Issues Raised By 'Under Fire'

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN

Aside from the "war is hell" tradition, there are, it could be said, two kinds of war movies. One is grand adventure; it is war as an arena for passion, heroism, patriotism and, as it often happens in the movies, romance. The other is war as a test of moral fiber, as an individual proving ground where decisions have immediate and fatal consequences. Most war movies contain elements of both and so does "Under Fire," a current and controversial example of the genre. From its opening scenes in Chad, where guerrilla troops with elephants are attacked by a helicopter gunship painted as a terrifying mask, "Under Fire" is filled with scenes of combat, coarse language, exotic locales, guerrilla encampments, and two people falling in love — with, in short, much of the action and romance of revolutionary war.

But the movie is far more about fatal consequences than it is about adventure. It tells the story of three American journalists who lose all semblance of professional detachment as they become progressively caught up in the 1979 Nicaraguan civil war that ended in the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza Debayle and his replacement by the leftist Sandinistas.

The film's central theme comes in the form of a dilemma. Two of the American journalists are brought by the Sandinistas to a guerrilla encampment where they are promised they will be able to take the first-ever photographs of one Rafael, an elusive and charismatic leader who bears more than a coincidental resemblance to Che Guevara. Rafael, however, is dead, and the guerrillas, to maintain their momentum toward victory — and to discourage the United States from sending more aid to the Somoza regime — need to persuade the world that he is still alive. After some wavering, the journalists agree to make a fake photograph showing Rafael, surrounded by lieutenants, appearing to direct the revolutionary war from his headquarters. The journalists are convinced that the fake photograph will help to hasten the revolutionary triumph and to reduce the bloodshed. In this particular, extraordinary situation, they believe that the truth must be sacrificed to some higher purpose.

In the end, the lie backfires disastrously. One of the three Americans dies as a result. Photographs of the guerrilla encampment end up in the hands of Somoza's national guardsmen, helping them to murder many of the revolutionaries, the very people the journalists wanted to help. The two surviving journalists emerge a bit sadder and wiser even as the movie ends with the triumphant entry into Managua of the Sandinistas.

Given the current situation in Latin America, it seems very likely that the choice made by the journalists will be hotly disputed by some who see the film. For one thing, there is the question of political judgment. The film portrays the Sandinistas — against whom the United States Government is supporting a guerrilla war — in a favorable light, as idealistic and handsome youths fighting for the cause of liberation, not hardbitten and ruthless Communists.

Second, there is the question of journalistic ethics. Journalists are familiar with the way in which emotions can interfere with objectively reporting the facts. "Under Fire" shows that dilemma in extreme form. Is it justified to throw over the truth altogether in order to serve a political end? Can the journalist under any circumstances join forces with those he is supposed to be covering? The questions are complex and difficult. But the film is unambiguously sympathetic to the choice that the journalists make. Despite the act of treachery to journalism and to the truth, despite even the disastrousness of its results, "Under Fire" encourages the viewer to feel that the commitment to the revolution was so true-hearted and well-intentioned that it was the only morally acceptable choice.

Filmed in Mexico on an $8 million budget, "Under Fire" was directed by Roger Spottiswoode, produced by Jonathon Taplin, and written by Clayton Frohman and Ron Shelton. Nicke Nolte stars as Russel Price, a celebrated and amazingly daring magazine photographer. Gene Hackman and Joanna Cassidy co-star as the other American journalists. Ed Harris appears as an entirely amoral American mercenary who drifts from war to war fighting for whoever will pay; Jean-Louis Trintignant is a cynical businessman and double agent who, like the mercenary, has con-

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Richard Bernstein is United Nations bureau chief for The New York Times and is a former foreign correspondent.

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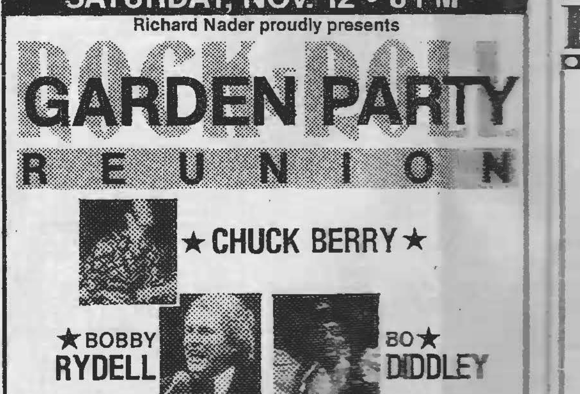

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'Under Fire'

Continued from Page 9

tempt for both sides.

Producer Jonathon Taplin, explaining the origins of "Under Fire" said that the film reveals an existential dilemma: to act or not to act. "We're talking about a classic movie situation," he said. "In 'Casablanca,' we want to know if Humphrey Bogart will make a commitment or will he sit on the fence. Here we watch Nick Nolte's character move from cynicism to some sense of commitment." Mr. Spottiswoode put it this way: "'Under Fire' is about the complexities of journalism, about journalists coping with the difficulties of being objective and yet having feelings and sensibilities about their subjects."

