

# ALEXANDRE

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### About Art and Artists

#### Whitney Museum Opens Retrospective Shows of Work by Levine and Bloom

By HOWARD DEVREE

THE Whitney Museum will open to the public today retrospective exhibitions of work by Jack Levine and Hyma Bloom. They grew up together in Boston—Levine is just under 40 and Bloom but two years older. Both began early to attain recognition. Last season the Institute of Contemporary Art organized the exhibitions as separate shows that have been seen in several other institutions and are now, with recent paintings by both added, brought together in the Whitney's third floor galleries.

The two, whose lives have paralleled at so many points, present striking contrasts. Bloom is the poetic realist, Levine a dramatic social satirist. From his paintings of synagogues onward, tradition and background play an important part in Bloom's work and color is a major element. In Levine's painting is a spirit of rebellion against social shams and injustice, with light and shadow and distortion more important than color for effect.

Soutine and Rouault come to mind when one looks at Bloom's work; Rembrandt and Greco and Daumier, one suspects, are nearer Levine's heart. Both are extremely good, draftsmen.

The two, furthermore, have differing concepts of mortality. In Bloom's paintings one senses something akin to near-Eastern and oriental fatalism and a certain morbidity that reaches its fullest statement in the recent paintings of cadavers and parts of bodies in color, which becomes lurid and even approaches chomo at times.

Levine's color is usually more subdued and his concentration is on depiction of types with sympathy for the very mortal residents of mean streets and for the overworked white horse on its daily rounds. And, beyond this, there is savage satire for snobs and gangsters and social sham and parasitic growths on the democratic way of life.

Bloom meditates a little mystically; Levine hits out hard at the things he doesn't

like: if he had turned to illustration he might well have illustrated Dreiser and Steinbeck while Bloom, had he so chosen might have illustrated Coleridge and Baudelaire and Eugene Sue.

Forty paintings and drawings by Bloom and forty-five by Levine are included in the exhibition, which will be open to the public, daily (1 to 5 P. M.) through April 3.

Despite the holiday-curtailed week a number of one-man shows have opened in galleries with the usual wide variety of theme and manner. Two of these are at The Stable, 924 Seventh Avenue, where Joan Mitchell is showing large colorful abstractions. In a number of these the color is massed horizontally across the center against creamy-gray-white backgrounds, as if she had attempted to present the effect of, say, an Italian hill town landscape translated abstractly into mere slashes of color.

Also at The Stable are paintings by Herman Cherry. In some of these spots of bright color stand out challengingly against dark blue or black backgrounds, while in others the use of dark blue color shapes against black gives an eerie effect as of dim light breaking through upon an interior in which objects are too dimly presented to be identifiable except as color shapes.

At the Davis Gallery, 231 East Sixth Street, Seymour Remnick is showing unpretentious still-lives and simplified landscapes that have a sketchy spontaneous quality as if of quick studies for larger paintings. Muted greens and grays and tans are favored in the simplified landscapes as if the artist had set himself the problem of depicting scenes without distinctive characteristics.

The West of the early movies is recalled in watercolors by Ernest Tonk at the Grand Central Galleries, 15 Vanderbilt Avenue. Riders of the range in their Sunday-go-to-meeting best are shown against the wide open spaces with illustrative effect.

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