

The background is a complex, high-contrast black and white abstract pattern. It features a series of concentric circles and lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized architectural structure or a complex optical illusion. The lines are dense and vary in thickness, creating a textured effect. The overall composition is dynamic and visually striking.

arts & architecture

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Cover: Detail of light machine by L. Moholy-Nagy.
(See page 28)

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ARTS & ARCHITECTURE is published monthly by Arts & Architecture, Inc., 3305 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90005. Established 1911. Second class postage paid at Los Angeles, California. Priced mailed to any address in the United States, \$7.00 a year; to foreign countries, \$8.50 a year; single copies 75 cents. Editorial material and subscriptions should be addressed to the Los Angeles office. Return postage should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. One month's notice is required for a change of address or for a new subscription. The complete contents of each issue of ARTS & ARCHITECTURE is available to subscribers in a Microfilm edition.

art

DORE ASHTON

BARNETT NEWMAN AND THE MAKING OF INSTANT LEGEND

When Degas complained to Mallarmé that his sonnets weren't coming out even though he had plenty of ideas, Mallarmé reminded him that sonnets were made with words, not ideas.

It is also true that paintings are made with painted forms, not ideas. Barnett Newman has lots of ideas.

His latest idea is broached at the Guggenheim Museum where he presents fifteen paintings, fourteen of which are listed as "Fourteen Stations of the Cross," with the subtitle, "Iema sabachthani"—the latter being the Aramaic version of Christ's last words translated usually as My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Newman's title will provoke iconographical discussion and many words will flow as a result. But that has always been the case with Newman: he has occasioned and been the occasion of much discourse, even before he registered seriously as a painter. Although I am about to add still a few more inches of printed type to his legend, I should like to make it clear at the outset that I regard his Fourteen Stations as the indisputable proof of his dilettantism as a painter. I'll come back to the paintings later. First I would like to deal with his legend.

This legend descends to us with lightning speed. Like everything else in our era, legend has been accelerated to the point where a living figure can enjoy legendary status. Legendary status allows for considerable interpretive latitude. What really happened is not important. What is important is that the legend compounds itself steadily and without interference from history. And this the Newman legend has done. Year by year, even month by month, the legend acquires more and more color and the facts recede into a vanishing mist.

Who starts a legend? Usually the legendary figure himself starts the ball rolling. In Newman's case, legend commences with his appearance not as a painter, but as an intellectual interpreting painters to painters and casting magic words upon the troubled waters of interpretation. As Robert Motherwell says, "he was a sort of Apollinaire to us all."

I don't know how far back Newman's active role amongst the artistic elect goes since I, like everyone else, have been swamped with legendary accounts. I do know, though, that until the early 1950s, Newman was regarded by his painting contemporaries as a kind of midwife; a man whose reflections were apposite and helpful in presenting a verbal accompaniment to a visual movement.

If one were to judge by recorded data, it would appear that Newman asserted himself as a critic between the years 1944 and 1948, weaving his quirky and intelligent metaphysics into the fabric of the new art. Around 1948, his editorial "we" in referring to the burgeoning abstract expressionist movement takes on a more personal note as he had, by then, exhibited a few of his paintings. By 1950, when he had his first one-man show at the Betty Parsons Gallery, Newman regarded himself as a founding member of the movement in word and deed.

I don't question that he was, in fact, a potent participant in word. The deed, such as it was, came much later. Until around 1953, I cannot remember hearing a single artist allude to Newman's work, although many retailed his amusing commentaries, his interpretations, his witticisms and his bizarre acts. Newman as an eccentric was well known from the mid-1940s. His love of contention, seen in his numerous letters to the editor, his various law suits, and his quarrels with scholars, was always a subject of jocular conversation.

When, in the late 1950s, the critics moved in to interpret the interpreter, Newman acquired a reputation as an innovator. When we ask: what did they see?—the answer must be that they saw an *argument*. They saw what Newman had been telling them in hundreds of clever fragments of writing for many years. They saw what he wanted them to see, and what he wanted them to see may well have been an elaborate excuse for his lack of ability as a painter.

The fact is that almost all of Newman's writings have put forth an argument against the visible evidence of the painting. By removing himself from the realm of *homo faber* into an ethereal province where

somehow there are only ends and never means, he removed himself from evaluation. His need to eliminate the sensuous aspect of painting (where would that leave Matisse?) is clearly expressed in his 1948 statement in *Tiger's Eye* on what is the sublime in art:

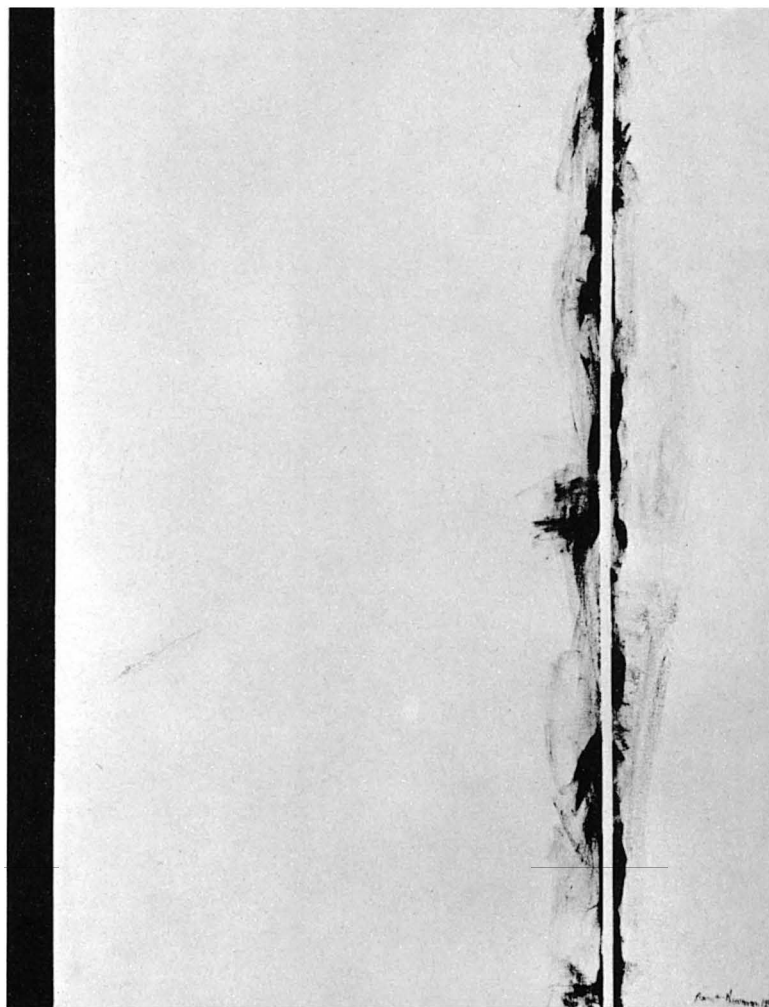
"The failure of European art to achieve the sublime is due to this blind desire to exist inside the reality of sensation (the objective world, whether distorted or pure) and to build an art within a framework of pure plasticity . . ."

His art, and the art of his colleagues, he continued, would be received in images whose reality is self-evident, devoid of the props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images, both sublime and beautiful.

That reality, declared by the artist himself to be self-evident, was soon to be acknowledged by the critics. In 1958 Clement Greenberg, whose first comments on Newman's paintings seem to have been published only three years before, wrote a rousing introduction to Newman's first retrospective at Bennington College which began with the statement that Newman was part of the splendor of American painting—a "particularly noble and candid splendor."

Newman was particularly noble and candid, according to Greenberg, because "we are not offered dexterity of a hand or the ingenuity of an eye. Skill and ingenuity cannot convey directly enough what has to be said." What we are offered, Greenberg said, are shaped emanations of color and light which produce a new kind of tension. He then lays the foundation for his subsequent polemic by stating that "such tensions form an almost entirely new area of interest for our tradition of painting, and it is part of Newman's originality that he should lead our sensibility toward it." The sequel to this story in terms of temporary art history is well known.

With Greenberg calling Newman a particularly noble pioneer, and Rosenberg chiming in a few years later in tones of awe and reverence, and then Greenberg's proteges—the so-called color painters—making their bows of obeisance, it is not difficult to trace the legend. Newman's magic had its way. His "idea-complex" which would bring painters



to the threshold of mysteries was planted like a shaman's consecrated stick.

Now to the Stations of the Cross: It has always been Newman's contention that the subject matter of a painting is given by the artist's idea-complex. "The artist's intention is what gives a specific thing form."

I will not quarrel with this since I believe Newman is right—the artist's intention, or his imaginative tension, is certainly what gives a specific painting its form. However, it has long been accepted that the chimera of intention is all but impossible to seize, and that the receiver of an image can only evaluate the specific form, not the intention.

We are told that these fourteen paintings, all 78" x 60", were discovered to be about the Stations of the Cross *en route*. Newman realized, while working on the fourth painting, the meaning of the work. Lawrence Alloway in his introduction says that Newman's Stations were arrived at through a process of self-recognition. Alloway authenticates them by declaring that although one cannot link his individual works with particular Stations of the Via Dolorosa, "the number fourteen is both an absolute limit and a symbol; more or less than this number would make it impossible to recognize any connections with the declared iconography."

The fallacies in this argument are so obvious that I won't comment. Alloway seemed to realize the inadequacy of this rationale, and further along, reaches for other meanings. Apart from the number symbolism, he states, it is possible to parallel the paintings with Christ's journey on the basis of an analogy between the events of the subject matter and the event of Newman's painting the series.

Alloway seems to be implying that Newman's own struggle on the Via Dolorosa is after the mythic model of Christ's. Therefore, since in a magical society where myth is still alive, each ritual act is an imitation of the original archetypal act, Newman is performing a magical rite. Again, this conveniently places Newman outside the framework of evaluation. Alloway accepts this, saying that Newman's concern with religious and mythical content never delivers an idol but a presence.

We are asked, then, to be moved by these presences.

It is not outside the realm of possibility that an artist with a religious or sublime preoccupation can, through the intensity of his intention, move us with presences. I have no objection to Newman's title, and do not think that it is, as I've heard many say, pretentious. I am willing to believe in the mystery of creation and the magical transformation of intention.

But the specific form Newman gives me is ludicrously inadequate. As exalted as are his notions of esthetics, Newman refuses to acknowledge that an image shows forth through matter; that an image must be crafted and shaped by a knowing hand in order to be convincing. It is not enough to know of religious intentions. One must receive them through the shaped matter that is the painting.

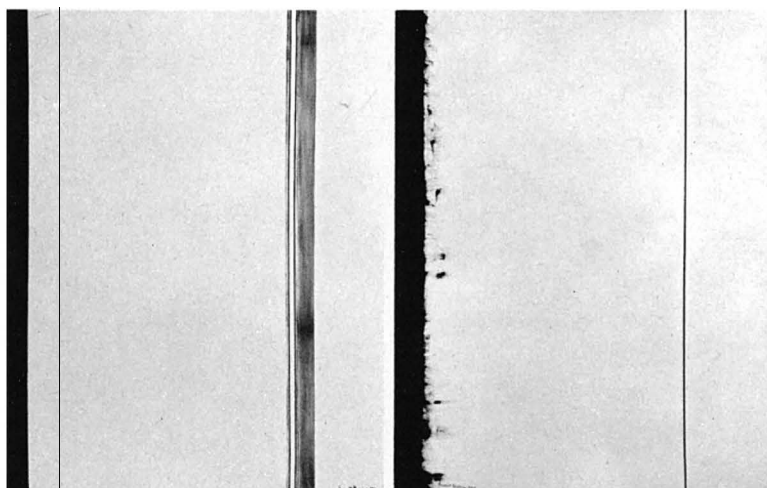
At this point, words can cover the situation only inadequately. If I say that these inept paintings are not grand enough, are not sure enough, are not powerful enough to convince me of the intention, I say little more than that Newman is not a painter, which is, of course, what I mean.

There are many small observations I could make to support my negativism.

For instance, there is the tremendous lack of tact which impels Newman to sign and date his paintings in prominent letters. If the spaces Newman is supposed to be talking about are indeed "participative" as Alloway claims, and if they are supposed to have a "wholistic" character, then these cursive marks, standing out in relief due to their curvilinear characters, are shockingly inapropos. They destroy the unity of the field; they intrude a note of three dimensionality; they allude back to another era in easel painting, and they are usually poorly placed to boot.

Then there is the problem of proportion. In some of the earlier large paintings, Newman's intervals were relatively effective, being spread over long, horizontal areas. But in these smallish paintings, the intervals are squeezed and cease to declare space. On the contrary, they are the dead ground on which Newman's verticals perform.

(Continued on page 34)



Barnett Newman

"The Stations of the Cross: Lema Sabachthani"

From left:

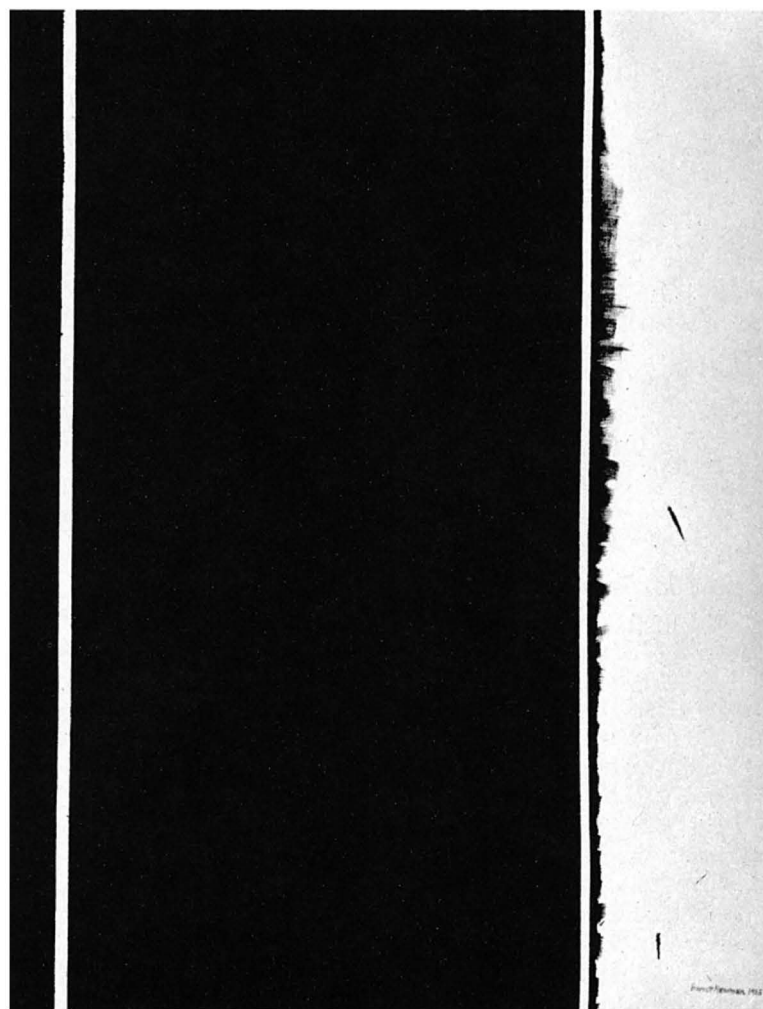
"First Station" 1958, magna on canvas, 78" x 60"

"Second Station" 1958, magna on canvas, 78" x 60"

"Fifth Station" 1962, oil on canvas, 78" x 60"

"Twelfth Station" 1965, acrylic polymer on canvas 78" x 60"

Courtesy The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



books

EARLY NEW ENGLAND GRAVESTONE RUBBINGS by Edmund Vincent Gillon, Jr. (Dover Publications, Inc. New York; \$2.75).

This collection of rubbings and photographs is as delightful as grim, a collection of *Memento mori* from 17th- and 18th-century New England graveyards, with a sprinkling from the early 19th century, an art that in some instances would scarce get by the kindergarten yet leaves no doubt of its purpose. The lettering and ornament are better made and more sophisticated than the faces, which change from death's heads to angel's heads or portraits with a collar or ornament of wings and an increasing conveyance of personality, though one doubts of likeness. The texts carry on the grim amusement. Here is one having at the top Indian symbols, bow, arrows, tomahawk, and at the bottom an elementary representation of a pregnant woman lying on her back: "On the 31st of August 1754 Capt. James Johnston had a Daughter born on this spot of Ground being captivated with his whole Family by the Indians." Or this, surmounted by a skull, four separate dropping leaves, and several decisive, if indeterminate ornaments: "Here is entered the remains of Isaac A. Spofford, son of Dea. Eleaz^r & Mrs. Mary Spofford, a brand plucked from the ashes of Rev. Laban Ainsworth's house 13 Feb. 1788, AE 8.

Oh say grim Death, why thus destroy

The parents hope, their fondest joy," etc.

This large, well printed, paper-covered book, a companionable necrology, should give joy to any student of design. And note the price.

THE COMPANY TOWN IN THE AMERICAN WEST by James B. Allen (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman; \$5.95)

This well-made book, issued by a university press which has printed many valuable books about the history of Western America, deals with a subject of sociological and public interest. The writer has evidently obtained his information and point of view almost entirely from the company and, while not avoiding, has so diminished the charges brought against the company town, its social and political attitudes, the company stores and script, its public services, and the power of the company to break strikes by evicting families from their company-owned homes, that the company town seems to have been, and to be wherever it survives an isolated urban paradise. If this were a true picture, one would expect that such towns would have grown in number. "While there is apparently much substance to these charges," the author admits, "it is also obvious that this is not the whole picture. On the contrary, owners of many company towns actually had the interests of their employees at heart in the operation of company houses, company stores, and other economic areas." This may have been true in more recent years. The editor should have insisted that the author tell the whole story. As it is, the evidence given continually favors the employers, and the charges against them are not seriously investigated.

THE AGE OF BAROQUE by Michael Kitson (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York; \$5.95)

This slender book, packed with illustrations, many full page and many in good color, belongs to still another series of arts through the ages. If the other volumes are as rewarding as this and the texts as well thought and well written, this series, at the price, should be one of the best in a crowded field. The author was not called in to wrap a text around the pictures; his plan of organization divides the period and book, after a clear introduction, into five major sections, three of which cannot be called baroque, except as a designation of the entire period. Thus the baroque and its later development into the rococo are set among the parallel developments of 17th-century Classicism, Realism, and Neo-Classicism. The notes accompanying the pictures are as carefully written as the text. Good printing in double columns and small, readable type, in suitable proportion on the page, though crowded and not a printer's model, but light and easy to handle. The author discusses all the visual arts, from architecture to ceramics.

BERNINI by Howard Hibbard (Penguin Books, \$2.45)

Another well-made paperback, well printed and proportioned, packed with illustrations some nearer gray than black. The author transmits his enthusiasm in a clear and descriptive text, mingling biographical narrative with critical comparison but avoiding the dead language of analysis. It is time that critical taste regained an appetite for the masterpieces of Bernini, as great an artist within and beyond the conventions of his time as any sculptor of any period. The intellectual imagination that centers on Michelangelo should be matched by the imaginative intelligence to take Bernini's work as seriously. "Bernini's creations, more than any other great works of visual art, are the fulfilment of the religious and political and human aspirations of his age and collectively form a portrait of the face and psyche of his time — are, in short, not simply autobiographical (as were, in a sense, the works of Donatello or Michelangelo) but the autobiography of the age itself. Unlike previous religious art, which told stories or illuminated divine events and emotions, Bernini's point of reference was the human worshipper; his goal was the revelation of divinity to the common man through empathy and analogy, and in this realm he stands alone in the history of art." *The Death of the Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*, mingling architecture, light, proportion, the coloristic textures of flesh and materials achieved in stone, the simultaneous dramas of pain and ecstasy, belongs with the greatest religious sculpture of India, China, or Japan. Here, as in the more famous, earlier *St. Teresa*, vision sensually touches flesh at the spiritual moment of transfiguration. It may be through our increasing knowledge of the less secular Oriental arts, in contrast to the Greek, that we are rediscovering Bernini. The power of his architecture has been always beyond argument.

BOOKS RECEIVED

A HISTORY OF CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE, From its Origins to the Emergence of Hellenesque and Romanesque Architecture by Bruce Allsopp (Pitman Publishing Corp., \$10.95)

THE ITALIAN TOWNSCAPE by Ivor de Wolfe (George Braziller, \$12.50)

A HISTORY OF DANISH ARCHITECTURE by Tobias Faber (The American Scandinavian Foundation, \$5.00)

EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE by Richard Krautheimer (Penguin Books, \$20.00; The Pelican History of Art, Edited by Nikolaus Pevsner)

THE RESTLESS ART, A History of Painters and Painting, 1760-1960 by Alan Gowans (J. B. Lippincott Company, \$9.95)

MICHELE CASCELLA, Text by Jehanne Salinger (Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, \$25.00)

ANGLO-SAXON ARCHITECTURE by H. M. Taylor and Joan Taylor, Vol. I & II (Cambridge University Press, two volumes: \$35.00)

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, An Introductory Study by William L. MacDonald (Yale University Press, \$17.50)

MIES VAN DER ROHE: The Art of Structure by Werner Blaser (Praeger, \$25.00)

PLANNING FOR HOSPITALS, A Systems Approach Using Computer-Aided Techniques by James J. Souder, Welden E. Clark, Jerome I. Elkind and Madison B. Brown (American Hospital Association, \$7.50)

HELMUT JACOBY: ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, Introduction by Claudius Coulin (Praeger, \$13.75)

ONEFAMILY HOUSES IN GROUPS, A collection of examples selected by Karl Krämer (Karl Krämer Verlag)

CATALOGUE OF COLOUR REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS, 1860 to 1965 (Unesco Publications Center, \$7.00)

Southern California is drifting rapidly towards disaster. It's in the air. Throughout overbuilt Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside Counties, stone-appliquéd housing tracts and sequinned apartments containing many of the 80,000 housing units now standing empty in the metropolitan area are being foreclosed. Shoddy, flashy warrens built with a hey-nonny-nonny from city and county officials and financed by the easy loan policies of banks, insurance companies and savings and loans which now find themselves the involuntary owners.

