

# 15 Americans

Edited by Dorothy C. Miller, with statements by the  
artists and others

Author

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART NEW YORK

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AMERICANS

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15  
AMERICANS

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EDITED BY DOROTHY C. MILLER

WITH STATEMENTS BY THE ARTISTS AND OTHERS

15  
AMERICANS

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART NEW YORK

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DOROTHY C. MILLER  
*Director of the Exhibition*

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## FOREWORD

*Fifteen Americans* is one of a series of exhibitions initiated by the Museum of Modern Art in 1929, the year of its founding. Like the others in the series this exhibition follows a pattern devised at that time: to present the work of a limited number of artists, devoting considerable space, in some instances a whole gallery, to the work of each one. In contrast with the cross-sections of contemporary American art held annually by many museums in which a large number of artists are represented by one work each, this pattern has been found to give a broader and more effective view of individual achievement.

The series began in 1929 with *Paintings by Nineteen Living Americans* and continued in 1930 with *Painting and Sculpture by Living Americans*. After a number of more general American exhibitions held during the 1930s, the Museum presented *Americans 1942*, which showed eighteen artists then working outside New York. *American Realists and Magic Realists*, 1943, was the only exhibition of the series devoted to a specific kind of painting; while *Fourteen Americans*, 1946, reviewed the work of artists of diverse styles, as had the earlier shows.

*Fifteen Americans*, 1952, again brings together a group of distinguished artists of marked individuality and widely differing aims. Their achievement may indicate trends in our art today, but to discover and illustrate such trends was not the primary intention behind the exhibition. The purpose was rather to give each artist an opportunity to speak to the Museum's public, in clear and individual terms, through a strong presentation of his work.

American art is rich in diversity. It is rich too in the mastery of techniques, a mastery which frees the artist for his main effort, the creation of form and symbol to express the quality and dimension of his experience. In the work of certain artists in *Fifteen Americans*—Dickinson, Rose, Katzman—experience and its expression are related to the world the artist sees about him. Others—Baziotes, Kiesler, Ferber, and Pollock in some of his latest pictures—even when dealing primarily with abstract forms, evoke vivid associations with the objective world. The work of Glasco and of Kriesberg seems to fall between these two groups. Rothko, Still, much of Pollock, Tomlin, Corbett, Lippold and Wilfred fall within the category usually called abstract, which, as many competent observers have remarked, is the dominant trend in mid-century American painting.

Classification of this kind is apt to be inaccurate. If it does not mislead the public it usually annoys the artist, particularly since so many of its terms can scarcely be defined. To this show of the work of fifteen painters and sculptors, separately exhibited, the artists' own statements, thoughtful, evocative, poetic, will prove the best introduction.

D. C. M.

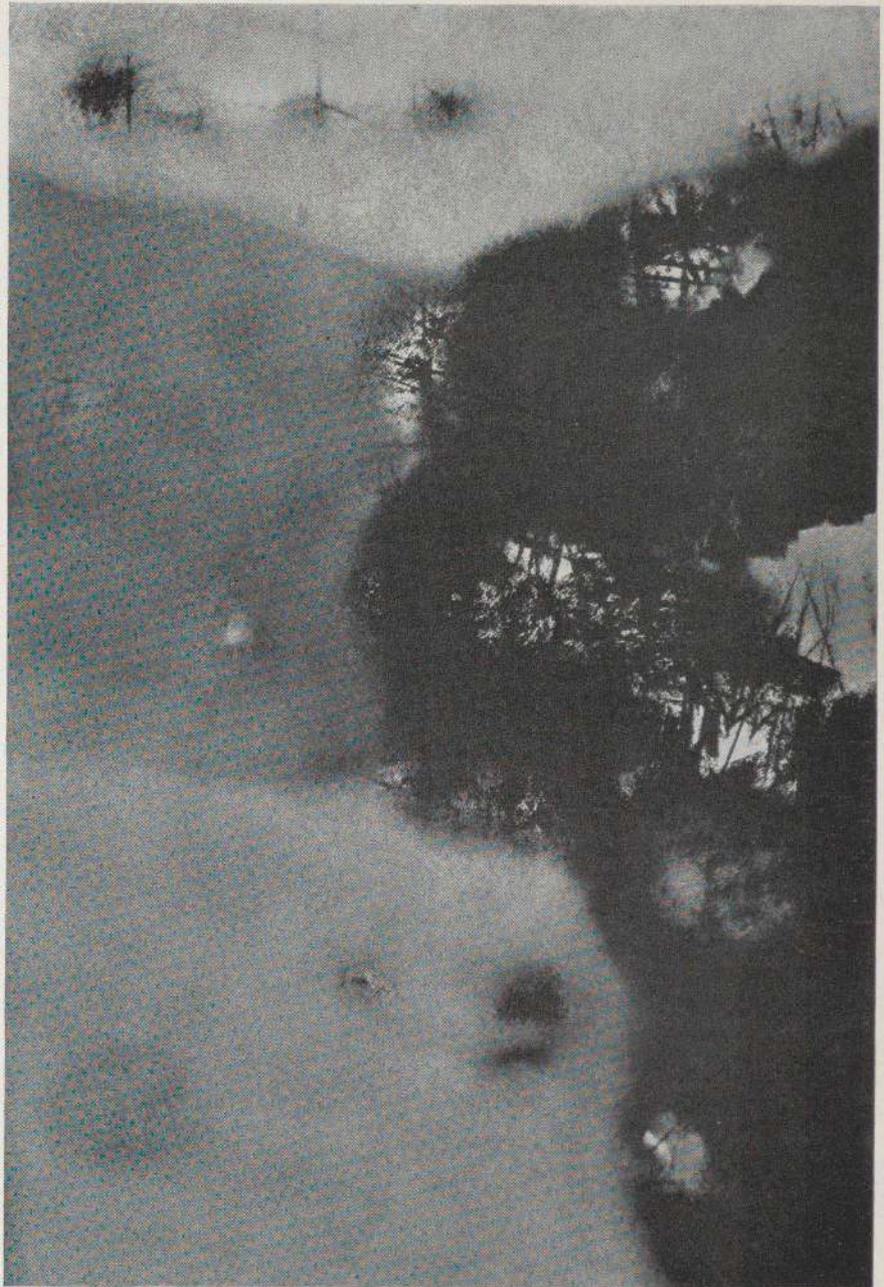
## EDWARD CORBETT



*opposite:* EDWARD CORBETT: *Number 11*. 1951.  
Chalk, 34 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". La Galeria Escondida,  
Taos, New Mexico

*left:* EDWARD CORBETT: *Number 15*. 1951.  
Chalk and casein, 27 x 14". La Galeria  
Escondida, Taos, New Mexico

Born Chicago, 1919. Son of Army officer; as a child, lived in Washington, D.C.; at Army posts in San Antonio and Laredo, Texas; the Philippines; Ohio; Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Went to high school at Tombstone, Arizona, and Richmond, California. Studied at California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, 1938-40. U.S. Army, 1941; Merchant Marine, 1942-44. In New York, 1944-46. To San Francisco, 1946. Taught at San Francisco State College, 1947. California School of Fine Arts, 1947-51, and University of California, 1950. Returned to the Southwest, 1951; now lives in Taos, New Mexico. In group exhibitions: San Francisco museums, from 1947; American Abstract Artists, New York, 1947; Art Institute of Chicago, 1947; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, 1950.



I intend my work as poetry.

EDWARD CORBETT

## FREDERICK KIESLER

Note on Correalism:

My sculpture is a practical sculpture. It is both to be lived with and within.

Sculpture should be touched not by the eye alone. It should be enjoyed not only esthetically but physically as well. This is a sculpture for relaxation.

It has always been difficult for me to separate artifacts from facts. Sculpture, painting, architecture should not be used as wedges to split our experience of art and life; they are here to link, to correlate, to bind dream and reality. To separate sculpture and painting from the flow of our daily environment is to put them on pedestals, to shut them up in frames, thus destroying their integrative potentialities and arresting their continuity with our total mode of life.

The debacle of art as a necessity today is caused by its separation from daily living, its isolation. During the past fifty years it has exhibited the exciting flare-up of a flame before extinction. The new flame will be kindled by the reawakening of our primordial awareness of the interrelatedness of man and nature, by a new consciousness of belonging-together, of coexistence in spite of apartness in space-time, of interdependence beyond such economic and social factors as now separate us. Such a

Born Vienna, 1896. Studied architecture at Institute of Technology and Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Worked with Adolf Loos, 1910. Stage setting for *R. U. R.*, Berlin, 1923; *The Emperor Jones*, 1923, first "space-stage." Member of *de Stijl* group, 1923. Chief architect, International Theatre and Music Festival, Vienna, 1924; fully developed "space-theatre." Architect, Austrian section ("City in Space"), International Exposition of Decorative Arts, Paris, 1925. To New York, 1926. Exhibited "space-house," New York, 1933. Director of scenic

consciousness would manifest itself in every type of life-activity and so, naturally, in painting, sculpting, building.

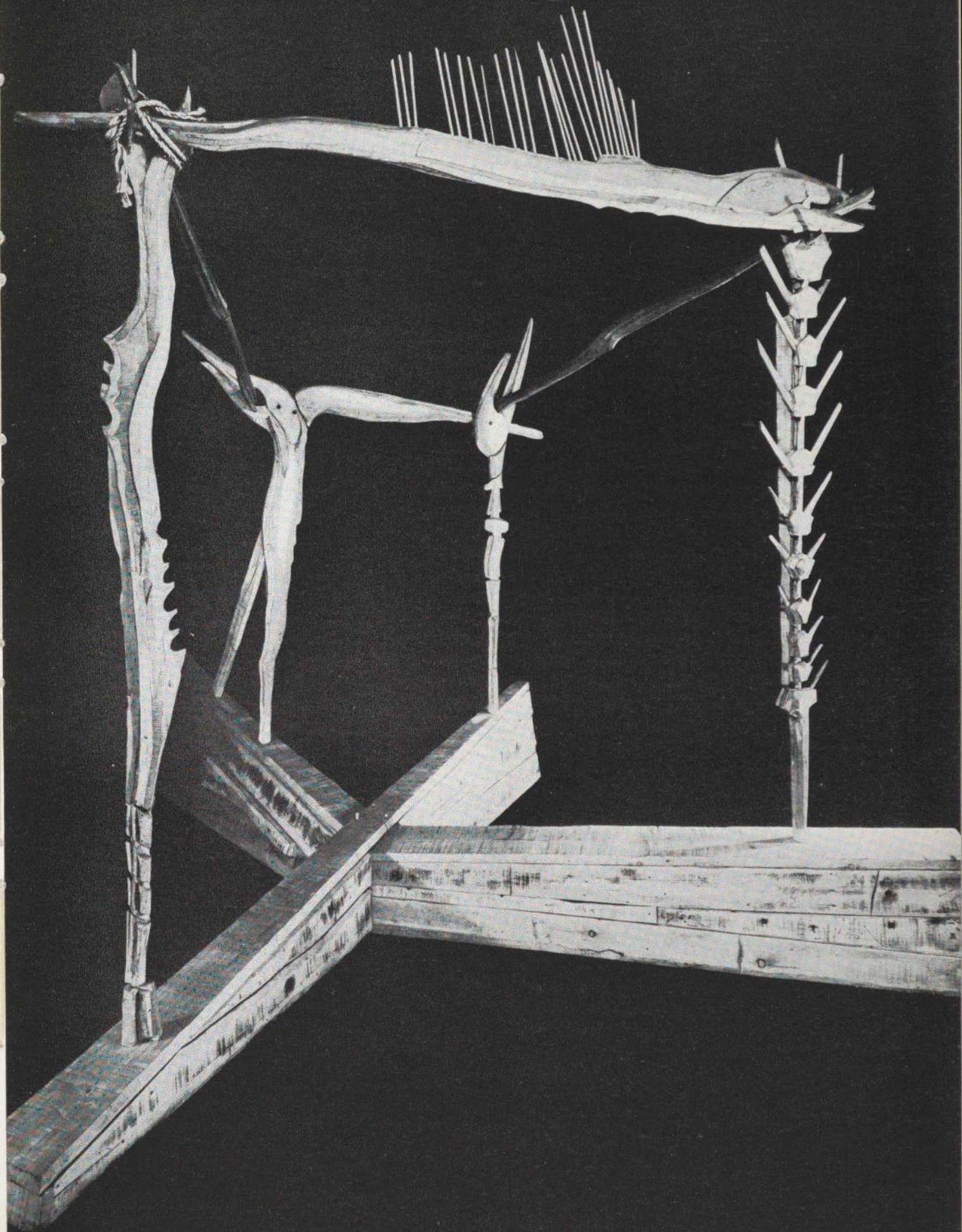
I find my paintings consisting of many paintings, smaller and larger units, separated from each other through intervals of varying dimensions, yet belonging together as one cluster, one nova, one galaxy. My sculptures I also see as consisting of divergent chunks of matter, held together yet apart, appearing like galactic structures,\* each part leading a life of coexistence, of correality with the others. Yet this correlation, whether close or far apart, does not necessarily depend on physical links. As in wireless electricity, there is correlation without connection. These "endless" paintings and sculptures lead a life of inner cohesion. Between these corporeal units there lie the various empty fields of tension that hold the parts together like planets in a void.

