

Newsweek

**If RUSSIA Meets Us
Halfway, WHAT THEN?**
(See Special Section, Beginning on Page 19)

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Labor Leader Walter Reuther: More, More, More

DETROIT: A WAGE PATTERN FOR THE NATION?—See Business

ART:

Beauty and Burlap

"But out of a wound, beauty is born. At any rate in the case of Burri. For Burri transmutes rubbish into a metaphor for human, bleeding flesh. He vitalizes the dead materials in which he works, makes them live and bleed; then sews up the wounds evocatively and as sensuously as he made them..."

That is the vivid reaction of James Johnson Sweeney, an American art expert, to the work of Alberto Burri, a very modern Italian artist. When Sweeney uses the word "rubbish," he means it. One of Burri's basic materials is discarded sackcloth. He not only paints on it, but uses it as a medium in its own right, sewing rags and tatters of it in flat or ruffled patches to the picture backing.

His other materials include swatches of silk and cotton; paints (white, black, and fire-engine red); sand; resins; and liquid plastics. When the 40-year-old artist runs out of needles for the sewing, he uses nails and wire.

Burri was a doctor in the Italian Army until he was captured on the Tunisian front in 1943 and was sent to a POW camp in Texas, where he became interested in putting scarce paints on an abundant supply of stretched burlap. Since his return to Rome in 1946 he has devoted all his time to painting.

Twigs and Glue: He began to use burlap as a medium, sewing together variously weathered pieces and stretching two or three thicknesses on a frame. Now he occasionally inserts twigs or wire between the layers so that the picture bulges, and sometimes he applies lumpy areas of sand and glue.

He may incise the surface and fill the gap with red plastic. "I tear the cloth at times," Burri explains, "because I feel like opening up the thing and seeing what is inside." Sometimes he sews up the tear, or, if he likes what he sees inside, he leaves it all open.

Burri's works are currently on view in New York at the Stable Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art. His intimate laboratory effects inspire Sweeney and other critics to make surgical and sensual interpretations. However, the message of his works cannot be explained, Burri says, but must be "conveyed directly to the onlooker by pure vision."

Forgery in the Gallery

In the field of professional artsmanship, the London art dealer Leonard Koetser was one up this week, and Sir Philip Henty, a British museum director, was still a bit shaken over the discovery of a forgery in his house, the venerable



Newsweek—Tony Rollo

Burri sews a fine picture

National Gallery of Art in London.

Last December, Koetser charged that the gallery's "Virgin and Child" by the fifteenth-century Italian, Francesco Francia, was only a fine nineteenth-century copy. The original, claimed the dealer, was in his possession. Weeks of study by experts proved the museum picture a forgery.

Koetser's Francia, for which he paid \$17,000, is on sale at \$50,000. Sir Philip said gloomily of his Francia: "As a masterpiece it was worth \$28,000. What its value is now I cannot say."

THEATER:

Burlesque for the Family

A hit performer in the Broadway musical "Fanny" this season has been a real, live belly dancer from Turkey. Another major theatrical undertaking, "House of Flowers," was all about the rivalry between two bordellos. The ogling set, consequently, was not exactly set to howling last week at the news that burlesque was on its way back to New York.

An action of the State Supreme Court cleared the way for a producer to run a show in Brooklyn under the word "burlesque," outlawed since 1937. But the show itself, he promised, would be a wholesome, "family-type" affair. Nevertheless, the news was viewed by Rose La Rose as "a blow against censorship—a victory for the American way of life." Miss La Rose is a strip-teaser.

MUSIC:

The Scores in Records

In the 44 years since the death of Gustav Mahler, his good friend and disciple Bruno Walter has never let up in his campaign to keep alive the name of Mahler, the composer. Mahler, the conductor, was safe in the reference books as one of the greatest of modern maestros. But the composer, who had to do most of his creative work during summer recesses from his conducting duties at the Imperial Opera in Vienna, or the Metropolitan Opera in New York, or the New York Philharmonic, remained in music's limbo. Most Mahler is gloomy, mystical, and long. A minority adores it; another minority loathes it. The great majority ignores it, an attitude shared in

Hi-Fi: How Softly, How Loudly

Addicts of high fidelity feel very strongly that the jokes about them have worn thin. Music, they now say, is much nicer than noise. Yet phonograph records designed to show off how loudly their sets will play, or how softly they can whisper, continue to outsell the standard symphonic repertoire, nearly all of which is now being recorded with strictest high-fidelity standards. Last week, RCA Victor's "An Adventure in High Fidelity," Capitol's "A Study in High Fidelity," and Columbia's "Strange to Your Ears" were all well up in the list of each firm's ten best-selling classical releases. The RCA Victor and Capitol versions make

reading obligatory. It is impossible to discover what the music is intended for without reading the program notes. Columbia's "Strange to Your Ears" eschews music altogether, tackling the world of sound through a spoken commentary and accompanying demonstrations. Jim Fasset, CBS Radio's director of music and intermission commentator for the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, is the narrator as well as perpetrator, just as he was on the intermission broadcasts which were the basis for the record. Sample item: "Fasset's patented pin drop," a pin drop acoustically treated to sound like the crash of masonry.