Inevitably there will be a wave of bankruptcies and failures among the hapless retail and service businesses that followed the developers to the urban fringe.

Southern California's 20-year real estate and building boom, allowed to run virtually uncontrolled under the short-sighted, permissive policies of successive administrations, may finally have gone bang. Ended, not by any rational act of government but by natural economic law which is pitiless and indiscriminate in its operation, punishing the deserving and underserving alike.

The entire metropolitan area is becoming a maelstrom with Los Angeles at its vortex. Watts, collapsing land, unsafe streets, jammed freeways, old squalor at the city core, new squalor in the suburbs, and now mass foreclosures and business failures, all and more are part and parcel of one gigantic urban problem: the systematic degradation of our environment.

But our cretinous mayor and city council have shown a total unawareness that the individual disaster signals which they see dimly as isolated problems are in fact all interlocking symptoms of a moribund metropolis. It is this ignorance of the totality of the problem which makes their actions so random and ineffective when dealing with individual trouble areas.

In the face of urban conditions which are changing at an uncontrolled and increasing rate, our elected officials continue to think in one-dimensional, static terms: civic malls, one-way traffic, parking structures, widening a freeway, moving a slum. They look upon urban renewal as merely a whopping, jet-age

pork barrel; and upon citizens asking for a rational, long-range approach to planning as hysterics. (Watts I, a desperate cry for help, the most overt kind of protest against intolerable suffering, deprivation and injustice, was called communist inspired by our mayor and a crime spree by the Los Angeles Police Department. The violence continues.)

In *Urban Renewal and the Future of the American City*, C. A. Doxiadis writes of the "necessity to have a program covering as long a time period as possible and as broad an area as possible . . . We must remember that many metropolitan areas have already merged into megalopolitan areas, so we must be clear that if the megalopolitan areas are not covered by regional program and plans, they must be covered by wider metropolitan programs and plans."

The master plan being prepared for Los Angeles, unlike the city's problems, will stop at the city line. No doubt beautifully printed in gay, brilliant colors, but thoroughly inadequate.

"I have mentioned," warns Doxiadis, "that the problems are going to be intensified and I attribute that fact to the forces already built into the urban areas—land bought for development in the outskirts, plans made for expansion, and so on. Thus the growth will continue for years to come with practically no change. Such growth means the expansion of our cities towards even larger human settlements, which will lead toward the universal city, or Ecumenopolis. Pressure on the central areas of existing cities within the Ecumenopolis is going to be very great and it will increase day after day. Within them even well conceived projects that are static are going to fail, and our central areas are going to move from chaos to disaster."

He states that the first principle of an urban renewal program is that it must be realistic. The unavoidable question then becomes, What hope is there for our environment under the leadership of public officials who have lost touch with reality — and their electorate?

D.T.

Next month: Architectural magazines—reviews or refuse.



Photo by P. Berdoy



HARDEN AND BOMBELLI, ARCHITECTS

Attempts by outsiders to capture the flavor of local architecture usually end in disaster — assertive sterile hybrids or vulgar, rootless parodies. The seven houses in Spain shown on these and the following pages are graceful and reflective exceptions, sharing what Benjamin Polk describes as “rootedness of spirit.” The architects have brought the discipline of trained minds to the problem of assembling materials to create environments that are simple and direct and very much a part of the terrain or city. Structures *on* the earth, however, and not *of* the earth: there is nothing here of the hollowed out tree trunk or cave squirted from a tube. Nor is there anything of the catalog architect. Local materials have been used throughout in a manner that refines but doesn’t weaken the local idiom: reeds, rushes, cork, whitewashed masonry, tile, stone.

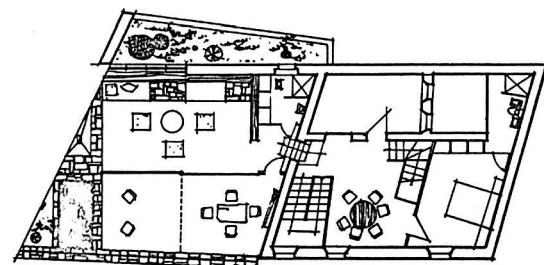
Peter Graham Harnden, 53, the son of a U.S. foreign service officer, was largely raised and educated in Europe (Spain, Germany, Switzerland). He attended the universities of Lausanne, Yale and Georgetown. He worked in Italy designing furniture and interiors in the early 30s, coming to California in 1936 where he was “strongly influenced by Neutra.” After working (1937-8) for various architects in Mexico, Harnden founded “Design Project” in Los Angeles, an architectural and industrial design office. Following wartime service in the European Theater from 1941 to 1945, he directed visual information projects and exhibitions for the U.S. Military Government in Germany.

From 1948 to 1956, Harnden worked in Europe for various U.S. Government agencies as director of exhibitions, then founded his own design firm (with Bombelli as a partner) which did contract exhibition work for government and international agencies and private industry. The firm became Harnden and Bombelli in 1962 and moved to Barcelona where it now specializes in architecture.

Lanfranco Bombelli Tiravanti, 45, is of Italian (father) and Swiss parentage. He graduated in architecture in 1946 from Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule of Zurich, winning a gold medal at the 8th Triennale of Milan the following year. Bombelli worked in various offices in Zurich for several years and then, continuing his studies, graduated in architecture from the Politecnico di Milano. He worked as chief designer in the agencies Harnden directed, leaving with him to enter private practice.

Photos by Casali

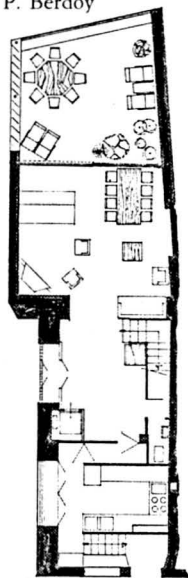
HOUSE IN CADAQUES 1



Harnden bought two adjacent houses in Cadaqués and remodeled them into one summer house for himself and his family. On the top floor, one vast and irregular living area was created out of six small rooms and opened to the light, air and views of the sea and the red and white village. This house like the others is marked by long built-in benches and beds and a sparsity of movable furniture.



Photo by P. Berdoy

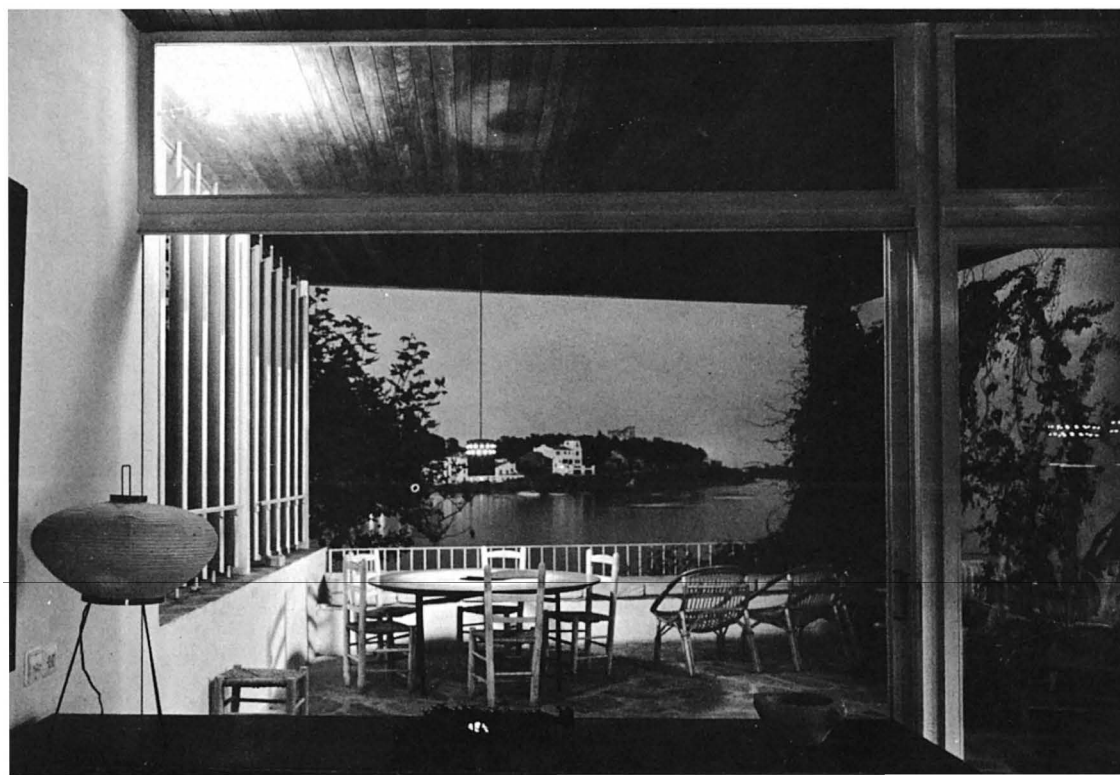


1st floor

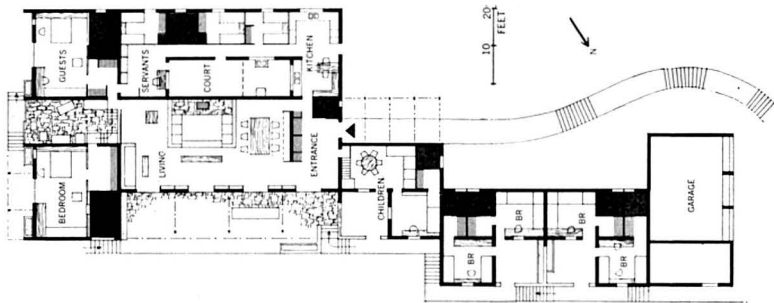
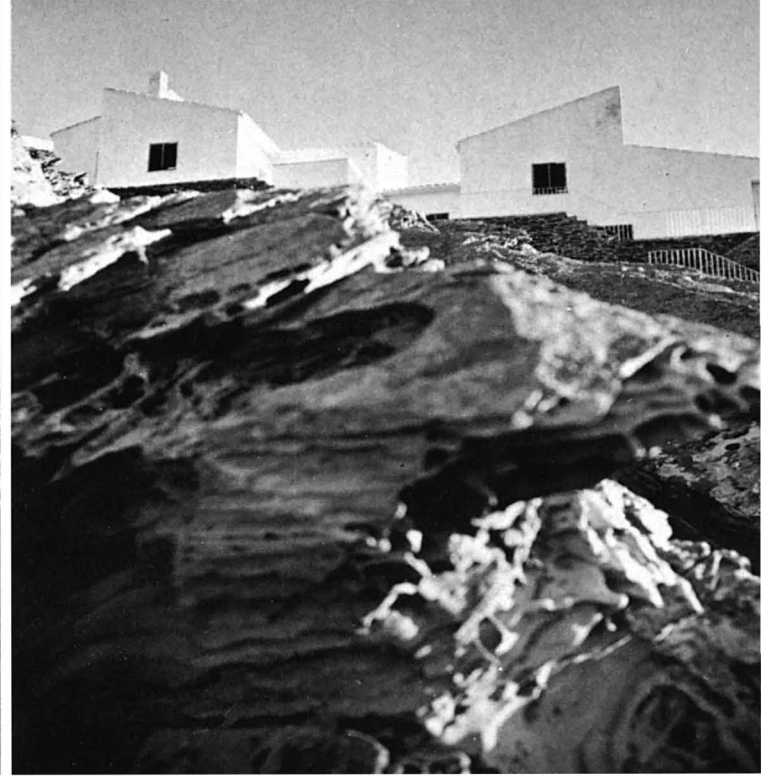
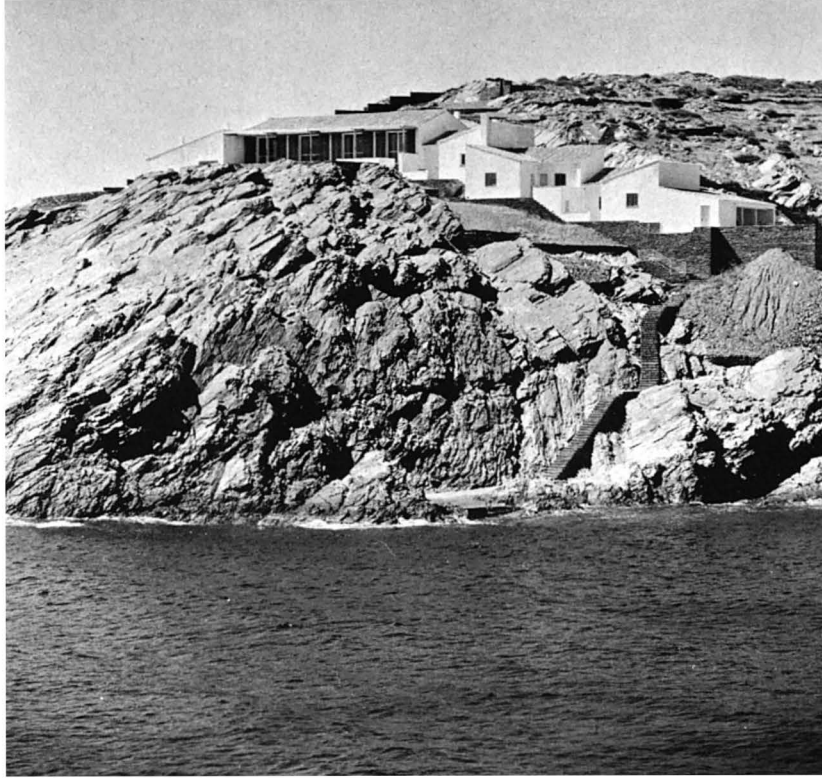


HOUSE IN CADAQUES 2

This summer house for American art dealer and collector George Staempfli illustrates again the architect's ability to create open, airy architecture in constant touch with nature. Views of the sea, village and landscape are framed, cropped, always sensitively controlled. The living room terrace is steel framed with laminated wood louvers for privacy and sun control.





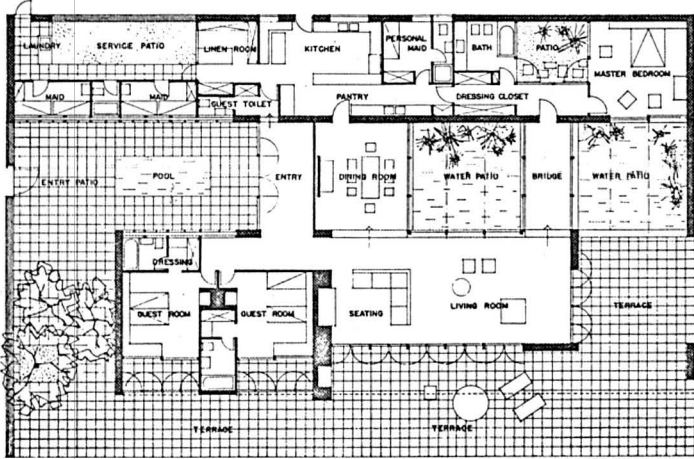


HOUSE IN PORT LLIGAT

This vacation house crowns a rocky precipice near Cadaqués on the Costa Brava. The complex has been articulated as a village, with interior courts and streets connecting the separate buildings. The core of the house is the large living area placed on the only sizeable level portion of the hill and containing the large scaled living room, the master and guest bedrooms. Kitchen and servants' areas are cut into the slope of the hill behind the living spaces. The children's rooms run down the slope to the west in a staggered line, linked by stone walks and steps to the garage entrance and a flight of stone steps leading down to the beach.

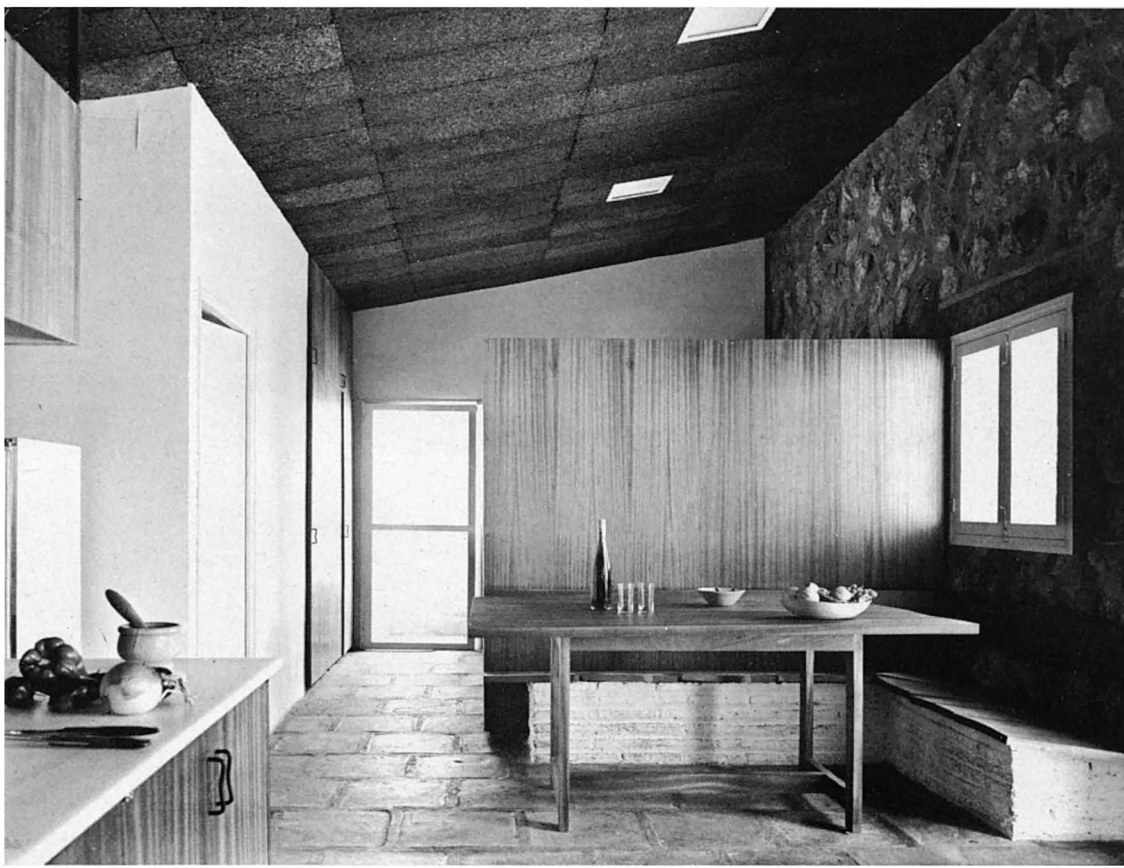


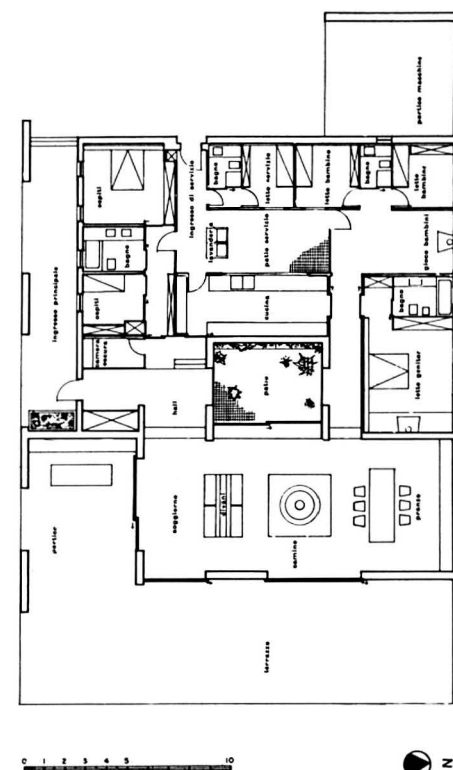




HOUSE NEAR MALAGA

The site for this summer house is the top of a small hill with a view in the distance of the Bay of Malaga. As with the others, it is built of local materials and in the local idiom. The walls are of granite block, enclosing a living area that opens on two sides to the terrace. The terrace itself is walled for privacy and for protection against the strong winds that blow in fall and winter. At the same time, summer breezes are captured and promoted by the many openings in the house itself and by the interior water and garden patios, which are roofed by light wood trellises spanned by split cane.