FREDERICK KIESLER

\*It was some time ago that I first worked on the structural principle of "tensions in free space" and wrote about it in the review *De Stijl*, Paris, 1925. The term correalism in its relation to nuclear concepts appeared first in my paper on the Laboratory for Design Correlation at Columbia University in the *Architectural Record*, New York, 1939.

design, Juilliard School of Music, since 1934; director of Laboratory for Design Correlation, School of Architecture, Columbia University, 1936-43. Designed Art of This Century gallery, 1942. To Paris, 1947, to design "Hall of Superstition" at Galerie Maeght in collaboration with Duchamp, Miro, Ernst, Tanguy and others. First sculpture, *Totem of Religions*, made at this time. First version of *Galaxy*, New York, 1947-48, made for production of Milhaud's *Le Pauvre Matelot*, Juilliard School of Music; present version, 1951. Lives in New York.

opposite: FREDERICK KIESLER: *Galaxy*. 1947-48, 1951. Construction in wood, 12' high. Collection Nelson A. Rockefeller. Photograph Ben Rose



## HERBERT FERBER

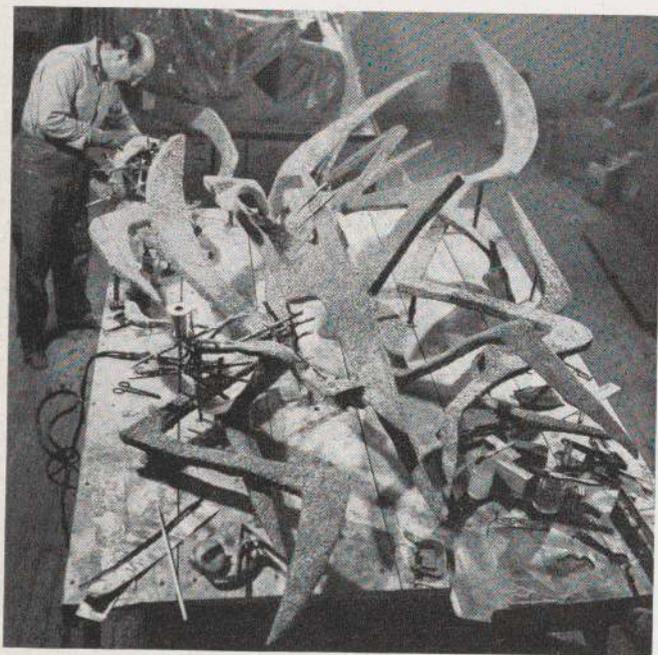
Contemporary sculpture, to my mind, achieves a good deal of its excitement from the way it extends in space. Its principal sign is that of extension, and often it is not extension from a central mass but rather extension in and about the space in such a way that space becomes part of the sculpture. The space is not displaced by the work as water is when a ship is launched. The sculpture moves in space, it pierces space and holds it in tension. However, this is but the sign by which the image of the artist's vision can be recognized. The way in which he materializes it is impossible to foretell but it is completely under his control.

If the sculptor succeeds in forcing on the material a transmutation into plastic idea, the spectator will not be misled. However, when materials themselves are held in reverence and when new techniques are mistaken for new plastic ideas, art goes out the door. The artist is concerned with fusing his personal and private vision with form, to make a metaphor for

his experience, so exactly constructed that there can be no doubt about his idea, although there may be several layers of meaning.

One of the things I became involved in, as I proceeded with the Synagogue commission, in the attempt to visualize the piece on the building, was the question of intimacy. Some years ago, in Italy, I had seen several sculptures at close range which had been brought down from their sites high up on buildings. I had seen these works originally *in situ*, and the confrontation with them, eye to eye, was overwhelming. There was a depth of form in which one could almost wander, and a sense of mass and intimacy of which there was only an indication when they were in place. I think that in much modern work this sense of intimate involvement with the sculpture is very important, and the loss of it, if sculpture should go on buildings, may be a great one.

HERBERT FERBER

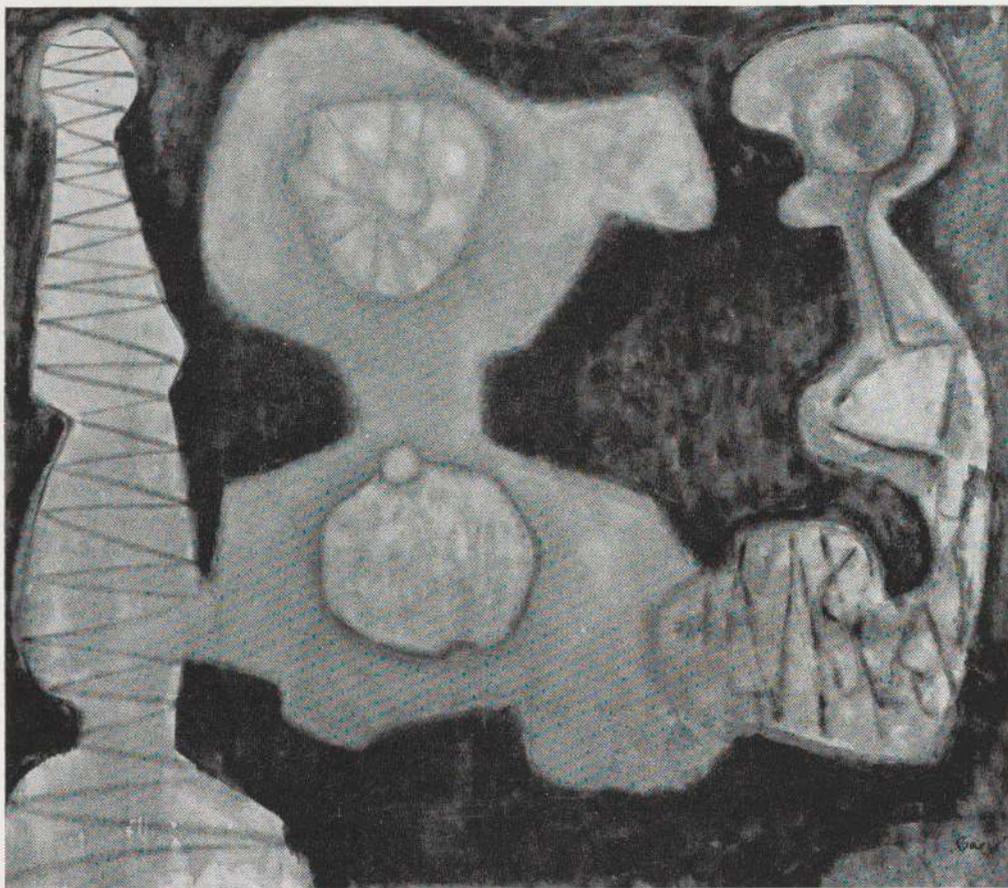


Born New York, 1906. Studied at City College of New York; Beaux-Arts Institute of Design; Tiffany Foundation fellowship. One-man shows: Midtown Gallery, 1937, 1943; Betty Parsons Gallery, 1947, 1950. In collections of Grand Rapids Art Gallery; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art; Whitney Museum of American Art. Lives in New York.

*opposite:* HERBERT FERBER: “. . . and the bush was not consumed.” 1951. Commissioned by the Congregation B'nai Israel for the façade of the Synagogue in Millburn, New Jersey. Made of soldered copper, brass, lead and tin; 12'8" high, 7'10" wide. Photographs Henry Elkan



## WILLIAM BAZIOTES



I cannot evolve any concrete theory about painting. What happens on the canvas is unpredictable and surprising to me. But I am able to speak of certain things that have occurred up to now in the course of my painting.

Today it's possible to paint one canvas with the calmness of an ancient Greek, and the next with the anxiety of a van Gogh. Either of these emotions, and any in between, is valid to me.

There is no particular system I follow when I begin a painting. Each painting has its own way of evolving. One may start with a few color areas on the canvas; another with a myriad of lines; and perhaps another with a profusion of colors. Each beginning suggests something. Once I sense the sug-

gestion, I begin to paint intuitively. The suggestion then becomes a phantom that must be caught and made real. As I work, or when the painting is finished, the subject reveals itself.

As for the subject matter in my painting, when I am observing something that may be the theme for a painting, it is very often an incidental thing in the background, elusive and unclear, that really stirred me, rather than the thing before me.

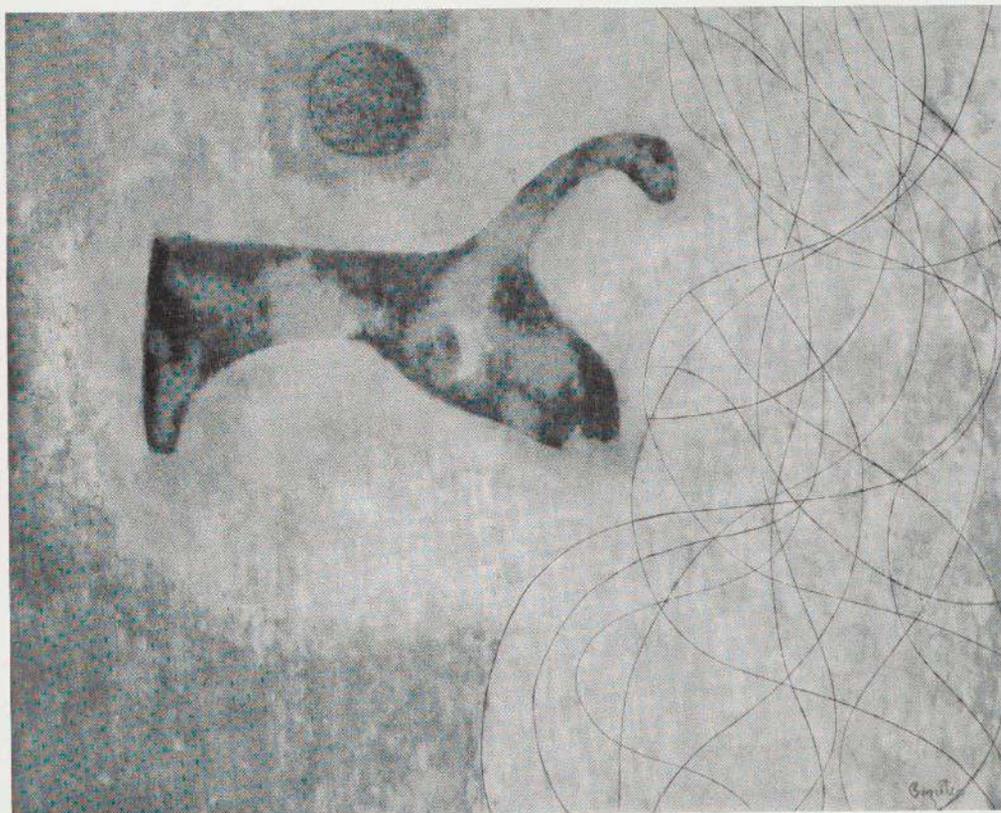
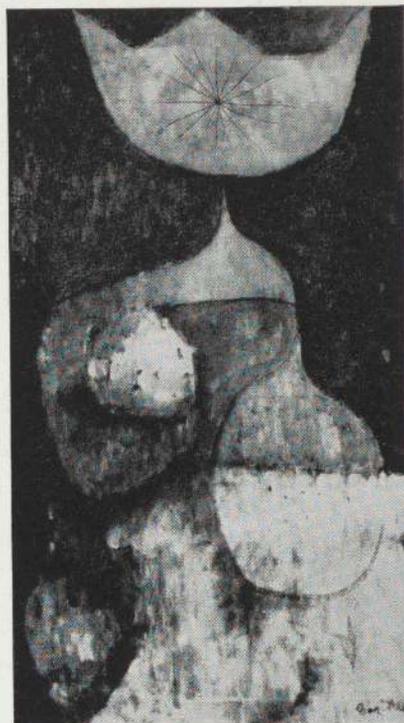
I work on many canvases at once. In the morning I line them up against the wall of my studio. Some speak; some do not. They are my mirrors. They tell me what I am like at the moment.

