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# ART NEWS

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Art news from:

# Los Angeles by Jules Langsner

Actor Harold Lloyd makes a debut as a painter at the Frank Perls Gallery [Jan. 12-Feb. 14]. Lloyd, one of the most unaffected individuals in Hollywood, became a painter as a by-product of his interest in color. It seems that some sixteen years ago he bought a toy for his daughters. Called a "Hoot-Nanny," it was a pantograph with which you traced out kaleidoscopic patterns. Lloyd played with it more than his children did, fascinated with what happened when color was placed against color. It occurred to him that he didn't know much about color and in his characteristic way investigated the subject for himself. He built an enormous reference library on color, its optical properties and its chemistry, and ended up by devising pigments of his own. He conceived a palette of seventy-two tones, based on eight basic colors, each of which is a complementary of another. This system is being widely used today by painters under a well-known label, but few of them know that they are indebted to Harold Lloyd for the system.

Mixing all that paint left quite a batch each night, and so Lloyd began to do what he calls *Imaginettes* (on 3 by 5 inch index cards) without any preconceived notions of how an initial swatch of color would turn out in the end. The best of the *Imaginettes* at the Perls Gallery take on a scale of primordial landscapes. Others, less successful, lapse into cuteness. Hemmed in by his index cards, Lloyd was emboldened to try his hand at larger paintings (12 by 16 inches), titled *Fantasces*. Some of these surge and swirl across the surface plane; others suggest landscapes. According to Lloyd, it never occurred to him that he was doing either one or the other. He simply was doing what looked right at the time. Willy-nilly, without knowledge of what artists are doing today, Harold Lloyd became a primitive abstract expressionist.

## Kauffman

Another self-taught artist with leanings toward abstract expressionism, twenty-year-old Robert Craig Kauffman is presented in a first one man show of oils, watercolors, and prints at Landau Gallery [to Jan. 17]. More sophisticated than Harold Lloyd in that he stems from Klee, Picasso, Matisse and the New York group of de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko et al, Kauffman comes by his non-specific images as naturally as his contemporaries toss basketballs into hoops.

The exhibition splits into two distinct groups: soft, serene, cerebrally-organized abstractions (like the *Ode to Crafts* series) and the more recent, highly-charged linear convolu-

tions on the other. Either way Kauffman is precociously gifted.

Just now Kauffman seems enchanted with the excitement attendant upon the making of a picture—no holds barred. But given his flair and intelligence, there is reason to believe that Kauffman may develop depth of intention and a more exacting attitude.

## Abstract-Expressionists

This month in Los Angeles well might be titled "The Abstract Expressionists Come to Town." Over at Paul Kantor Gallery, four of the movement's brightest luminaries, Baziotes, Gottlieb, Hofmann and Motherwell, are exhibiting drawings, watercolors and oils [Jan. 8-Feb. 5]. Knowing the dealers as we do, we attribute this coincidence of like-minded shows, which allow us to compare the local vintage with the imported stuff, to sheer chance. The local product is more effervescent, barbed, a bit on the spiked side. The New York contingent, while hardly mellow, evidences the assurance and command often missing here.

These painters put on a sprightly, vivacious, exuberantly colorful show. Seen as an ensemble there's impact. Over-all impact, however, is dissipated in many instances when you stop long before an individual work in the hope of becoming involved in the artist's mode of vision; many of the pictures seem to be notations or brisk studies to be filed away for future reference. These are not spectacular show pieces. Nevertheless, there are rewards in catching an artist in a germinal moment.

## Heinrich collection

In two brief years Theodore Heinrich, Director of Art Galleries at the austere Huntington Library in San Marino, has found a warm place in the heart of our art community. It's hard to see how we are going to get along without him now that he leaves for his new position as Associate Curator of Painting at New York's Metropolitan.

Drawings from the very large private collection of Theodore Heinrich currently are on view at U.C.L.A. [Jan. 20 - March 1], the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, the Pasadena Art Institute and the Arizona Art Foundation at Scottsdale, near Tucson. These exhibitions, like the collection as a whole, stress drawings of the Renaissance and Baroque epochs, terminating with examples of David, Géricault and Ingres.

Out at U.C.L.A. there is a study by Raphael for his tondo, *The Virgin on the Chair*, which, almost square in shape, belies the ingenious accounts of its circular composition some of us received in our col-

lege days. At U.C.L.A. is Velasquez' study for *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, discovered by Heinrich in 1949; a Lorenzo di Credi; and an early Poussin.

In talking to Heinrich this writer was startled by his casual statement that, "the only trouble with contemporary drawing, very often as splendid as that of the old masters, is that I usually cannot afford to buy them." He assured me that anyone with taste, a modest purse, sufficient diligence and a bird dog instinct in out-of-the-way spots in Europe can build a collection, too.

## Master prints

Connoisseurs of prints are enjoying a wide selection of shows. The Los Angeles County Museum presents "Engravings of Mediaeval Towns" and Piranesi's *Prisons*; the newly-opened Falk-Raboff Gallery offers Piranesi's *Antiquities of Rome*; and the Pasadena Art Institute presents a comprehensive survey of Chinese and Japanese prints.

The engravings of mediaeval towns (dated 1560 to 1750), from the Collection of Warren C. Shearman, range from detailed maps to pictur-

esque scenes of pageantry and everyday life of the period. A common device is the aerial perspective of town or countryside in which the artist, who could not possibly have seen his subject from those heights, managed to convey the sensation of arriving by air in a town of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Primarily of documentary interest, the engraver's art was so highly developed that an unusual degree of aesthetic quality enters many of these prints. The exhibition includes works by such representative artists as Abraham Bloemart, George Hogenberg, Franz Hogenberg, Wanzel Hollar, Abraham Ortelius and Peter Schenck.

The show at Pasadena, loaned by the well-known collector of Oriental prints, Judson D. Metzgar, includes dazzling works by such figures as Hiroshige, Hokusai, Horunobu, Shigemasa and Utamaro. One cannot help but be impressed once again by the grandeur of these subtly-nuanced, highly-formalized, calligraphic expressions and to note the deterioration of the printer's art in the Orient with the advent of the industrial era.



Executions in Haarlem During the Spanish War, 16th-century engraving at the Los Angeles County Museum.



Fantascape by Harold Lloyd, movie star recently turned painter (Frank Perls).