Mr. Taplin said that the origins of the film came some four years ago during the early stages of what has become an ongoing reexamination of the Vietnam War. "I became fascinated with war correspondents," he said. "At the end of the Vietnam War, a lot of books were being published,-that showed a new type of correspondent, young guys who were action junkies, guys who just had to be at the next war and were always taking chances. I came to see these people as new heroes."

Mr. Spottiswoode and Ron Shelton, one of the two scriptwriters, made a trip to Nicaragua itself, where, they said, they talked to journalists, toured the country and added a number of anecdotes to the script. Among them: a young Sandinista and lover of American baseball who could pitch grenades with uncanny accuracy into the midst of government soldiers. Mr. Shelton said that the young man died during the war but not in the way shown in "Under Fire."

As a portrayal of the band of reporters, photographers and others who wear bush jackets and jeans and roam the world's trouble spots, "Under Fire" is believable. To be sure, there are moments when reporting a war seems a good deal more romantic and easier than it really is. The most extraordinary action is always blowing in the path of Nick Nolte who often seems to be about the only photographer on the scene. But never mind that. When Gene Hackman, deciding to go to cover the story in Nicaragua, tells Joanna Cassidy, "It's a neat little war with a nice hotel," he reflects, with due self-mockery, something very true in the mentality of the television age war correspondent. War is where the action is in journalism. It helps to make careers.

In "Under Fire," war reporting, to begin with, is just a job, a largely technical task. In this sense, the dilemma posed in "Under Fire" reflects a genuine problem in the real world. The journalistic technician has feelings, too. How he should deal with them, how he should react when people are being killed and he wants it to stop, are not easy matters to decide.

Is the commitment made in "Under Fire" the correct one? "We don't excuse it," Mr. Taplin said. "We show all of the horrendous consequences of it. One of the things that I'm proud of is that we show all of the gray areas. We don't really let anybody off the hook."

Yet, even with the gray areas, "Under Fire" seems to make some implicit political judgments that are likely to stir debate. The film portrays the Somoza government and all that have anything to do with it as villainous or, at best, stupid; the Sandinista revolutionaries are, by contrast, charismatic, courageous and committed. It is difficult to quarrel with the venality the film shows of the Somoza government, but its depiction of the Sandinistas is another thing. This, after all, is the same group — except for a few notable defectors such as the famous Commander Zero, Eden Pastora Gomez — who in their four years of power have aligned themselves with Cuba and the Soviet Union, suppressed free trade unions, curbed their country's best newspapers, indefinitely postponed earlier promised elections, and forced thousands of Miskito Indians to flee into Honduras.

In this sense, "Under Fire" seems to grow out of the tradition of such other recent movies as "Missing," particularly in its tender-hearted sympathy for guerrillas fighting right-wing dictatorships, and its too-facile seduction by the romance of revolution and revolutionaries.