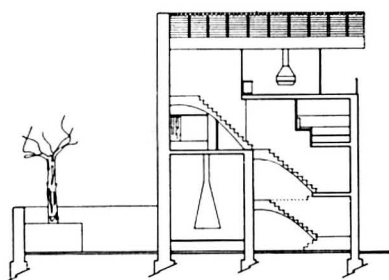
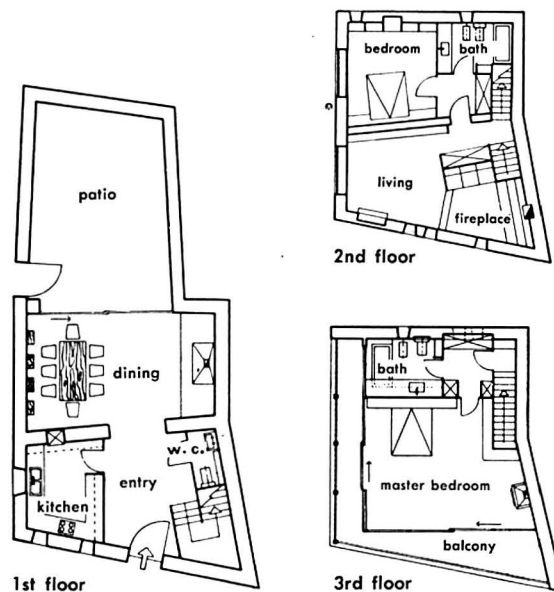
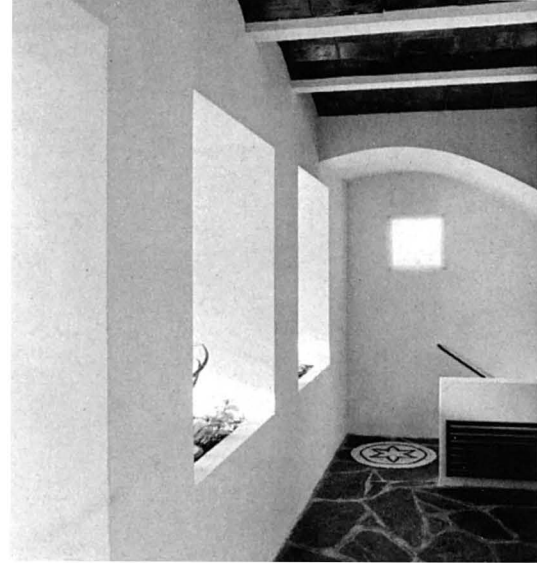




HOUSE IN PALAFRUGELL

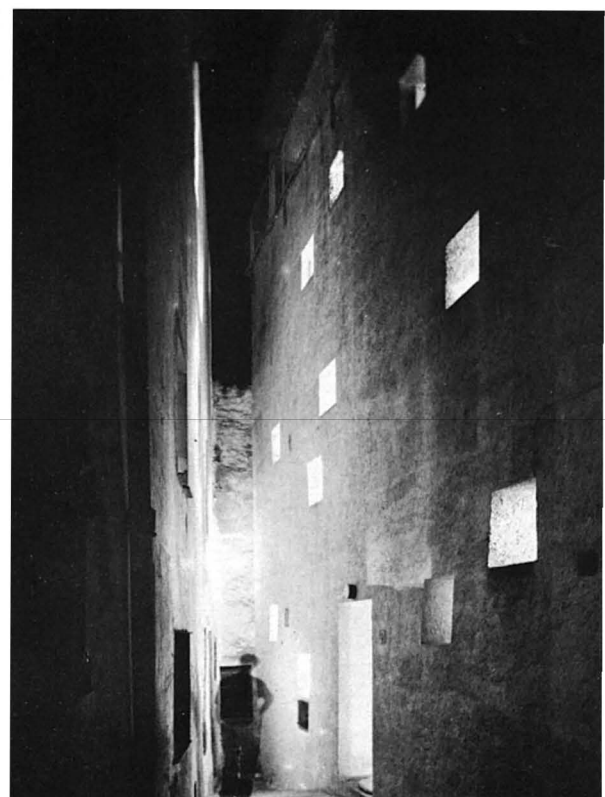
This vacation house is constructed near the summit of a roughly textured hill near an old village with the sea visible in the distance. The huge tile roof which shelters the terrace and portico is pierced at the center to admit light to two interior patios. The house is transparent from the interior garden patio through the living area to the terrace.

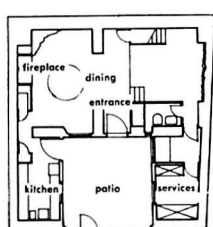




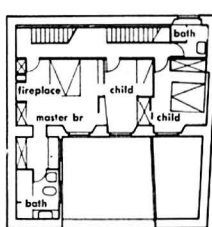
HOUSE IN CADAQUES 3

Another house in Cadaqués, which has become the new St. Tropez, is developed vertically above a small site. The two-story living area borrows additional space from a patio whose stone walls are a continuation of the enclosing walls of the house. On the interior, the stone floors and stairs and the limestone walls with built-in benches give a feeling of the walls and alleyways of the town.

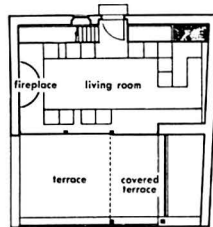




1st floor



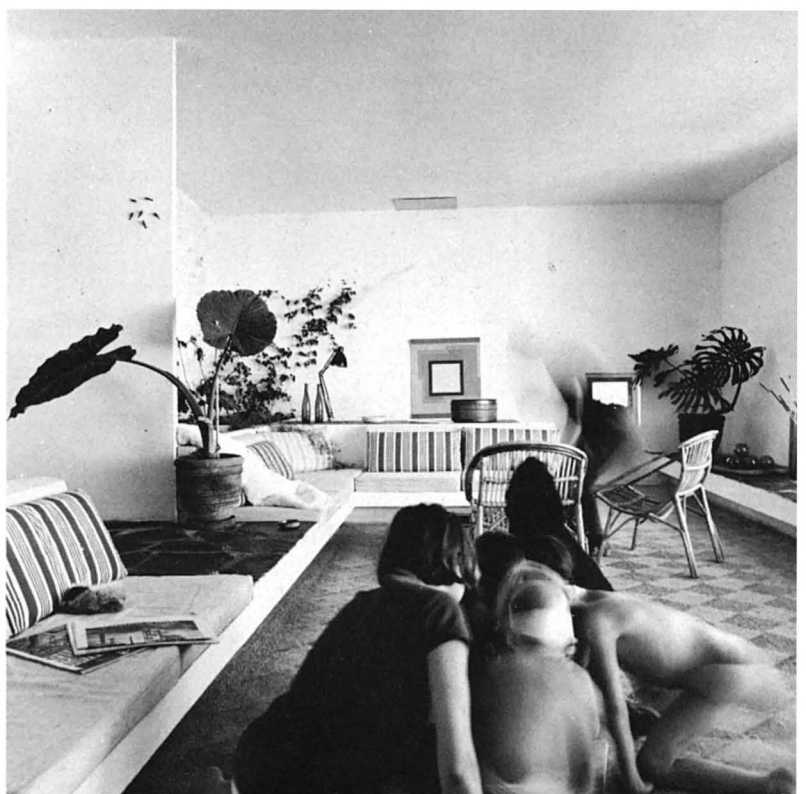
2nd floor



3rd floor

HOUSE IN CADAQUES 4

The living room of architect Bombelli's vacation house is a large, cool space which occupies almost the entire top floor. Glass doors and walls open to a dining terrace which is partly covered. Bedrooms are on the second floor and the major space on the ground floor is the dining room and kitchen. Like the majority of the houses, this one is uncluttered by furniture, containing built-in benches which are low and wide but by no means rustic.



Before the Industrial Revolution the breadwinner's tasks were, more often than not, performed at, or near home. The chores involved a great diversity of operations and personal decisions, providing satisfactions for adult psychological needs and mental stimulation for the attending child, with frequent opportunity to enter into the activities by rendering minor assistance. The towns were small by modern standards, so that the total, over-all diversity of urban forms and events in any community were to a large extent encompassed within the frequent orbit of the individual, young or old. If the city dweller so desired, the slight dimensions of the urban settlement also made the variety of nature in the surrounding countryside easily available, but there is little evidence of any widely felt wish for such rustic diversions on the part of the general public, before the age of the industrial revolution. Even the romanticism of Rousseau at first only affected what we today might speak of as the intelligentsia and the idle rich.

It was only the industrial revolution, with its monotonous specialization and greatly reduced role of self-direction in the provider's chores, with the removal of these chores from the previous diversity of the home environment and from the stimulus field of the child, with the tremendous expansion of urban dimensions tending to confine individual experience within greatly enlarged, monotypic neighborhoods—which brought into the picture the possibility of an urgent need to retain every element of urban diversity that can be preserved, and seek new sources of variety in all precincts of cityscape. Elementary recitations of earlier history, known to all, are neither enlightening nor germane. References to the remote past may serve to divert attention from current problems, but have no bearing upon their solution, and the suggestion that what is being done today is "not an iota worse" than what was done about 6,000 years ago seems a peculiarly feeble apology for modern design contributions to monotony. Personally, I am chiefly concerned with the changes I have seen in my own lifetime.

As the industrial revolution progressed there appeared an almost explosive diversity of forms and details in architecture for the affluent. There would be just as much, and just as little, logical reason for assuming that this may have expressed "a very profound human need" in response to rapidly changing conditions of living, as there would be for drawing similar conclusions from "the explicit unification of anonymous environmental design" in the uniformity of the workers' quarters built during the same period, echoing old traditions of minimum effort for the poor in person and for functions deficient in status value. Since the end of the first world war the visual inventory of our surroundings has suffered a quantitative leveling downward instead of upward, which, unfortunately, is not an isolated

occurrence in the process we are pleased to call social progress.

Sarcastic comments on the needlessness of research data in regard to the relationship between adventurousness and delinquency, especially when accompanied by extravagant claims about what has been "proven" by "exhaustive studies," can, of course, only inspire added apprehensions concerning the possible role, in urban design, of knowledge acquired by jumping to conclusions. How do we know, except as revealed knowledge, that "the alienation of the physical environment" springs "consciously or subconsciously" from the lack of contrast between shelter construction and "public buildings that symbolize the city as a shared ideal of power and wealth"? Have we any objective evidence that "generations of city dwellers lived and created civilizations because they were stimulated by great singular public buildings"? And which city dwellers are we talking about, the lords in their mansions or the paupers in the slums?

It seems fitting to apologize to the reader for having to explain the difference between primary causes and contributory factors. Tuberculosis is an infectious disease with the infection always present as a primary cause, but malnutrition, climate, clothing, housing, overwork, dirt, anxiety, and many other conditions may all be contributory factors of greater or less importance in individual cases and in population statistics. The disproven idea of dwelling type as a primary cause of socially objectionable behavior seems rather far-fetched to begin with, but I am not aware of any results of objective research that either could, or would purport to, rule out "some contributory positive connection" between visual monotony of milieu and juvenile delinquency.

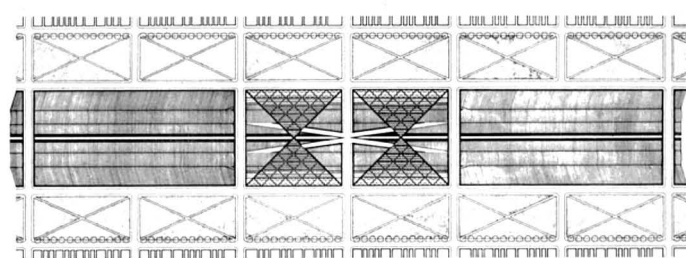
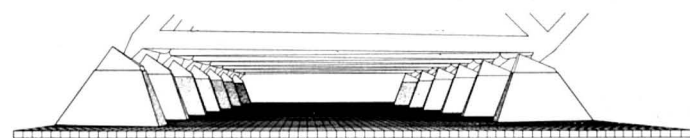
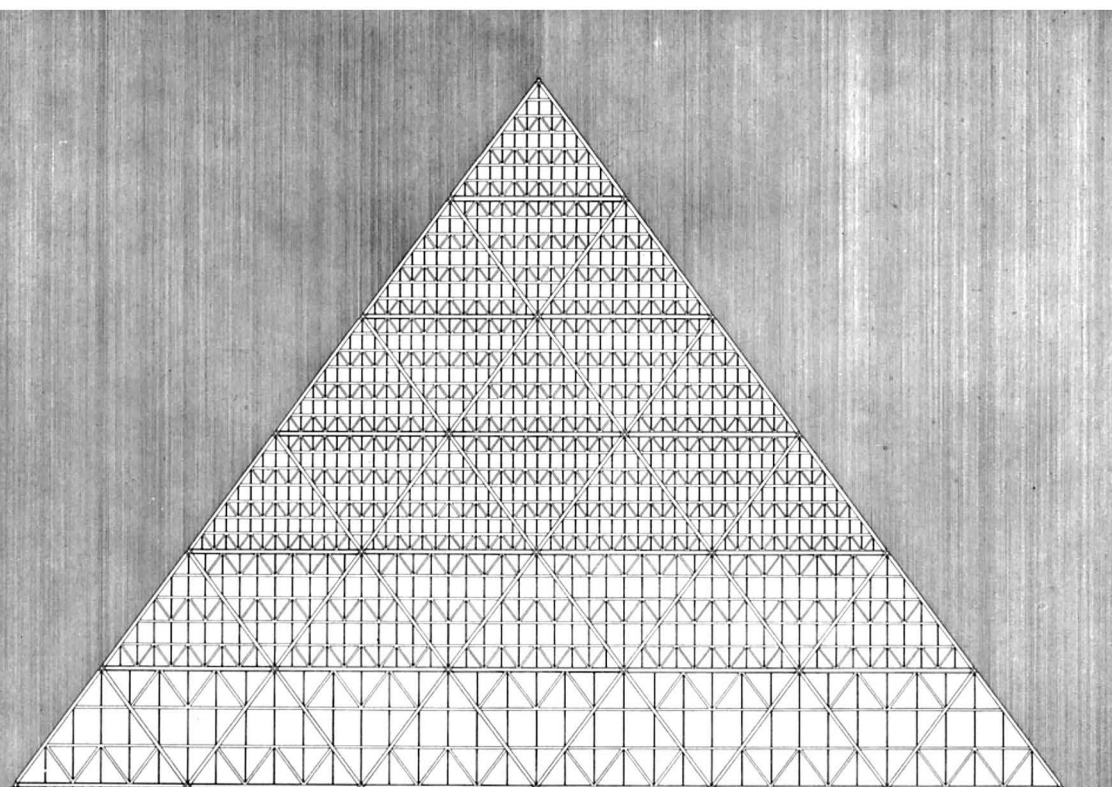
If they don't have bread, let them eat cake! If their neighborhood stifles them, let them visit the stoa! It is not true that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks if you have the patience for it. But the plasticity of our minds and personalities declines with the passage of time, so that it is still perfectly valid to speak of the early years of life as the formative period. A child of formative age spends some four to five thousand hours awake each year. It must be the duty of environmental design to provide proper settings for all of these hours, when young minds are open and young senses alert to the stimuli offered by the surroundings, with full recognition of the very limited daily orbits of the very young. One can only hope that not many designers will attempt to dismiss their responsibilities by easy and ridiculously inadequate prescriptions of occasional therapeutic visits to "public buildings and public places" to absorb the "elating, memorable and highly symbolic stimulus" of such august premises. My own misgivings relate to the daily diet of the senses, not to the visual ingredients of their Christmas dinners.

HISTORY & OTHER DIVERSIONS

A Reply to Sibyl Moholy-Nagy

By A. E. Parr, Senior Citizen

(This is the latest chapter in a dialogue between Dr. Parr and Prof. Moholy-Nagy. See A & A Feb./Mar. and May. Ed.)



INSTANT CITY BY STANLEY TIGERMAN, ARCHITECT

A Project Commissioned by the Vermiculite Institute

The project was commissioned to demonstrate aspects of lightweight, fire-resistive, water-repellent, thermal-reducing products as they relate to the notion of multiple building, city and regional planning.

Ours is a time of creating environments to accommodate expanding population. In that vehicular movement in and between existing cities is a reality and in that in such cities as metropolitan Manhattan land availability is becoming scarce and finally in that man's historic demonstration of building has been in single and isolated forms, the problem of linear cities reinforcing the axial movement of expressways was attacked.

The problems of the expressway are numerous, not the least of which is the carbon monoxide fumes of the vehicles. Though utilization of air rights over expressways appears to make sense, it rapidly became apparent that the exhaust problem was a major one. The apparent solution of building conventional structures over either median strips or paralleling expressways would tend to further divide the already separated communities. A further problem: linear, multiple use buildings of substantial density conventionally require structural design based on resistance to lateral forces such as wind. The environmental problems of expressway orientation also begin to present themselves when linear cities are contemplated. Finally, the economic problem of building rationally and quickly of reasonably lightweight materials must by necessity be attacked.

With these problems in mind one solution did ultimately present itself. The notion of building in reasonable increments of semi-pyramidal structures composed of one hundred foot by one hundred foot tetrahedral mega-structures seemed to be appropriate within which one, by spanning the horizontal geometric vector of fifty feet, could assemble a series of trays for varying activity.

Thus did INSTANT CITY evolve.

Lightweightness became a prime consideration. The mega-structure is composed of two foot diameter steel tubes, fireproofed and clad in steel. The base of the structure at grade is six hundred feet long conforming to the parameter of city blocks. As the structure goes up the six hundred foot dimension decreases until it reaches a point attaching itself to the next structure. There are three floors vertically dividing the lowest mega-structure with floor to floor heights of 21' 6" containing 77,500 square feet per tetrahedron or 155,000 per building increment of educational, institutional, light industrial and commercial spaces available for a flexible square foot leasing program. The dividing floors would be an 18" thick multiple cored slab and prefabricated in thirteen foot widths, the top and bottom flanges of such slabs made up of structural, dense reinforced concrete, the major center section of which the concrete mix is modified under controlled shop conditions to a lightweight Vermiculite concrete not effecting structural capabilities and lightening dead loads. These slabs are supported by a trussed, micro-structure on the buildings, longitudinal faces composed of clad, lightweight, fireproof, eight inch diameter, prefabricated, steel tubes. The micro-structure occurs throughout at alternate floors so that the slabs bearing on it are thus located at the points of the top and bottom chord of the micro-structure truss.

The second mega-structure is composed of 102,000 square feet per tetrahedron or a total of 204,000 square feet multiple or single tenant office space divided over five floors with fourteen foot floor to floor height. They as well as the first mega-structure institutional use sequence are elevated separately on a funicular basis. Mechanical, electrical, telephone and computer utilities are accommodated in the continuing fifty foot prefabricated, clear-span, lightweight, Vermiculite sections.

The next three mega-structures would contain 210,000 square feet per tetrahedron or a total of 420,000 square feet of available duplex apartment leased space spread over twenty-one floors of a ten foot floor to floor height, the width of such apartments being in multiples of thirteen feet and creating a broad marketing base of efficiencies up to four bedroom units.

The bottom floor of the top most tetrahedron is comprised of 5,000 square feet per tetrahedron or a total of 10,000 square feet of restaurant and recreational facilities, the final floors above which deal with mechanical services, elevator over-ride, etc.

The ground floor is completely open with the exception of entry cores. From that point downward there are four floors of parking and service accessible from the expressways.

The entire mega-structure transfers its loads through pin connections to a series of concrete buttresses supported by caissons with below expressway grade tension cables tying the structures together.

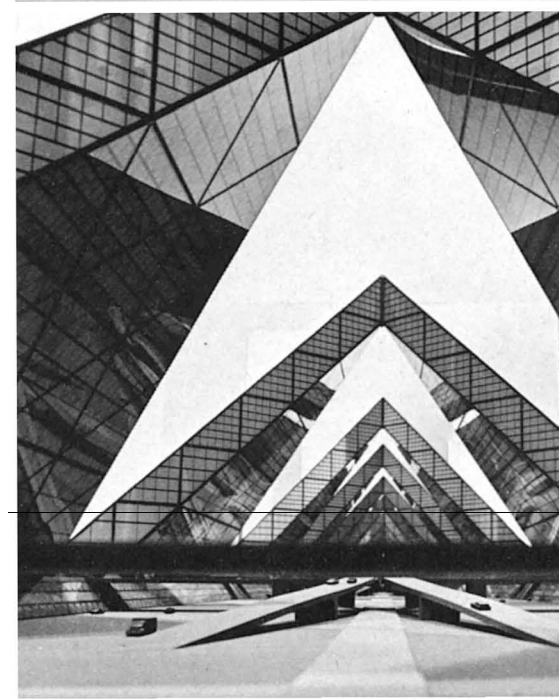
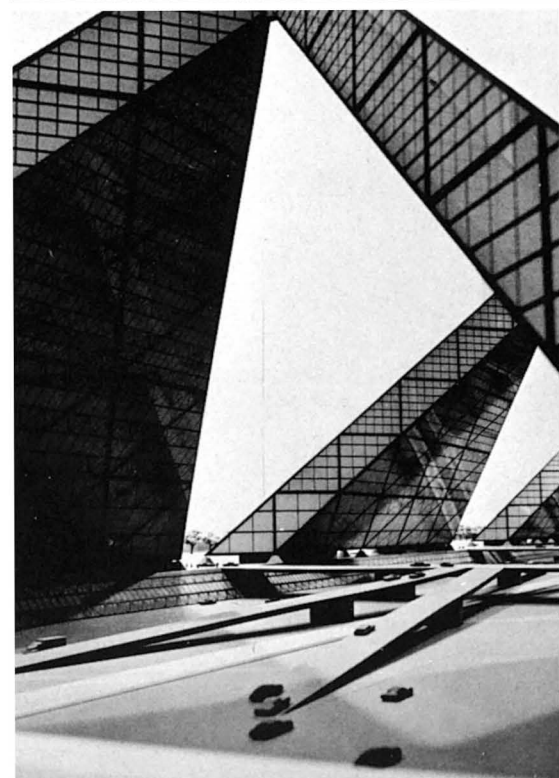
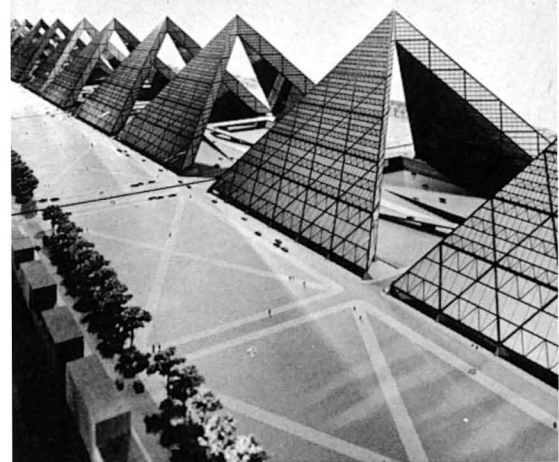
The problem of gas fumes is resolved in that the structures are effectively open as they span the expressway. Environmentally a statement is made in that dwelling units are single loaded and face a series of transitional parks, recreation, shopping malls, etc., before the city as we know it begins, thus minimizing the division of communities.