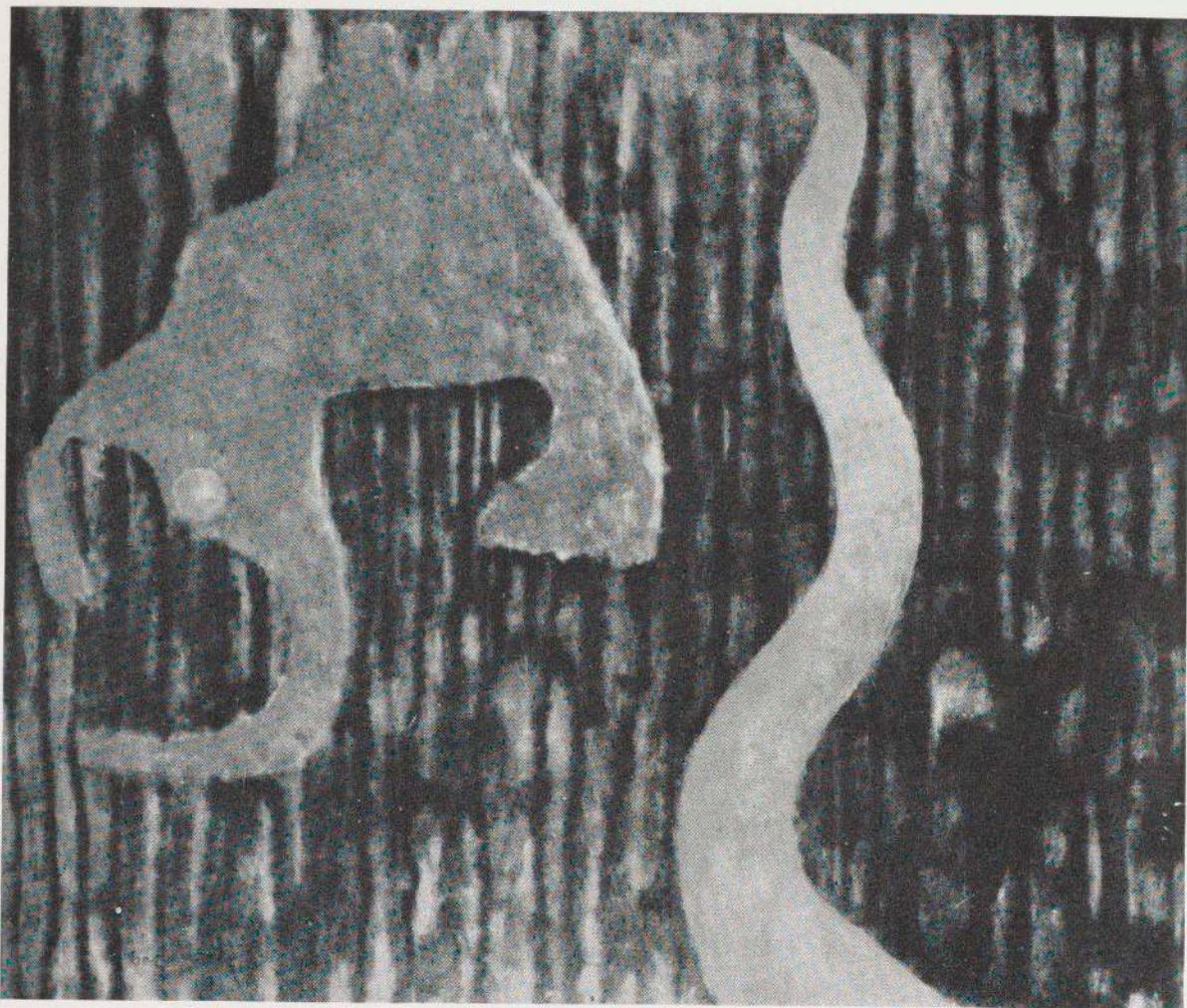
WILLIAM BAZIOTES

*opposite:* WILLIAM BAZIOTES: *Night Mirror*. 1947. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60".  
Collection Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III

*right:* WILLIAM BAZIOTES: *Cat*. 1950. Oil on canvas, 38½ x 22". Collection  
Joseph R. Shapiro

*below:* WILLIAM BAZIOTES: *Toy World*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 50 x 60". Collec-  
tion Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden





WILLIAM BAZIOTES: *Jungle*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60". Collection Nelson A. Rockefeller

Born Pittsburgh, 1912. Grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania. To New York, 1933; studied at National Academy of Design, 1933-36. On WPA Federal Art Project, New York, 1936-38 (teaching), 1938-41 (easel project). One-man shows: Art of This Century, 1944; Kootz Gallery, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1952. In collections of Addison Gallery of American Art; Art Institute of Chicago; Baltimore Museum of Art; Fogg Art Museum; Los Angeles

County Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art; Newark Museum; Tel Aviv Museum, Israel; University of Illinois; Washington University, St. Louis; Whitney Museum of American Art. Lives in New York; teaches at Brooklyn Museum Art School, New York University, and People's Art Center of the Museum of Modern Art.

## JACKSON POLLOCK

The variations within this group of paintings are another assertion of the unity of concept that underlies the work of Jackson Pollock. Through the abstract work previous to 1951 and through the recent more recognizable images there flows the same unifying spirit that fuses together the work of any major painter—the singleness and depth of Pollock's vision makes unimportant such current antitheses as "figurative" and "nonrepresentational."

The attention focused on his immediate qualities—the unconventional materials and method of working, the scale and immediate splendor of much of his work—has left largely untouched the forces that compel him to work in the manner that he does. Why the tension and complexity of line, the violently interwoven movement so closely knit as almost to induce the static quality of perpetual motion, the careful preservation of the picture's surface plane linked with an intricately rich interplay upon the canvas, the rupture with traditional compositional devices that produces, momentarily, the sense that the picture could be continued indefinitely in any direction?

His painting confronts us with a visual concept organically evolved from a belief in the unity that underlies the phenomena among which we live. Void and solid, human action and inertia, are metamorphosed and refined into the energy that sustains them and is their common denominator. An ocean's tides and a personal nightmare, the bursting of a bubble and the communal clamor for a victim are as inextricably meshed in the coruscation and darkness of his work as they are in actuality. His forms and textures germinate, climax and decline, coalesce and dissolve across the canvas. The picture surface, with no depth of recognizable space or sequence of known time, gives us the never ending present. We are presented with a visualization of that remorseless consolation—in the end is the beginning.

New visions demand new techniques: Pollock's use of unexpected materials and scales is the direct result of his concepts and of the organic intensity with which he works, an intensity that involves, in



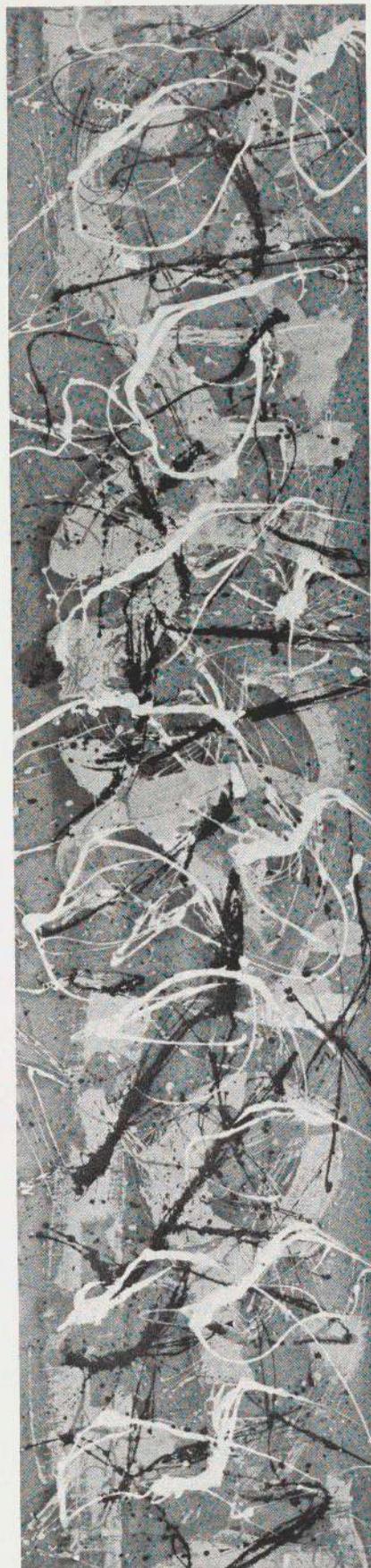
JACKSON POLLOCK: *Number 3*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 56 x 24".  
Betty Parsons Gallery

its complete identification of the artist with his work, a denial of the accident.

The most recent paintings are done with an austerity of means that underlines their protean character: thin paint and raw canvas are the vehicles for images full of the compulsion of dreams and the orderliness of myth. Black and white are sleep and waking. Forms and images dissolve and re-form into new organisms; like Proteus they must be caught unawares, asleep. They demand of the viewer an alertness and a total involvement before releasing any answer to the questions posed. Without the intricacy of color and surface pattern characteristic of his less immediately figurative work, they are filled with the same combination of strength, sensitivity, and exultant acceptance. Remote from anecdote or propaganda, stripped of immediate material appeal, they both reawaken in us the sense of personal struggle and its collective roots and recall to us the too easily forgotten fact that "what is without is within."

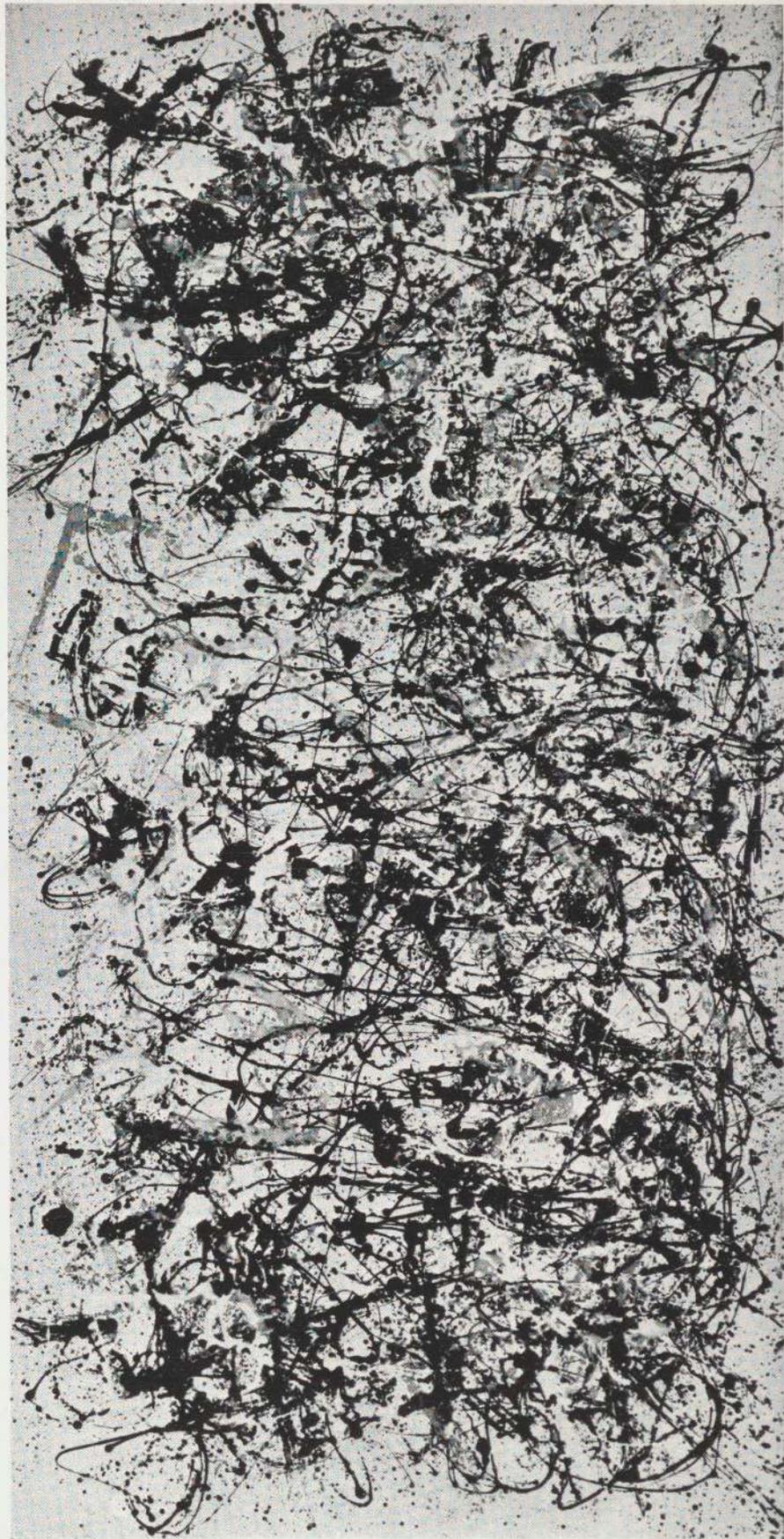
ALFONSO OSSORIO

Born Cody, Wyoming, 1912. Grew up in Arizona and northern California. To New York about 1929. Studied at Art Students League with Thomas Benton for two years. Worked on WPA Federal Art Project, New York, about 1938-42. Made several trips West. One-man shows: Art of This Century, 1943-47, yearly; Arts Club of Chicago, 1945, 1951; San Francisco Museum of Art, 1945; Betty Parsons Gallery, 1948-51, yearly; Venice and Milan, Italy, 1950 (Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century collection); Paris (Michel Tapié), 1952. In collections of Addison Gallery of American Art; Baltimore Museum of Art; Joslyn Memorial Art Museum, Omaha; Museum of Modern Art; San Francisco Museum of Art; University of Iowa; Yale University; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Lives at Springs, Long Island, New York.



