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American Artist's Work Is Charming

BY AN ART CRITIC

An attractive display of paintings, mobiles and collages by Richard Maitland, an American artist, are now on show at his terrace studio on the roof of Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi. Maitland, a professional dancer, is also an artist trained at the California School of Fine Arts and the New School in New York city. His exhibition is one of charm with scenes and vignettes based on anecdotes of life in India. His art is full of imaginative flights, innovation and decorative playfulness.

The display and the colour, the floating forms of the mobiles, the rich tones of his collages, the spatial and somewhat literary painting—all contribute to the building up of effects which are delicate and pleasing and as one might expect of a dancer gracefully theatrical.

Maitland exhibits about 50 works. Of these the paintings in watercolour and oil have a gentle nostalgic beauty. If somewhat given to the literary idea rather than to more painterly values many of them catch subtle moods and nuances and make interesting spatial patterns. Especially pleasing are his landscapes with or without small figures. *Landscape with Laundry* has a kind of moody dignity in spite of the fluttering cloths in the foreground. *Pink Stairs* and *Jangpurg Patio* convey a quietly recollected equilibrium while *Monsoon* has an element of tense expectation. While the pictures do not contain any deep emotional or formal meaning they are subtle little anecdotes of beauty.

MOBILES

The mobiles (moving sculpture, mostly suspended) are the first showing of this strange flowering of modern art seen in Delhi. Made of wire and copper foil decorated with shells or beads the mobiles have a light ethereal grace which is natural to them. The best examples such as *Nest*, *The Aboriginal* and *Adam and Eve* attain their ends with lines and means of great simplicity.

Maitland's collages are meant to be decorative pieces for the home rather than serious works of art. Executed in khadi with a very bold treatment and rich colour they should certainly enliven many a dull interior. The most successful of them is the simple abstract design of *Jantar Mantar*. All in one colour it conveys with the impact of a good poster a sense of monumental design.

The exhibition will be open to the public till April 10 between 4 and 8 p.m.