

ALEXANDRE

Cats Made of Canvas Are Painted

By HILTON KRAMER

FOR some years now, the sculpture of Anne Arnold has been one of the special delights of the New York art scene. It is special in two senses—first and foremost, in the sense of being exceptionally accomplished in its own terms, but also in the sense of appealing to a special taste. Miss Arnold's sculpture has little or nothing to do with the established critical view of the esthetic mission of modern sculpture. It raises no extreme intellectual issues; it does not traffic in far-out forms or radical materials or unfamiliar techniques. It is disarmingly easy to like, and almost shocking in the ease with which it raises something familiar to the level of a modest, but perfect, artistic realization.

In the past Miss Arnold has been at her best in wood-carvings of animals—carvings that were often painted but that were primarily little masterpieces of the carver's art, stunningly accurate, often humorous, always executed with an affectionate spirit. In her new exhibition at the Fischbach Gallery, 29 West 57th Street, she continues her interest in the animal motif, but she has moved into another sculptural medium. These new sculptures—all depicting house cats in various sizes, attitudes, and gestures—are made of canvas that has been stretched and shaped over wooden armatures. The canvas surface is painted to form a complete sculpture-in-the-round, and the painting itself, though inseparable from the sculptural conception, is a feat of creative observation in itself.

Some of these cats are monumental in scale; others make their appeal in the most relaxed, domestic terms. There is enormous charm, sensibility and artistic intelligence in this new work, and, as always with Miss Arnold's work, a flawless command of a very difficult realm of craftsmanship. For works of comparable artistry and feeling, one would have to look

to the art of older civilizations than our own, to certain folk cultures and ancient crafts.

Yet there is nothing of the archaic in Miss Arnold's work; there is nothing sentimental or merely evocative of other styles. She is, in fact, an extremely original and independent artist who has created her very special body of work out of a keen understanding of the resources of modern art. Her work continues to be a surprise and a joy, and this new exhibition shows her at her very best.

Other exhibitions this week include the following:

Gregory Masurovsky (Parsons, 24 West 57th Street): Mr. Masurovsky is an American artist, a native of New York, who has lived in Paris for many years and has established a high reputation in Europe as one of the most poetic draftsmen of the past decade. The exhibition of drawings he is currently showing certainly confirms that reputation. Indeed, it reminds us that there are certain kinds of talents—those inclined to delicacy, intelligence, and an extreme refinement of craft—that the European atmosphere is still capable of nurturing in a way that the American art scene, with its more exciting and more vulgar appetite for the merely new, is not.

Mr. Masurovsky's art embraces a wide variety of motif and emotion, and we are offered only a part of this variety in this show. There are a large number of his flower drawings, and these are among his most accomplished works—drawings of painstaking observation in which the tiniest details are given their poetic due, but that derive their authority from the way the entire surface is endowed with a patient, thoughtful, felt attention. There are also some figure studies, and a few of those gray "abstract" drawings that show his command of the draftsman's surface at its purest. This is a very good show by an artist whose work ought to be better known in New York than it is.

Bruce Tippet (Parsons, 24 West 57th Street): To see Mr. Masurovsky's show, one must traverse a gallery devoted to

Other Recent Shows Are Summarized

—well, what? There are giant rolls of black rubberized material that lie on the floor, climb the walls and smell simply awful. Perhaps it is sculpture of some sort; perhaps it is nothing but a failed conception that occupied a lot of space. It is worth hazarding, however, in order to see the drawing show in the next room.

Rudy Burckhardt (Green Mountain, 17 Perry Street at Seventh Avenue): Though well known as a photographer and a maker of off-beat underground movies, Mr. Burckhardt is also a painter of some modest distinction. He is at his best in painting landscapes, and there are several good ones in the current exhibition—especially "Field No. 1," two ambitious works entitled "Pond," and a group of tree studies. The water-color drawings of nudes are more problematic; they do not quite achieve the kind of authority that work in this vein needs to be really interesting.

Howard Kanovitz (Waddell, 15 East 57th Street): This exhibition, featuring three-dimensional painted figures of basketball stars, represents a high order of illustration. Distinctions between fine art and commercial art are not, to be sure, as rigorous as they once were, but I think Mr. Kanovitz's work remains securely within the realm of the latter. The drawings that accompany the completed three-dimensional figures are, indeed, a lesson in the difference between the art of illustration and drawing as a fine art.

Ernest Briggs (Alonzo, 26 East 63d Street): For those who recall Mr. Briggs's former abstract style, with its heavy emotion and elaborate rhetoric, this exhibition of new paintings and drawings will certainly be a surprise. The emphasis is all on images of metamorphosis, sometimes very rationally designed. There is a suggestion of early Pollock—the Pollock of surrealism—and yet everything here, the technique as well as the often intense imagery, is handled in a very personal manner.

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