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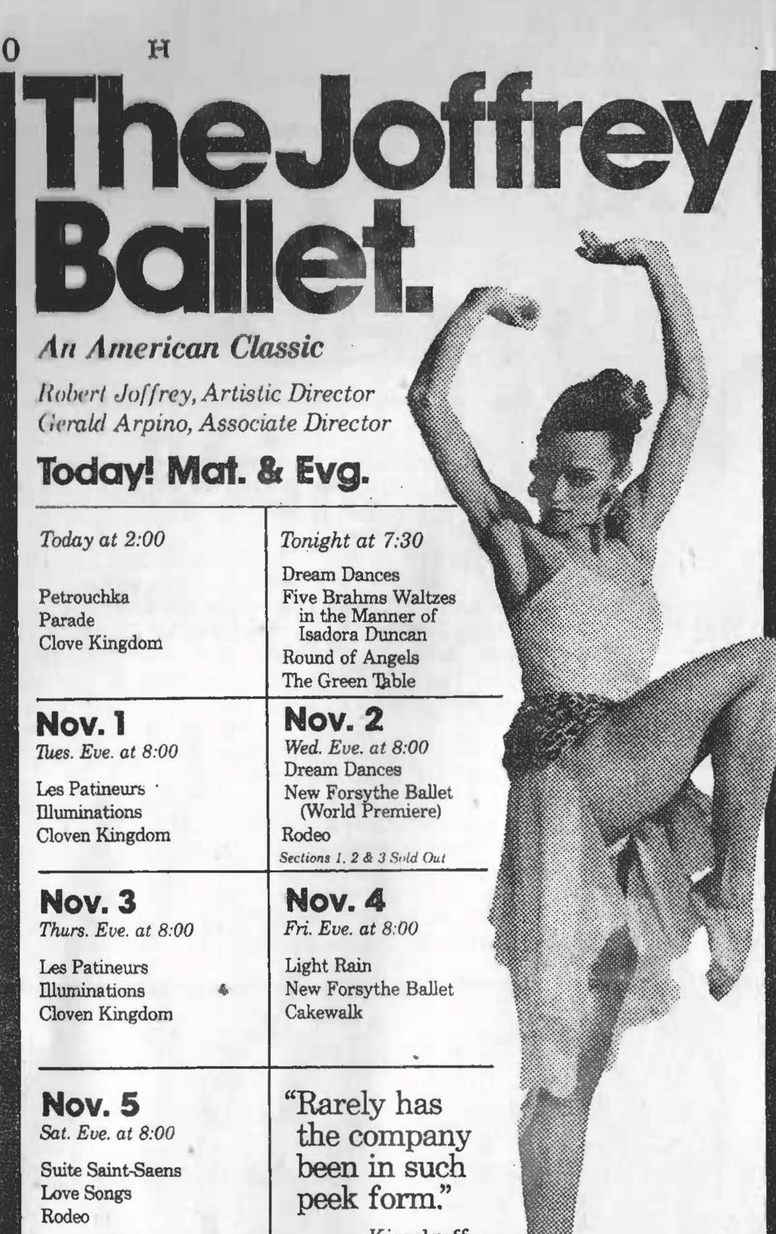
At the very end of the film, the photographer, looking at the parades of Sandinistas entering Managua in triumph, says, "I would do it again." It is doubtful whether many would agree with that judgment. Recent history, after all, has provided a good deal of evidence that Marxist-Leninist revolutions, however nice they may sound in theory, generally turn into very nasty totalitarian states once they succeed. Perhaps, if "Under Fire" had included an epilogue hinting at what has happened after the Sandinista takeover, the film would not leave the impression of the revolutionaries as simply youthful idealists. That way, too, the consequences of the journalists' decision — which, after all, was to abandon journalistic ethics in favor of an intentional lie — would appear in full tragic dimension, rather than as, at most, simply a well-intentioned and understandable mistake. ■



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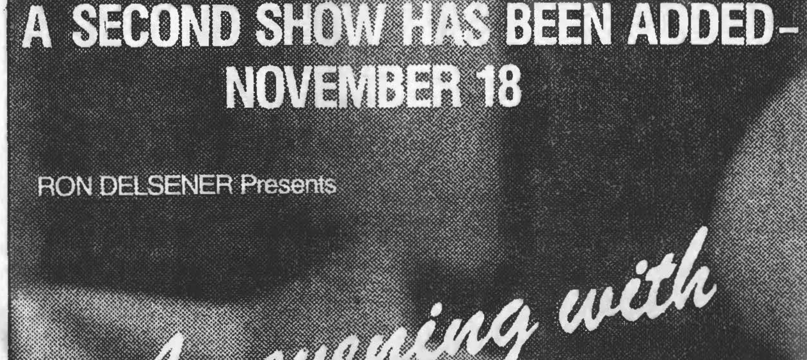

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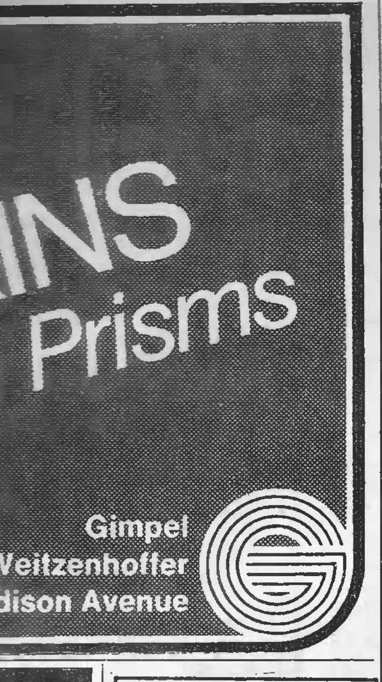

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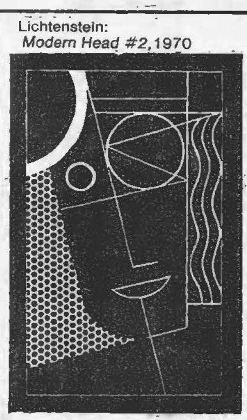

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JOELLYN DUESBERRY
NOV 1—30

Chinese Murals

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ple. (The rededication of the gallery on Tuesday is in recognition of the Bishop's contributions to the museum over many years.)

The mural was mounted by Prof. George Stout, of the Fogg Museum at Harvard, who was assisted by William Todd of the Rom staff. They used a paistaking method invented by Professor Stout and described in Mr. Curelly's book.

