

# Does Marlborough Tell Gimpel?

By GRACE GLUECK

EVERYONE in the neighborhood said the Gimpels were coming, and they were right. Oozing a special British brand of understatement, a branch of Gimpel Fils, the London art firm, has finally opened at 1046 Madison — roughly (in case you're spotting trends) the sixth art emporium this season to take up new digs in the 79th St. quartier.

Gimpel's new establishment (it has one in Zurich, too) is called, quite simply, Gimpel Gallery (pronounced Gam-pell). Its partners are Charles and Peter Gimpel, sons of the famed French art dealer René, and Max Weitzenhoffer, a 29-year-old Oklahoma oil scion who has apprenticed at 57th St.'s Findlay Galleries.

The Gimpels are here because, like dealers in anything, they're following their market. "For 20 years we ran the London gallery on one or two Americans a week," explains Peter Gimpel, a brown-haired and-mustached ringer for his father. "That's where 80 per cent of our business came from. We've had a long-standing ambition to open in New York, but it remained abstract until we met Max and he suggested the partnership."

The family Gimpel, it should be noted quickly, is not exactly new to the New York scene. The firm was founded in Paris in 1889 by the brothers' grandfather, Ernest. His son, René, became one of the noted dealers of the Gilded Age, shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic to sell wares to Bache and Berwind. What's more, Mme. Gimpel's brother, uncle of Peter and Charles, was the dynamo dealer Joseph Duveen (whose old American establishment, now owned by Acquavella, sits cosily across 79th St.). The present Gimpel operation was set up in London by Peter and Charles in 1946 after René, active in the French resistance, had died in a Nazi concentration camp.

With them the Gimpels have brought a big stable of European contemporaries — such *vedettes* as the sculptor's Barbara Hepworth, Bernard Meadows and Sergio de Camargo, the painters Alan Davie, Louis Le Brocqy, Gottfried Honegger, plus some 15 others. "No one can accuse us of having a clear-cut image," says Peter. "We like so many people. We don't handle Americans here yet — the ones we represented abroad are tied up with other galleries in New York. But we hope to show them in the future." The gallery's past range of activities is reflected in its opening show, lent by American collectors to whom it has sold work.

Gimpel has more up its sleeve. It has a print department, run by the lively London firm of Editions Alecto and stocked with graphics by more than 30 European and American artists. And it is also the first major gallery in the U.S. to sell movies as



Minding the Gimpel store: Peter Gimpel (top), René Gimpel, Max Weitzenhoffer, Mrs. Charles Gimpel.

works of art. Its film department, run by a fourth-generation Gimpel, René, son of Charles, is trying out, for openers, 16-mm. movies by two American filmmakers, Gregory Markopoulos and Robert Beavers. Price: from \$1,000 per print. It may, soon, predicts Gimpel, be as in to snap up films as paintings.

## FOLLOW-UP

"Brand X," an upcoming movie scripted and directed by painter Wynn Chamberlain, may seem to have all the trappings of Subterranea — nudity, perversion, a low budget and a non-star cast (come to think of it, what's *Subterranea* about all that). But "Brand X" is an undergroundie, Chamberlain insists. A movie take-off on TV, it compresses a day of network airings into a 1-hour-and-40-minute color film, with action that alternates between a funky TV station and a set-watcher's view of what it produces. Among the videotities: daytime serials, late shows, commercials, a nudie weather talk.

It will be acted by a cast that includes Sally Kirkland, Taylor Mead, Tally Brown, Baby Jane Holzer, and Frank Cavasenti (who does Clark Gable with a Puerto Rican accent). Abbie Hoffman of Yippie fame and Ed Sanders, thane of The Fugs, will also do turns.

In the contract (with a well-known film distributor) is a proviso that the movie will give equal time to male

and female bareness. "I feel right at home, having had a hand in the nudity thing to begin with," says Chamberlain, who several years ago exhibited some rather exuberant paintings of his friends in the altogether. "Where can you go after 'I Am Curious (Yellow)'? You have to do it funny." But Chamberlain, who later in the year will co-direct (with Julian Beck and Judith Malina) a movie version of the Living Theater's "Paradise Now," has by no means given up painting. "I'm doing abstract now," he reports. "Realism's for the movies."

## T-VISIONARIES

Another artistic assault on TV will be aired (on TV) this evening at 8 P.M., when WNDT's Channel 13 presents the Public Broadcast Laboratory's "The Medium is the Medium." The half-hour show comprises some very off-network programming by six high-input artists — Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, James Seawright, Thomas Tadlock and Aldo Tambellini.

"Medium" is the result of a Boston adventure by the six, who interacted with the technical facilities of WGBH-TV — its sound recorders, videotape and editing machines. Treating the screen "as a canvas," for instance, Paik videotaped the interplay of images bounced back and forth among three TV cameras. Piene's "Electronic Light Ballet" was achieved by mixing colors and patterns elec-

tronically on videotape, then superimposing his "Manned Helium Sculpture," a 95-lb. girl suspended in midair with the aid of helium-filled plastic tubing. Tambellini projected his slides and 16-mm. films on and around 30 black youngsters, then videotaped the interaction. And for his greeting-Happening, "Hello," done exclusively for the medium, Kaprow set up TV cameras at four Boston locations. What Transpired is a secret until tonight.

It all could point, opines Piene, a fellow of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at M.I.T., to a day in the near future when artists may run their own radio and TV stations. T-Viva!

P.S. A show, "TV as a Creative Medium," involving some of the above artists plus other T-Visionaries, will open May 17 at the Howard Wise Gallery.

## MEMORIALS

The 50th anniversary of Renoir's death this year has not gone unnoticed. One tribute will occur in the form of a UNESCO-sponsored International Festival of Painting at Cagnes-sur-Mer, the art-conscious Côte d'Azur village where the aging Impressionist settled in 1903 and died 16 years later. Jüring of the show, which con-

sent by 44 countries, begins Saturday and ends April 7. Four main prizes, headed by a Golden Palette worth 10,000 francs, will be awarded — and after that, through July 15, the public will get a chance to view it. The show, designed as a counterpart of music, drama and film festivals in other French towns, may become an annual event.

Meanwhile, right here in Manhattan, a major Renoir retrospective opens Thursday at Wildenstein. Said to be one of the most important Renoir shows (and fairly speedily organized, too — in just a couple of months it includes over 90 paintings, on loan from U.S. and French collectors).

The Wednesday evening preview will benefit a worthy and fairly unsung cause — the American Association of Museums, a Washington-based organization that promotes the goals of museums as educational and cultural centers.

Renoir may or may not have approved.

## COLLAGE

Tuesday, opening at the Barnett Newman exhibition at Knoedler's (8:30 to 11:30), is a benefit for the Frank O'Hara Foundation, established after the death of the poet, art curator and critic in 1966. The Foundation's aim: to help younger, unrecognized poets who find it difficult to publish. Donations: \$15 per person. The "Linda Eastman" who married Beatle Paul McCartney recently is the daughter of Lee Eastman, a lawyer well-known on the New York art scene. . . . R. Buckminster Fuller, the cosmic architect-designer, is drawing up plans for his first building in England, the Samuel Beckett Theater in Oxford. What's more, he's doing it for free.