

films stage art music

Man dominates family group

Sculptural Group, by Herman Wald (St. Mary's Arcade).

IN A WAY, the imaginative power that Herman Wald achieves in his vast sculptural group is lessened by the figures of a woman and two children. The father, a brooding, defensive figure, who seems symbolic of all ages, has a protective gentleness faintly at variance with the stylized interpretation of the woman and children.

This huge, dominating man with drawn sword held with fatalistic protectiveness above his family belongs in an age of violence and drama: in a world of cyclone winds and storm-ripped seas.

Wald attains heroic proportions and dramatic strength with blunt simplicity in this giant whose head rests compassionately on his own shoulder, the arm clutching the sword hilt shadowing his face as though implying that bloodshed is the last measure he desires, and only resorted to for the protection and sanctity of his family.

This is conveyed with full-blooded vision, faint Egyptian simplicity in the suggested robe folds and muscles adding stark intensity to the emotional image. The group of mother and children causes a recession in this holocaust of instinctive emotion.

HINT

There is something passionless about these figures that might result from the artist's deliberately allowing the hint of Egyptian simplicity — still tracing the features to the woman's face — to merge with a contemporary characterlessness in the children's figures and faces, and in the woman's figure.

In a way, this suggests an eagle, soaring in flight, yet held to earth by a string.

The wind of myth touching the massive man becomes a breath of matter-of-fact life in the woman and children: this might, of course, be the artist's way of emphasizing the helpless innocence of the smaller figures.

Set against soft grey mosaic-work, the bronze group makes a dramatic addition to the sculptural pieces in public places in this city.

Devised in a broadly realistic manner, it is a pity that the effectiveness of the sculpture should be marred by the satin silver and glass partition "barring" it from the arcade proper.

Not only does this interfere with one's view, but it generates the facetious ideal that keeping his monumental work under lock and key will prevent thieves in the night tiptoeing off with it.