

New York (City). Macbeth gallery.

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RECENT PAINTINGS BY m12m33

HERMAN MARIL

FEBRUARY 25 — MARCH 16

FROM APRIL 1941

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MACBETH GALLERY

11 EAST 57th STREET • NEW YORK CITY

HERMAN MARIL

When I first saw Herman Maril's pictures seven years ago I was struck by his meticulous workmanship and the unusual restraint that governed his brush. Most of these paintings were small, which was characteristic, and Maril had limited his palette to cadmiums and earth colors with dominant tones that were sure but muted. In the drawing of the forms, austere buildings, grave skies and stretches of water, preoccupied little human figures, rather lonely, you saw the same economy, the same precise, right placing.

His work still has these qualities, the more remarkable because so many young painters feel they are hiding their faculties if their color and pattern is not the most dashing in the exhibition room. But looking deep into the space that goes far back in Maril's paintings you get an idea of the perspective that makes this discipline possible.

There is a great deal of feeling as well as a great deal of space concentrated here in a little room. The small figures intent on digging, building, playing, sometimes arrested in motion, seem to have no individual lives of their own but are symbols of the ceaseless striving of human life. It is a rather sad music they make, the sort that Maril has heard around him all his life in Baltimore, a typical sprawling, haphazard city full of ugly reminders of our heedless industrial past. In Maril's pictures the houses and factories stand for the urgency people feel for making and building things, but you see them also to be part of a cruel environment they have unwittingly hemmed themselves round with.

Perhaps, though, it is a mistake to find meanings in pictures, at least out loud or in print, since everyone should find his own. The important thing about Maril as an artist, anyhow, is his highly

PAINTINGS

1. ANAEMIC GIRL
2. BOY WITH RAKE
3. CAFE
4. EARTH AND MACHINE
5. FARMER RESTING
6. FLOWER GIRL
7. CHICKEN FEED
8. THE DOCK
9. FOR NEW POSTS
10. KIDS AT PLAY
11. MACHINE AND MAN
12. OLD LIGHT
13. ROCK AND WATER
14. OLD SLEIGH
15. SKATERS
16. A NEIGHBOR
17. STREET IN THE CITY
18. TO THE BARN
19. WAITING ROOM
20. WASH DAY
21. SUNDAY AT THE DOCKS
22. WINTER ON A FARM

In portfolio:

Group of Drawings, Gouaches and Sketches

special ability to organize his forms in the picture space. It is there for anybody to see.

Maril has been good at drawing ever since he was six or seven. From his student days he has shown an affinity for the lighter mediums, but his persistent effort has always been to improve his command of oil paint. His years of life drawing, his notebooks filled with sketches of people and objects, and his color experiments in gouache have stood him in good stead; the pictures are sometimes the reworking of sketches and gouaches a year or two old. To Maril painting in oil is a deliberative process demanding sustained concentration and labor. This serious approach, and the fact that he had reduced his technique and subject-matter to the barest essentials, led people to speak of his work a few years ago as "abstract" and "intellectual". Actually, he had felt that to learn all he could about painting he must start from the ground up and master his tools and materials the slow and hard way.

In all learning, and this is especially true in the arts, there comes a point when the techniques you have gotten under duress respond freely and naturally to the necessity of your idea. It is this Maril is aiming for. Now that he is getting command of oil, the paintings have a more relaxed, easier manner. At the same time he feels free to explore a greater range and resonance of color, and, for instance in the portrait here of a girl with flowers, when people are his subjects they show up now as individuals in particular moods and phases of life.

This portrait is one of many recent pictures gathered in this exhibition which represent a definite advance in the career of a real painter. As such, they should take a lot of looking just as they have taken a lot of making.

F. A. WHITING, Jr.
Editor, Magazine of Art

BORN: Baltimore, Maryland; October 13, 1908

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