

By JOHN RUSSELL

Other shows of interest this week:
Gandy Brodie (Knoedler & Compa-

ny, 19 East 70th Street): As a teacher, as a friend and as an energizing presence on the New York art scene, Gandy Brodie was loved by everyone who knew him. Not in a slovenly or sentimental way, but tenaciously, constructively and in relation to ideas that blew all the fuses. Elaine de Kooning said that "even Gandy's clothes seemed to have opinions." He died five years ago, at the age of 50, and what Knoedler's has mounted is, in effect, a memorial exhibition.

To one who did not know him, the paintings reveal themselves slowly. The first impression is of subject matter drawn from the repertory of Morris Graves — a seagull sitting at the top of a tall pole, a dead robin on the highway, a very small bunch of anemones aglow and ablaze. But these things do not have the easy poignancy that they have in a Graves. We sense instead that through them a powerful nature is thrusting toward a new kind of finality in paint. That bloodied robin and that stationary gull bear an exceptional weight of meaning, such as was born by an isolated bird when Albert Pinkham Ryder painted it.

The handling of paint is everywhere quite unusually rich and affectionate, with never a perfunctory or a meaningless mark. When Brodie uses emerald lichen as his ostensible subject, we remember that lichen has its point of departure in stone and cannot be imagined without it. But we also recognize that that slow, long-ruminated rhyming of blue with turquoise is something that only a very superior painter could bring off. In Brodie's paintings a very good case is made not only for a sumptuousness of paint that went out with Rouault, but also for symbolism of an oblique but omnipresent sort. Through Nov. 4.

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The New York Times, Oct 24, 1980

Gandy Brodie Exhibition, Knoedler & Company, NYC