

N. Y. Inter-Racial Gallery Presents Best Of Flourishing New Negro Art

By RAMONA LOWE
(Defender New York Bureau)

NEW YORK.—Lodged inconspicuously among 57th Street art galleries is the International Print Society dedicated to the promotion of international and interracial understanding through art. Its director is Edward B Alford, young white art connoisseur from Boston. "I was criticized," he said, "for stressing the interracial aspects. Critics said, 'art is art and it doesn't matter who does it.' In a way that is very true, but in order, to understand the whole it is necessary to break it down into its component parts.

"At present the work of separate groups make the whole of American art. I differ with those who describe art as racial, however, I think it rather cultural. It is a matter of segregation. A different school will develop in Paris from that in America. Hale Woodruff is developing a school of painting in the South. It has nothing to do with the artists being Negroes. If young white artists studied with him they would paint the same way.

Points To Fear

"I want the gallery to serve as an outlet for young Negro painters in the South. I have traveled through that region a great deal and visited a number of universities. And I have found among Negroes a tremendous fear of whites instilled from birth. They have a fear too of expressing themselves. Just as Richard Wrights points out in 'Black Boy' there is the feeling that to do anything artistic is a waste of time.

"Hale Woodruff has established the National Negro Art Show there in Atlanta. It gives the boys and girls a chance to show their work and provides small scholarships and encouragement for them. We

plan to show the 35 best here. This will give them a chance to participate in the big shows and to be shown all over the country.

"I feel a great deal has been done to bring about better racial understanding through music and theatre. The gallery provides contact on another cultural level.

"I grew up in New England and was 20 years old before I thought about Negroes at all. My introduction to them came in a night club in Boston. I think that people will always go along together if they understand one another. The more they can eat, sleep, play together and the more they will find they have in common.

Mixed Shows

"We have a very informal atmosphere here and try to make everyone feel at home. We have had a large Negro group at nearly every opening, and they seem to have a definite interest in the showings.

"In sending out exhibits we have had to answer a demand for mixed shows, which is a very good sign." Exhibits have been sent to Wellerly College, to Albany, to Atlanta and to various USO centers.

This is part of the plan to bring the best work of artists of all groups before a wider public through exhibitions in schools, galleries, colleges and universities throughout the country.

The gallery opened in October with an exhibit of interracial art, Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, mem-

bers of various American national groups and Latin-Americans were represented. Among the noted Negro artists who exhibited then were William Aritis, Richmond Barthe, Al Bledger, Ernest Crichlow, Frank Neal and Hale Woodruff.

There have been a number of special theme exhibits. Recently Barthe exhibited his sculptures including his well known bust of Katherine Cornell and his head of Canade Lee. The present exhibit is Hale Woodruff's first one-man show in New York. It is a splendid document on the poverty and desolation of the South, told in brilliant, dramatic colors.

Run Print Club

An interesting feature of the society is its Print club. Subscribers will receive for a nominal fee three silk screen prints a year of their own choosing.

This is to stimulate a wider public interest in art forms.

The sponsors of the society are Mrs. Richard Garrett, Dr. Rufus Clement, Dr. Karl Downes, Dr. Alain Locke, Mrs. D. Grinnell Noyes, the East and West Association, the National Serigraph Society and the Southern Regional Council.

Mr. Alford who believes in the practical application of his theories has a Negro secretary, Mrs. Mildred King. "The Gallery has been a tremendous success," he said finally. "It has done everything we expected and we hope to do even more next year."