JACKSON POLLOCK: *Number 7*. 1950. Oil on canvas, 24" x 8'10". Betty Parsons Gallery

JACKSON POLLOCK: *Number 30*, 1950. Oil on canvas, 9' x 18'. Betty Parsons Gallery



## MARK ROTHKO

The progression of a painter's work, as it travels in time from point to point, will be toward clarity: toward the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer. As examples of such obstacles, I give (among others) memory, history or geometry, which are swamps of generalization from which one might pull out parodies of ideas (which are ghosts) but never an idea in itself. To achieve this clarity is,

inevitably, to be understood.

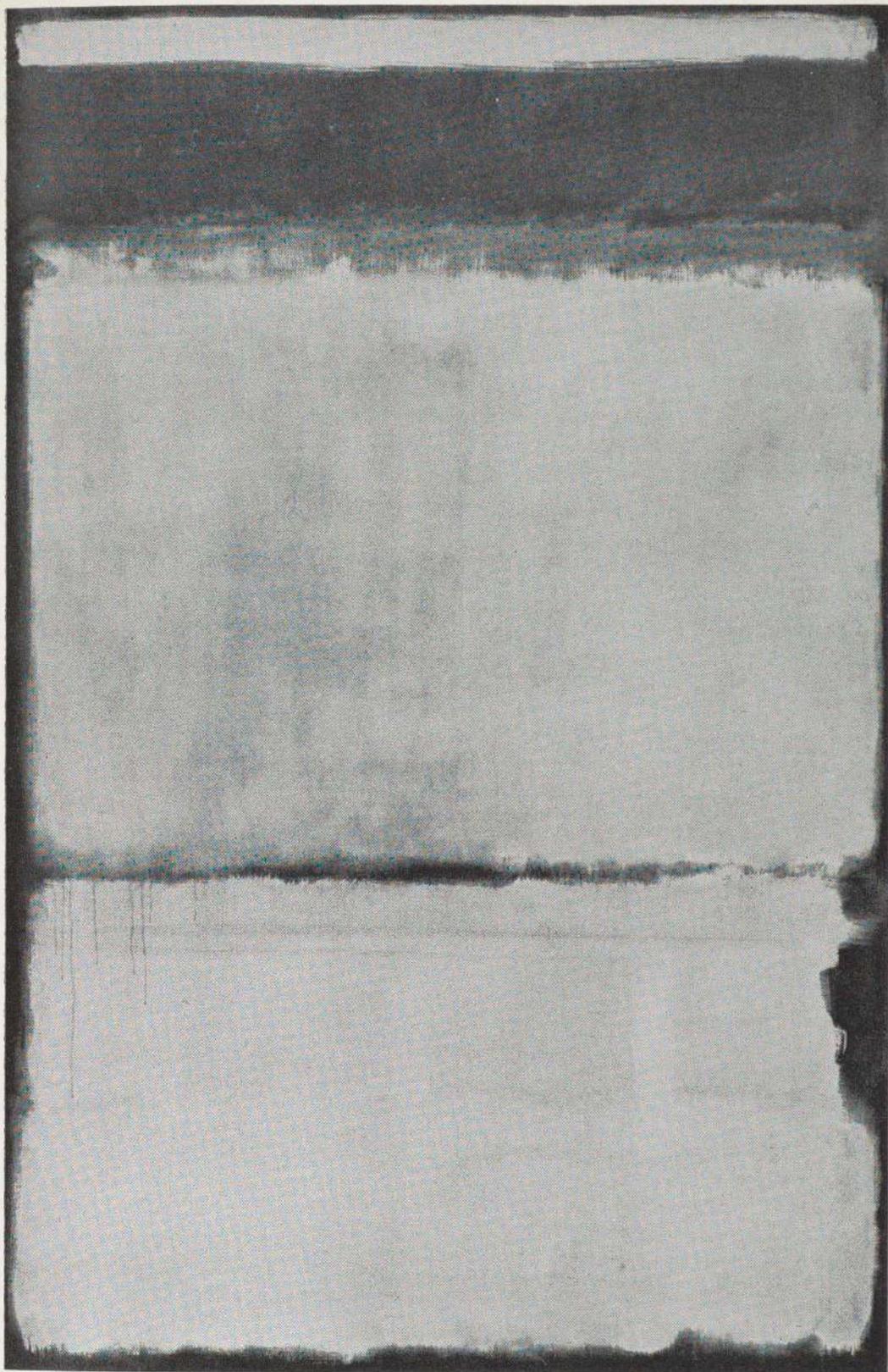
A picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is therefore a risky act to send it out into the world. How often it must be impaired by the eyes of the unfeeling and the cruelty of the impotent who would extend their affliction universally!

MARK ROTHKO

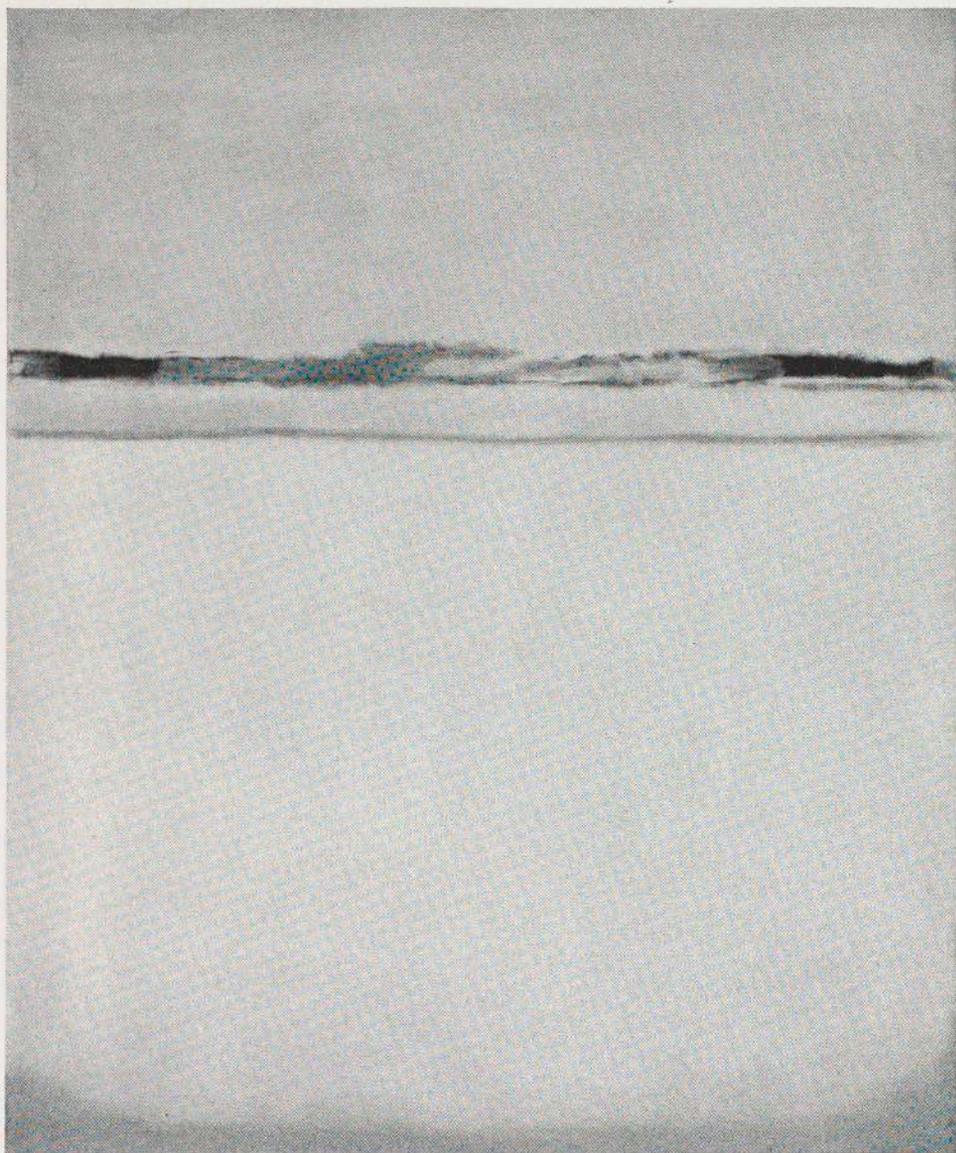


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THKO



MARK ROTHKO: *Number 10*, 1950. Oil on canvas,  $90\frac{3}{8} \times 57\frac{1}{8}$ ". Museum of Modern Art, Purchase Fund  
*opposite*: MARK ROTHKO: *Number 1*, 1949. Oil on canvas,  $67\frac{1}{4} \times 56$ ". Collection Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III



MARK ROTHKO: *Number 18*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 81¼ x 66¾". Betty Parsons Gallery

Born Dvinsk, Russia, 1903. To U.S.A., 1913; spent boyhood in Portland, Oregon. Yale University, 1921-23. Began to paint, 1926; studied at Art Students League with Max Weber. Worked on WPA Federal Art Project, New York, about 1936-37. Taught at California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, summer 1947, 1949. One-man shows: Portland Art Museum, 1933 (watercolors, drawings); Contemporary Arts, New York, 1933; J. B.

Neumann's New Art Circle, 1940; Art of This Century, 1945; Mortimer Brandt Gallery (Betty Parsons' section), 1946; San Francisco Museum of Art, 1946; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1946; Betty Parsons Gallery, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1951. In collections of the Brooklyn Museum; Museum of Modern Art; San Francisco Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art. Teaches at Brooklyn College. Lives in New York.

## CLYFFORD STILL

That pigment on canvas has a way of initiating conventional reactions for most people needs no reminder. Behind these reactions is a body of history matured into dogma, authority, tradition. The totalitarian hegemony of this tradition I despise, its presumptions I reject. Its security is an illusion, banal, and without courage. Its substance is but dust and filing cabinets. The homage paid to it is a celebration of death. We all bear the burden of this

tradition on our backs but I cannot hold it a privilege to be a pallbearer of my spirit in its name.

From the most ancient times the artist has been expected to perpetuate the values of his contemporaries. The record is mainly one of frustration, sadism, superstition, and the will to power. What greatness of life crept into the story came from sources not yet fully understood, and the temples of art which burden the landscape of nearly every city are



CLYFFORD STILL: *Painting*, 1949. Oil on canvas, 80 x 68 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Collection Alfonso Ossorio



above: CLYFFORD STILL: *Painting*, 1947. Oil on canvas, 69 x 65". Owned by the artist

opposite: CLYFFORD STILL: *Painting*, 1947. Oil on canvas, 84 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 70". Owned by the artist

a tribute to the attempt to seize this elusive quality and stamp it out.

The anxious men find comfort in the confusion of those artists who would walk beside them. The values involved, however, permit no peace, and mutual resentment is deep when it is discovered that salvation cannot be bought.

We are now committed to an unqualified act, not illustrating outworn myths or contemporary alibis. One must accept total responsibility for what he executes. And the measure of his greatness will be in the depth of his insight and his courage in realizing his own vision.