The surface of each block was covered with vinyl acetate, heavy paper and cotton cloth for protection. Then the four inches of clay from the temple wall was removed with hand grinders and sandpaper until only a thin layer of the original paint was left. Each piece was backed with vinyl acetate and pre-shrunk canvas and put in a powerful press built to apply "tons of pressure." When the pieces were dry the cloth and paper were removed with spirit. The 80 canvas backed pieces were fastened with vinyl acetate to 80 pieces of mahogany chip masonite and returned to the press. The masonite was backed with canvas and painted with some ground clay in vinyl acetate so both sides of the masonite were exactly the same.

The painted squares were then mounted on the gallery wall by hanging them on a grid made of mahogany strips and sliding them together to form the whole picture. The grid allowed a passage of air to flow behind the paintings to create similar atmospheric conditions on both sides of the great painting.

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Three years later, in 1936, Mr. Curelly purchased two more temple paintings similar in style from a well known dealer, Mr. Tanaka of the firm of Yamanaka and Company. The paintings are called "The Lord of the Southern Dipper" and "The Lord of the Northern Dipper." Both are entitled "Homage to the First Principle" and are about 10½ feet high and 34 inches wide. They originally graced the walls of a temple in Shansi province in the same area as the one that housed the "Maitreya Paradise." They are believed to have been painted by the same artists, although a signature was never found.

According to Elizabeth Phillimore, the director of the renovation project, the two paintings, which now adorn the east and west walls of the Bishop White Gallery, did not arrive in blocks like the "Maitreya Paradise" but in long sections rolled up like paper scrolls.

Fortunately, Mr. Tanaka also had two sets of remarkable photographs, one showing the paintings on the temple walls, the other showing how they looked after they had been cut into 12 panels, mounted on cloth scrolls and extensively inpainted. These proved to be invaluable during the restoration process, making it possible to compare the reconstructed areas to the originals, which the conservators at the ROM were trying to recreate.

Although all of Yamanaka's records of the paintings were destroyed during World War II, it is almost certain that the paintings were cut in blocks from the temple walls in China and sent to Japan.

"Somewhere in Japan," said Mrs. Phillimore, "they had cut the paintings and faced them with shellac, which discolored the paintings. Then they stripped the clay off by submerging them in water. The paintings were then stuck onto paper and cloth and rolled up on poles and shipped to New York. All this," she added with concern, "caused incredible damage."

The Japanese attempted to repair the damage with overpainting but this resulted in what Mr. Curelly described as the "Japanesing" of many faces.

When Mr. Tanaka came to the museum and saw the "Maitreya Paradise" in place, he recognized the similarity to his own paintings, each of which represented a procession of celestial beings moving at a leisurely pace through an ethereal place to pay homage to the Buddha of the future. They had been taken from the east and west walls of a temple and fit perfectly with the "Maitreya Paradise." It was as if they were made for each other.

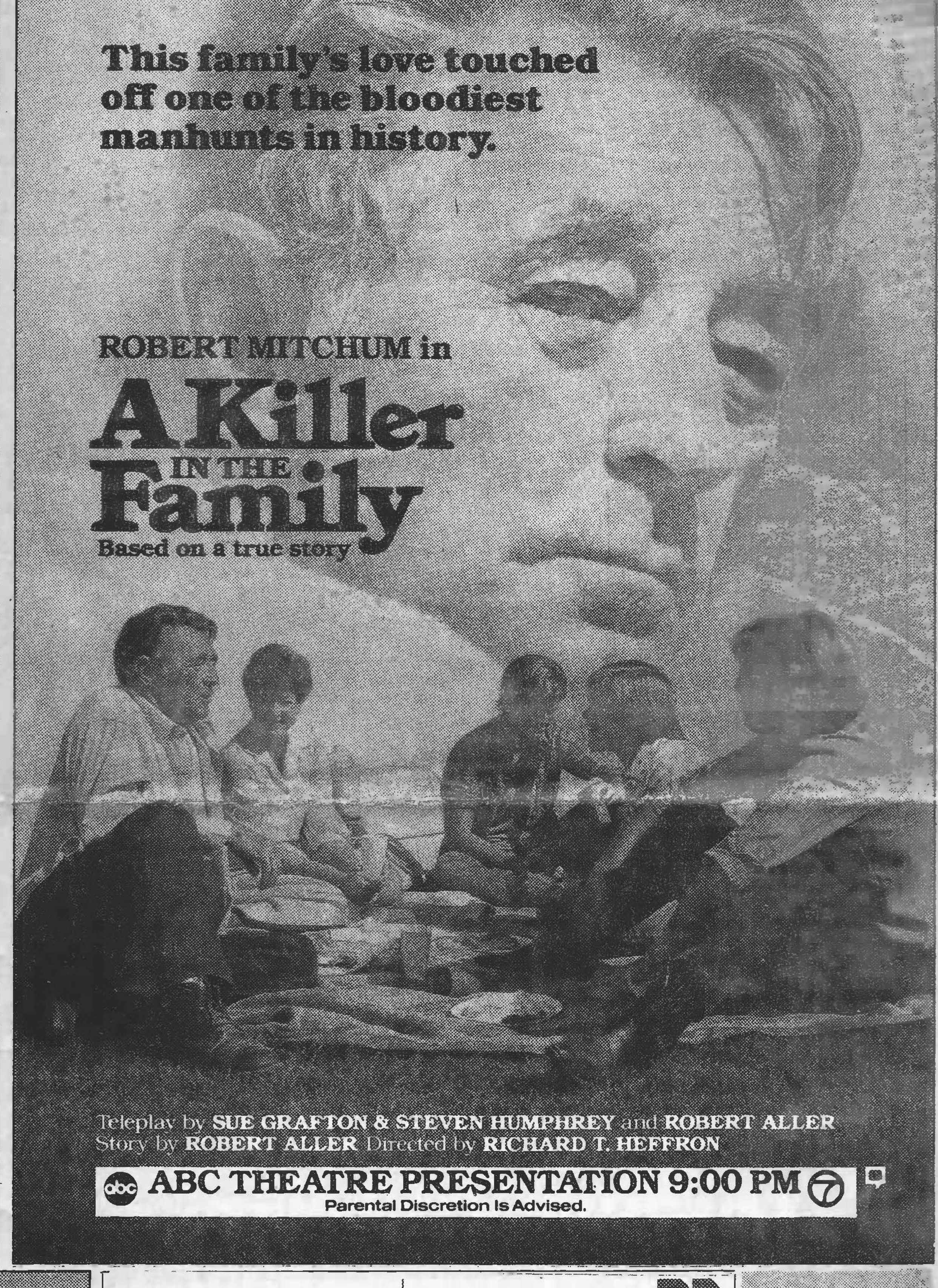
Mr. Curelly wrote that when Mr. Tanaka saw the "Maitreya Paradise" in place he "was so much impressed with the importance of keeping these things together, so that there might be in America one complete representation of what these early temples were like, that he offered the two to us at an extremely low price, which he said was what they had cost. When these arrived, Todd was able to handle them himself and we now have one of the most impressive groups of paintings I have ever seen."