And so the name of the project INSTANT CITY: INSTANT in that it is buildable in conceivable increments quickly and rationally; CITY in that it is comprised of multi use facilities and while having the ability of becoming independent as a linear statement, further acting as a possible gateway to the traditional cities of our times.

STANLEY TIGERMAN



Photos by Baltazar Korab





KAMNITZER & MARKS, ARCHITECTS



The architects of this 38-unit apartment project in the Los Angeles suburb of Sherman Oaks, in an attempt to mitigate the evils of our purblind land-use policy makers who continue to conceive of the land as a consumer product to be sliced into ever smaller and more easily disposable units, have treated building masses and spaces between in a manner similar to that which an "urban designer" would employ with a large civic development.

The architects determined that a reception court should be built around an existing 80-foot-high conifer, inviting the visitor into the project rather than repelling him, as with the usual sequined or star-studded facade that characterizes low budget apartment projects. After experiencing the entrance court with its pine tree, fountain and pergola and free standing wall containing the mail boxes, the visitor is "squeezed" through a narrow space, arriving at the largest open area of the project. This area is planned on several plateaux with the sunken swimming pool at the lowest and the landings leading to the stairhalls at the highest. In between is the terraced major walkway leading through another constricted space to a second wide area, this time, however, extended at right angles to the approach. Again steps lead up to stairhalls, each serving four apartments, and down past private patios to the garage area. The total effect is that of a small European town offering a play of larger and smaller spaces, surprises, areas in sunshine and areas in shadow; a scale geared to the pedestrian, not the car.

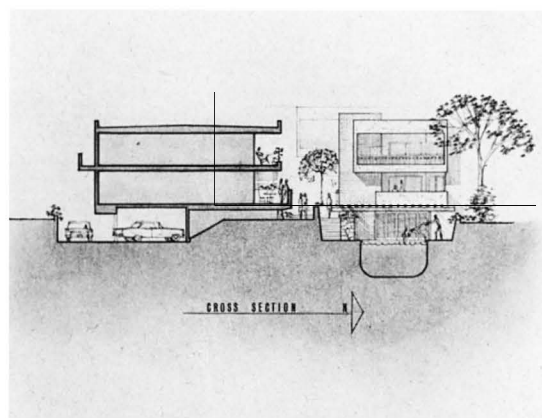
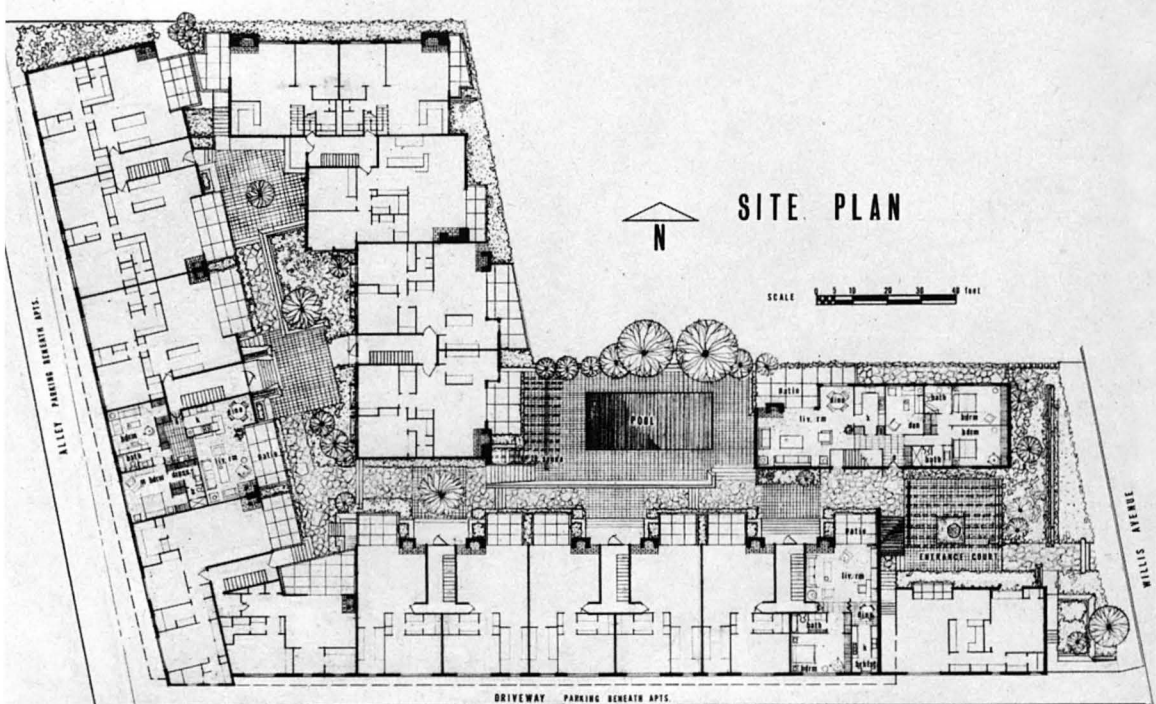
The soil excavated from the garages was filled, compacted and gradually terraced towards the rear of the property, avoiding a three-story walk-up condition in the rear section of the building, which borders an alley subject to flood conditions.

The major consideration for sculpturing the land was, of course, achievement of heightened interest. Various terraces are created, separated by three to five steps, and the walk through the project permits the visitor to take in the various vistas and visual surprises that the composition of the building complex offers.

There are other advantages to the cut and fill. By depressing the pool area and raising the adjacent walkway, the tenants using the pool are protected from through traffic. More important, the apartments surrounding the pool area are assured privacy and seclusion from the activities there.

The apartments are wood frame and stucco with twelve different plans, including one- and two-bedroom, two-bedroom and den and studio suites with three baths ranging up to 2000 square feet.

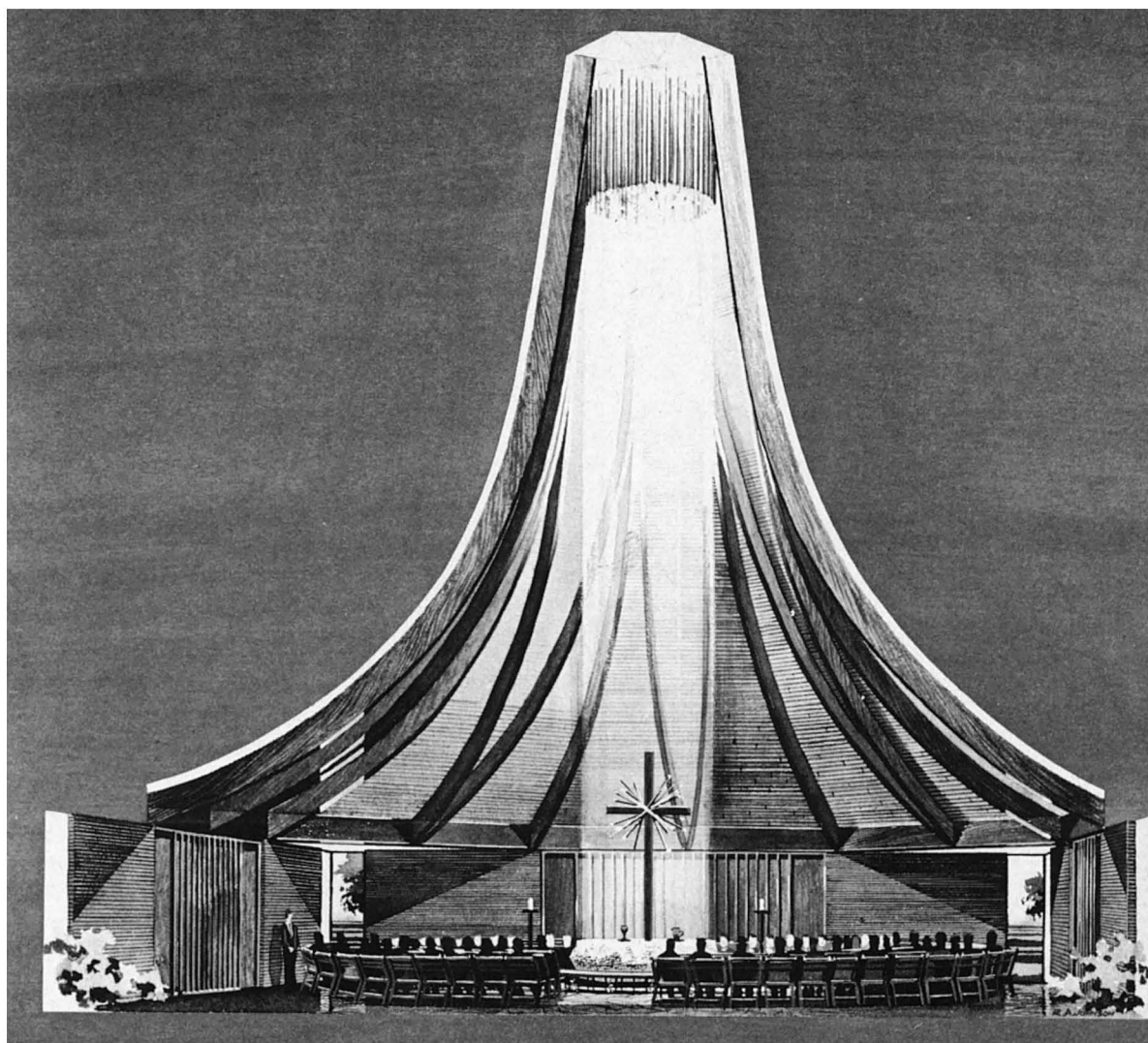
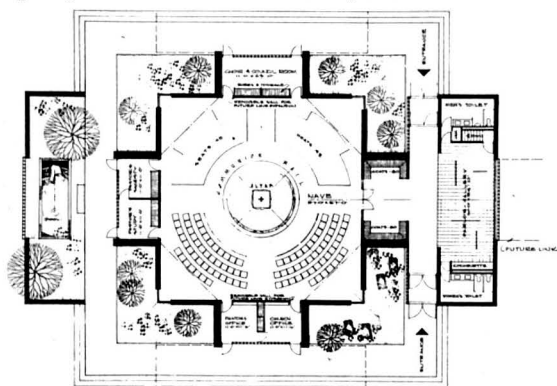
Photos by Jordan





COOLEY AND BORRE, ARCHITECTS

This Lutheran Church near Chicago (Stickney Township, Ill.) is for a congregation that has returned to an earlier form of Christian worship in which the minister sits among his communicants rather than preaching from a pulpit. The program required that the concept of the congregation gathered about the altar be expressed in the plan. The solution employs a laminated roof frame which rises 62 feet above the floor of the nave, terminating in a skylight that directs a shaft of light into the altar-communion area. The natural light is supplemented by a special reflective and directional lighting fixture. The 12-ton white marble altar is itself the cornerstone of the church; black brick walls and a grey concrete floor emphasize the white marble. On the exterior, the 100-foot-high shingled spire rises from a black brick base. The building, which is air conditioned, contains 7,820 square feet with a nave seating capacity of 300. Cost was \$180,000.



CONSTRUCTIVISM FROM KASIMIR MALEVITCH TO LASZLO MOHOLY-NAGY

BY SIBYL MOHOLY-NAGY

There is no better antidote against the proverbial ravages of time than the accumulation of sufficient mileage in years and experience to comprehend the cyclic nature of cultures. Like a pump primed with a shock of fresh water, revolutionary ideas come in discontinuous spurts till they flow as the mainstream of a new era. The OP ART phenomenon of the mid-1960s, promising the next legitimate development in art after the bogus side-show of POP, is no more and no less than a second spurt of the constructivist revolution of the 1920s. It is the privilege of young people to see their contribution as unique. Measured on historical rather than individual time, 40 years are a mere beginning in any cultural development with a claim to lasting continuity. More than a lifetime passed between Cezanne's *Bathers* and Picasso's *Desmoiselles D'Avignon*, and between Rodin's *Reclining Nude* and its perfection in the reinterpretation of Henry Moore. Despite the cliché of "cultural acceleration" almost beyond human comprehension, the gestation of art concepts cannot be measured on the tempo of scientific discovery. Art as "a continually unfolding manipulation of space which must be read as an experience in time" (Gabo) and as "a creation with purely optical means of expression, conditioned by perceptions of motion and change" (Moholy-Nagy) is just now entering its second phase of mutation. The antecedents from which this new phase developed are largely unknown to the Second Generation; yet it is by their subconscious absorption of the earlier solutions through the teaching of art and design, through photography, film, stage lighting, advertising and product design, that their optical art developed. When Harold Rosenberg writes:

"... Hope for the artist lay not in finding a new formula for 'stylizing' objects or ideas but in entering the historic stream of activity..."¹

he formulates the contemporary equivalent to a creative creed of total involvement, expressed in the Constructivist Manifesto which appeared in the Hungarian avant-garde magazine *MA* in 1921: "The new dimension of Constructivism has no other purpose than to participate in life. It declares itself identical with the forces of evolution which have produced science, civilization and social systems. Form and contents are one as simultaneous realizations of concept and action."

Academic and esoteric barriers are to be torn down separating art from environment and blocking the inclusion of scientific and technological developments into visual creation. The driving force is the supremacy of means and processes over finished results. This approach demands the total involvement of the spectator whose passive contemplation of the artist's ultimate expression is finished. Only the activation of all senses and all intellectual-associative faculties — blatantly causing discomfort and the bewilderment of lost orientation — justifies the presence of the viewer. Most important of all the characteristics shared by OP art ancestor and progeny is the willingness to indefinite transformation, the artist as seismographic needle of the productive ideas of his time — technological, scientific, philosophical, social — testing their validity against the sublimation of art.

D'Alambert once remarked: "History does not repeat itself — historians do." It would be self-

defeating to fall into this trap. The differences that separate the lone rebels of 1920 from the accepted experimenters of the 1960s are profound. The founding constructivists saw the key in depersonalization, a universal objectivity of values. The withdrawal of the contemporary artist into pure unmitigated self-projection, unconcerned to the point of ID-iocy with the impact of visual forms on society, represents a polar contrast.

Kasimir Malevitch, a Russian born in 1878, must be considered the founder of Constructivism although he called his work "Suprematism." His basic doctrine was the assertion that it is the mission of art to establish "the supremacy of pure feeling".

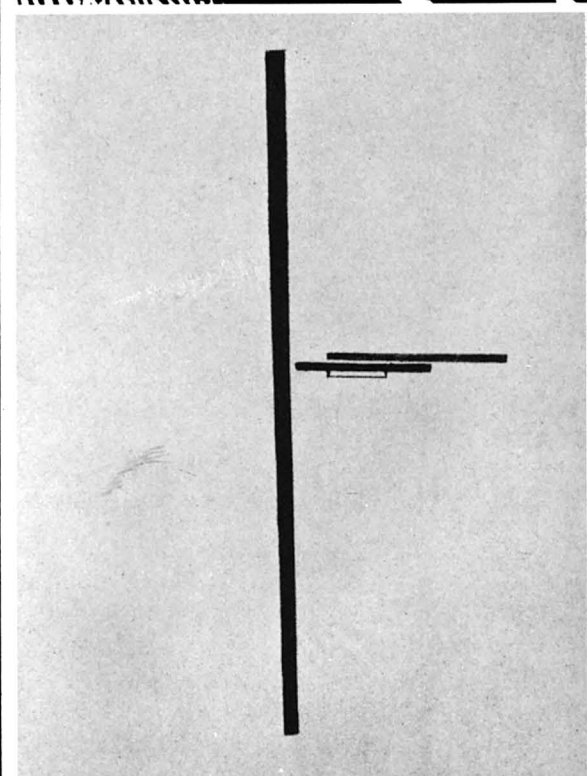
On a verbal level this seems to align him with the Expressionism of his time but the contrast and the challenge become visually evident. Representational Expressionism (Fig. 1) projected the most intense personal experience of the artist on an x-ray screen while Malevitch claimed for his work the sublimation of collective experiences into universally understood compositions (Fig. 2). Instead of identifying the cosmos with an individual model, Malevitch found a notation for the infinite that was pure idea. Cubism, the dominant art movement of the second decade of this century, was rejected by Malevitch as a mere fragmentation of naturalistic objects. His form was without likeness, sheer energetic density suspended in the ethereal void. He blamed Futurism for the same cowardly betrayal of its own ideology that had invalidated Cubism. Instead of symbolizing movement through the multiplication of static images, the floating progression of time was to create a true dynamism of the eye (Fig. 3).

No matter how primitive (in the original meaning of the word: "original") Malevitch's attempts might seem to us today, they have religious purity. Malevitch removed the model in order to arrive at a structured vision of man's cosmological sustenance. Cut loose from the last connections with the classical interpretation of art as *energeia* — the vesting of an idea in a definitive form — Malevitch's Suprematism was the first step toward *en dynamei*, the response to emotional experiences creating themselves with each new impact.

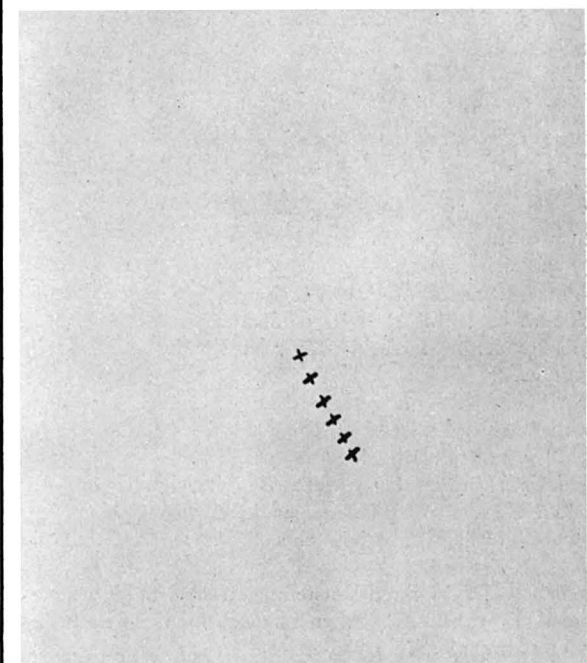
The limitations and ultimately the negation of Malevitch's new vision were inherent in the age-old fate of the prophet. The shattering originality of his emotional-visual revolution forced him in the pre-revolutionary period between 1910 and 1918 into a self-defeating isolation. A bitter melancholia speaks from his book *The Non-Objective World*² and the few other utterances we have from his pen.

"This is the zero-hour of art. The Fine Arts have been condemned. The idol 'artist' is a thing of the past. Suprematism condenses the whole essence of painting into a black square on a white canvas. I have invented nothing. Only the total night have I found and in its blackness have I seen the new."³ (Fig. 4)

El Lissitzky, Malevitch's most gifted disciple, was only 12 years younger, but these 12 years decided the momentous change from a defensive to an aggressive art revolution. The emotion-charged tracer bullets which Malevitch had fired into a dark cosmos, Lissitzky redirected toward the exploration of a social-scientific-mathematical reality. Following a millennial tradition that has compelled art to seek justification through mathematics and science, Lissitzky followed the space theories of his compatriot Lubachevsky. His aim was the liquidation of the Euclidean space parallax with its illusionistic object displacement on the pictorial horizon (Fig. 5). In its place Lissitzky put a



1. Edward Munch, "The Scream," 1895
2. Kasimir Malevitch, Suprematist composition expressing magnetic attraction, 1914
3. Kasimir Malevitch, Suprematist construction conveying a feeling of universal space, 1916



parabolically bent space defined by interaction of shapes aimed directly at the viewer. The aim taken was not only the emotional sublimation of the picture plane. The aim was the whole designed world.

Harold Rosenberg in the already mentioned evaluation of the contemporary American art scene, emphasizes the revolutionary fact that "artists have been taking account of the powers that control their environment. Most directly pressing upon art for more than a century has been art's gargantuan double, commercial art — including printed and display advertising, industrial design, product packaging, teaching aids and visual entertainment, from the comic books to the Big Screen."

While the cognizance of this vast spectacle of images as belonging to the totality of art might be news in America, it was Lissitzky, almost single-handedly, who moved effortlessly from exhibition installation (Fig. 6) to propaganda-posters (Fig. 7), from ballet and theater setting to typography and photomontage (Fig. 8). These diffusions of the Constructivists concept should, so wrote Lissitzky in the Gutenberg Testimonial in 1925, achieve through optics what the voice of the speaker does for the intellect. In a prophetic anticipation of television he concluded: "The next form of the book will be no longer typographical but mobile and pictorial."

