

Paul Lantz: An Artist Whose Subject Is Life

Artist Paul Lantz came down from New York State last week-end to see his show at the Woodbury Fine Arts Gallery, and left with this writer the impression of a man as forthright and steadfast as his paintings.

His subject is always "life in all its variations; people, landscapes in their varying moods," stressing always the beauty and simplicity of life's forms. In season and out, for some 35 years, as his fame grew on the west coast, in Mexico, and finally in the East, Lantz has insisted on painting what he actually sees, rather than an abstract or esthetic interpretation of the subject.

"And this is not easy," he said. "One can never really reproduce in oil the magic of people, the flesh tones, the life that is within them; or paint the truth of even a tree. No matter how you try, how well you apply your craft, it's never good enough; you can never copy nature completely."

A look around George and Marie Hendrick's gallery on Main Street where Mr Lantz' work is part of a three-man show, now through July 4, would make you wonder at his words. His "River Boat," riding the black winter water at the dock in the Hudson with that peculiar clarity of objects around the water on a cloudy, opalescent day;—the "Two Little Girls" who were his then small daughters, their soul-westers bright against the craggy stones, are surely looking at the sea, although there is no water in the picture; — and you can feel the dust in your eyes and know the lonely quiet of a Sunday afternoon in New York in his street scene, reminiscent of the early realists or "ash can artists."

His "Reservoir" has in it all the blank beauty of a lake where no one swims, a shore where no one sun bathes. His spring landscapes exhude the lingering winter cold of early spring. And anyone who saw his luminous blue water pitcher and bowl in the patio display at the Southbury Playhouse last week, would also be apt to disagree when the artist says, "It's never good enough."