

JULY 4, 2011

GEORGE TOOKER

The figurative painter, who died in March at ninety years old, painted his best-known work, "Subway," in 1950, when he was thirty. This mesmerizingly odd and claustrophobic painting (on loan here from the Whitney) depicts souls in a labyrinthine station and is the gem of this taut retrospective. Though none of the other works strike quite the same balance between alienation and visual allure, Tooker consistently earns our attention, with his straw-haired, wide-eyed figures, whether they're staring blankly into the middle distance or running desperately into waiting arms. His earnest, socially conscious approach can seem a bit dated but, somehow, it never gets old. Through Aug. 5.