

Reviews and previews

Jack Tworikov [Egan; to Nov. 12] emerges from his third New York show as one of the most masterful artists of his generation now at work in America. At forty-nine he has a long period of maturation behind him, and he himself is the first to admit that ahead of him still lie several crucial pictorial problems. But in these landscapes and figure pieces one finds statements at once reticent and eloquent, emotional and disciplined. Trained at the Art Students League and the National Academy, the spontaneous calligraphy that loops over his waving textures has a sureness and a precision that comes only from complete mastery of means. In the drawings—many scratched through enamel-covered paper with a pencil—is more evidence of his ability to produce the poise of an arm or a plane within his free concept of space. "Space" is the clue to Tworikov's pictures—as it is for those of his teacher of two decades ago, Karl Knaths. For several years he restrained his palette to browns and greys, attempting to anneal the anatomy of a seated figure or an apple to the taut surface of the can-

vas, yet still retain the freedoms and connotations of three dimensions. Now he has gone back to brighter hues. Working this summer in front of the flowering trees and dusty groves of Virginia, he filled his lyrical compositions with sunny greens and yellows. In the still rather tentative figure pieces, blues, reds and yellows replace the cool dignity of the earlier versions with a monumental gaiety. Tworikov says that in front of nature one is either an abstractionist or a Corot. His triumph seems to be that in choosing the former he has not betrayed the latter. \$100-\$750. T.B.H.

Alfred Maurer's [Whitney Museum; Nov. 5-Dec. 11] memorial exhibition, which was covered at length in these pages when it opened in September at Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, will arrive in New York this month. This will be the first time that the people of his native city will be able to see this pioneer abstractionist in a full-length retrospective. Prices unquoted.

Ben Shahn [Downtown; to Nov. 12] is one of the very few living

American painters of his generation (he was born in 1898) who is accepted as a major artist by almost our entire body of informed critical opinion. His images, no matter how anecdotal and circumstantial—he does not hesitate to indicate every brick in a building or tooth in a comb—are so firmly developed from solid, imaginative designs that even the formalists enjoy them. And his many distortions—notice the twisting moldings in *Interior*—are such completely logical projections of his attitude towards the picture's content that they do not offend even the most sensitive champions of magic realism. The fifteen temperas and the many drawings in this show—all of them executed since his retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946—indicate several changes in Shahn's style and approach. As is immediately evident in *Nocturne* (which was analyzed at length for its creative process in these pages: A.N.; May '49), various parts of the pictures—especially the backgrounds and immediate foregrounds—are treated in a looser, more painterly manner. Colors, at once brighter and softer, are brushed on with feath-

ery strokes. There is a feeling of more freedom, and of richer means. And where there is social comment, as in *Death of a Miner*, based on the Centralia disaster, the scene tends to lose its specific character and become universalized tragedy—more akin to Euripides than to Odets. Finally, in the best works, *The Anatomical Man*, *Interior*, *Sound in the Mulberry Trees*, there is continuing evidence of a growing sense of power and authority, of an ability to dislocate a private, insignificant fragment from the commonplace and to endow it, for the spectator, with the hallucinatory magic of symbol and form. Prices unquoted. T.B.H.

Rouault's [Perls; to Nov. 26] paintings, including selections from 1903 to 1943, the first show here since he won his Vollard lawsuit, represent him with more scope but less power than other recent exhibitions. Dominating the group are the familiar Christs, clowns and pierrots sectioned by heavy black bars, and street scenes from the earlier period in his more calligraphic style. However, there is considerable range of quality between the best examples,

German XV-century Madonna among old master drawings (see p. 47)



Shahn's *Interior*: "such completely logical projections."

Rouault's *Old Clowness* in watercolor: "terse drama . . ."





Jack Tworckov:

Figure

"the spontaneous calligraphy that loops over his waving textures has a sureness . . . that comes only from complete mastery . . . [expressed in] statements at once reticent and eloquent . . . [by] one of the most masterful artists of his generation."