It is a puzzling thought that Lissitzky's highly successful synthesis of Malevitch's pure ideological vision with his own vital, many-sided and pragmatic applicability did not save suprematist constructivism from disappearing around 1930 into the museums. This sudden loss of influence at the very moment when abstract art was finally recognized as a vital cultural factor might have two causes. The first cause was the rapid transformation of spatial perception through physical science. Although geared to the visualization of scientific principles, Lissitzky rejected any other art form than the easel painting. He had liberated his pictorial compositions from classical perspective, replacing the vanishing point with a foreground point of optical departure, and so had given to Constructivist painting one of its unique concepts. The creation of space as an experience of time in action seemed to him utterly non-sensical. The fourth dimension of kinetics in art remained for him "unimaginable, unrepresentable, without material reality."

Time as one-dimensional experience sequence, and space as three-dimensional experience limit, were to him without common definitions:

"We don't know any space except through the objects in it. And we don't know any objects except through their position in space. To shape space means to shape the objects in it."

With this viewpoint Lissitzky exiled Suprematism from the most decisive conceptual revolution of this century, space as a dynamic function of time. The other cause of the premature banishment, not only of Russian Suprematism and Dutch *Stijl* but of the whole early phenomenon of Constructivism, to art history treatises and memorial exhibitions seems to be connected with a confused identification of architecture and art. The socialist revolution which terminated the First World War and dominated the 1920s fell under an architectural psychosis. The young revolutionaries who participated in the liquidation of the old Imperialistic monarchies felt their art to be the highest sublimation of a new society based on equality and justice for all. Its symbol was the building as such, integrating in its structure, its form, its space, the building stones of a new community of men.

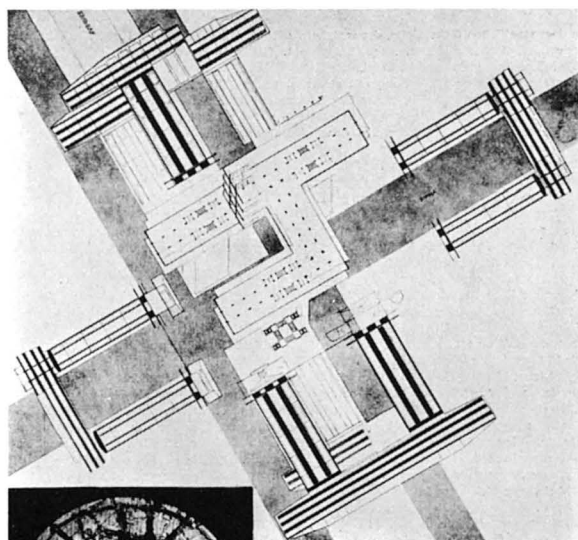
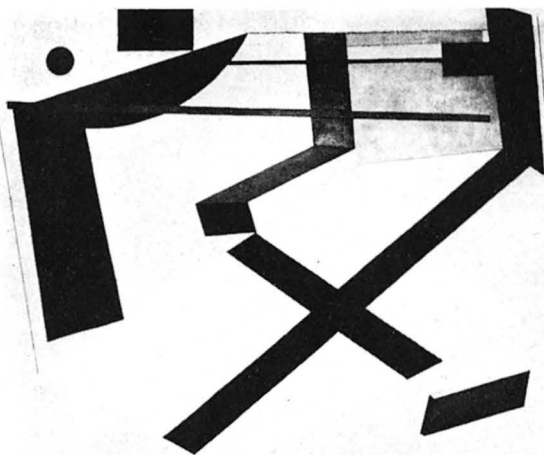
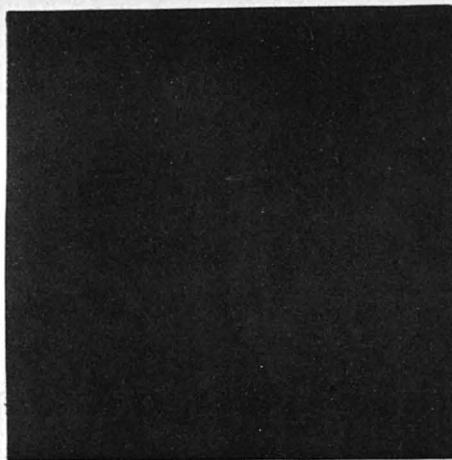
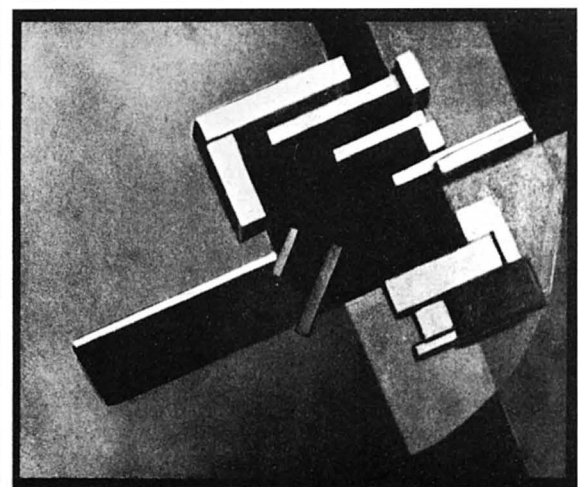
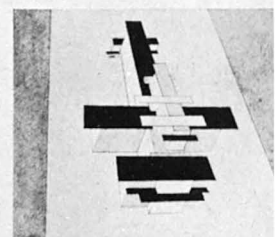
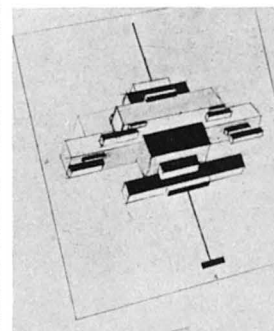
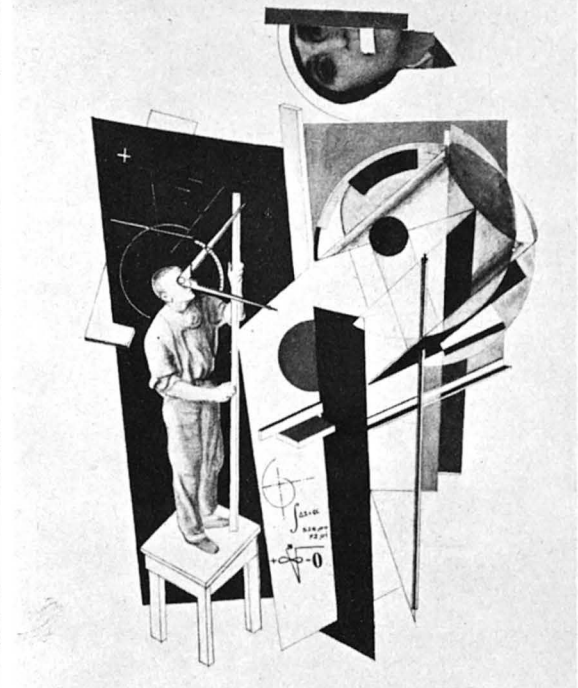
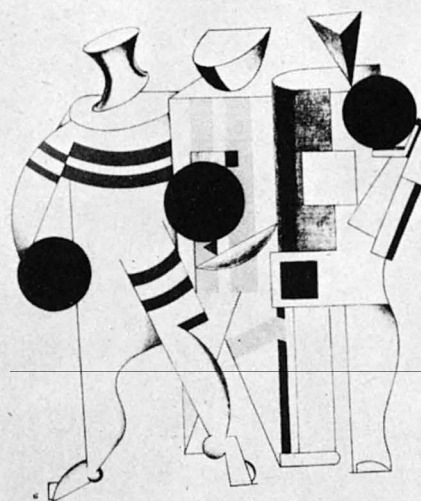
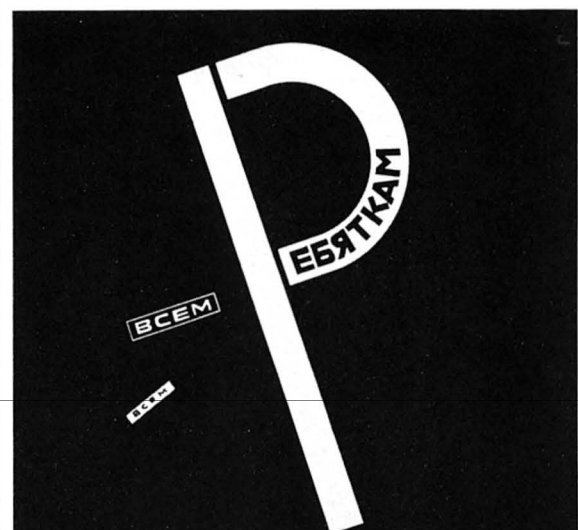


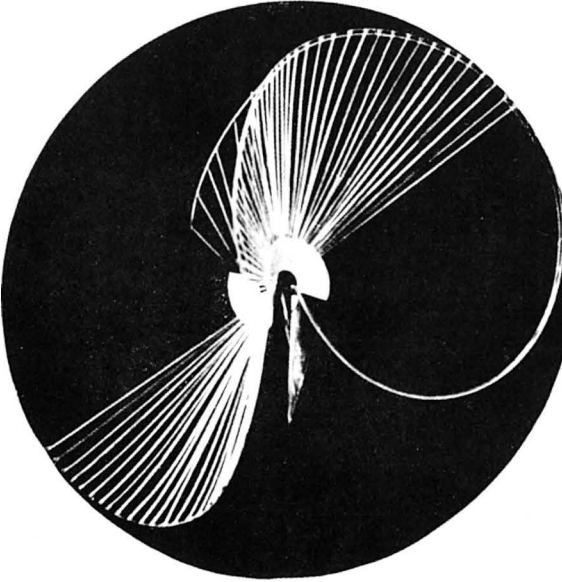
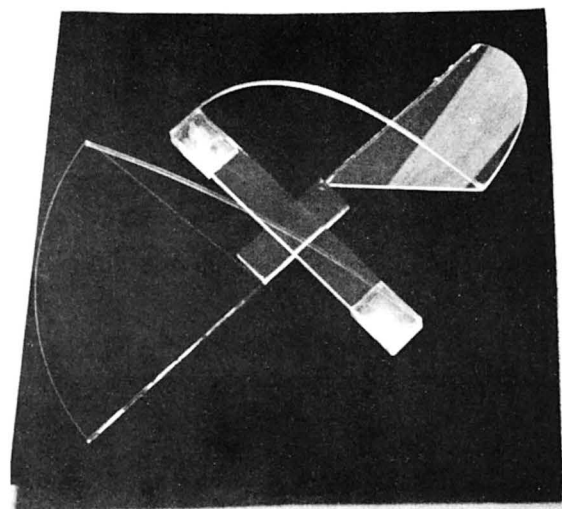
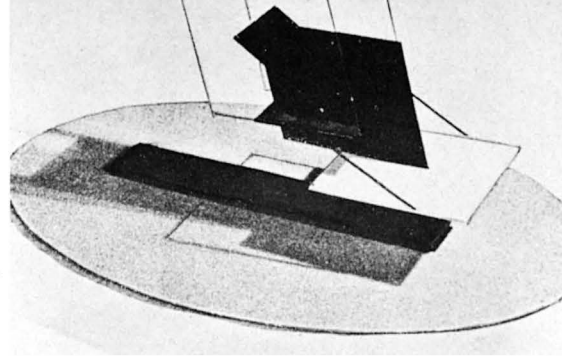
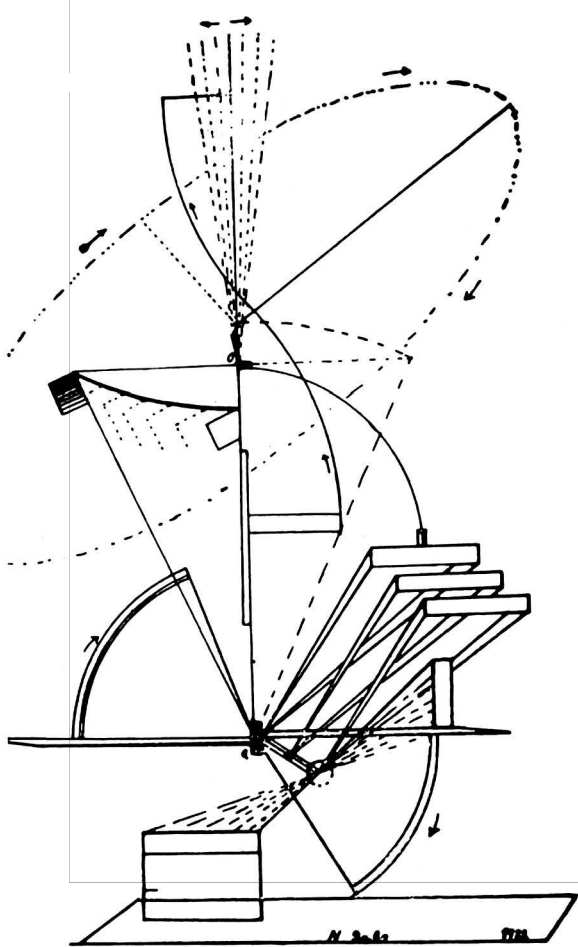
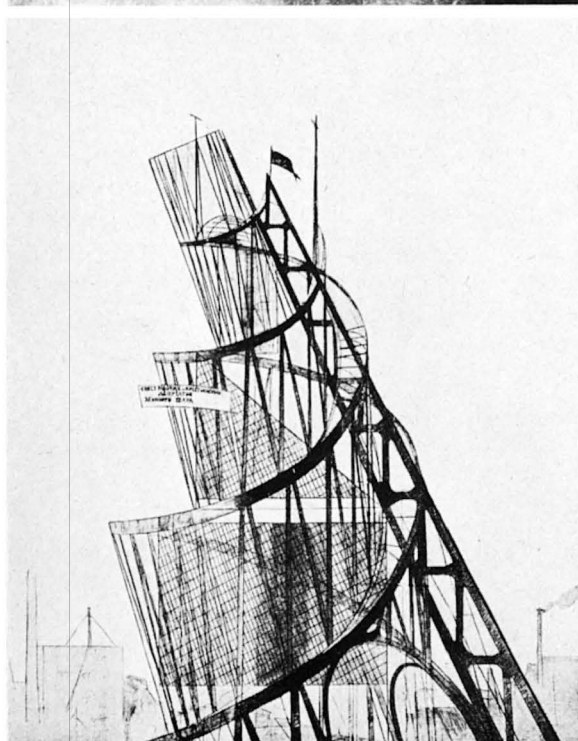
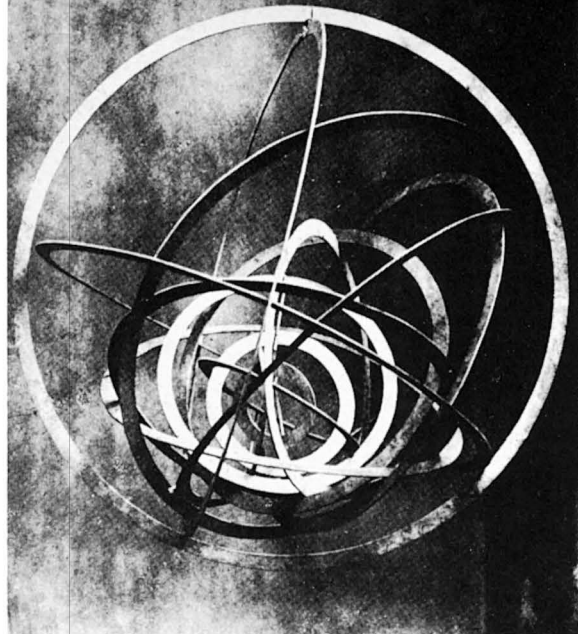
Abb. 26. El Lissitzky, Der Wolkenbügel 1924.

Moskau, Stadtzentrum mit dem Wolkenbügel am ersten Ring

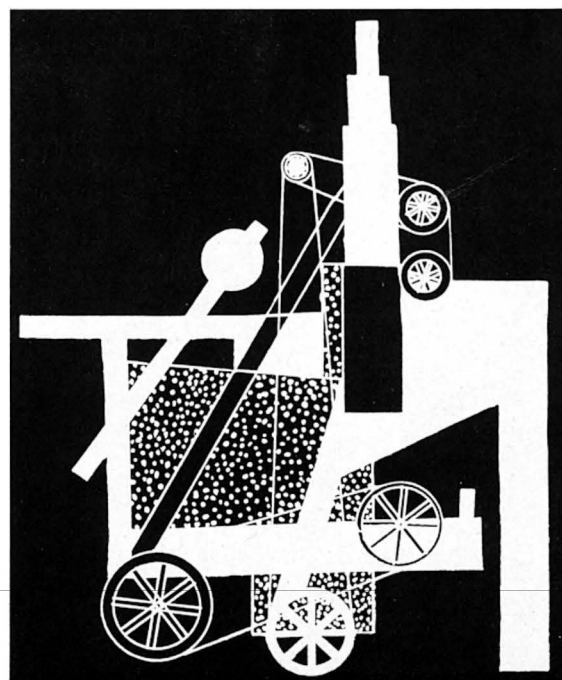


4. Kasimir Malevitch, The basic suprematist element: The square, 1913
5. El Lissitzky, Proun painting "30 T," 1920
6. El Lissitzky, typography "Everyone," 1920
7. El Lissitzky, "Sportsmen" from ballet, *Victory over the Sun*, 1923
8. El Lissitzky, photomontage, 1920
9. Kasimir Malevitch, Blind Architecture, 1913-24
10. El Lissitzky, "Project for a City," 1920
11. El Lissitzky, "Cloud Stirrups in Center of Moscow," 1924





12. Alexander Rodchenko, hanging construction, 1920
 13. W. Tatlin, Monument to the Third Internationale, side view, 1920
 14. Naum Gabo, kinetic construction, 1922
 15. Naum Gabo, monument for an airport, 1924
 16. Naum Gabo, square relief, plastic, 1920
 17. Naum Gabo, spheric relief construction, 1937
 18. L. Moholy-Nagy, "The Peace Machine That Devours Itself," 1920



The *Bauhaus Declaration* of 1919 written by Walter Gropius is perhaps the most precise statement of the idea of salvation through architecture. "Let us will, conceive and create together the new building of the future, which will embody everything in its *gestalt*: architecture, sculpture, painting. Out of the hands of millions of workers it will rise to heaven as the crystalline symbol of a new future faith."

Theo. van Doesburg, leader of the Dutch *Stijl*, movement echoed the Bauhaus directives when he proclaimed: "Only in coordination with architecture can painting and sculpture find their fulfillment."

And Malevitch had written earlier than either of the above quotations: "The new art of Suprematism which has expressed new forms and form relationships through emotion made visible, will be the source of a new architecture. It will translate the pure idea from the canvas into space."

In one of the most incomprehensible interpretations of his own axiom concerning the identity of form and content, Malevitch devoted himself after 1918 mainly to the creation of architectural models which he himself called "blind architecture" (Fig. 9) — cubic compositions without plan or section, related to neither interior nor exterior spaces.

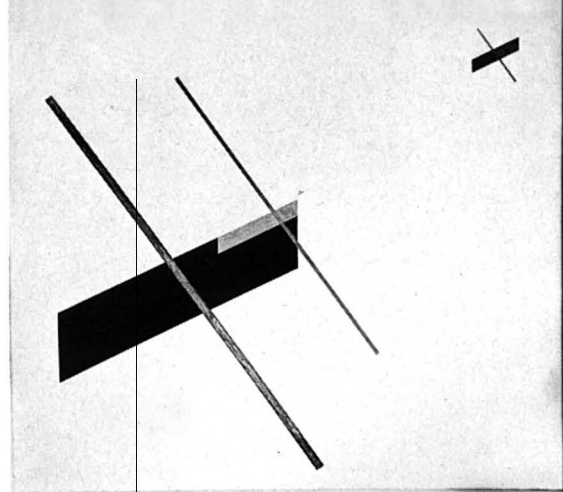
Lissitzky, faithful to his calling as the interpreter of his revered teacher, invented a new name — *Prism* — for his architectural compositions which he himself translated as "transit point from painting to architecture." (Fig. 10) When he was faced with the actual realization of an ideal architecture in the Russia of the 1920s, his ideas remained two-dimensional (Fig. 6). The anti-architectural character of Malevitch's "blind" compositions and Lissitzky's "transit stations," seem to prove the First Law of morphology — that every form-creating organism must strive toward its own, exclusive, unduplicable organization of matter or fail.

The fulfillment of the constructivist aim "to participate in the totality of life and declare itself identical with the forces that have produced science, civilization and social systems" by interpreting them with the specific means of the artist, fell to a slightly younger group of Russians and Hungarians. Free of Malevitch's transcendentalism and Lissitzky's programmatic rationalism, they evolved in a chain-reaction of impulses the four visual elements that carried the constructivist message: luminosity, chromatic, kinesis, and the interpretation of materials.

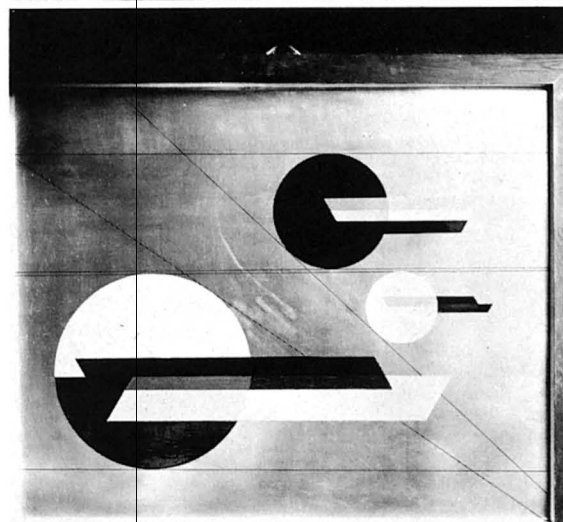
Like relay runners Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, Naum Gabo and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy lighted their torch on the original flame of Malevitch's vision and carried it into a new era by handing to each other the achievements of their search.

