated a rotating system with this show. It also awarded two \$300 purchase prizes, with the paintings to go, not to the league, but to two lucky ticket holders for their own homes in order to encourage interest in *owning* a picture. Vitally active, the league opens its Avenue of Art, in which paintings are displayed in the shop windows of Highland Park, on May 7, after jurying by Allan Frumkin, Copeland Burg, and Eldon Danhausen its annual member's show begins on May 22, juried by Leon Golub, Hugo Weber, and this reviewer. In addition, the league has begun printing a well-edited members' newsletter which contains revealing statements on working methods and philosophies by Chicago artists.

Cohen and Sahlins

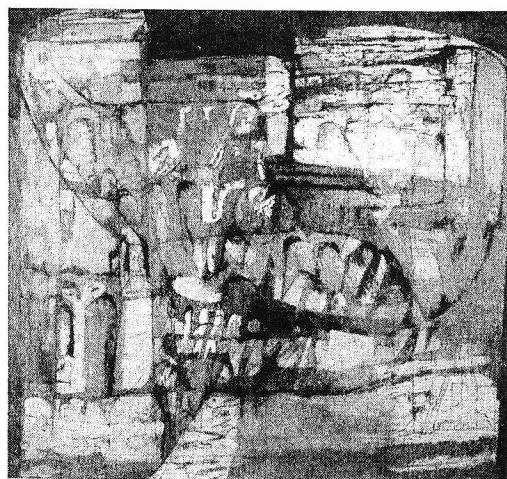
The logic of George Cohen's art as exemplified at the Cliff Dwellers last month, and currently (with his wife, Constance) at Leonard Linn's, shows a sudden new turn. Feeling "a victim of monochrome" and "over-dependent on the shoddy surface, the antique look of 'found things,'" Cohen has made a sharp break with his former style. Always a user of gold and silver leaf, he has not only stopped toning these metals down with dark oils, but has added numerous small mirrors glued to the canvas and swung to clear, primary colors in large flat areas. Like the older works, the new paintings explore the possibilities of the human image as something to synthesize, but now in the search for shiny, new surfaces Cohen often hangs dissected plastic

dolls' legs and arms on the canvases together with the mirrors. The best painting in the show is *AHS*; the letters standing for the Latin inscription of "In the Year of Human Salvation." Here Cohen has integrated his new materials into a meaningful whole.

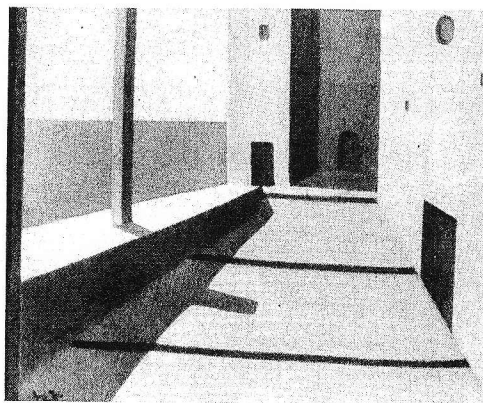
Like Cohen, Fritz Sahlins, who appears at the Kerrigan-Hendricks Gallery this month, is a metaphysical painter, but her paintings spring from two sources—the idea and visual memory, each producing its own type of work. *European Coat Hanger* is a visual memory from her childhood in Germany. The color is strong and direct. *Silent Sleep* is an idea painting. The color is low key; the tonal values are closely related. A creative experimenter in materials, Mrs. Sahlins waxes most of her paintings (none of which are oils). *Silent Sleep* was painted in casein on heavy waxed paper. It is partly a collage in that the female nude was cut out and attached to the background after a superb texture of incised lines had been cut. One of the most exciting pictures is *The Two* which treats of two children frightened as the sun sinks behind them to leave them in a darkened world. The work shows a fine understanding of children's postures and psychology. Painted in enamel, its rich texture was achieved by rubbing the picture with paper before it had thoroughly dried.

Two painter sculptors

The Newman Brown Gallery is showing the work of the sculptor, Eoina Nudelman [to May 14]. Long a painter, Nudelman has only been sculpting for 12 years and this is just his second show in Chicago. In his own words Nudelman is "interested in the continuous flow of form," and, in truth, his unnamed abstract bronze, set on lucite, has the miraculous rhythm of a wave turning over. In the more recent *Adam and Eve*, in plaster and wire, this flowing quality is checked into channels of stop-and-go tension. The result is an arresting pair of male and female figures. Far less frenetic were the female nudes of Jawad Selim on view recently at the American Friends of the Middle East at 116 South Michigan. Shown with a series of rather less interesting paintings, these sculptures by the founder of the Baghdad Modern Art Group combined a Sumerian and Babylonian heritage with modern creative talent. Of special worth were the *Mother and Child*, in ebony and metal, in which the two movable abstracted figures could be placed in varying relationships as a child in a play pen, and the *Mother and Child* in carved crab apple, in which the child is an ovum suspended by a string held by the mother over her head.



Prix de Rome winner Arthur Osver's *Colosseum*, at the Fairweather-Garnett Gallery in Evanston.



Terrace on the Sea, by Italian poet-critic, Franco Miele, at the House of Arts, Chicago.