Demands for communication are both presumptuous and irrelevant. The observer usually will see what his fears and hopes and learning teach him to see. But if he can escape these demands that hold up a mirror to himself, then perhaps some of the implications of the work may be felt. But whatever is seen or felt it should be remembered that for me these paintings had to be something else. It is the price one has to pay for clarity when one's means are honored only as an instrument of seduction or assault.

CLYFFORD STILL

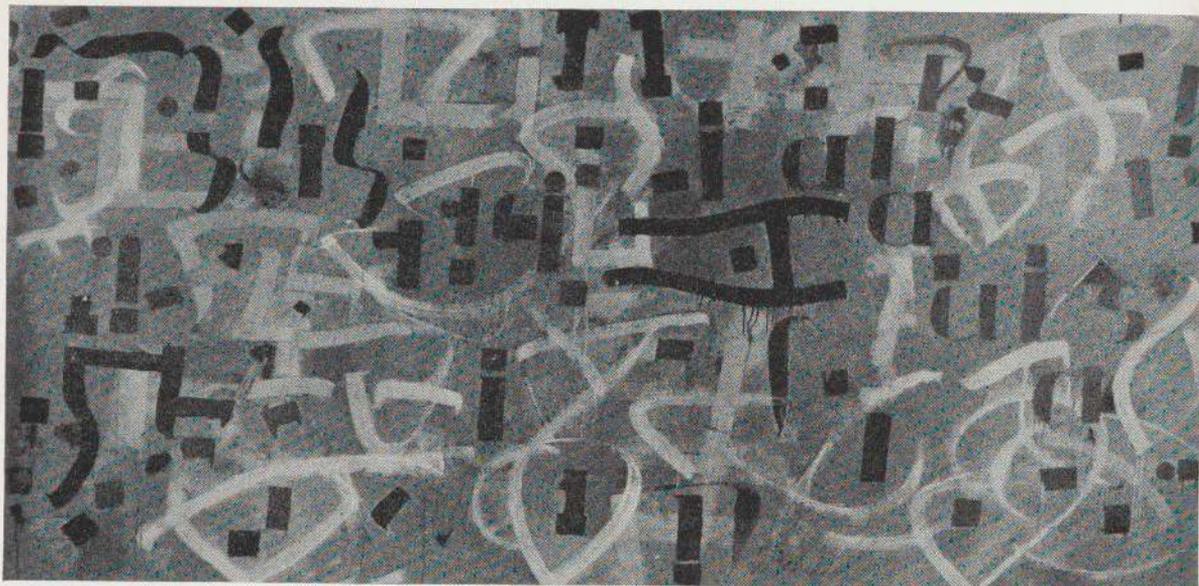
*From a letter dated February 5, 1952*



Born Grandin, North Dakota, 1904. Grew up in Alberta, Canada, alternating farm work with schooling in Alberta and in Spokane, Washington. Graduated from Spokane University, 1933. Teaching fellowship and M.A. degree, Washington State College, Pullman, where he taught 1933 to 1941. To San Francisco, 1941; worked in war plants. In the East 1944; to New York, briefly, 1946; to San

Francisco to teach at California School of Fine Arts, 1946-50. One-man shows: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1941; Art of This Century, 1946; California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 1947; Metart Gallery, San Francisco, 1950; Betty Parsons Gallery, 1947, 1950, 1951. In collection of San Francisco Museum of Art. Lives in New York; teaches at Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges.

## BRADLEY WALKER TOMLIN

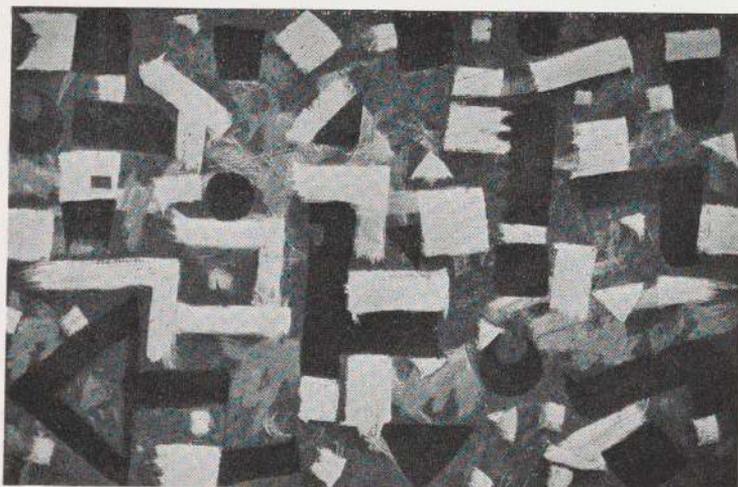


Since art and its enjoyment by the observer are both largely the results of intuition, attempts to explain what artists are trying to do—even when made by the artists themselves—are seldom satisfactory. Perhaps, therefore, the most that should be said of Bradley Tomlin's admirable paintings is that they will appeal to those who enjoy sensitively manipulated pigment and linear suggestions of movement.

Such people will respond to the luminous quality

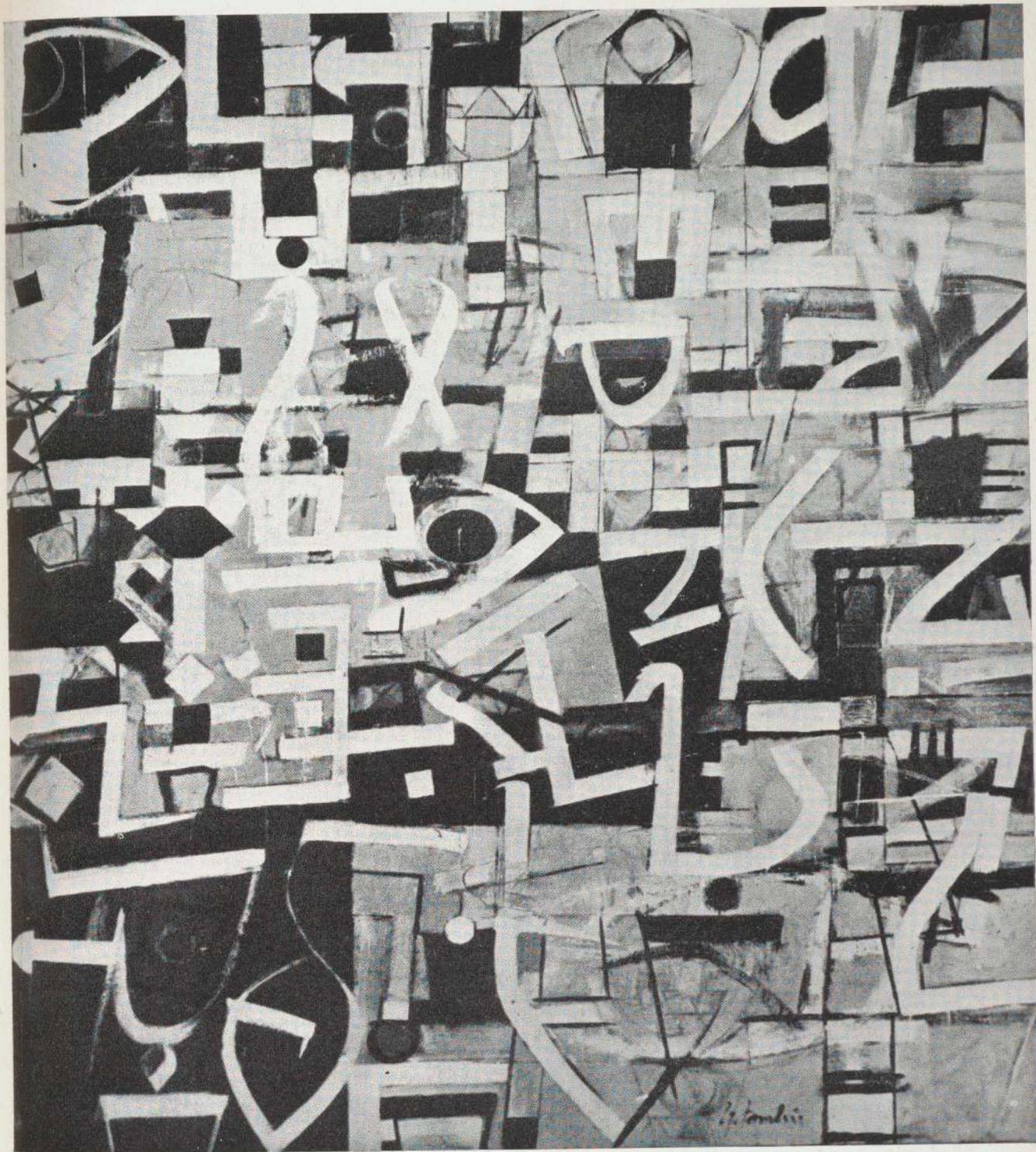
of his painted surfaces and will see in his complex arrangements of bands, pot-hooks, boomerangs, letters, dots, rectangles, zigzags and so forth a sort of pictorial equivalent of ballet, in which the many figures shimmy, gyrate, contort or drift at two or more levels with stimulating spontaneity and with an over-all coördination which is as satisfying as it is unobtrusive.

EDWARD W. ROOT

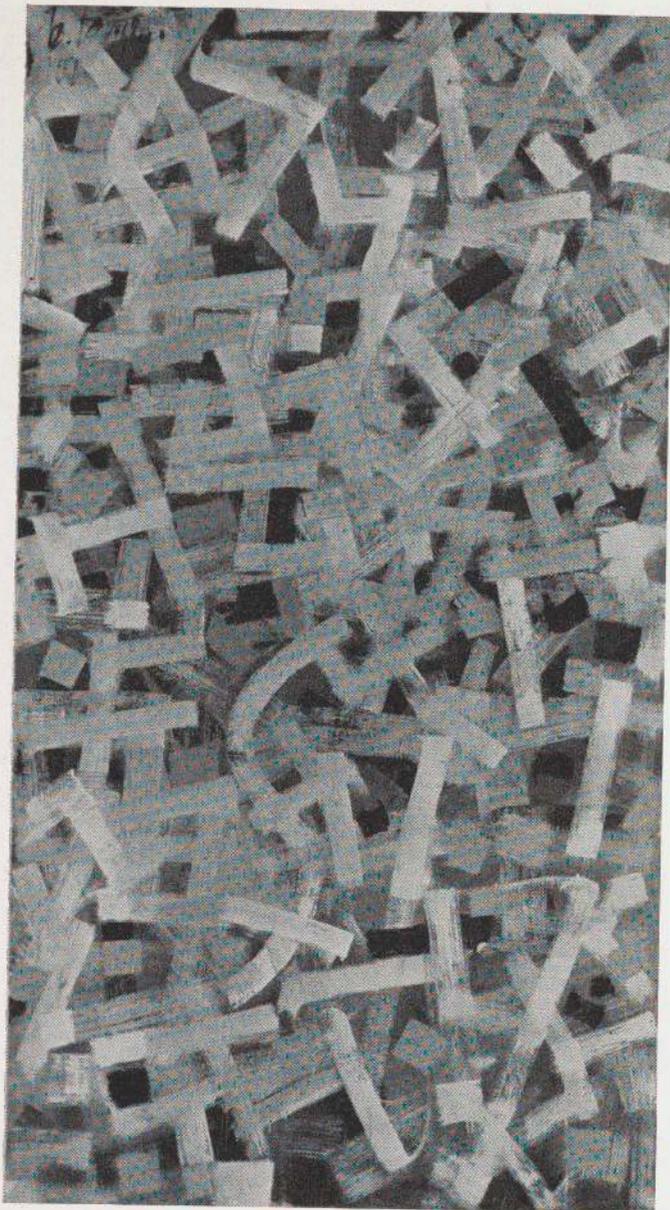


*above:* BRADLEY WALKER TOMLIN:  
*Number 9: In Praise of Gertrude Stein.*  
1950. Oil on canvas, 49" x 8' 6".  
Collection Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III

*left:* BRADLEY WALKER TOMLIN:  
*Number 10.* 1949. Oil on canvas,  
27 x 36". Collection Mr. and Mrs.  
William A. M. Burden



BRADLEY WALKER TOMLIN: *Number 20*. 1949. Oil on canvas, 7'2" x 6'8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Betty Parsons Gallery

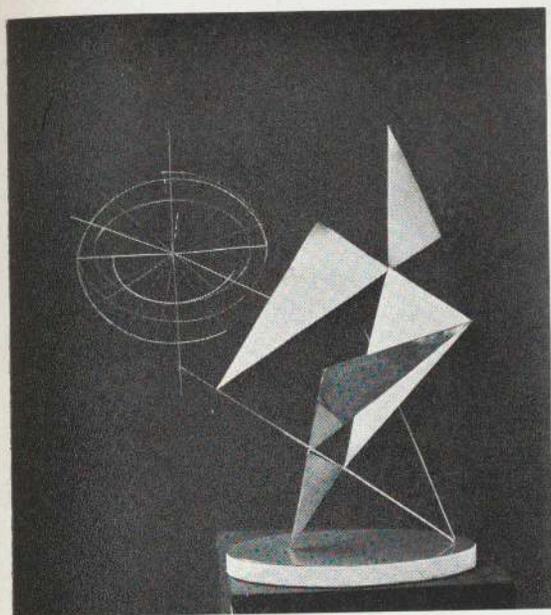


BRADLEY WALKER TOMLIN:  
*Number 1*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 78 x 42".  
Collection Edward W. Root

Born Syracuse, New York, 1899. Graduated from Syracuse University, 1921. Spent several years in Europe during 1920s. Taught at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, 1932-41. One-man shows: Montross Gallery, 1924, 1927; Rehn Gallery, 1931, 1942, 1944; Betty Parsons Gallery, 1950.

