Joan Whalen Hosts

Theresa Bernstein Retrospective

NEW YORK CITY — On March 1, American Modernist Theresa Bernstein will cele-
brate her 100th birthday. Joan Whalen Fine Art will honor
this cultural milestone with a
major 70-year retrospective
on view through Saturday,
April 18.

Bernstein, among other real-
ists in this century, has been
somewhat overshadowed by the
art world's focus on more
abstract artists. Now, coinci-
dently with the Joan Whaler
exhibition, Bernstein is receiv-
ing public and critical atten-
tion as part of a two-year trav-
ering exhibition, "The Phil-
adelphia Ten: A Woman's Art-
ist Group 1927-1947," which
opened at Moore College of
Art and Design in Philadel-
phia on January 23. The group
was formed on February 11,
1927 in response to the male-
dominated art group called
The Eight, later called the
Ashcan School.

Born in Philadelphia in 1899, Bernstein showed early talent and
interest in art. At 17, she
won a Board of Education
scholarship to attend the Phil-
adelphia School of Design for
Women, now Moore College of
Art. She enrolled in the four-
year Normal Art Course for
training teachers in 1916, study-
ing under Elliott Daingerfield, Daniel Garber, Harriet Sartain, Henry B.
Snell and Samuel Murray.

Later, she studied with Wil-
liam Merritt Chase at the Art
Students League in New York
City. One of her earliest
works, "Daniel Garber's Stu-
dio" (1918), is included in this
retrospective. In the 1920s,
along with John Sloan, she
helped form the Society of In-
dependent Artists.

Adhering to Robert Henri's
philosophy that art cannot be
separated from life, Bern-
stein, a superb colorist, has
chronicled decades of Ameri-
ca's urban and seaside life
with a passionate intensity
and energy of brushwork —
her own expressive realism.

Last summer, her friend
Jerry Jackson, director of
Smith-Girard, asked Bern-
stein if she considered herself
an expressionist painter. She
replied, 'I never thought of
myself as a painter. I was
someone trying to paint. In the
1920s, [art] work was going up
the abstract ladder, but I kept
my feet on the ground. I be-
lieve art is human.'

Bernstein translated her love
of humanity into scenes de-
picting the joys and trials of
everyday life in New York
City and Gloucester, where
she still keeps a summer
home. This unobtrusively
optimistic and resourceful artist
has captured seven decades of
Amercians coping with eco-
nomic uncertainty. A good ex-
ample is "Waiting Room—Em-
ployee's Office," 1917. She
portrayed celebrating reli-
gious rituals in "The Seder,"
circa 1919; playing at the sea-
shore in "Good Harbor
Beach," 1969; listening to mu-
sic in "Music Lovers," circa
1934; attending a jazz concert in "Lil Hardin and Louis Arm-
strong," circa 1927; and
marching in parades in "Four
 Freedoms Parade, July 4,
1944."

Since her first solo exhibition
at the Milch Gallery, New
York City, in 1929, Bernstein
has enjoyed many exhibitions
and is represented in the per-
manent collections of more
than a dozen museums in the
United States. She has estab-
lished herself as a uniquely
American realist — a genre
painter whose work spans the
Twentieth Century.

Joan Whalen Fine Art is in
the New York Gallery Build-
ning, 34 West 57th Street, Suit
507, and is open Monday
through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6
p.m. For information, 212/397-
9700.