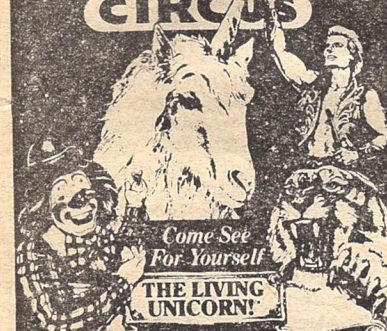


TONIGHT'S HOT SPOTS

PALLADIUM: 9 p.m., \$20. The fantastic Ruben Blades in concert. No more need be said.
KAMIKAZE: 10 p.m., \$10. a "Thanksgiving at Kamikaze" party for those who eschew the other trimmings.

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GOOD SEATS AS LATE AS SHOWTIME

'Hopper's Places,' by brush & lens

By **JERRY TALLMER**

INSTRUCTIVE lesson: compare the roofpipes. The one in the photo is flat, stumpy, colorless, metallic, uninteresting. The one in the Edward Hopper painting is bold, round, tall, terra-cottaish, brown and orange, with a deep shadow and a ringlike top.

"You know," said Gail Levin, "once in an early interview Hopper said: 'It's amazing how much personality you can get into a rainpipe.'"

The personality roofpipe is left-center in Hopper's *City Roofs*, painted 1932 from atop 3 Washington Square North, the building where he had his studio and where he and his wife Jo lived from 1913 until his death in 1967; a haunting, afternoon-sunlit canvas — but is there, anywhere on earth, an Edward Hopper that is not haunting?

The photograph from the same roof, embracing the same scene, was taken three or four years ago by Gail Levin. It faces the *City Roofs* painting itself in Hopper's *Places*, the new book by this young woman who was Hopper curator at the Whitney from 1976-84 and put together its big 1980 Hopper retrospective.

As Gail Levin sat now in a coffee house talking about Hopper and his places and her photographs, a lady got up from a nearby table, glanced down at the book, and said: "He gets you very easily. Good luck."

One famous Hopper painting, perhaps the most famous Hopper painting, the Whitney's *Early Sunday Morning*, a row of low brick buildings along an empty avenue, is not in the book, and for good reason. Nobody knows where it was done.

"People always think



New York Post: Louis Liotta

Gail Levin: Hoppers, Hoppers everywhere.

they see Hoppers around them," said Miss Levin. "Alfred Kazin said he saw *Early Sunday Morning* in Brooklyn. Hopper said: 'No, it's Seventh Avenue in the Village, but it's no longer there.'

"I think Hopper was exaggerating," said Gail Levin, diplomatically. It's her theory that *Early Sunday Morning* derives at least in part from Jo Mielziner's original 1929 set for Elmer Rice's *Street Scene*. "Hopper was a great theatergoer and saved all his stubs. We have his stubs from *Street Scene*. He sat in the second balcony — he was economical too — looking down on Jo Mielziner's set from the same angle as the painting."

Hoppers not only exist all around us, they also exist in our movies. Herbert Ross in his 1981 *Pennies From Heaven* went directly to Hopper's *Nighthawks* for a vignette of Steve Martin and Bernadette

Peters at an all-night diner. The original may have been the White Castle in that little triangle across 11th Street from St. Vincent's. "For some reason the Germans — Fassbinder, Wim Wenders, Peter Handke — keep putting Hopper into their movies and novels. He represents something to them." And anyone who has ever seen *Psycho* has seen a Hopper, because — though Alfred Hitchcock denied it — the Victorian gingerbread Norman Bates mansion is a clear copy of Hopper's 1925 *House by the Railroad*.

You'll find that one on page 17 of *Hopper's Places* (Knopf), and you can find Gail Levin herself teaching *The Influence of the Visual Arts on Film* as of January at Drexel University. She's also just started *Art at Issue*, a 3-hour live call-in show for Manhattan Cable Channel 6. Next session's Dec. 6.

BITING PERCEPTION

THE American Place Theater, 111 W. 46th St., is presenting *Times and Appetites of Toulouse-Lautrec*, by Jess

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 CBS MORNING NEWS

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—Susan Granger, WMCA RADIO

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Levin

FROM 1J

'mangeling'



JOE McTYRE/Staff

n." said Ordovery, who was
 ily involved in theater as an
 ergrad. He and Reeves, Rush
 Hurley often team up and work
 nsely with a single actor.
 "It's the most helpful thing I've
 e so far," said Miss Landwehr.
 "It leaves you exhausted," added
 s Pearson.
 Students portraying asylum resi-
 ts recently devoted an hour to
 interrupted improvisation. "The
 ors were allowed to say only
 ir lines in the play and nothing
 e," Ordovery explained. "They an
 of things to do and started real-
 getting into their characters. It
 very disturbing. The longer they
 it, the more they found they
 ldn't be caricatures."
 "By the end," Miss Landwehr
 d, "it was hard to get out of
 aracter."
 Hurley expects the "play will be
 st-moving and entertaining. It has
 whole lot of comedy in it. That
 end of comedy and its more dis-
 rbing aspects gives the play its
 tency."

sort of salon, during which she and invited artists discuss their work and issues in which they share an interest.

And that is not all. The publication of her newest book, "Hopper's Places," (Knopf, \$10.95), reveals another dimension of her multifaceted career: photographer. The book pairs Hopper's paintings of New England subjects with color photographs of those buildings taken by Ms. Levin.