We who are today overexposed to Calder's Mobiles and their cheap imitations will find it hard to imagine the significance of Rodchenko's first motion sculpture in 1920 (Fig. 12). These inter-moving circles were a victory over Futurism whose symbolic dynamics was suddenly reduced to a windblown plastercast toga. In the same year Tatlin designed a monument for the Third Internationale (Fig. 13). A steel helix 165 feet high conveys the first convincing impression of endlessness, emphasized by geometric glass bodies in the interior that were to move in different rhythms and directions. Only a modest wood model was ever built but it had been shown that form and space are self-creating, interacting elements. The meaning of Tatlin's tower was not the object in

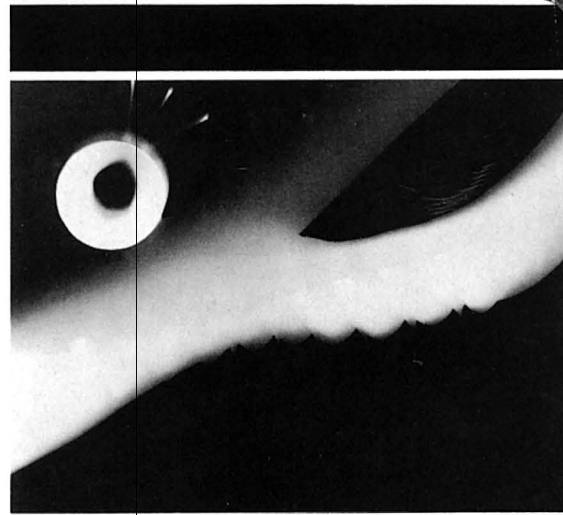
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21



19. L. Moholy-Nagy, collage and tempera, 1921
 20. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Great Aluminum Picture," 38 3/4" x 31 3/4"
 21. L. Moholy-Nagy, photogram, 1922
 22. L. Moholy-Nagy, photomontage, "Jealousy"



22

space but space, movement and light-coordination as the celebration of time.

Shortly afterwards, Naum Gabo constructed Kinetic Construction whose vibrating elements expanded into its own virtual volume (Fig. 14). In 1920 Naum Gabo and his brother Antoine Pevsner published before their departure from Russia the well-known *Realist Manifesto*. Among the plethora of programmatic manifestos issued by each new group of artists in those years of feverish discovery, the Gabo-Pevsner statement has retained a timeless validity. It reads in part:

"To realize our creative life in terms of space and time: this is our goal. . . . Our minds are stretched like a bow and we fashion our work as the earth its products, the engineer his bridge, the mathematician his formula of a planetary orbit . . . We deny volume as an expression of space . . . Depth is the unique form by which space can be expressed . . . We proclaim that the elements of art derive from a dynamic rhythm."⁴

With the intuition of the authentic creator Gabo avoided architectural affiliations and the charade symbolism of a technological age (Fig. 15). As Malevitch had before him, he shaped the essence without borrowing the model. Gabo made the instrument itself into a piece of art, and instead of Léger's flattened machine parts, it is the energy that produces machines that permeates his taut hard-edged constructions. Gabo celebrates weightlessness as a new *logos*, the dematerialized luminosity which the spirit of man has been seeking for millenniums (Fig. 16). Gabo's tragedy which one can only sense was the perfection of his craftsmanship. That supreme control over new materials and methods that lifted Constructivism from the studio and the gallery into the magnetic field of scientific and social cross-currents carried with it the danger of medium control as an end in itself. The Constructivist crystal which he and his brother had cut in so many sparkling facets was gradually reduced to one facet alone: "Surfaces, suspended in space, are inside and outside, convex and concave, relief and depression."

There is almost no development between Gabo's work from 1920 and that of decades later (Fig. 17), except a progressive refinement of mathematical order through the interaction of plane and edge, transparency and superimposition. Luminosity and the interpretation of one material alone proved insufficient for the total constructivist involvement.

This total involvement was the life Laszlo Moholy-Nagy chose for himself when he joined with the Constructivist refugees who struggled in post-war Berlin against famine, cold, and an art world that was totally immersed in Representational Expressionism. It was a collision with a defeated society that had lost all traditional values and tended by disposition to express its suffering in apocalyptic vision. Moholy and his friends were of a jubilant optimism, combining it with the sarcastic criticism of old institutions that is the privilege of beginners. His "Peace Machine Devouring Itself" (Fig. 18) was a take-off on the Versailles Conference which, by its continuous collapse, might rate as the direct ancestor of Tinguely's machine art. More important was the decision for a total *tabula rasa* (Fig. 19). A new beginning from which all memories of his earlier successful work as portraitist had vanished would reveal fundamental optical relationships as the building stones of a new vision in motion. With the preternatural perception reserved by providence for curators alone, Alfred Barr Jr., discovered in both Lissitzky's and Moholy-Nagy's work Suprematist elements adopted from Malevitch and labelled them

more or less gifted eclectics.⁵ While thus passing judgment on practically every important artist and art movement of history, he overlooked the decisive difference between Suprematism and Constructivism: the variation in depth of the picture plane achieved not through linear and planar direction but through the interaction of chromatics and space (Fig. 20). The three-dimensional superimposition demanded a craftsmanship that had to be acquired by exploring the densities of collage and the fluidity of pigment in many experiments. One is reminded of the wise commentary of Joseph Albers:

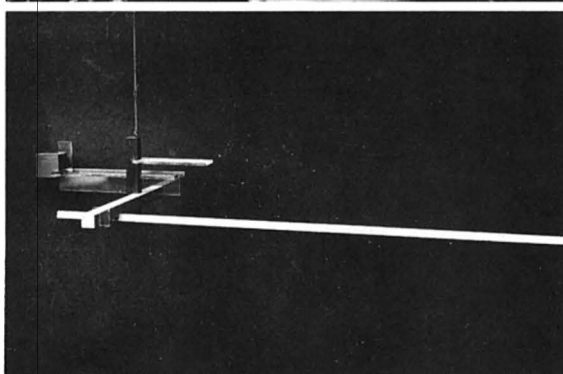
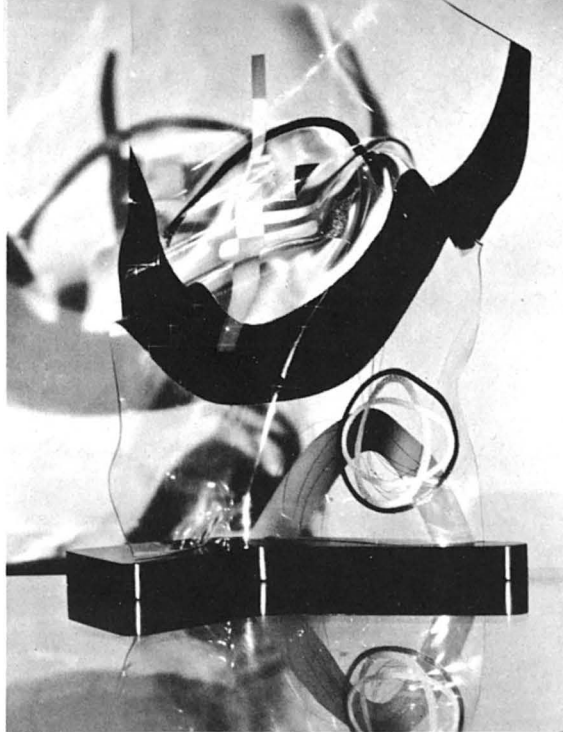
"There is a profound difference between self-discipline and self-expression. Each presentation needs rehearsals, and each statement rests on exercise. Planning precedes execution. Constructivism is study, not revelation."

The next step in Moholy's fulfillment of his constructivist vision was nevertheless a sort of revelation — not in the form of a creative muse but in the form of an Erneman Camera and the light-sensitive emulsion. By 1923 Moholy had come to the conclusion that pigment and picture plane were not sufficient to coordinate light, color, motion and the potential of new materials into a constructivist *Gesamtkunstwerk*. With the natural logic of the dilettante he understood that photography had been poorly exploited as a creative means because the photographic lens was considered the significant factor. His senses sharpened by his experimental paintings he concentrated on the interaction of emulsion and light as the unique and creative elements in the photographic process. The lens was a mere tool to this end. His first break with easel painting was therefore not the naturalistic image but the photogram (Fig. 21). Here the graduations and superimpositions of his paintings acquired a new luminosity and depth. The object dissolves into light values.

When he turned to object photography it was not as a record of likenesses but as an investigation of light and structural relationships through close-up, bird's-eye view, texture, and shadow pattern (Figs. 22, 23). His special interest was the positive and negative printing process, the ability of the photographer to transform perception from day into night, and from the familiar to the ghost-like apparition.

It is hardly remembered today that at its founding in 1919 the German Bauhaus had been as romantic-expressionistic as the art of that period in general. Between 1923 and 1930 Moholy-Nagy and Joseph Albers converted its program almost singlehandedly to constructivism. Each master teacher assumed responsibility for one of the production workshops regardless of his status as an artist. Besides heading the metal workshop whose main function was the design of lamps which today have become standard commercial types, Moholy and Albers developed a foundation course of visual fundamentals which is the basis of most design curriculae today (Fig. 24). In addition there was the typographical Bauhaus revolution brought about by Moholy's and Herbert Bayer's experiments in layout and typography, and the exploration of kinetic motion in collaboration with Oscar Schlemmer. They formed the basis of settings for the State Opera in Berlin (Figs. 25, 26) where the superimposed planes of the canvases, the transparency of the photograms and the de-realization of the recorded object were transposed into a symphonic entity.

The chaos and destruction of the Hitler regime exiled Moholy and his collaborators from the Bauhaus and Germany. In London, Alexander Korda offered him the construction of "the city



23. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Shadows," 1923

24. Bauhaus workshop, "Exercise in Equilibrium," 1923

25/26. L. Moholy-Nagy, stagesetting for "Madame Butterfly," (Staatsoper Berlin) 1930

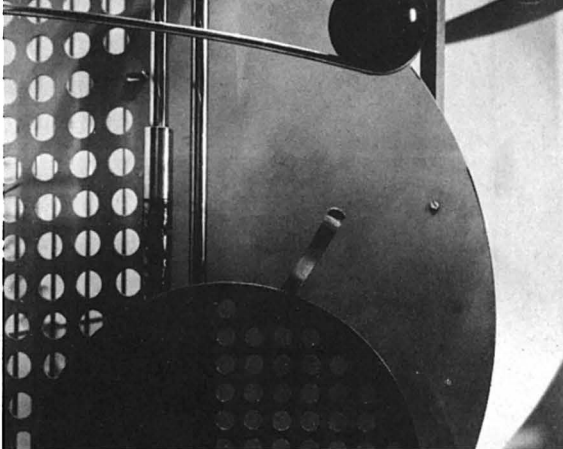
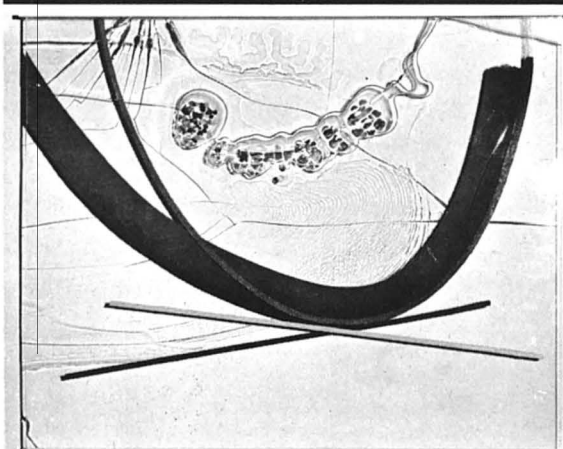
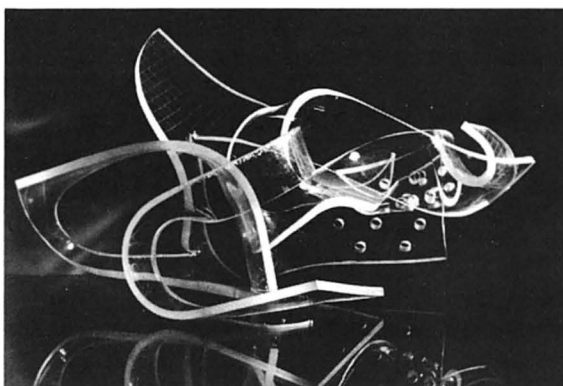
27. L. Moholy-Nagy, plexiglas space modulator, "Papmac," 1937

28. L. Moholy-Nagy, warped plexiglas form, 1940

29. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Virtual Volume," 1941

30. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Light-Edged," 1945

31. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Lightplay," black-white-grey, 1930



of the future" in H. G. Wells' *Things to Come*. This was the fateful encounter with a brand new industrial product: plexiglas, which in 1936 was in its earliest experimental stage (Fig. 27). With the eagerness of the cardboard constructivist Moholy got hold of damaged sheets whose irregularities fascinated him. Later, as the material was perfected, he rejoiced as much in the flawless transparency of a material that responded to pigment and engraving, to perforation and warping, and to a kinetic light and shadow play on any background (Fig. 28).

In the natural cycle of stimulus, response and transposition, there developed from those first beginnings with plexiglas and a wide range of other plastics in the film studio at Ealing, new exhibition designs in Holland and America that became prototypes. This intimate acquaintance with new technological products stimulated student experiments at the Institute of Design in Chicago, ranging from fibreglass textiles to exquisite lucite chess sets, and from mass-producible furniture to the smallest workable telephone and the simplest, most luminous desk set for Parker Pen.

All this would amount to no more than a fine design talent if this total grasp on visual environment had not sublimated itself constantly in the disinterested vision of the artist. Around 1940 Moholy constructed his first mobile from wood and nickel rods. It fascinated him as the medium for a dynamic virtual volume (Fig. 29). By encouraging the viewer himself to set the forms in motion, Moholy hoped to achieve a participation experience that would stir perceptive impulses deadened by the mechanization of our existence. Later the leaves of the mobile turned transparent, adding a mobile shadow to the virtual volume.

But in the end, in the last year of his life, he turned away from mobiles as too limited and too mechanical in their active response. The plexiglas sculptures he made before his death in 1946 are infinitely subtler in their total projection of light than any mechanically animated object can be (Fig. 30). Light flows along the edges of the solid material which thus becomes the contour of space and the mediary between the artificially shaped transparent plane and the movement of the atmosphere flowing around it. Only one step beyond this structured dynamics was possible and this was the motion picture (Fig. 31). Since 1926 Moholy had worked on a mobile metal sculpture that would permit a controlled light and shadow composition just as the photogram was based on control of light impact and emulsion. The light modulator was finished in 1929. The "Peace Machine That Devours Itself" had changed into the Lightmachine that creates endless spaces. In 1930 Moholy composed a lightplay, a very simple short picture whose rhythm does not come from a sound track but from the movement of luminosity. Its message goes back to the initial message of Constructivism: that form is depth and the creative process an unlimited dynamic transformation, that perception is the carrier of human emotion and that it is the subtlest awareness of this perception to all phenomena of life that saves man from stagnation and desperation. Because only the evolving and the unknown are hope undefeated.

¹ Harold Rosenberg, "From Pollock to Pop," *Holiday Magazine*, March 1966.

² Kasimir Malevitch, *Die Gegenstandslose Welt*, Bauhausbuch No. 11, 1927

³ Kasimir Malevitch, *The Non-Objective World*, P/Theobald 1959 in *Hans Arp, El Lissitzky*, ISMS, Zurich 1925

⁴ Chas. McCurdy, *Documents of 19th and 20th Century Art*, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn where it is wrongly listed as "Constructivist Manifesto."

⁵ Alfred Barr Jr. *From Cubism to Abstract Art*. The Museum of Modern Art, NY. 1936

KINETIC SCULPTURE

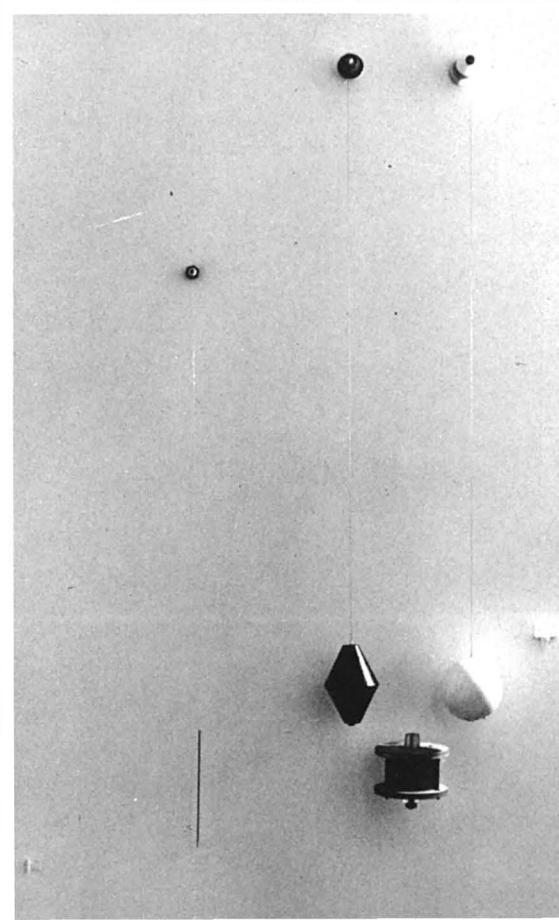
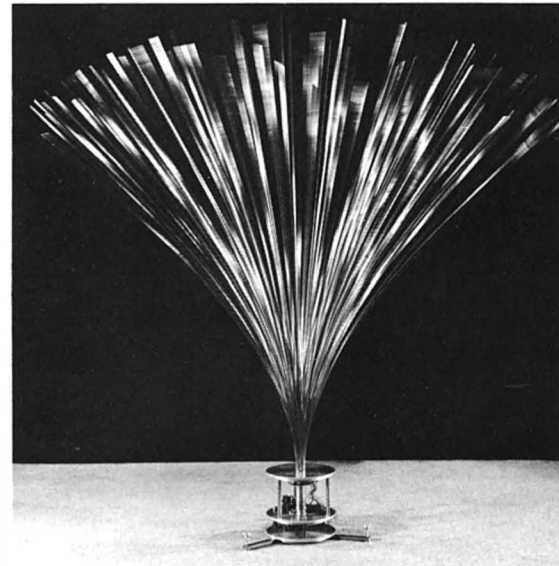
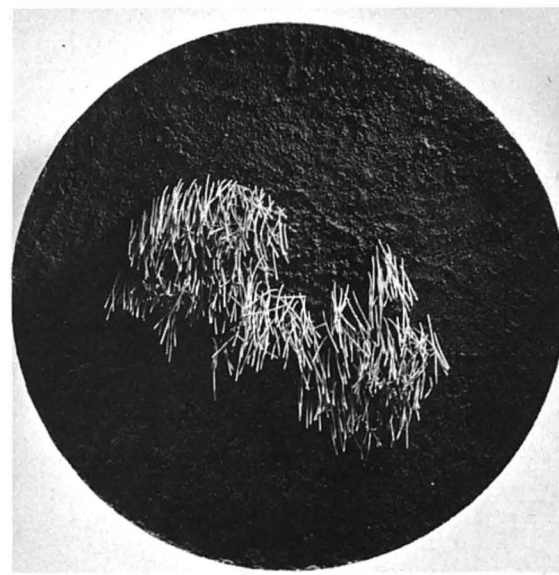
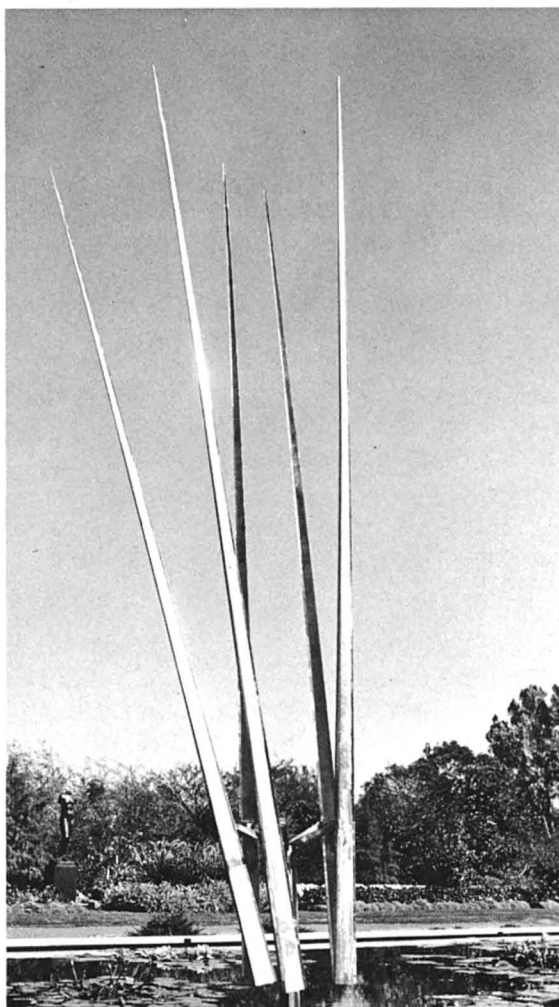
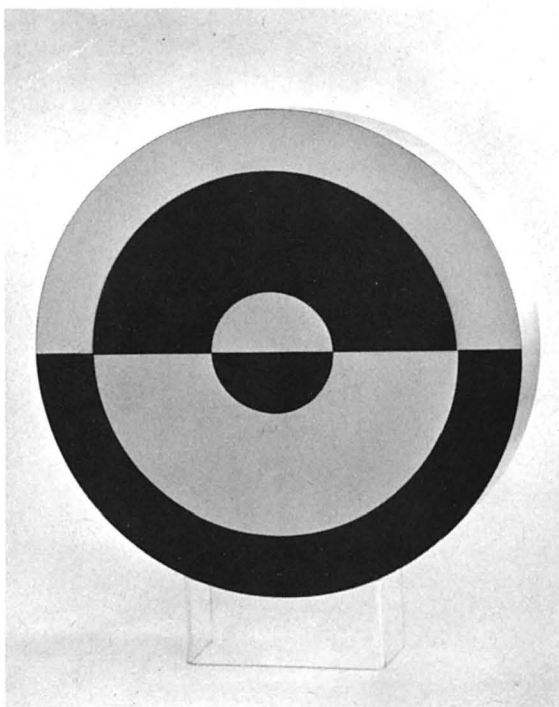
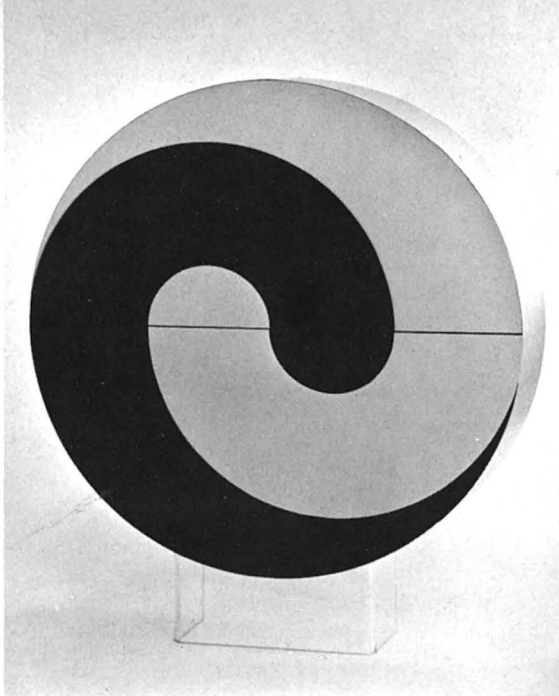
An Exhibition Assembled by Peter Selz at the University of California, Berkeley