The two smaller paintings are Taoist but have iconogrpahic features mixing Taoism with Buddhism. The west wall procession is grouped around three central figures: the Jade Emperor in the center, Lao-tzu, the founder of Taoism to his left and the Empress of Heaven to his right. These are balanced by nine officials, representing the nine stars of the Southern dipper and various astrological figures.

The east wall procession is also grouped around three main figures, the Yellow Emperor, Heavenly Emperor and the Empress of the Earth. These are balanced by personifications of cosmic phenomena representing the Northern dipper and the Five Planetary Deities.

To complete the authentic temple atmosphere of the Bishop White Gallery, seven wood images dating from the 12th to the 14th centuries are on exhibit. Like the murals, the statues are all from Shansi and have histories full of mystery and intrigue, some of which were related in Mr. Curelly's book. According to him, most of the statues were sold by starving monks. One of these transactions nearly caused the death of two men. It is typical of the corruption and chaos of that period in the 1920's when so much of China's art was lost to foreigners.

After troops of the Shansi warlord had taken all available food and valuables from the monks in a certain monastery (the exact one is unknown), the monks sent an agent to inform George Crofts, a collector who had been asked by Mr. Curelly to obtain objects for the ROM, that out of desperation they were ready to sell an ancient statue of great value. Mr. Crofts sent his agent with money to buy the statue, but as soon as the transaction was completed the warlord seized the statue and condemned both agents to be executed by a firing squad. The monk's agent saved his own life by surrendering the money to the warlord, but Mr. Croft's man had to face the firing squad. When they reached the execution grounds Mr. Croft's man, with the little money he had left, bribed the firing squad to shoot over his head. According to Mr. Curelly, "he was put against a wall, the rifles rang out and he dropped, and that night he and the firing squad stole the statue from the warlord. So we got it after all." ■



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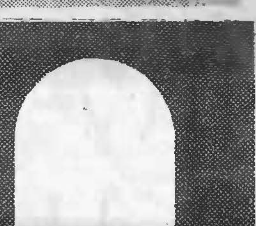

ART VIEW

GRACE GLUECK

A Show on Cubism Stresses Affinities With Writers

"Cubism is a necessary reaction [to impressionism] that will give rise to great works, whether people like it or not," wrote Guillaume Apollinaire in 1911, complaining about the hostility with which the new movement had been greeted in Paris. "I will go even further, and say that Cubism is the most noble undertaking in French art today."

Apollinaire, an innovative poet, an influential art critic for several newspapers, and master of ceremonies of the Parisian avant-garde before World War I, was not speaking lightly. The chief theoretician and promoter of Cubism, he was responsible for the meeting, in 1907, of Braque and Picasso, who became co-creators of the movement; he helped organize the Cubist Room 41 at the Salon des Indépendants in 1911, he was an editor of the influential Cubist review, "Les Soirées de Paris" (1912-14), and he publicized Cubism through lectures and writings. What's more, a "poet rooted in painting," as the arts historian Roger Shattuck has described him, he wrote lyrical verse akin to the pictorial structure of Cubism, in that it sought to express in language the simultaneous multiplicity of events and views that the artists conveyed on canvas.