An exhibition of the Hopper photos as well as her independent work at Fay Gold Gallery brought the 37-year-old Northside High alumna to her home town. Over a breakfast that included grits (though now a New Yorker, she hasn't severed those Southern roots), Ms. Levin described how she segued to the flip side of her career as an art historian.

"I always had a camera. When I started, it was simply taking notes or taking pictures when I travel, which is all the time," she said. "I studied at the Sorbonne my junior year and traveled to 13 countries. I found myself taking pictures in pairs or series. The idea of comparing probably came out of the double slide projection in art history class."

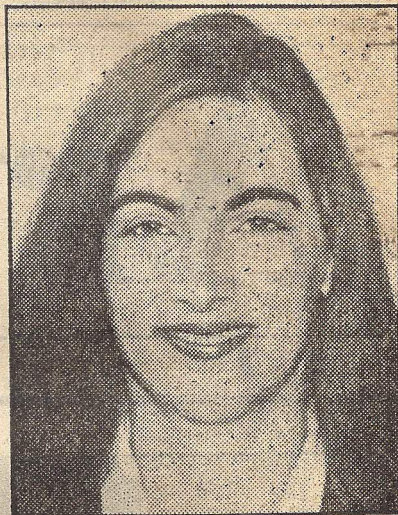
She made her first photograph of a Hopper subject well before becoming a Hopper scholar. It was a snapshot of the lighthouse at Cape Elizabeth in Portland, Maine, which she visited while staying with a college friend as an undergraduate.

Most of the others were taken as adjuncts to her research on Hopper. "I wanted to see what Hopper saw, to see how he operated," she explained.

This required her to don her gumshoes and wander around the areas that Hopper frequented in Mexico, Paris and the Southwest as well as the New England locales that are the focus of her book. With reproductions of paintings in hand, Ms. Levin would wander around a town, such as Gloucester Mass., looking for Hopper houses.

The search was fraught with obstacles. Time had changed many sites. Trees and bushes had grown tall. Houses had been remodeled, obscuring or altering the original view. And then there was the problem of architectural similarity. "All of Gloucester looks like Hopper painted it, which of course he didn't," Ms. Levin said.

Eventually, she hit the jackpot. As she said, "Once I could find one Hopper place, if I looked around in the same area I could find more." Asking area natives for help was occasionally fruitful. A visit to



GAIL LEVIN: 'I still find his [Hopper's] work incredibly interesting.'

interesting," she said. "He must be a great artist if I'm not bored."

Comparing the photos with the paintings offered Ms. Levin some interesting insights. She discovered that Hopper manipulated his compositions, especially building proportions, to achieve his expressive aims. For example, he made the buildings appear narrower and taller. Given Hopper's height (he was 6'5"), this adjustment, she posits, was a means of self-identification. Omitting adjacent buildings or landscaping from his compositions made the buildings appear isolated — a projection of his own loneliness.

The photographs in "Hopper's Places" are essentially documentary. Ms. Levin has followed Hopper as closely as possible, right down to trying to emulate his point of view. Ostensibly, the other group of photographs are quite different. Taken mostly in exotic places Ms. Levin has visited — from Central America to Nepal and China — the photos include spontaneous portraits, images of religious practices and dolls or mannequins.

Yet, in these photographs, too, life imitates art history. Ms. Levin related her interest in dolls and mannequins to Surrealist use of these images. (She also noted that she has kept her own dolls, each packed away in its own shoebox with precocious curator's care.) Her attraction to religious icons has plenty of precedents in art history.

She compares her compositional preferences to Hopper and, through his interest, to Degas. The use of intersecting diagonals and placement of central figures above the point of intersection is certainly a device Degas favored. The placement of the red-shirted Buddhist sitting in lotus position and staring into the camera is a good example.

Ms. Levin is drawn to brightly colored environments and culturally

mentally ill in London when this play was written in 1922. He's been real helpful.

Reeves believes the 303-year-old script is relevant in 1985. "Jacobean sensibility is quite modern to a world that lives under the atom bomb," he said. "It made no sense to the 18th and 19th centuries, but in terms of the monstrous violence in all levels of society today, both on a personal and a public level, this sensibility is very close to what's going on today."

Theater at Emory — both Theater Emory and student-organized productions — is improving at an increasingly rapid rate since the creation of Theater Emory three years ago, said Ordovery. He and several other students indicated that Reeves' openminded, non-elitist attitude promises many more good things for them.

"Students really feel they have a friend in Theater Emory." ■

fire station produced only raise leads until one fireman recognized one of the buildings as his mother's house.

Not everyone shared her excitement over her discoveries. "I went up to a man painting a house and said, 'Did you know that Edward Hopper painted this place?' He replied, 'All I know, lady, is that I'm painting it now.'"

That her passion for Hopper is incomprehensible to many people is exemplified by a 1980 newspaper article that began, "The man in Gail Levin's life has been dead for 13 years." Perhaps only another scholar could understand how Ms. Levin could spend nine years studying one artist. She noted that her enthusiasm for the subject has actually grown since she began.

"I still find his work incredibly

specific scenes. Photographing a festival in Bali, she captures the costumed dancer at the moment his hand is cupped in that graceful, almost double-jointed gesture associated with Oriental dancers.

The exotic locales, rich coloration and expressive physiognomy she captures make for seductive pictures. And the act of photography has seduced the artist. Ms. Levin, who is soon moving to an apartment with a darkroom, said, "After all those years of being an art historian, I'm really enjoying being on the other side." ■

"Hopper's Places." Fay Gold Gallery, 3221 Cains Hill Place. Through Dec. 31. 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Free. 233-3843.

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