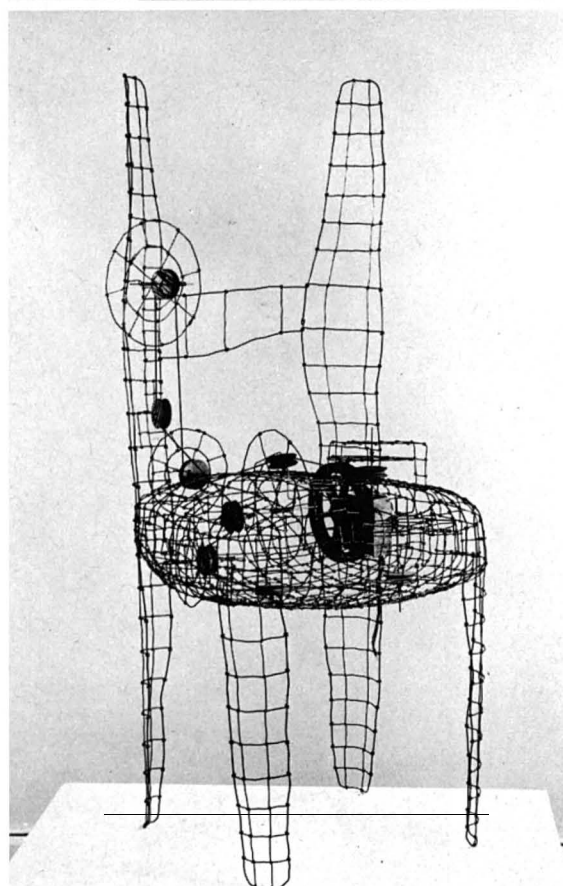
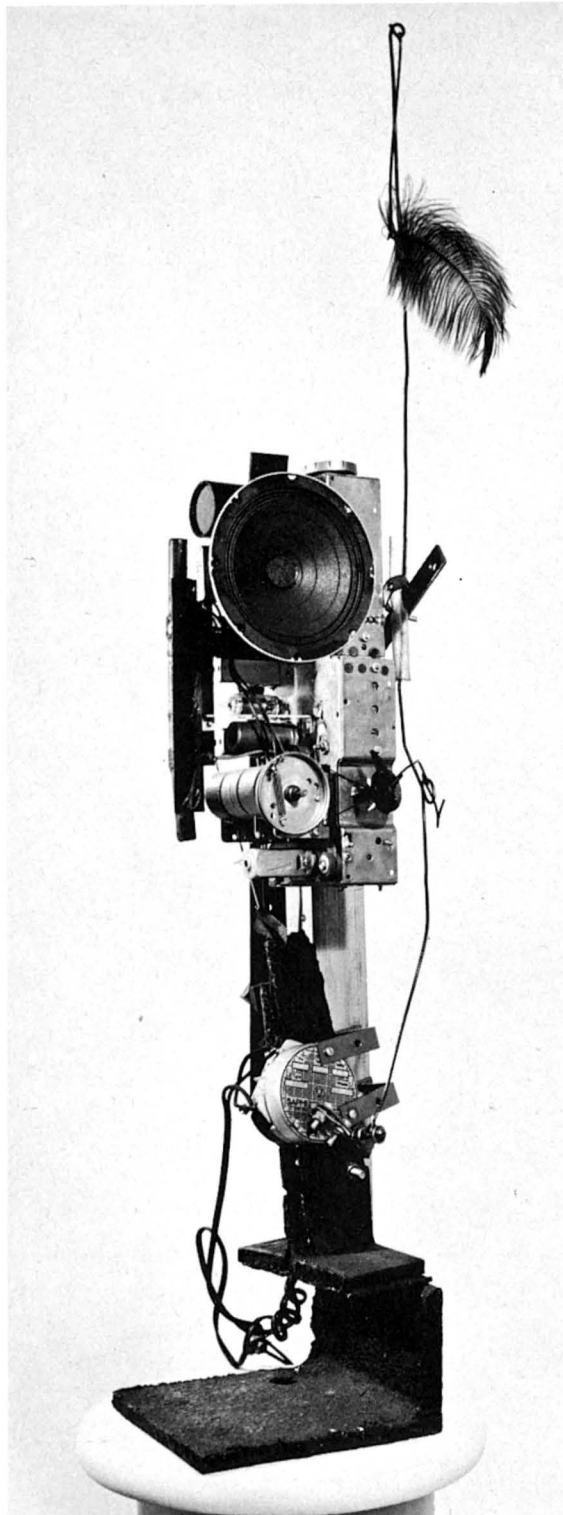
In 1920 the Constructivist sculptor Naum Gabo built a motorized steel structure which he entitled *Kinetic Sculpture*. In 1922 in *Der Sturm* Moholy-Nagy formulated the theory of kinetic art which he defined as the "relationships of energies" rather than forms, and which foresaw the day when art would be an "event" unfolding before the spectator. Then, for almost three decades the word "kinetic" was forgotten. Not until the mid-fifties did artists seriously begin to investigate the possibilities of "vision in motion." In 1955 the first international kinetic show "Le Mouvement" was held at the Galerie Denise René in Paris. Soon thereafter in the late fifties and early sixties groups such as Group Zero in Düsseldorf, Groups N and T in Italy, Equipo 57 in Spain, and Recherche d'Art Visuel in Paris were formed to further collective research in kinetics. Then in 1961 La Nouvelle Tendance was organized in Zagreb as an international movement of sixty artists which set forth its official precepts as primacy of research, depersonalization of art, and open communication and collective work.

Although the widely ranging interests of these various groups and the extreme diversity of "media" used in this art make a definition of its "esthetic" almost impossible, there do exist certain fundamental concerns which are germane to all kinetic art. As George Rickey, one of the movement's most exciting sculptors and articulate spokesmen, wrote in *Art Journal* last summer they include bypassing traditional materials; consideration of light and movement as expressive in themselves; use of microelements as creators of forms, tones, and forces; new ideas of the space-time continuum between two and three dimensions; the objectification of a work through mathematical relations of change and randomness and spectator participation.

With these ideas in mind kinetic artists have developed a rational and scientific art. Accepting the invisible as well as the visible external forces that condition life as the basis of their art, they are investigating esthetic possibilities that radically change the relationship between artist and the work of art, and between the work of art and the viewer. The artist, like the spectator, experiences the work of art as a performance which is enacted before him, and like the spectator, he does not know exactly what variations will occur in that performance. Consequently, unlike earlier Abstract Expressionism, kinetic art does not reflect the personality of the artist. It has a "personality" of its own which is revealed when it moves. Although the mechanics of kinetic art are considered "suspect" by the more conservative and stable-minded, if one considers to what degree motion and energy have rearranged life in this century, from the splitting of atoms to the launching of rockets, it is not surprising that the same forces have also begun to rearrange art. To what extent "vision in motion" will change the way we look at art and the world is impossible to say, but as the exhibition "Directions in Kinetic Sculpture" organized by Peter Selz at the University of California, Berkeley, demonstrates the possibilities of this art are too varied and the intentions of its creators too serious to think that it will be abandoned shortly as mere fad.

In this show kinetic sculpture runs the gamut





from George Rickey's "Etoile Variation II," which is controlled by wind and gravity, to a whole spectrum of motorized and magnetized pieces ranging from Fletcher Benton's moving "Op Art" (Fig. 1) to the startling performance of Len Lye's *Trilogy* in which steel bands rise slowly toward the ceiling and suddenly crash to the floor. But, within this wonder-motionland there do exist common denominators which define three varying approaches to kinetic art. Some artists such as Rickey, Haacke, Bury, and Len Lye are interested in movement in nature, be it in terms of the use of natural forces or be it in terms of movements which express their feelings about the surrounding world. Others such as Takis whose work derives from a Constructivist tradition are concerned with the science and physics of motion. Still others such as Kramer and Tinguely seek out the humorous and the unpredictable in the machine in action and think of it as a source of amusement or an ironic comment on the gadget world in which we live. Among the "naturalists" Rickey and Haacke transform nature's invisible equilibrium and balance into perpetually changing rhythms. Rickey's steel needles (Fig. 3) shift gracefully in answer to pressures of wind and air currents, while in Haacke's *Large Wave* (Fig. 4) the flow of water through plexiglas results from the displacement of gravity when the plate is tilted. Although Bury (Fig. 5) and Len Lye (Fig. 6) use motors rather than natural forces, their art is analogous to Haacke's and Rickey's in that they both think of motion in organic rather than mechanical terms. Bury speaks of a "certain quality of slowness" between the immobile and mobility which has the "capacity to create, keep alive, and recreate unforeseen and foreseen contacts . . ." Len Lye talks of feeling movement from within himself which allows him to know the swaying of grasses, the hovering of birds in air, the gliding of the snake, and the scudding of smoke. He thinks of his art not as the imitation of specific physical phenomena, but as the expression of deeper forces which create the infinite changes in nature. In Bury's pieces "slowness" suggests birth and the imperceptible growing and breathing of life, while in Len Lye's works all its thunder and wildness is loosed in a violent and noisy spectacle.

Unlike Lye, who is unconcerned with the mechanics of motion to the extent that he has other people design his pieces, Takis, who follows Constructivist principles, is fascinated by the scientific and technical aspects of kinetic art. Not only does he use instruments and objects that resemble equipment in a chemical or industrial laboratory, but he builds structures that are mechanically as complex as they are visually.

Often, as in his *Electromagnetic Musical Pendulum II*, (Fig. 7) he explores the effects of various sorts of energy operating simultaneously so that movement is a combination of electric currents, magnetism, and sound waves. Other times electricity creates visible motion in the form of colored light waves which circulate endlessly through glass tubing. For Takis art is a sophisticated blend of audio-visual energies which transforms science into alchemy through motion.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from Takis are Harry Kramer (Fig. 9) and Jean Tinguely (Fig. 8) whose works represent the playful and

humorous aspects of kinetic art. Both Kramer, who is a choreographer and film maker, and Tinguely, who stems from the Dadaist tradition, are interested in the amusement and spectacle of the performance rather than the physics of kinetics. Whereas Kramer uses a minimum of simple materials (iron wire and small disks) to create a whimsical statement about a common object such as a foot or a chair, Tinguely makes assemblages of self-destroying or inoperative machine parts and "ready-mades" as a disparaging and ironic comment on the dangers of life in a mechanized society. Although Tinguely's machines mock the "technology" beloved by most Kineticists, his thoughts on movement define perhaps most humanly the whole philosophy of this art. As the artist said in 1963, "People have always tried to fix things into permanence because of their fear of death, but in reality, the only stable thing is movement. Our only chance is to make things move from beginning to end, to allow them to eternally transform themselves."

Thus kinetic artists have come to accept change as the substance of life, and so doing they have begun to consider art as "the relationships of energies" of which Moholy-Nagy spoke almost half a century ago. The esthetic behind this art is not new. Bergson, Einstein, the Futurists, the Suprematists, and the Constructivists have all explored it in various degrees. But what is new is the way in which it requires both the artist and the viewer to experience art — to accept the discoveries of science and technology which continually change the conditions of our lives as the materials of a continually changing art whose forces, like the forces of life, are movement, time, and chance.

KATHERINE METCALF

Illustrations:

1/2. Fletcher Benton, "Yin and Yang," 1965. Aluminum sprayed with automotive lacquer and wood, diameter 15 1/2". Photos by Joe Schopplein. Courtesy Hansen Galleries.

3. George Rickey, "Five Lines in Parallel Planes," 1965. Stainless steel, 19'. Photo by Herb Weitman.

4. Hans Haacke, "Large Wave," 1965. Plexiglas and liquid, 12" x 96" x 1". Photo by Hilde Casey. Courtesy Howard Wise Gallery.

5. Pol Bury, "Rods on Round Background," 1962. Wood and aluminum, diameter 35 1/2". Photo by O. E. Nelson.

6. Len Lye, "Fountain" stainless steel, mechanized; 7 1/2', 1963. Photo by Geoffrey Clements. Courtesy Howard Wise Gallery.

7. Takis, "Electromagnetic Musical Pendulum II," 1965. Cork, permanent magnet, electromagnetic spools, wood; 78 3/4" x 39 3/8" x 8". Courtesy Alexander Iolas Gallery.

8. Jean Tinguely, "Radio Scripture," 1962. Iron, radios, motor and feather, 37 1/2". Courtesy Alexander Iolas Gallery.

9. Harry Kramer, "Rainer's Chair," 1965. Iron-wire and motors; 40 3/8" x 17 3/8" x 15 3/8". Photo by O. E. Nelson. Courtesy Albert Loeb Gallery.

music

PETER YATES

SEVERAL WEEKS OF THEATER AND MUSIC

While I was on the road lecturing from Texas to New York, March into April, the Los Angeles musical scene burst into spring bloom and continued flowering for a month after I returned. As a member of a panel brought together to think visibly for National Educational Television I replied to a question about the present state of esthetic activity in Southern California, that there has been a great improvement in the showcases but not in what is being put into them. The new Music Center is not yet the musical center of Los Angeles; in volume and variety the University of California at Westwood still puts on a better show, from ethnomusicology to dance. The most important operatic project was not the imported San Francisco Opera performance of Berg's now fashionable *Lulu* or the laborious beginnings of a hoped-for Los Angeles opera company but the University of Southern California presentation with full staging of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*.

Many of us have held in imagination the belief that, since Hindemith's symphony, *Mathis der Maler*, assembled from portions of the opera, is a well-made and pleasing work, the complete opera would be still better. I regret that this is not true. The complete opera suffers from all the ailments of the Germanic opera tradition, edema, elephantiasis, hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, with failure of speech and hearing. It starts with a symphonic overture, effective in its symphonic setting but worthless to the opera; an overture should set the drama in motion right to the cracking of the curtains. The first acts are laden with expository dialogue, no less incomprehensible in English translation than if they had been sung in the original German; and in any case no opera should depend on stage dialogue to explain, as in this case, the historico-religio-sociological problems of its historical period. Yet this is the real subject of the opera, remorselessly unfolded in much talk and subsidiary excitement through the greater part of seven acts.

There are splendid portions, particularly the fourth act, in which the real dramatic relationships of the principal characters are presented in a cross-fire of sometimes intelligible solo dialogue rising to intense individual song. Historically, the opera carries weight; it illustrates the breakdown of the Lutheran Reformation within the church into a murderous conflict between power and peasants. The composer flung this theme into the teeth of the rising Nazi leadership, who naturally suppressed the performance. Wilhelm Furtwaengler was dismissed from his post as director of the Berlin Opera; Hindemith went to exile in Turkey. The central figure of this more dramatic aspect of the opera is the Cardinal Archbishop of Mainz.

Crosswise with this, another major plot presents the dilemma of the artist in a time of political crisis: should he engage himself as a political leader or stay apart to continue working as an artist? Hindemith's fictional Mathis, a character surmised from the very little that is known about the career of Mathias Gruenewald, painter of the Isenheim altarpiece, lets himself be persuaded to enter into the controversy, tries and fails abjectly to become a voice of the people and then a military leader. After defeat, visions, and being attacked like St. Anthony by demons, he encounters once more the Cardinal Archbishop, now wearing the grass cloak of an ascetic, who persuades him to resume his art and forswear politics. It is not clear whether Hindemith meant in this way to describe himself before Hitler as a non-political person. The original Mathias, for reasons unknown, did the opposite, giving up his art to become a builder of mills. The operatic Mathis dies in the midst of his canvases.

Historically and dramatically, the Cardinal Archbishop is the principal protagonist. Mathis, more observer than participant, laments all that he sees; he refuses his beloved Ursula when she falls into his arms. A well-made libretto might have saved the opera and reduced it to dramatic length and concentration. Even then the unsuitability for singing of the prevailingly instrumental themes would have impeded a successful performance.

The USC Opera Theater staged this difficult work efficiently, costumed

it handsomely to the period and did much to give it dramatic continuity and force. The soloists, chorus, and orchestra, directed by Walter Ducloux, performed remarkably well. Any opera house could have been proud of this performance. Of the thirteen principal roles, ten require male voice; of the three female roles only one has a prominent part. Yet the USC school of opera is large enough to satisfy these requirements; no role was less than adequately sung. Rafael Enriquez as the Cardinal Archbishop acted and sang with notable authority. George Gibson, as Mathis, strove heroically to sustain his long, limp, lamenting part. Joan Robb, as Ursula, countered both male roles with fine stage presence and strong, if not powerful voice. Whatever my opinion of the opera, the University of Southern California deserves all praise for having attempted it and presented it so well.

A large traveling company of Japanese *Bunraku* puppeteers performed their traditional art for a week at the Wilshire Ebell Theater. The puppets, about two-thirds lifesize, are each manipulated by three black-clothed puppeteers, who — one is invariably told — become invisible. For myself, they did not, and some of the more elaborate changes of position resembled a close-packed, clumsy dance of puppeteers and doll. Other puppeteers crawled on and off the stage, being careful always to expose some part of body or black cap so that no one should be fooled. The *yoruri* reciter or reciters, accompanied usually by solo *samisen*, sat at one side offstage to speak the roles of the puppets, a very emotional type of operatic recitative requiring such combined vocal effort and strangling restraint that their faces turned bright red while they enacted their parts by facial expression.

Attention is thus divided between two separated stages and two distinct dramatic modes, bound by voice and music. If one watches the *yoruri*, one cannot watch the puppets. The convention is not more unreal than that of our own opera, and I am sure that one quickly accommodates to the non-presence of the puppeteers and to looking back and forth between the intensely dramatic but immobile *yoruri* and the formalized, yet convincing slow motion of the manipulated dolls. For an habituated audience a performance pleases not more by its substance than by its reiterated convention. The substance of the first play, an insult followed by the striking of a superior, the extended ritual of *suppuku* (public suicide) portrayed to the last twitching of the corpse, and the retainer's oath of revenge, each a separate scene, enables a great show of virtuosity. In the second play, a pathetic comedy, a female puppet played on the *koto*, her movements according exactly to the actual music, played by a musician who sat among the *yoruri*, his back to the stage. There is a charm and power in this stagecraft and its music, which, since Brecht, have influenced the European theater to its advantage.

The American theater seems as incapable of sophistication as its critics. In New York, I saw the Repertory Theater group of Lincoln Center perform Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*: for one of the great plays of our era there was not a full house. Only Walter Kaufmann in the *New York Times* wrote well of it; other critics wavered between panning the performance and dismissing the play itself as incompetent. A handsome theater, spacious but intimate; a well equipped stage, the turntable put to good use; the staging adequate, framed and colorful, like a series of genre paintings; the costuming glorious; yet the stage area seems spatially limited and remote. This, rather than the style of the performance, may be the defeating element.