Aptly, the presence of Apollinaire pervades the engrossing two-gallery show, "Cubist Prints/ Cubist Books," uptown at Aldis Browne Fine Arts, 1018 Madison Avenue at 78th Street; downtown at the Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin Street (through Dec. 3). His big, beefy face is seen, at Aldis Browne, in three arresting etchings by Louis Marcoussis, one of the major Cubist printmakers. In the earliest of the three (1911-12) — and the only one done from life — Marcoussis celebrates the achievements of his friend the poet in a geometricized rendering that presents him simultaneously in full face and profile, pointing to a stanza of verse from his famous poem, "Zone," with words that float in the background from the titles of his major works. And downtown at Franklin Furnace, we can see printed copies of his literary productions. They include his second volume of poetry, "Calligrams, Poems of Peace and War" (1913-16), in which unusual typography and random order are used to suggest instantaneousness, and his treatise, "The Cubist Painters" (1913), a book of "esthetic meditations" on the movement he helped actualize.

Jean-Emile Laboureur's illustration from "Petites Images de la Guerre," 1917, in "Cubist Prints/Cubist Books," a two-gallery show at Aldis Browne and Franklin Furnace.

But, although Apollinaire serves as a kind of symbol of the deep affinity between artists and writers in the Cubist movement, the exhibition is by no means centered on him. Assembled by Donna Stein, a scholar of Cubist material (and co-author of the catalogue for "The Cubist Print," a touring show that began at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1981), "Cubist Prints /Cubist Books" is the first in New York fully to survey the work of the Cubist printmakers, along with the books they produced, and drawings, posters, magazines, monographs, catalogues and so forth relating to Cubism and its creators. The aim is to point up printmaking — close to Cubism because of its linearity — as one very significant aspect of the bustling Cubist activity. And the show is also meant to give us an idea of the bonding between the painters and the poets; including, besides Apollinaire, Andre Salmon, Blaise Cendrars, Pierre Reverdy, Max Jacob and Raymond Radiguet.

The items on view at the Aldis Browne gallery are entirely from the collection of Sanford and Vicki Weiss, a New Jersey couple who in the past few years — with the gallery's help — have built up a fine Cubist print collection. It actually starts with the first Cubist print, "Standing Nude" (1907-08), by Georges Braque, an etching in which a nude less curvaceous than — well, triangulacious, represents a rather crude attempt to apply the abstracting principles of Cézanne to a female figure. The influence of Cézanne is also seen in a drypoint by Picasso of 1909, "Still Life With Compote," a rearrangement of one of Picasso's own paintings, in which recognizable still life elements are geometricized on a surface rhythmically broken up by crystalline light.

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"The chief theoretician and promoter of Cubism, Apollinaire was responsible for the meeting of Braque and Picasso." (Grace Glueck)

Picasso's own particular poet friend was the humorous fantasist Max Jacob, in whose prose poem, "Saint Matorel," a young man is converted to mysticism and then sainthood. Picasso did four etchings for the Jacob book, published by his dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, in 1911. They were the first real prints done in Cubism's early Analytic style (in which motifs were "analyzed" by assembling different views of them on a flat surface). All four are here; the most complex and "advanced" shows Mademoiselle Leonie, mistress of the hero, seated in a chaise longue. Her fractured body is simultaneously rendered from every conceivable aspect; it sits sideways on the couch to form a lively, balanced composition of planes and angles and arcs. (At Franklin Furnace we see the published version of the poem.)

By early 1909, Picasso and Braque were closely involved in the meeting of minds that was so decisively to affect the course of 20th-century art. Each was commissioned in 1911 by Kahnweiler, whose dedicated support was one of the chief factors in Cubist print production, to make a large print, and the two, working together at Céret to advance their new discipline, produced similar drypoints on still life themes. In Braque's "Fox," a strong pyramidal composition is produced by the disposition of linear, broken-up objects — bottles, saucers, cigarette packs, playing cards — along with letters and numbers, on a table top. Picasso's "Still Life With Bottle, or Bottle of Marc" builds up the same elements in more painterly fashion, and where Braque's composition is strictly frontal, Picasso's angles slightly toward the right. Aside from the graphic pleasures provided by the works, they are perfect examples of Analytic Cubism.

