

IN THE GALLERIES

Sensuality, Style Combined

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An intriguing combination of erotic subject matter, stylistic elegance and optical gamesmanship makes Richard Herold's one-man show at the Feigen-Palmer Gallery one of the most remarkable in town.

Painting reverse images on aluminum with acrylic Herold manages to eschew vulgarity at no expense to frankness. As the viewer passes each composition the image seems to shift with his point of view.

I suppose that Herold's expressions fall within the province of camp or Pop art but he seems to explore the nude figure, male and female, with considerable care for its formal beauty as well as with a lusty appreciation of its functional sensuality.

In the best of these smooth compositions, Herold succeeds in balancing stylistic detachment with psychological involvement. A young man, he demonstrates outstanding skill and imagination. And in dealing frankly with sexuality, Herold avoids both social criticism and snide snickering. In fact these paintings could be seen as a celebration of intimacy and privacy.

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Far more complex are the images and commentaries of Ben Sakoguchi who has turned from his high accomplishments in printmaking to the creation of painted objects that overflow with technical as well as with imaginative virtuosity.

The chaos of 20th Century life, overshadowed as it has been by wars, actual or threatened, stimulates this fertile talent to project images evocative of Bosch, not in their manner but in their intent.

Sakaguchi's very personal symbolism poses some deliberate dilemmas for the viewer. He tends to couch his commentary on violence in topically dated references which are off-set by vanguard accents and an adventurous mingling of many contemporary styles.

Somehow, Sakoguchi's chaos is paradoxically well-ordered and his most hair-raising insights into man's innate confusions are presented in almost fun-fair terms. Because these peculiar amalgamations succeed in fulfilling the artist's aim of clarifying formal and psychological relationships rather than concentrating on literary or social commentary, his idiom is primarily of aesthetic significance.

In the process of creating these collage compositions, the artist edits the torrential flow of his conscious and unconscious images but he does not try to stem or limit it for the sake of overclarification.

The validity of his objects lies in their dazzling dynamism. Here is an art that raises questions about contemporary life that the pat banalities of many of his contemporaries fail to answer.

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In quite a different vein, Philip C. Curtis has always



GREENE CANVAS.—Among outstanding canvases in the Balcomb Greene exhibition at the Adele Bednarz Gallery is the painting entitled "Madeline."

kept his independence. His meticulously rendered visions, which add up to a very personal extension of Surrealism, project a forceful and witty personality which is at its best in those paintings that are most deliberately theatrical.

Too long absent from the local exhibition scene, Curtis exhibits a large number of recent canvases at the Feingarten Galleries which speak of the continued growth of this mature and widely acknowledged painter.

Earlier stages of his development sometimes included a certain coyness now happily eliminated. And the least impressive of the canvases shown here is that which harks back to his desert landscapes—though they, too, were often capricious rather than literal description.

It is when Curtis incorporates his long empathy with the Arizona landscape into his dreamscapes, as in "Tea Party", that he makes the most of this experience.

Beneath the obvious humor found in such pictorial fantastic as "Band Concert," "The High Chairs" and "The Tent," there lurks the desolation, loneliness and emptiness of the clown unmasked.

With characteristic individuality, Curtis delights the viewer while haunting him.

While avoiding the changing vogues of the contemporary American art scene and deepening his enormous facility in the juggling of pictorial volumes, Balcomb Greene is in danger, at times, of turning his own distinct

ive idiom into a highly sophisticated cliché.

But in the best of his works now on view at the Adele Bednarz Gallery, Greene achieves a metamorphosis of landscape and figure elements that makes them almost interchangeable.

The most striking canvases here are explorations of the looks and moods of women, undertaken in an almost tactile manner and yet with a detachment enhanced by the nearly monochromatic tonality the artist prefers. There are painterly as well as psychological tensions in "Jean A.," "The Gown" and "Eleanor," not so readily found in the landscapes here. The dramatic quality of many canvases stems from Green's ability to freeze movement

as it is frozen in a frame of movie film. Occasionally, this apparent reference to cinematic techniques slips into the melodramatic as in "The Quai." But it strengthens Greene's imposing talents in the masterly picture titled "Summer at St. Tropez."