

ic-speaking Azerbaijanis seem intent on resuming the vendetta. Meanwhile, Bulgarian nationalists seem set on evicting their own Turkish minority. It's like 1915 all over again, only the situation is both less and more dangerous. Nobody can really imagine that the world's great powers will today be drawn into these arcane, atavistic bickerings, but the old blood feuds are reviving across a terrain that has become littered with nuclear weapons. (Nuclear weapons, too, it will be recalled, were at one time thought to have brought an end to a certain kind of history, and the age of war itself was supposed to be over.) Uncle Toby has awakened, but what has he awakened to?

Museumgoers

THE old yellow school bus rumbled along the potholed streets of the Bronx through a tall forest of high-rise apartment buildings and public-housing projects. "It feels good not to be cooped up in the same place every day," Naturé Finch said as he looked out one of the bus windows. Like virtually all the other children on the bus—thirty-two fourth graders in Class 4-312 at Public School 100—he lives in the Soundview section of the Bronx. "It's a bad neighborhood—there's a lot of shoot-outs and drug wars," he said. His friends sitting nearby nodded in agreement, and told stories of finding crack vials and junkies in the stairwells and of hearing gunfire at night. "If I were Superman, I would squeeze dirt into diamonds and blow all the drugs off the earth," Naturé said.

Light-years might appear to separate this part of the Bronx from the Whitney Museum, which is where the children were headed, but actually the members of Class 4-312 feel a strong connection to art. P.S. 100, on Taylor Avenue, had already sent the class to five different museums since school opened last fall, and this would be their second visit to the Whitney. The first time, they had admired the playfulness of Claes Oldenburg's "Soft Toilet"—a sagging vinyl rendition of the usual porcelain model—and had especially liked a work by Nam June Paik in which forty television sets were stacked up in a pyramid.

When the children arrived at the museum this time, they stood around, looking at the Calder circus until their guide, Lynne Shapiro, arrived. They greeted her like an old friend. "Shall we dance?" she said as she led them toward the elevator.

Among the many groups Ms. Shapiro takes through the museum, Class 4-312 is one of her favorites. "Kids from lower-income, largely minority schools are much more wide-eyed, interested, and open to art than kids from more middle-class or upper-middle-class backgrounds," she says. "These kids don't have a lot of preconceptions, so they respond very emotionally."

On this occasion, Ms. Shapiro took them first to see some more or less traditional paintings by Thomas Hart Benton and then to a Calder mobile—an elaborate web of wires with small pieces of white-painted sheet metal at their ends. She walked past the mobile, and the motion of her body made it come alive in a kaleidoscope of white shapes.

"It's like a running man," one child said.

"It's like a snowstorm," said another.

Ms. Shapiro was expecting difficulties when she led the class over to a Cubist painting—"Chinese Restaurant," by Max Weber—that has defeated many devoted museumgoers. But it took the class about ten seconds to guess the painting's subject.

"It's a restaurant!" one of the children exclaimed.

"It's like a restaurant that's been destroyed," another said.

Before Ms. Shapiro had a chance to explain Cubism, one of the children, Fran Ramos, came up with an explanation of his own: "It looks like a big



puzzle where all the pieces have been scrambled."

The children paused a long while before Arshile Gorky's portrait of himself as a child with his mother. Ms. Shapiro told them that the portrait was based closely on a photograph taken before the mother's premature death, and showed them the photo in a book about Gorky. She asked why they thought the artist would bother to make a painting when he already had the photograph.

"The painting is bigger," one girl answered.

"The painting is the way it was. The picture could be a memory," Glenn Soto said.

Carl Lipscombe, whose mother died not long ago, pointed to a telling difference between the photograph and the painting: instead of drawing his mother's hands realistically, Gorky made them fuzzy and indistinct, like a pair of white mittens. "He might have remembered his mother's hands as so soft that he painted them like cotton," Carl said.

The tour ended with a visit to "The Sleep of Reason," a video "environment" created by Bill Viola. Even before entering "The Sleep of Reason," the children could hear strange noises. "It sounds like a monster burping," one of them suggested cautiously. Once inside the space, they found a quiet bedroom, furnished with soft carpeting, a night table, a clock, and a vase of flowers. A television set showed the face of a woman sleeping. Suddenly, the room went dark and was filled with images and sounds of snarling dogs. "She's having a nightmare," one child said. "We're inside her mind." Just as suddenly, the lights went back on, restoring the quiet bedroom and the image of the sleeping woman. Then came another nightmare; an X-ray of a human skeleton accompanied by eerie noises. And so it went.

