Colorful show

Potter, painter join forces

By HELEN ZUCKER

The Allen Rubiner Gallery has one of the best shows I've seen this year. Robert Burkert's recent oils, monoprints, and serigraphs are the work of a sure, highly original artist. Burkert's superb technique is always at the service of his content. His art delights. Despite Burkert's enormous knowledge of the varied mediums he works in, the machinery behind his art is not evident. He has ambition, vision, and readn—all shown by the 35 works on view.

Burkert and his equally literate, gifted wife, Nancy Eckolm Burkert, were in town for the opening of Burkert and March 1e and for a book signing party at the Birmingham Book Store on March 11. Ms. Burkert this third with the supplier of the supplier

SHE HAS PUBLISHED six titles and is currently working on a book about whales. She is also illistrating Edward Lear's "The Harmony of All Creatures." Ms. Burkert believes that ther really is no distinction between "fine art" and "illustration" when one is dealing with illustrators of Arthur Rackham's and Beatrix Potter's art. Daumier is certainly no "mere illustrator," and the remarkable "Phiz," the pseudonym for H. N. Browne, the original illustrator of Dickens' volumes, was a remarkably gitted artist. There are many others. That caliber of illustration passes easily into the realm of fine art.

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Ms. Burkert believes that "the world overwhelms people verbally." She is upset that library journals, newspaper reviews, and children's literature associations pay little attention to visual content.

Though pictures wake children to reading quite as much as sound does, the typical review in "The New York Times Book Review," Ms. Burkert maintains, has a tag line on the end saying something about "pleasant" or "unpleasant" pictures, as if the whole subject were "unpleasant" pictures, as if the whole subject were infinite miportained. The current Bruno Bettelheim thesis books should have no pictures so children can form their own images — angers Ms. Burkert and many artists.

ists. Burkert and many art-ists. The Burkerts spent five months in England last year. "London," says Burkert "is a city that cultivates eccen-trics."

Neither of the Burkerts believe that England is falling apart. A country that takes such incredible care of its

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many gardens, its enormous quantities of art works, its ancient nooks and crannies, is, they feel, "essentially civilized, saveable, liveable."

Burkert, who is head of the graphics department at the University of Wisconsin, took a group of students on the trip. He teaches grad students, freshmen, and a "drawing class in between," so he can keep in touch with all levels.

HE WAS SURPRISED at the sudden sophistication that contact with London gave his students, and with the amount of work they produced. Burkert drew a great deal and kept a "London Journal" — drawings, and a list of parks and gardens that grew daily. Most of his tips on "great gardens" came from passing strangers. He said people would stop, peer over his shoulder, and tell him: "You'll get a better job out of the park three blocks away."

"You'll get a better job out of the park three blocks away."
Advice from the "natives" has paid off handsomely in the current show. "Garden," a large oil, captures the years of careful toil that go into English gardening. The speckled lawns, divided into separately planted plots, are echoed in the sky, the falling water in the fountain at the end of the garden. It's an extraordinarily organized, complex painting. Yet it breathes serenity. "Chelsea Flower Show" catches the English love affair with fresh flowers, blooming soil.





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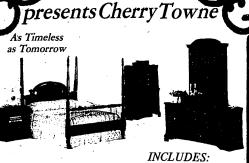
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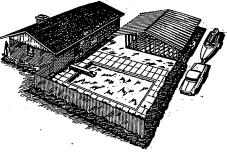
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