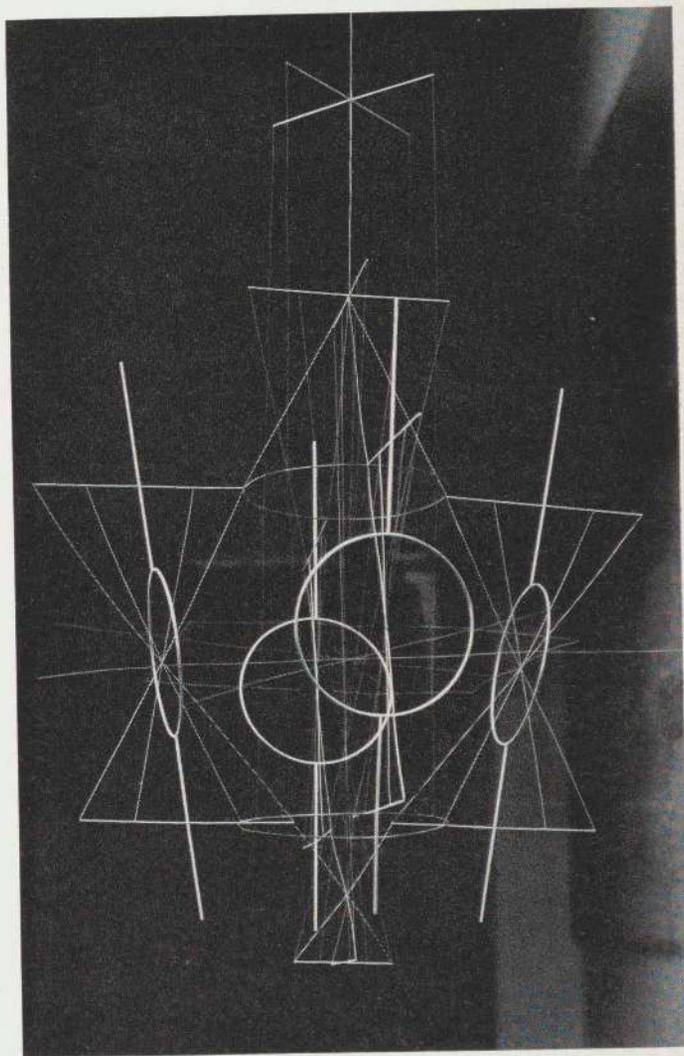
In collections of Addison Gallery of American Art; Brooklyn Museum; Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; Phillips Gallery, Washington, D.C.; University of Iowa; Whitney Museum of American Art. Lives in New York.

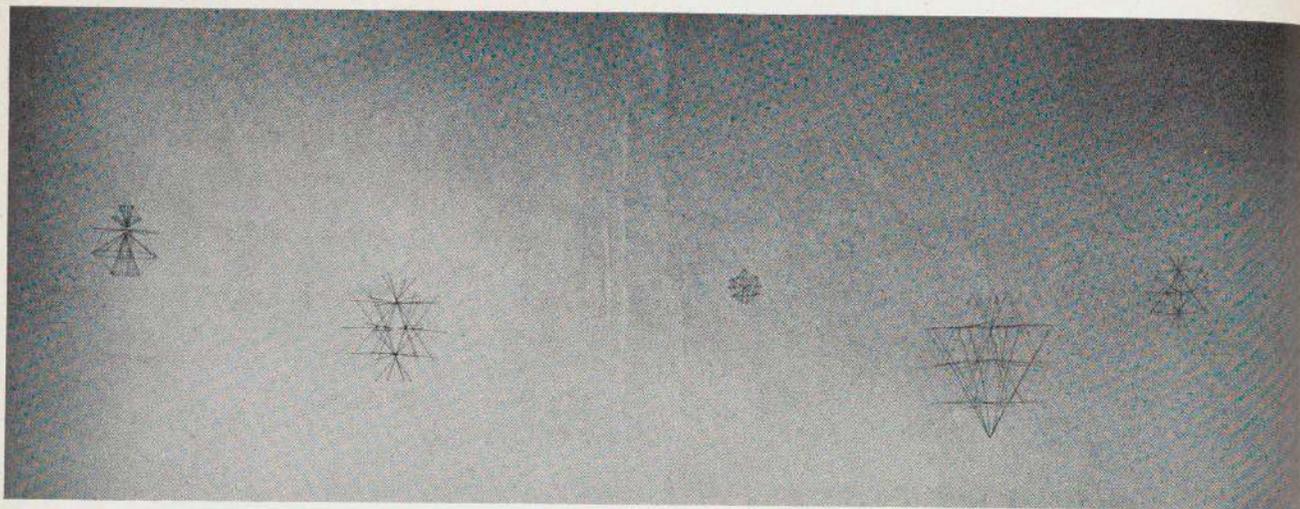
RICHARD LIPPOLD



above: RICHARD LIPPOLD: *Juggler in the Sun*. 1952. Brass, bronze, nickel-chromium, nickel-silver and stainless steel wire, 13" high. Collection Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden. Photograph Adolph Studly

right: RICHARD LIPPOLD: *Aerial Act*. 1950-51. Brass, copper, stainless steel, nickel-chromium and nickel-silver wire, 31½" high. Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. Photograph Adolph Studly





RICHARD LIPPOLD: *Five Variations within a Sphere (for John Cage)*. 1947. Brass, silver, stainless steel and copper wire; 3" to 12" diameter. Collection John Cage. Photograph John Stewart

opposite: RICHARD LIPPOLD: *Variation Number 7: Full Moon*. 1949-50. Brass rods, stainless steel and nickel-chromium wire, 10' high. The Museum of Modern Art, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. Photograph Soichi Sunami

The fragile snowflake appears in more variations of form than any kind of "permanent" sculpture. The spider's web is both a jewel for the branch and a noose for the fly. Nature abhors a vacuum only within the earth's atmosphere, not beyond it where infinity "begins."

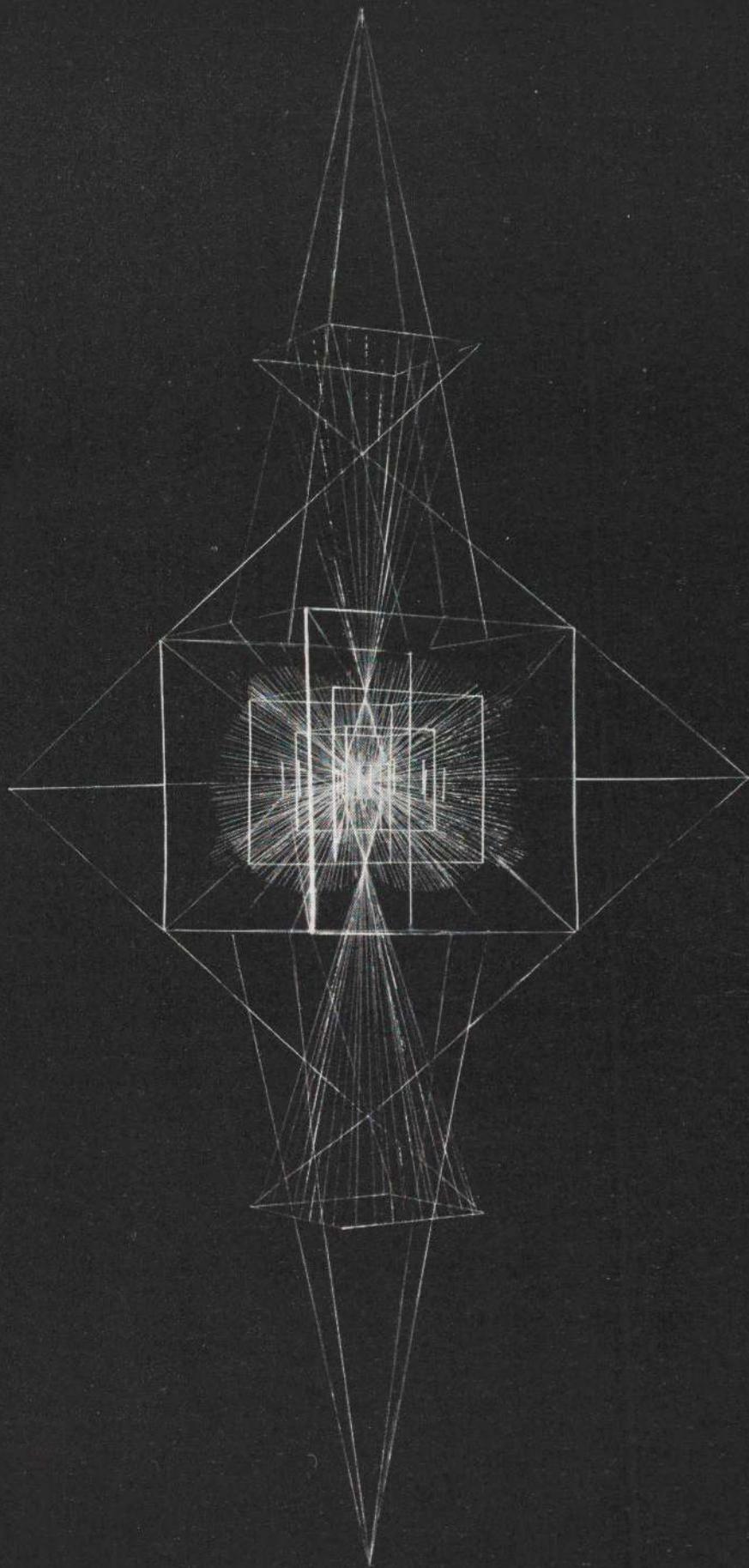
With so much variety in truth, where will a man rest his head and his heart? At this moment in history the answer seems to be, "Nowhere," although we still have our preferences, as there are many species of turtles and rockets. My preference in material is Space, captured by the most seductive

other materials I can arrange. My preference for social action is simply to have my being among all the other objects that exist in Space, "which loves us all," and in which modes of communication today can dissolve barriers of time and energy, of nations and races. Although the word sounds old-fashioned, I thus have my faith in Space. Like every adventure, this being in Space at all levels is full of terror, delight, question, and answer. Has *any* Material, Society, or Belief had more permanence or finality?

RICHARD LIPPOLD

Born Milwaukee, 1915. Studied at Art Institute of Chicago, 1933-37, and University of Chicago. Industrial designer, 1937-41. In 1942, gave up designing, began sculpture. To New York, 1944, to live. Has taught at Layton School of Art, Milwaukee, 1940-41; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1941-44; Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont,

1945-47; since 1947, head of art department, Trenton Junior College. One-man shows: Willard Gallery, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1952; two-man show, Margaret Brown Gallery, Boston, 1950. In collections of Addison Gallery of American Art; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica; Museum of Modern Art; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.