They also provide examples of Cubism's own referential language, developed as much from private associations, "in" jokes and literary material as from traditional and public sources. As pointed out by Miss Stein, a close reader of Cubist iconography, Braque's use of the word "Fox," for instance, refers to the name of an English-style bar on the rue Amsterdam frequented by Apollinaire and his friends. And she also speculates that the

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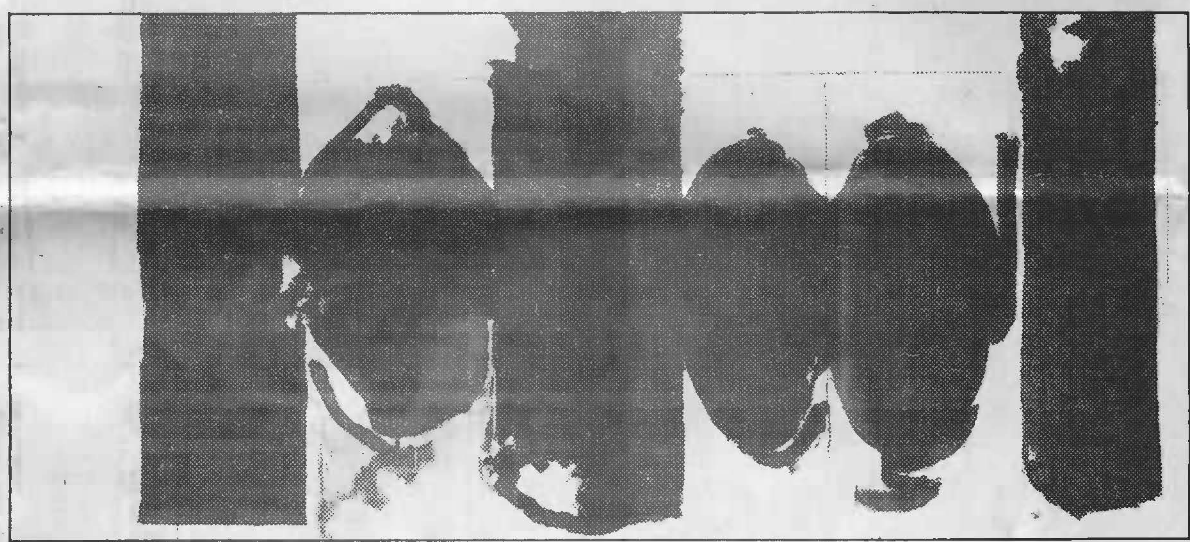
MICHAEL BRENSON



"Elegy to the Spanish Republic," in the Motherwell retrospective at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo through Nov. 27—He divides the art community into two camps.

Why Robert Motherwell Provokes Diverse Opinions

As much as any living artist, Robert Motherwell divides the art community into two camps. For some he is a modernist master, a major figure of Abstract Expressionism, someone whose bulbous, suspended, splattered forms have expanded the possibilities of abstraction and art in general. For the pro-Motherwell camp he is also a voice, perhaps the most eloquent spokesman for a heroic approach to art that was mocked and repudiated by post-Abstract Expressionist generations.

There are others, however, for whom Mr. Motherwell is almost antipathetic. They do not believe in the importance of his work, feeling his artistic reputation is due more to his polemical than his pictorial gifts and to his association with a group of painters whose direction they think would not have been one bit different without him. Far from considering him a positive voice, this camp is distrustful of his propensity for big terms like tragedy, metaphysical void or the self, and the license for waxing poetic such terms have given generations of curators and critics.

The traveling Motherwell retrospective, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo through Nov. 27 (it will arrive at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in December 1984), may not settle the dispute but it should define once and for all the issues. The exhibition, selected by Douglas Schultz, acting director and chief curator of the gallery, is a good size — 92 works. The full range of the artist's work is here: the saturated areas of color, the grids, the reflections on painting and the Spanish Civil War, the collages composed with pieces of his life, the abstract ideograms intended to register joy and doubt and dread.

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Mr. Motherwell's background is by now well-known. He was born in the state of Washington in 1915. He studied art briefly in California when he was very young, then specialized in philosophy at Stanford University and as a graduate student at Harvard. He lived in France in 1938-39, returning in 1940 to take art history courses from Meyer Shapiro at Columbia. Mr. Motherwell was the youngest of the Abstract Expressionists, the last one to devote himself to painting (beginning about 1941) and the only one not to have had a solid traditional art formation.

Mr. Motherwell is an exceptionally literate man. He has been an editor, a teacher, a writer and a lecturer. "More than any other painter," he is "the historian of the New York School," painter and art historian William C. Seitz has written. The references that pour out of the artist's interviews and writings include Mozart, Beethoven, Goethe, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Kierkegaard, Joyce and the Spanish poets Alberti and Lorca. There can be no question about Mr. Motherwell's passion for art or his ability to communicate that passion with words. "What a mysterious thing it is," he has said of art, "exhausted and inexhaustible." Like few other artists, what he says can inspire one to open a book or put on a record or pick up a brush.