Morton Subotnick composed music in Weill mannerisms to accompany the songs. The acting was realistic and unsophisticated, and the combining of songs with action did not heighten the emotion. Yet nothing was overwrought; the play was enabled to make its points, as Brecht intended, without hindrance by individual actors reaching for admiration. All was clean, neat, and sufficient — which is, for the New York theater, a kind of sophistication. The critics seem to expect that a repertory company should reach great heights. Far better that it should learn to play as a team and let the heights come naturally, as the group develops. The directors have chosen consistently first-rate plays to work with, perhaps beyond their immediate capacity, but this is not to be complained of. The record shows that the New York audience in recent years has consistently rejected plays at the level of Brecht and Lorca. New York taste is better adapted to *My Fair Lady* than to *Pygmalion*, prefers wrappings to content. If New York does not support this company while it is growing, they will have to watch another company

do the same job over again, with more fear of its audience and more directorial caution. My guests and I enjoyed ourselves and were satisfied that Brecht's play had not lost stature by the performance, except the severe cutting of the last act. It is the critics, not the players, who were inadequate.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and its Contemporary Art Council invited a group called Five Choreographers to give three programs, two at the Museum's Bing Auditorium and one at the Roller-drome in Culver City. The Five are one branch of the Judson Theater group in New York; four of the leaders, Robert Rauschenberg, Steve Paxton, Deborah and Alex Hay, are former members of Merce Cunningham's dance company. I attended the first performance; close to half the audience went home before the end. With the Cunningham group, everything seems open to improvisation; a rehearsal without accompanying sound is as exciting as a public performance. Everything has been prepared, disciplined, worked out and liberated; the interlacing of movement is richer than that of formal ballet. (In a long conversation with Alwin Nikolais at the Henry Street Theater, he told me he prefers to speak of "motion," instead of "movement," which is by comparison static. But movement seems to me the more accurate term for an interlacing of bodily action with motion in space.) The Five Choreographers have supplanted both motion and movement by a sort of worldweary vaudeville which invites sympathy instead of empathy, a pathos of let's not do it, with occasional surprises, as when a *Tel-Hi-Scoper*, a formidable machine used for loading baggage into the underside of airplanes, shot Steve Paxton as high as the proscenium. Rather than skill there was a weariness of skill, more clowning than amusement. I think it's a wrong direction. Of the clowns Trisha Brown was best.

An evening of chamber music at USC, sponsored by the local ISCM, honored Carl Ruggles's 90th year with a good reading by Peter Hewitt of the *Evocations* for piano. The remainder of the program consisted of thin sound in wandering discordance, so that compositions by Mario Davidowsky, Aurelio de la Vega, and Earle Brown (his *Times Five* in two different aleatoric versions) seemed distressingly alike. I blame the programming rather than the players or the compositions. The Sonata No. 2 for solo violin by Giseler Klebe gave the effect, as someone near me remarked, of a discarded experimental tape rescued from the wastebasket. This type of discordant sound needs to be set in contrast to more full-bodied sound; the continuous cancellation of overtones reduces the sonority, so that one wearies of trying to follow the minutiae of design. It was all drearily repetitive.

By contrast, the program of American music chosen by a committee of composers to be played by Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at four universities, under the sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation and USC, added up to a brilliantly successful event — even more, when compared with the previous year's drab program slackly directed by Alfred Wallenstein.

George Tremblay's Symphony in One Movement, composed in 1949, previously played once at Hamburg, Germany, deserved the attention its long-resident composer never has been granted. It is melodiously written around a tone-row consisting of two groups of six notes, each a chord of superimposed thirds; the theme, a subsidiary row, is harmonized on each note by a six-note chord formed like the chords of the original basic row. This adds up to a serial procedure able to be realized freely in key relationship, thus overcoming the tendency towards increasing discord, with resulting cancellation of overtone sonorities, which is the outcome of too many harmony-rejecting serial

procedures. Music, after all, is made of sound, and sound has its rights and wrongs built into it by nature. In 12-note equal temperament a composer loses sonority as he rejects harmony, though harmony need no longer be controlled by key relationship. The dilemma can be resolved in various ways, all of which are nowadays being explored, from strict just intonation to the limitless permissibility of the computer. Tremblay's Symphony, a gracious and pleasing work, may be thought overly fragmented in design, a fault emphasized by too slow performance of the allegro sections. (The same fault is even more noticeable in the Philadelphia Symphony recording of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, directed by Eugene Ormandy.)

Roger Sessions's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, composed in 1935, has had a half-dozen previous American performances. Robert Gross, of Occidental College, the soloist in several of these previous readings, again played it. The difficult solo part must combine accurately with many smaller parts of similar difficulty distributed throughout the orchestra; the desired balance is hard to achieve, and without such balance the Concerto lacks variety of rhythm and color to compensate for the missed opportunities in their jewel-like detail. The performance suffered, therefore, by inadequate rehearsal.

Any one of these works would be a severe undertaking for a major orchestra, even if the remainder of the program went by routine. To put four such works into one program was asking too much of orchestra and conductor, though the Foundation provided five rehearsals. The excuse is, of course, that such works need to be heard, and in present orchestral circumstances only such a special occasion can lure a conductor to attempt them. The fault lies with the systematic habituation of orchestral performance and the consequent slackness of the audience. The Rockefeller Foundation project aims to break through such habituation by encouraging conductors and orchestras in different parts of the country to go outside their routine, thus bringing the unhabitual music to audience attention, at the same time giving the composers a chance to hear in reasonably expert performance what they have written. One must commend Zubin Mehta and the Philharmonic musicians for the good spirit and hard work they put into this program.

The third work, *Analigus* (which the composer says means nothing) by Aurelio de la Vega, may be called a *klangfarben* symphony in four movements: *Phases*, composed in masses and intensities of sound; a lyrical *Serenade*; a short movement of decisively interrupted fragments called *Pauses*, which gives valuable contrast to the three extended movements; and a finale, *Partitus*, which builds from isolated sounds to a concertante climax. A multitude of sound means are used, including short solos for wood saw sawing wood and metal saw sawing metal, a tutti of scuffing feet, and slapping and muffling of instruments; all instruments of a large orchestra with extra percussion are amply provided for; nothing is developed beyond the general phantasmagoric excitement. This went best at the third concert, in the acoustically perfect auditorium, designed by Gerald Strang, of Long Beach City College, where even the most minute differences of the sound were audible. While the concertmaster and several of the musicians sat visibly amazed, the audiences indicated by applause that they enjoyed it.

The final work, which some of us had waited decades to hear, was Carl Ruggles's *Sun Treader*, first performed at Paris in 1932 but never in America until this year, when the Boston Symphony played it at Portland, Maine, as part of a Ruggles festival honoring the composer's ninetieth birthday. (It has also been recently recorded for Columbia by an orchestra of Viennese musicians directed by Zoltan Rosznyai, a young fugitive from Hungary. Considering their unfamiliarity with the music, they did fairly well by it. For a more extended discussion, see my review in *High Fidelity*, March 1966.)

Mehta and the Philharmonic played it all out in a magnificent reading which ended each of the two programs I heard with a blaze of music and resounding applause. Hard to understand why American orchestras have so long avoided playing it! This is one of the great works of American art, unique in structure and a model of resonance in discordant sound, undoubtedly difficult but greatly rewarding when fully mastered. One hopes that Mehta will keep it in the Philharmonic repertoire for performance in the regular subscription season and that he will take the score with him to play with other orchestras in this country and abroad.

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I should like once again to commend the UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology, its faculty and director, Mantle Hood, the many participating students and several guest musicians, for still another week-long festival of music from many cultures, combined with representative dances by members of the university school of dance. This Institute is without question the most important internationally connected musical activity in the United States. Its work is of great value in our cultural relations with many other countries, particularly Mexico, the Balkans, Greece, Africa, the Orient, Indonesia, and India. It provides a training ground for musicians from these areas, and for American students an educational opportunity, combining musicology with actual performance, not at present duplicated elsewhere.

Three of the most important musical events of the current musical season have taken place at the University of Southern California the concert for orchestra and chorus featuring Bartok's *Cantata Profana* directed by Ingolf Dahl, the piano recital by Michael Tilson Thomas, and a concert by the Debut Orchestra, sponsored by the Young Musicians Foundation, with the same Michael Thomas as conductor and piano soloist. The purpose of foundation and orchestra is to provide a local sounding board for outstanding young musicians, none of whom, conductor, soloists, or orchestra members, may be over 25 years old. Young Thomas has just turned 21.

Backstage, before the concert, he fell, fracturing his right wrist, although he neglected to find this out until after the concert ended. When he came out to play and conduct the Mozart A Major Piano Concerto it was evident that hand or arm was causing him trouble. It was what he did rather than how he did it that won our interest. He played in the old style, participating as pianist in the orchestral tutti, not to be heard but unobtrusively to outline a phrase or mark an accent. And instead of playing the slow movement note for note as printed, he embellished it in the manner Mozart's audience would have expected, adding at least a half-dozen notes of embellishment to each note printed in the score. Myself, I thought he overembellished, a common fault of the modern experimenter in this improvisatory art. It turns out that he had for model a recent publication of several Mozart concertos, from a manuscript by one Philip Karl Hoffmann, who having heard Mozart perform these concertos wrote them out with Mozart's embellishments. The question is, of course, how well P. K. Hoffmann recalled what he had heard and how much he put in to his own taste where his memory failed him.

The glory of the concert was a performance of Charles Ives's *Three Places in New England*. Advised by Ingolf Dahl, with whom he studies conducting, and by the previous conductor of the Debut Orchestra, Lawrence Foster, now assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, who performed the same work last year with another orchestra, young Thomas put together a reading unequalled by any I have heard, including the recorded versions by Janssen, Hanson, and Ormandy. Every detail of the score, technical and acoustical, had been thought through, and the orchestra responded with an exemplary performance out of thorough knowledge. I noticed particularly that in the several places where one part plays out of synchronization with another, the result was fully obtained, not as a result of some manipulative gesturing by the conductor but because he had trained those players to hear the part in melodic independence. The same melodic freedom distinguished the reading of Haydn's Symphony No. 102, masterfully performed by the young orchestra. Where the routinized ensemble picks up from a conductor his way of articulating the first notes of a principal melody and then reverts to routine in filling out the remainder, these players had been trained to play as the conductor wished from first note to last. I do not imply a machine-turned performance, just the opposite. Young Thomas has an infallible sense of tempo and the control to keep the parts moving in related freedom.

Robert Notkoff, associate concertmaster of the orchestra, performed the Chausson *Poème* for violin and orchestra with virtuoso precision and exquisite tone.

I recognize the mortal danger of seeming to thrust a genuinely gifted musician towards fame in our society; Mephistopheles was less threat to Faust than a public career to an American performer of great talent. Unless he has the courage to call his soul his own and keep it his own in face of every offer, temptation, threat, and peril of

anonymity, what is good in him will surely perish, in a few rapidly traversed, exciting, spiritually destroying years. Michael Tilson Thomas is not a show pianist, a virtuoso; he brings his superlative musicianship to the piano as to his conducting, in service to the music. But here is the voice of the Devil at his ear: even now, in either field, there are few musicians able to compete with him.

Lou Harrison has proved himself an anti-careerist, as in nearly every other way he has run counter to current fashion, by abandoning New York in 1952 and coming to live in the small community of Aptos on the California coast. At Aptos every summer the excellent Cabrillo Festival is now given under the direction of Gerhard Samuel, musical director and conductor of the Oakland Symphony, who has built that orchestra into a competitive rival for the San Francisco Symphony, under conservative Josef Krips, across the Bay.

Two years ago, at the Festival, Gerhard Samuel conducted the first performance of Harrison's *Symphony on G*, the applause of the visiting critics unanimously qualified by dissatisfaction with the final movement. Studying his original sketches, Harrison learned that, in the crisis of distaste for the New York scene which had caused him precipitately to abandon it, he had completely forgotten his original plans for the last movement and in changed circumstances had written a new finale inappropriate to the symphony. This year Samuel and the Oakland Symphony performed the rewritten *Symphony on G*, with the finale composed from the original sketches.

The four-movement Symphony, begun in 1948, has the effect of a very large suite, the opening *allegro deciso* tossing its row in continuous melodic variation as if for a prelude, followed by a *largo* luscious as a peach — euphony in dimensions not easily attained by the current academic discord, yet for all its melodious sonority, which teases the ear with pleasure, yielding nothing in its skilled deployment to the theorists of dissonance. Harrison, a pupil of Schoenberg, is a master of row and serial procedures, using these in tonal concordance for the enrichment of sonority. For this reason his music sounds as strangely in the contemporaneously habituated ear as Schoenberg's in his lifetime. The *Scherzo* consists of four distinct sections, *Waltzes*, *Polka*, *Song*, and *Rondeau*. *Waltzes* ends in a parody of sweetness, like a candy

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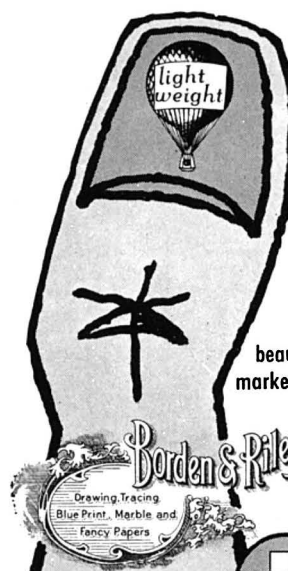
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fairy balancing on one finger; the *Polka* is a show-stopper, and did so, to an outbreak of applause; *Song* is for the cellos; the *Rondeau* serves for a cadenza leading to the final movement. After the gorgeous orchestral panoplies the music comes down to an ecstatic buzzing, like a harpsichord intermingled and equally balanced with piano. It is in fact piano and tack-piano, Harrison's peculiar instrument, far more satisfactory with modern orchestra than a harpsichord, and the pair are supported by harps and discreet percussion.

Why should the voices of learning in present-day music be always sour or nasty, sugar-sweetened by the vibraphone!

The final movement at once asserts the great resonances of the American musical heritage, that complex of independently moving melodies out of Ives, Ruggles, Varese. It is a second *largo*, in three parts, a rondo of Mahlerian dimensions that is in itself a symphony. With his *Suite for Symphonic Strings* (recorded by the Louisville Symphony) and the *Symphony on G*, Harrison can take place among the largest contemporary masters. Add to this his recent arrangement for large orchestra of John Cage's *Suite for Toy Piano*, a delectable treatise in total orchestration. At first hearing one may very well think these works old-fashioned; they are in fact music of the extended field of sound, after-Schoenberg, a tone-centered serial polyphony.

All seats for the pair of concerts had been sold out since May 1965; an audience which came to hear Van Cliburn play the Rachmaninoff Third Piano Concerto gave its ovation instead to the Harrison symphony. "Lou Harrison Steals the Show," Carl Cunningham headlined his review in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

I have written before of my late friend, Wesley Kuhnle, who recovered for practical use the tuning orders, or methods of tuning directly from the instrument, by which one can tune a keyboard instrument to any of the historic temperaments. In my book on keyboard music, *An Amateur at the Keyboard*, I discuss the significance of the principal historic tunings, from which proceeded the several distinct types of Western European harmony which we now confuse in one rationalizing theory.

In one chapter I tell of a young hostess who was, besides, an excellent amateur player of the harpsichord. She has since then established her name, Margaret Fabrizio, and reputation as one of the best performers in the West. Her former teacher, the fine harpsichord player Putnam Aldrich, speaks of her as one of the few ex-pianists who have mastered a correct touch on the older keyboard. She has made herself, in my opinion, one of the most thoroughly skilled and intelligently competent players of the instrument. She has learned also, from Lou Harrison, to play the Chinese psaltery, the *cheng*, reads the Chinese notation and corresponds with Chinese and Korean musicologists. What a dull life the ordinary virtuoso, dashing off his little repertory of familiar masterpieces, leads by comparison! She is still an Amateur in the larger meaning of the word.

Going to San Francisco last December to lecture and read poetry, I

visited her, and she read for me Bach's *Art of Fugue*, arranged in a new sequence of the fugues and canons by Eric Vaughn. He joined us for the evening, having spent the day—such is the dark life of non-accredited scholarship in this academic nation—in a department store playing Santa Claus. As it happens, I have strong opinions about the *Art of Fugue*; I doubted that I should find the new ordering of the fugues acceptable.

But I did. Eric Vaughn has devoted years of study to the several versions, with the help of documents supplied by the Berlin Library, and his ordering of the fugues, though not necessarily Bach's, is a textural whole by progression of the entries, in comparison with which the published version is quite arbitrarily arranged. Yet the test has to be in performance, and I was convinced; the fugues, canons, and cadences in this order lead most persuasively forwards, accumulating to an immense textural climax of interweaving at the end. I would say that the *Goldberg Variations*, even the *Hammerklavier Sonata*, makes less demand of the performer: an hour and 18 minutes playing time, without intermission.

The performance was not in our equal temperament but in the well tempered tuning of Bach, a very slight progressive narrowing of the thirds, giving a pattern of slightly unequal intervals which colors every modulation. After the public performance, sponsored by the Atheneum Arts Foundation at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Alexander Fried wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*: "Last night it became clear to me that harpsichord is just the right instrument for (the Art of Fugue). All the other large and small instrumentations of it I have ever heard have been tiresome, partly because the fugues are all in the key of D minor . . . The harpsichord sound was modest, yet decisive. It did not cloy. Its palette of timbres included fine colorations, spurts of ornamentation, pungent miniature organ chords and one delicious fugue in which happy recorders seemed to be threading their melodies through the contrapuntal texture."

Nothing pleases me better than to quote a veteran newspaper music critic when his ears have heard something new and wonderful. The performance was so successful that it was repeated several weeks later.

ART

(Continued from page 5)

Finally, there is the question of painting itself, or paint handling. Since I cannot accept Newman's and Greenberg's decision that skill and dexterity are no longer significant in painting, I must see Newman's crude painting technique as the reason for the unconvincing nature of his paintings.

When Newman lays down a black, it is not the resonant black that any skillful painter knows cannot be merely slapped on, but must be worked up to a suitable opaque depth. Newman's blacks are raw and lifeless. When he makes what Alloway calls the "plumed" lines, in which a vertical black is worked on either side with feathered strokes, sometimes with a dry brush, producing ambiguous half tones, he seems unaware of its effect in the adjacent space. These bits and pieces of half-tone fall roughly on his pristine ground. They are not modulated, not shaped, but merely there. Every advanced art student knows that each stroke of the brush must produce a form or it merely produces inchoate tone. Yet Newman seems not to notice. The "plumed" effect, for him, results from his rough brushing, and needs no further articulation.

I don't bring up the disparity between the legend and the work capriciously. It seems to me that the Newman legend is symptomatic of a sickish turn of intellectualism, or rather, academicism in the arts. If Newman's rather arcane rhetoric is sufficient to pass for the highest of esthetic thought, and if by virtue of its wide currency it succeeds in placing him in the forefront as a leading artist, there is something askew somewhere. When rhetoric replaces direct experience, it is a warning to us that the nature of our experiences is debased.

It is significant that others of Newman's generation have stopped talking. Such fellow adventurers as Rothko, Still, deKooning and Gottlieb have long since ceased making samplers of their intentions. They merely paint. No amount of words, no matter how skillfully applied, can fill the vacuum that the absence of the masterfully achieved work of art creates.

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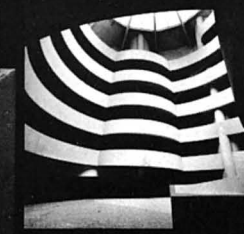
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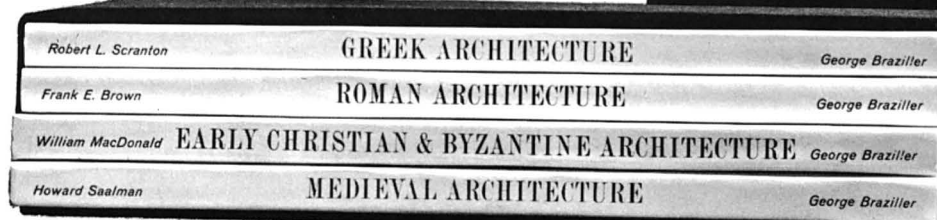
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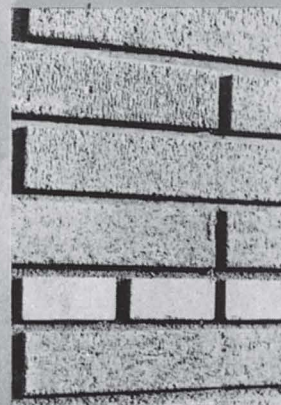
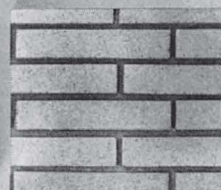
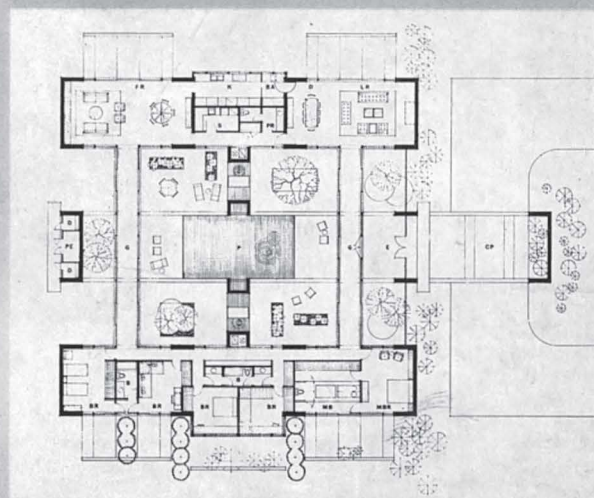
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