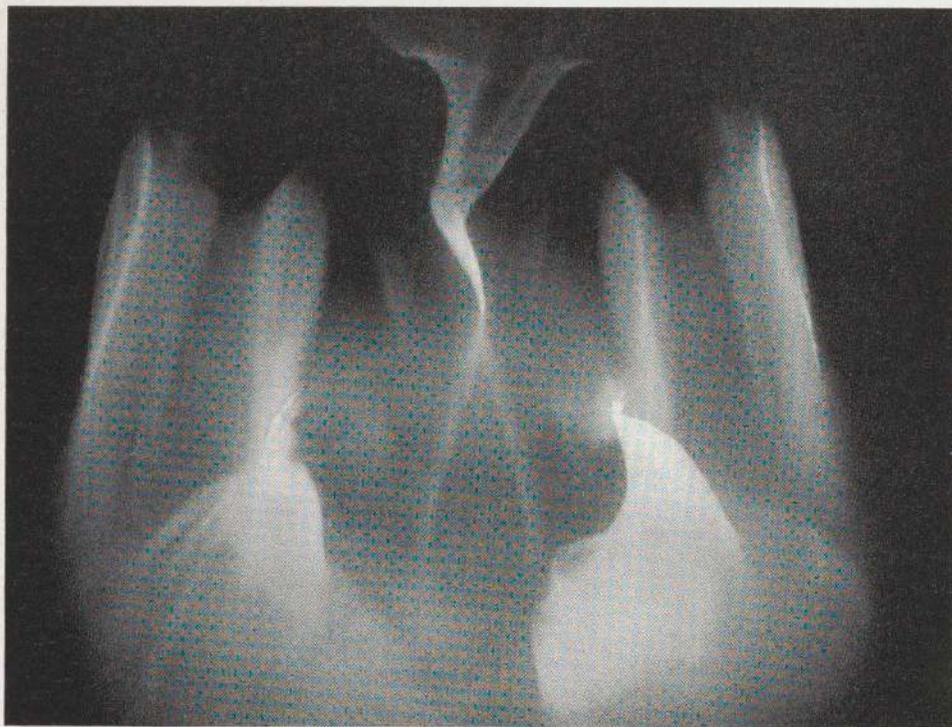
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## THOMAS WILFRED



THOMAS WILFRED: A passage from the lumia composition. *Abstract, Opus 59*. 1923

A new art form has begun its life in our generation, a silent visual art in which the sole medium is light. This new art form has been named lumia.

Like the older arts, lumia is an esthetic concept expressed through tools, materials and techniques. The lumia artist visualizes his composition as a drama of moving form and color unfolding in dark space. In order to share his vision with others he must materialize it. This he does by executing it as a two-dimensional sequence projected on a flat white screen by means of a specially constructed light-generating instrument controlled from a keyboard. By manipulating the sliding keys, he can release white light, mold the light into form, add color, and imbue the result with motion and change.

Lumia is neither composed nor performed like music. In music instruments have been evolved, and long since standardized, by means of which any composition may be played instantly. In lumia the

execution of nearly every new work means changes in the existing equipment. Lumia may never be played in the manner of music and I see no reason at all for striving toward this goal. The two arts are so different in nature that attempts to design lumia instruments in imitation of musical ones will prove as futile as attempts to write lumia compositions by following the conventional rules laid down for music. We must shun imitation and deal with lumia in terms of itself.

The result alone matters. How we have achieved it is a secondary consideration, whether we have adhered to established procedures in optics, or kicked over the traces to do something which may well make a physicist scoff but which nevertheless yields the desired result. This applies to all phases of the new art; it is obvious that the rules governing static composition and static color harmony in painting do not apply to form and color in motion,

nor do the rules of composition in music apply to a visual sequence.

If a lumia composition is stopped at any point, an analysis of the static image may show both form and color out of balance from the painter's point of view. It will have meaning only when viewed as a link between what came before it and what is to follow. Harmony and balance are here a kinetic concept; the composition may not contain a single moment of static symmetry, no matter where stopped.

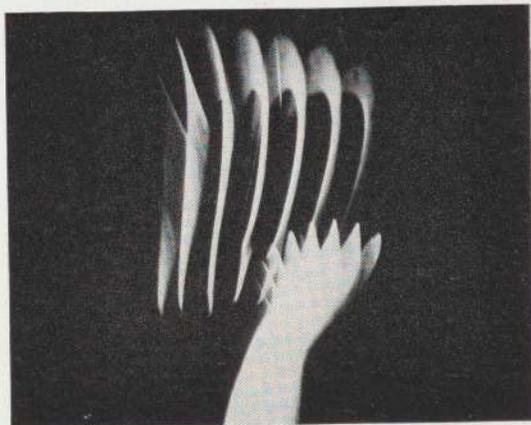
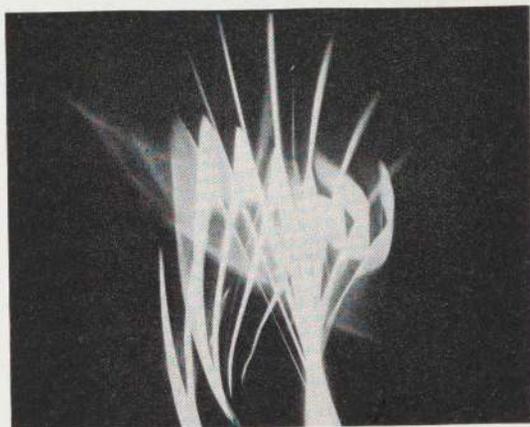
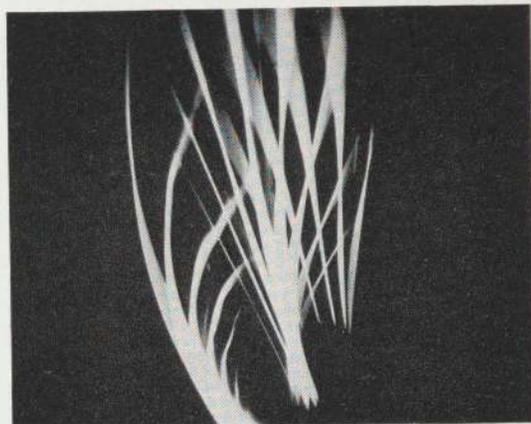
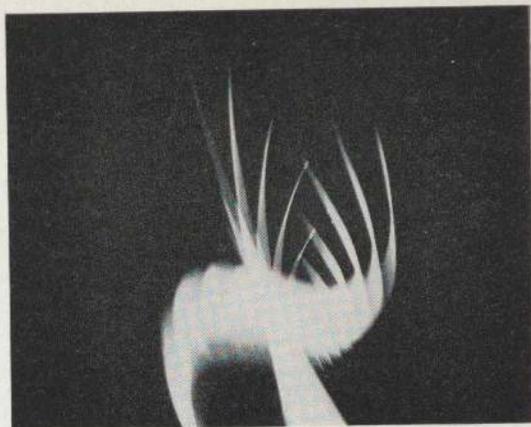
A lumia composition may be recorded and mechanically rendered, either full screen size or reduced almost to a miniature, by means of playing devices corresponding to the phonograph in music. The compositions in this exhibition are such recordings.

Lumia has been used in various fields; when played from the keyboard, as visual accompaniment to music, the drama and the dance; and in recorded form, as projected mobile mural decoration, as exhibits in museums and private collections, and as an aid in psychiatric diagnosis and psychotherapy.

THOMAS WILFRED

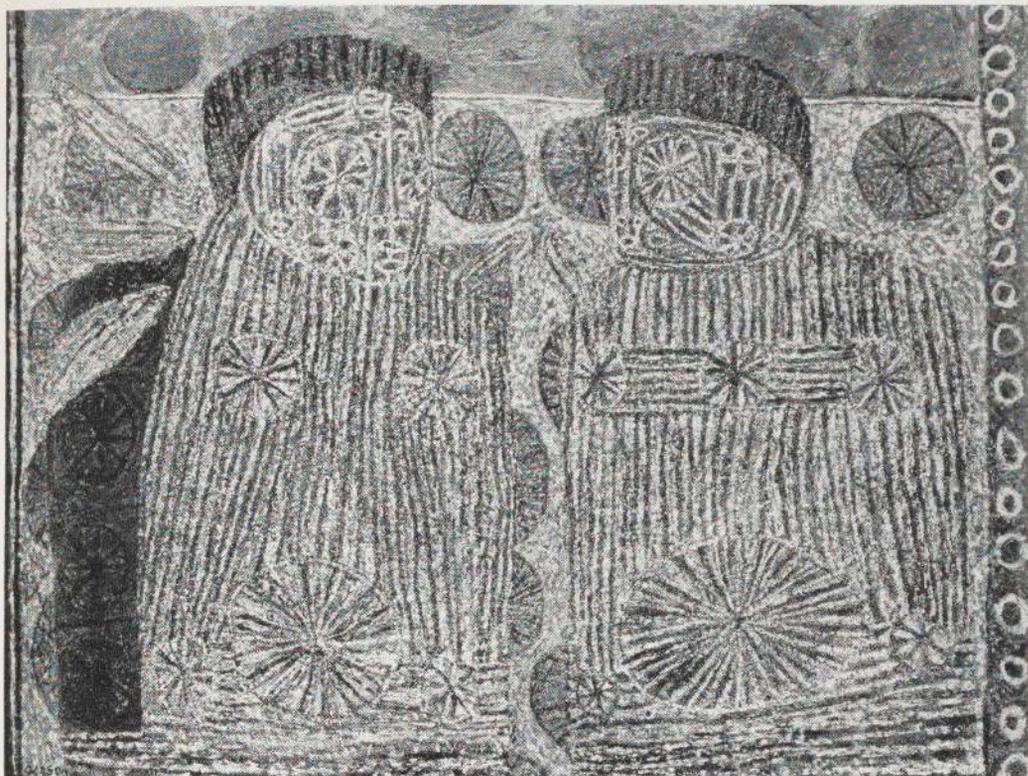
Born Nestved, Denmark, 1889. Made first experiments with light, Copenhagen, 1905, with a cigar box, an incandescent lamp and pieces of colored glass. Continued experiments while studying art and music, Copenhagen, Paris, London, 1905-11. Professional singer and player of twelve-stringed archlute, 1912-19, to support experiments with light as an independent art medium. Served in Danish army, 1914-16. To U.S.A., 1916; continued concert work until 1919, then gave full time to building an instrument, the "clavilux," completed late in 1921. First public "lumia" performance with the clavilux, January 1922, at Neighborhood Playhouse, New York. Clavilux recital tours, 1922-43, United States, Canada, Europe (first European tour, 1925). Soloist with Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski, 1926, performing visual setting

THOMAS WILFRED: A sequence, eight seconds long, from the lumia composition *Unfolding*, Opus 127, 1940





JOSEPH GLASCO: *Big Sitting Cat.* 1949. Ink, 40 x 26 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Museum of Modern Art, Katharine Cornell Fund



above: JOSEPH GLASCO: *Two Figures*. 1951. Oil and sand on canvas, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 40". The Museum of Modern Art, Purchase Fund

right: JOSEPH GLASCO: *Athlete and Landscape*. 1951. Oil on canvas, 30 x 24". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Lee A. Ault

Born Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, 1925. Lived in Texas from age of six. At University of Texas six months; drafted, 1943. Painted murals for Air Corps at Amarillo Air Field. Transferred to infantry, early 1945; saw combat in Germany. After release from Army, traveled in Europe. In Los Angeles, 1946-48; studied briefly at Art Center School and with Rico Lebrun. To Mexico, 1948. To New York, 1949, to live; studied at Art Students League, 1949. One-man shows: Perls Gallery, 1950; Catherine Viviano Gallery, 1951, 1952. In collections of Museum of Modern Art; Whitney Museum of American Art.



## IRVING KRIESBERG

Technically my paintings are depictions with a fluid focal point. The objects in them are shown not as taken from a fixed point in space nor at a single instant of time. Traditionally we expect a picture to show a scene taken at a given point in space and time. How can a single fixed depiction impart many points of view and many moments of time? Well, how can a depiction on a flat surface impart a sense of depth and space? It can, it does. We daily see such pictures: we look at a flat piece of paper, we see a spacious vista, and we sense nothing illogical. The idea is contradictory, but it works. It works because we want it to.

The medieval man saw his icon simply as it was. Of course it symbolized something else, but his Madonna had little optical reference to a specific woman. The Renaissance man saw his Madonna as a woman: what the artist painted blue was not only a symbol, it was the depiction of a robe, a real gar-

ment a real person might wear. Together the artist and the observer altered the meaning of the colored panel: from being a symbolic object it became also a depiction of natural objects. The optical means employed were arbitrary conventions but they gave to painting an unsurpassed richness and scope. We are still within this tradition. We admire medieval art and borrow from it, but we still seek to depict natural objects with all the richness and vitality we perceive in them. If a flat surface can show the depth and space of nature then a single fixed surface can show the change and motion of nature. I see that nature is motion and change and that is what I paint. True, it is illogical, but then art is illogical. How can patches of color transmit to one man the passions felt by another? It is impossible. It is utterly marvelous.

