

Munich Artist's Exhibit

By Dean Wallace

That the tradition of Expressionist print making has not died out in modern Germany can be readily seen in the work of a Munich artist, Claus Bastian, which is now being shown at Lesser's, downstairs at 685 Sutter street.

This first showing of the artist's work in the United States includes a selection of graphics, including woodcuts and pen-and-ink drawings, and a group of oil paintings.

Although the man's painting style is strong and highly skilled, the drawings will undoubtedly attract the most attention—primarily because it is in this medium that Bastian shows his most original ideas and strongest ability to find visual form.

Most significant of Bastian's motivations is his deep religious fervor, which is expressed in many works, but nowhere with more éclat and sensibility than in his remarkable series of drawings, "The Stations of the Cross." These are actually sketches for a large series of bas-reliefs (Bastian is as well known in his home city as a sculptor as he is painter and draftsman) which the artist executed for a new Munich church; but they can stand perfectly well by themselves.

In these works, Bastian evokes the stark grandeur



Bastian's "Station of the Cross."

and bold design of Louis Corinth. Elsewhere, as in his festive scenes and figure studies, he shows a closer affinity to Grosz and Noë. But these comparisons are merely descriptive; Bastian's style is his own.

Bastian's oil paintings do

not always come off; many of the figures seem half-formed and coloristically flat. But when he turns to oils in the pure spirit of recreation in the illustration of the *Wanderfest*, he evokes all the joy and gaiety and bubbly life of his subject.