After the class returned to the Bronx, the children were asked to pick their favorites among the things they had seen. A couple of them chose "Chinese Restaurant." Several, including Carl Lipscombe, voted for Gorky's portrait of his mother. But the overwhelming favorite was "The Sleep of Reason."

"They really like horror," their teacher, Judith Ann Johnson, said,

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in a tone of concern, and she added that she couldn't help wondering whether there was some connection between Viola's image world and some of the things the children see and hear in the neighborhood—another place where reason often sleeps.

Exceptional

JIM D'AQUISTO's decision to work for the guitar maker John D'Angelico, whose shop was on Kenmare Street, in lower Manhattan, took him out of the running for a promotion from pocketbooks to men's wear at Lord & Taylor. That occurred in 1952, when Jim was seventeen years old. Had he demonstrated the same abilities as a salesman of suits that he exhibits as a maker of guitars, there is no telling how far he might have gone; his guitars are regarded as the finest arched-top guitars made anywhere in the world today.

Mr. D'Aquisto is now fifty-four. He is small and has dark hair with a small amount of gray. He looks like one of the Little Rascals grown up. He lives, and makes guitars, in Greenport, Long Island, near the Stirling Harbor Shipyard & Marina. His manner is shy and thoughtful and obsessive and generous. People who bring him their guitars for attention sometimes have difficulty getting him to accept money; they often end up leaving checks in his workshop or beside the toaster in the kitchen or somewhere else in his house where they will later be found. He makes ten or fifteen guitars a year, ranging in price between six thousand five hundred dollars and twelve thousand dollars, and he has a waiting list of at least a year and a half. Building guitars is close, painstaking, watch-mending labor. Days that Mr. D'Aquisto doesn't feel like working, he does something else, in the belief that a few slipshod hours can undo several days' progress. He estimates that since 1964, when he took over the Kenmare Street workshop, following John D'Angelico's death, he has made between three and four hundred guitars. His instruments are especially popular with Europeans and with Japanese. (A collector in Japan once paid twenty-five thousand dollars for a D'Aquisto.)

Arched-top guitars have tops that



"Now can we turn in?"

are carved from a single piece of wood. Instead of having a round sound hole at the base of the fingerboard, like a flat-top guitar, an arched-top has f holes, like a violin. Flat-top guitars have tops that are made from two pieces of wood, joined at the middle, and their tone is warm and soft, compared with arched-tops'. Arched-tops are used mainly by jazz guitarists and are trickier and more difficult to build than flat-tops.

The tops of Mr. D'Aquisto's guitars are carved from spruce; the backs, sides, and necks are maple; and the fingerboards and tailpieces are fashioned from ebony. The spruce and the maple come from the Tyrol—the region where the great violin makers got their wood. The ebony he uses comes from Madagascar, India, Gabon, and Ujung Pandang. Fingerboards on guitars are often cut from rosewood, but Mr. D'Aquisto believes that ebony sustains a note longer and provides a clearer sound.

If you drive out to Greenport and ask Mr. D'Aquisto how he spent the early years of his life, he will say that he was always dreaming and staring out the window from a seat near the back of the room in his grade school, in Brooklyn. Or he will say, "I come from a creative family. One grandfather was a custom tailor, the other

was a blacksmith, a great-grandfather was a furniture maker, my father was a tool-and-die maker—he invented three machines for Westinghouse—and my mother was a patternmaker. They were always doing things, making things, and I was always watching them, so while the teacher was saying 'One and one equals two' and 'ABC' it didn't relate to what I was seeing at home." He attended a commercial-arts high school, where he skipped all the academics he could and did all the arts, and eventually he was invited to leave. His mother got him a job as a runner on the stock exchange; it lasted two months, and then she arranged the job in pocketbooks, through a friend. Mr. D'Aquisto was learning to play the guitar at the time, and one afternoon an acquaintance said he wanted to show him where the best guitars in the world were made, and took him to John D'Angelico's shop, at 40 Kenmare Street, between Elizabeth and Mott. (The site is a parking lot now.) Mr. D'Aquisto returned four or five times over the next two months. Each time, he would take something he had made—a model airplane, a bridge he had built for the railroad he had in his room, a part he had made for a guitar—because he knew that Mr. D'Angelico liked gadgets. He never stayed long, because Mr. D'Angelico