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Harry Sternberg  
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## HERMAN ROSE

*December 3*

*to*

*December 22*

*1956*

*aca aca*

ACA GALLERY, 63 EAST 57 STREET

"Beauty is severe and difficult . . . you must wait on her hour; track her, rush her, and clasp her tightly; force her surrender. Form is a Proteus, but a much more tireless and inventive one than the Proteus of the fable. Form can be made to show its true aspect only after a long fight. . . . The unseasoned painters have not been cheated by disguises; they have persevered until nature has been forced to show herself, naked and in her true spirit."  
 Frenhofer to Poussin in Balzac's "Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu."

HERMAN ROSE waits in ambush for Form from the rooftops, El stations, bridges, and other middle-grounds in the New York topography. Above him, at a distance, is the skyscraper spine of the island. Below are the streets and the clusters of small buildings that proliferate like lichens along the stone flanks of Manhattan.

The sun beats down on the picture and into the painter's eyes. The patience, discomfort—even pain—of the ambush is part of the painting.

Form reveals itself after months of work. The city is clasped tightly in a surface of pats, dabs, and streaks of color that softly have rained on the canvas.

In his extended essay in "Art News" on Herman Rose, Fairfield Porter pointed out the parade-like quality that informs these landscapes. They also have the ritual yet spontaneous gaiety of a New York parade in which a contingent of garbage-collectors or book-makers will stroll behind a corps of West Pointers—smoking cigars, cracking jokes, successfully keeping out of step with a V. F. W. band that follows. The bookmakers or garbage-collectors are inherent to the order of the New York procession, as are the cops, scouts, bugle-and-drum marching societies and West Pointers.

A comparable sense of New York ritual in informality, of pain in gaiety, can be felt in Italy, and Herman Rose's paintings of the Hudson waterfront have been mistaken for contemporary Venetian vedute. In fact, a comparison of Herman Rose with Canaletto could be instructive: there is a similar hardening of atmosphere and granulation of surface, a similar ironic distance between the artist and his view. But Herman Rose's painted surface is more traditional than Canaletto's (who was a more stylized artist) in its continuation and re-creation of the Impressionists' plastic sensation. And, as I have pointed out at the time of Herman Rose's inclusion in a Museum of Modern Art "Fifteen Americans" exhibition, his concept of the

- 1 PARTHENIA
- 2 THE MUSICIAN  
Loaned by Dr. and Mrs. Emanuel K. Schwartz
- 3 PORTRAIT OF DR. MILTON R. MALEY  
Loaned by Dr. and Mrs. Milton Malev
- 4 STILL LIFE WITH PLUMS  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Small
- 5 STILL LIFE WITH ORANGES
- 6 STILL LIFE WITH PEACHES  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Goldstone
- 7 MACDOUGAL STREET  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hoving
- 8 GOWANUS CANAL  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Renthal
- 9 COAL BIN AND BOATS  
Loaned by Mr. William Zierler
- 10 INTERIOR—SPRING MORNING  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Small
- 11 MANHATTAN SKYLINE FROM BROOKLYN  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Barman
- 12 RED HOOK PLAYGROUND
- 13 FLOWERS AND DRIFTWOOD  
Loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Barman
- 14 FLOWERS AND SHELL
- 15 RAPHAEL SOYER
- 16 ELIA
- 17 CENTRAL PARK
- 18 SEVENTH AVENUE TRAFFIC
- 19 BROOKLYN PIPE YARD
- 20 59th STREET—HUDSON RIVER
- 21 TREE IN CENTRAL PARK
- 22 MANTLEPIECE
- 23 THE STUDIO
- 24 LACKAWANNA FERRY SLIP
- 25 UNION SQUARE

painted surface is also, in its way, distinctly American avant-garde.

I hope that these notes, which you may have stopped looking at the pictures long enough to read, will invite you to look at the pictures again, and perhaps longer. This is their only intention; the pictures speak eloquently for themselves. Thomas B. Hess