The question about Mr. Motherwell concerns his stature as a painter. How this question is answered is likely to depend on how one understands his work in the context of Abstract Expressionist goals and values. Like the other artists of the New York School, a term he is said to have coined, Mr. Motherwell was heavily marked by Surrealism and Picasso. Surrealism provided the group with the technique of *automatism* and with it an awareness of the possibilities of gesture. Picasso provided a mythic content and mural scope. Just as important for Mr. Motherwell were the surfaces and color of Matisse. "When I first saw the work of Matisse," he told Mr. Seitz, "I knew that was for me."

How such elements were assembled and put in the service of a new and dynamic artistic space is a primary concern for any Abstract Expressonist historian or critic. It is worth emphasizing here just how important the sensation of space was in Abstract Expressionist thinking. If artists like Pollock, de Kooning, Newman and Still wanted to liberate painting from the centered, logically conceived, perspectival, small-scale easel tradition, they also wanted to make great painting. Great painting and a powerful and distinct sensation of space went together. Nobody knew better than they that after all is said and done that sensation, like the smell of a lost home, is what endures.

The first thing to be said then is that the space in much of Mr. Motherwell's painting is not always coherent. As a result, despite the eruptions of paint and the dramatic imagery suggesting bulls and caves and mountains, the work as a whole seems somewhat disembodied. There is a lot of paint and a lot of compelling imagery. But since the paint often seems not to belong to the imagery, the works seem split, less an exploration of the duality that preoccupied many Abstract Expressionists

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Rare Chinese Murals Get A Facelift in Toronto

By AUDREY TOPPING

On Tuesday, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto will reopen an exhibition of three extraordinary Chinese murals from the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). The large religious paintings, which are of tremendous historic and artistic value, were reinstalled in their Buddhist temple setting, the museum's Bishop White Gallery, after undergoing a 2½-year restoration. The extensive conservation project has not only restored the paintings to their original freshness and mystical beauty, but in the process new restoration techniques were developed and new details about Buddhist iconography were discovered.

The fact that these fragile works of art are still intact after being torn from temple walls in China and put back together in Canada is as amazing as the paintings themselves. The largest, called the "Maitreya Paradise," depicts the coming of Maitreya (Buddha of the Future). The central figure is a haloed Maitreya with one hand raised in the position of bestowing protection. The Buddha is symmetrically flanked by a host of celestial deities, bodhisattvas and disciples. The paintings were originally executed in China on clay walls with ink and colors ranging from muted to brilliant. They are believed to have been painted by Chu Hoa-ku, the master religious painter of the time, and his pupils.

The "Maitreya Paradise" was finished in 1320. For over 600 years it adorned the north main wall of the holy temple of Hsing-hu Ssu in the village of Hsiao-ning Ts'un in southern Shansi province. The temple and monastery were founded in 600 A.D. by Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty. The mural was painted under a gable, so it slopes down from the top on both sides where it originally fit under the eaves of the temple roof. (At the peak it is 18 feet 11 inches high and 38½ feet wide.)

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In 1923, Buddhist monks in the temple learned that the local warlord, who had recently imposed a military dictator on Shansi province, had ordered his troops to march on the village and pry the heads from the figures of the sacred painting with their bayonets. This was sometimes done by non-Buddhist rulers because of an ancient superstition that the figures would come alive at night and haunt nonbelievers unless the eyes of the painted deities were gouged out.

To save their cherished mural the monks decided to remove the frescoes from the walls and hide them. They sawed into the hard clay about four inches deep and cut the painting into 80 pieces, carefully avoiding cutting through the faces and other important parts of the mural. Then they pried the blocks free, wrapped them in cotton cloth, roped two together and packed them with straw into wooden crates. The boxes were then taken by mule cart to a nearby village. The main body of monks had no idea where the hidding place was, so no amount of torture by the warlord's soldiers could force them to reveal it.

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Five years later, this story was related to Charles Trick Curelly, the first curator of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archeology, in a letter from Bishop William C. White, who was the First Anglican Bishop (1909-1934) of Honan province and known for his lifelong interest in archeology and Chinese art. The Bishop had learned about the hidden painting from an English traveler who had been approached by the monks of Hsing-hu Ssu temple. The monks said they were destitute because the warlord had taken all their food and valuables. Mr. Curelly later told of the incident in his autobiography, "I Brought the Ages Home."

"The Englishman," he wrote, "was writing to Bishop White to find out if he could possibly sell the fresco for the monks, as it was now all that stood between them and starvation."

Mr. Curelly cabled the Bishop to buy the painting from the monks. Later he recorded in his book: "In due time the 80 pieces arrived [at the Royal Ontario Museum] and as we had no place for such a large picture they were packed away in the basement where they remained for several years."

In 1933, the "Maitreya Paradise" was installed on the north wall of the newly constructed Bishop White Gallery in the museum. The north wall is the place of honor in a Chinese tem-

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Part of a Buddhist wall-painting now reinstalled in the Bishop White Gallery of the Royal Ontario Musem after a 2½-year restoration.