IRVING KRIESBERG

*From a letter dated February 9, 1952*



*opposite:* IRVING KRIESBERG: *Yellow Sheep*. 1951. Tempera, 55 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 47 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Bernard J. Reis

*left:* IRVING KRIESBERG: *Birds Alighting*. 1951. Tempera, 32 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 30". Curt Valentin Gallery



Born Chicago, 1919. Studied at Art Institute of Chicago, 1937-40. Painted murals for College of Jewish Studies, Chicago, 1938. To Mexico, 1941, for three years; studied at Government School of Painting and Sculpture (Calléjon Esmeralda), Mexico City; murals for exposition building, Ministry of Agriculture, Mexico City, for 1943 agricultural

fair. To New York, 1945, to live. In group shows: Art Institute of Chicago and Cincinnati Art Museum, 1941; Pepsi-Cola show, 1948; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1949. Two-man show, Art Institute of Chicago, 1946; one of three in "New Talent" exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, 1951. In collection of Museum of Modern Art.

HERBERT KATZMAN



above: HERBERT KATZMAN: *Horse Butcher*.  
1949. Oil on canvas, 61 1/2 x 21 1/2".  
Downtown Gallery

left: HERBERT KATZMAN: *Giotto's Tower*.  
1949. Oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 28 1/2".  
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dreyfuss

opposite: HERBERT KATZMAN: *Brooklyn Bridge*. 1951-52. Oil on canvas, 54 x 60".  
Private collection, New York

I paint things around me that I like and if at times the paintings move it's because I am moved by the world around me—in that sense I suppose I am an expressionist painter. I do not paint abstractly because if I give up the appearance of the world I find I am unable to become involved in it. I am not interested in its abstract or metaphysical aspects as

the subject itself means very much to me. I like the way the yellow-black sky looks over the Brooklyn Bridge, the way the sun hits a building, or the way my wife looks in an ochre-green dress. These are the important things to me and they are wonderful to paint.

HERBERT KATZMAN

Born Chicago, 1923. Studied at Art Institute of Chicago, 1935 (children's classes) and 1940-42. In U.S. Navy, 1942-44. Returned to Art Institute, 1944; graduated and was awarded traveling fellow-

ship, 1946. To Paris, 1947, for three and a half years; traveled in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia. Returned to U.S.A., 1950. Lives in New City, New York.



## HERMAN ROSE

I am a New Yorker born and bred. Like so many other tenement-raised children, I early learned to escape to the roof top for closeness with the elements, privacy for contemplation, while yet in sight and smell of the peopled tenements. Long ago I discovered the city roof tops as a quiet place where one can do serious work without being disturbed.

I have lived and painted alternately in Manhattan and Brooklyn. I once found Manhattan grim and cold. More recently I am developing a sense of its peculiar color, a fondness for its bold roofs and spires. Brooklyn is the friendly spot where you can portray your neighbor's house or his garden.

Three pictures were done from a roof over near Avenue A and 15th Street. I had wandered up and down mountains of tenement stairs, hastily and mistrustfully expelled from some as an intruder, unnoticed in others. On occasion a friendly superintendent or tenant expressed respectful curiosity and offered coöperation. Here I was fortunately left alone with a wonderful vista all around me. I could see the whole East 14th Street area of Manhattan. Seen thus from on high the tanks and towers rise up

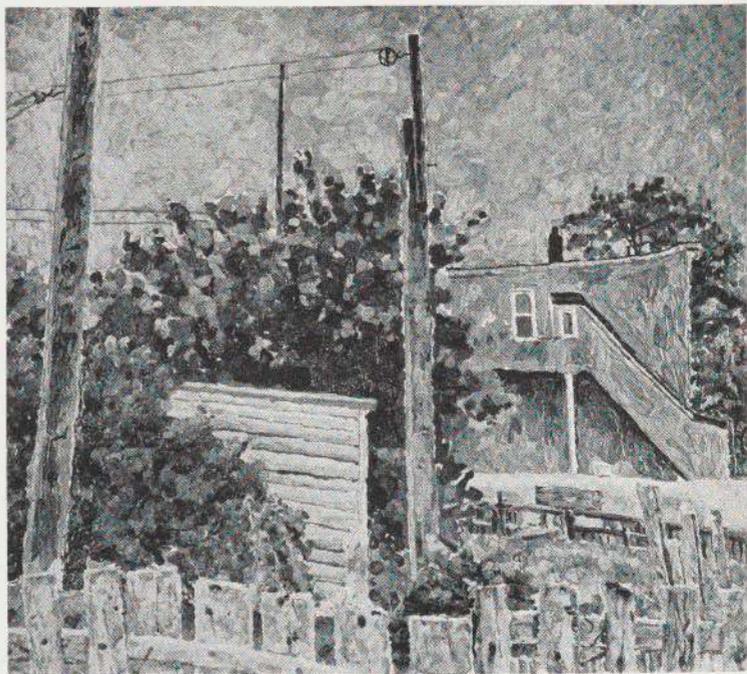
as important symbols of man's doings. There the Edison Tower with its clock and distinctive silhouette has climactic power and looms meaningfully over Union Square and Irving Place.

I always paint specific scenes or people or situations. For me it is not possible to recreate human emotions and perceptions without the physical shapes of the world that gave these feelings birth.

The student of art takes root in tradition. Through tradition we gain a key to art, a definition, a standard. Tradition takes the place of nature and first-hand experience for the young artist. Once secure and growing, he gains insight into how life influences art forms and expression, learns to cast his own experiences onto canvas, learns how in turn the valid and inspiring art of others influences his very life.

My sincerest desire is to paint the era I live in, twentieth-century reality. If only I can put on canvas man as he is today, seen through me a product of today, in genuine personal terms, thereby to be myself.

HERMAN ROSE



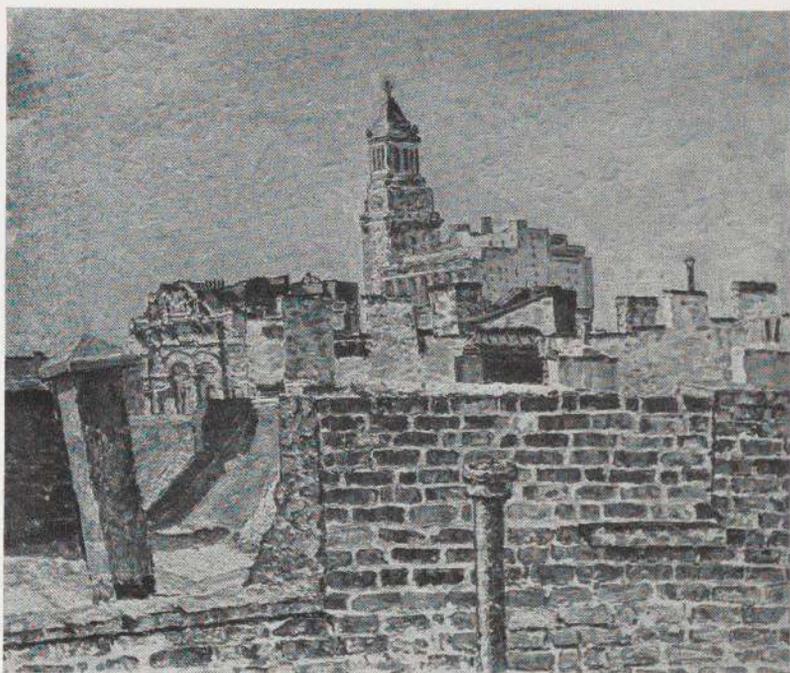
HERMAN ROSE: *Red House*. 1948. Oil on canvas, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Collection Alexander M. Bing



HERMAN ROSE: *East New York*. 1947. Oil on canvas, 13 x 22". Collection A. I. Klotz.

Born Brooklyn, New York, 1909. At seventeen entered National Academy of Design, studying there two to three years. Intensive study of paintings in New York museums and of prints in New

York Public Library's print room. First exhibited in 1944. One-man shows, Egan Gallery, 1946, 1947, 1948. In collection of Museum of Modern Art. Lives in Brooklyn.



HERMAN ROSE: *From Avenue A*. 1946. Oil on canvas, 12 x 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Collection Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Wolf

## EDWIN DICKINSON



Born Seneca Falls, New York, 1891. Studied at Pratt Institute, Art Students League, and with William M. Chase and Charles W. Hawthorne. Began exhibiting, 1916. Served in U. S. Navy, 1917-19. Traveled in Italy and Spain; painted in France, 1919-20, 1937-38. Worked on U.S. Public Works of Art Project, 1934. One-man shows: Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, 1927; Wood Memo-

rial Gallery, Rochester, 1940; Passedoit Gallery, 1936, yearly 1938-42; Farnsworth Museum, Wellesley College, 1941. In collections of Albright Art Gallery; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Springfield Museum of Fine Arts. Teaches at Art Students League and Brooklyn Museum Art School. Lives in New York and Wellfleet, Massachusetts.



above: EDWIN DICKINSON: *Self Portrait*. 1941. Oil on canvas, 20 x 23". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Earle Ludgin

left: EDWIN DICKINSON: *The Finger Lakes*. 1940. Oil on canvas, 23½ x 28¾". Collection Mrs. Chauncey L. Waddell



EDWIN DICKINSON: *Woodland Scene*. 1933-35. Oil on canvas, 71 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 68 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection Ansley W. Sawyer



EDWIN DICKINSON: *Unfinished composition*. Begun 1943; still in progress. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60". Owned by the artist

## CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

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A.C.A. Gallery, New York; Downtown Gallery, New York; Galeria Escondida, Taos, New Mexico; Kootz Gallery, New York; Betty Parsons Gallery, New York; Curt Valentin Gallery, New York; Catherine Viviano Gallery, New York; Willard Gallery, New York.

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Congregation B'nai Israel, Millburn, New Jersey; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Springfield Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts.

### CATALOG

*A star preceding the title indicates that the work is illustrated. In dimensions height precedes width.*

#### WILLIAM BAZIOTES

*Dwarf.* 1947. Oil on canvas, 42 x 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". The Museum of Modern Art, A. Conger Goodyear Fund

\**Night Mirror.* 1947. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60". Lent by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III. *Ill. p. 12*

*Moon Forms.* 1947. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48". Lent by Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz

*Mummy.* 1950. Oil on canvas, 36 x 42". Lent by Edward W. Root

\**Cat.* 1950. Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 22". Lent by Joseph R. Shapiro. *Ill. p. 13*

*Dragon.* 1950. Oil on canvas, 48 x 40". Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

\**Toy World.* 1951. Oil on canvas, 50 x 60". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden. *Ill. p. 13*

\**Jungle.* 1951. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60". Lent by Nelson A. Rockefeller. *Ill. p. 14*

#### EDWARD CORBETT

*Painting.* 1951. Oil on canvas, 67 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 48 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

*Number 1.* 1951. Chalk and carbon pencil, 22 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

*Number 2.* 1951. Chalk, ink and carbon pencil, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

*Number 3.* 1951. Chalk, pencil and casein, 21 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 13 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

*Number 9.* 1951. Chalk, 33 x 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

*Number 10.* 1951. Chalk and casein, 34 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

\**Number 11.* 1951. Chalk, 34 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". *Ill. p. 7*

*Number 12.* 1951. Chalk, 22 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 18"

\**Number 15.* 1951. Chalk and casein, 27 x 14". *Ill. p. 6*

*Number 16.* 1951. Chalk, 23 x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

*Number 18.* 1952. Chalk, 23 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

All works by Corbett lent by La Galeria Escondida

#### EDWIN DICKINSON

\**Woodland Scene.* 1933-35. Oil on canvas, 71 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 68 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Lent by Ansley W. Sawyer. *Ill. p. 43*

*Composition with Still Life.* 1933-37. Oil on canvas, 97 x 77 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by the artist

*Stranded Brig.* 1934. Oil on canvas, 40 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 50". Lent by the Springfield Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts (acquired through Public Works of Art Project, 1934)

*Château at Ollioules.* 1938. Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Lent by Ansley W. Sawyer

*Villa Le Printemps.* 1938. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by the artist

*Villa La Mouette.* 1938. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

\**The Finger Lakes.* 1940. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Lent by Mrs. Chauncey L. Waddell. *Ill. p. 42*

\**Self Portrait.* 1941. Oil on canvas, 20 x 23". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Earle Ludgin. *Ill. p. 42*

\**Unfinished composition.* Begun 1943—still in progress. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60". Lent by the artist. *Ill. p. 44*

*This book has been printed in March, 1952, for the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art by the Plantin Press, New York*

The Museum of Modern Art



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