

The 13th Triennale

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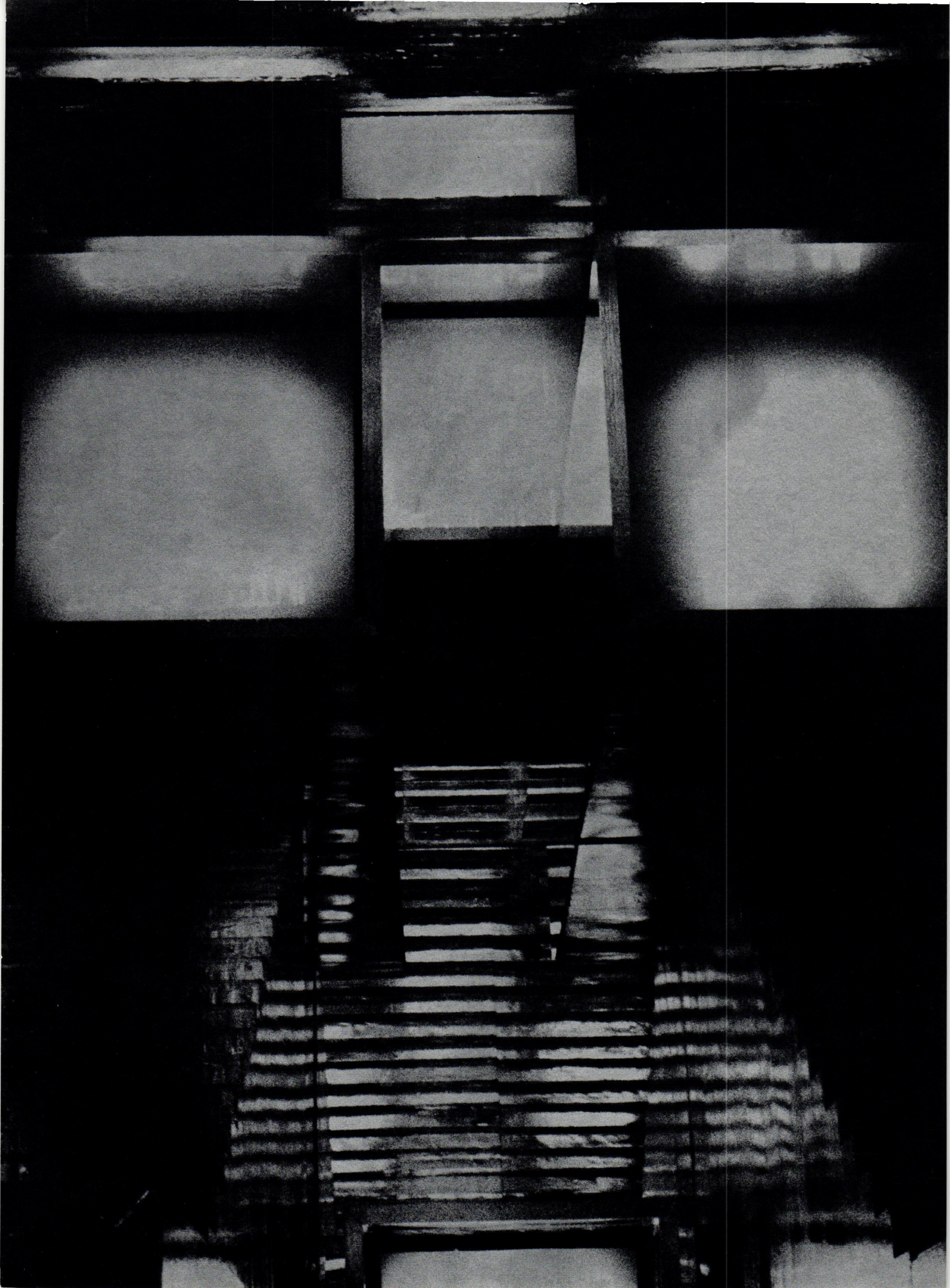
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# The 13th Triennale

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota



The *Triennial International Exhibition of Architecture and Decorative Arts* is held every three years in the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan. Since 1923, the Triennale, an extensive exposition involving the efforts and products of designers, architects and manufacturers, has presented an international survey of directions and achievements in all areas of design.

The 13th Triennale (July - September, 1964) was divided into three main sections:

The International Introductory Section in the Palazzo was organized by an international committee of architects, designers and design theorists; it was planned and executed by a group of well-known Italian architects.

The Triennale in the Park consisted mainly of vacation houses, plastic domes and park furniture.

Exhibition space in the Palazzo for fourteen countries: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Mexico, Switzerland, the United States and Yugoslavia.

This year, for the first time, the United States officially took part in a Triennale, a representation largely possible through the efforts of designer Jack Lenor Larsen, who organized a group of individuals directly concerned with the state of design in this country. This Committee for American Participation in the Triennale was headed by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., noted writer and lecturer in the fields of architecture and design. Mr. Larsen was appointed Commissioner for the United States exhibition, and private contributions, along with partial government sponsorship, enabled this section to be realized.

After reviewing more than 5000 entries, the Selection Committee consisting of Mildred Constantine, Associate Curator of the Department of Architecture and Design, Museum of Modern Art, Olga Gueft, Editor of *INTERIORS* magazine, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. and Jack Lenor Larsen (ex officio) chose only 75 objects to represent the United States in the 13th Triennale.

The result of their deliberation was a startling and noteworthy exhibition, honored by a Grand Prize for the best total exhibition design (installation and design by Charles Forberg) and another Grand Prize for the best individual object (stacking chair by David Rowland).

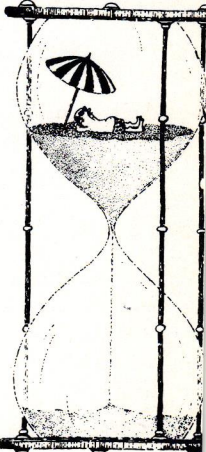
The American Section of the Triennale, distinguished by awards from an international jury and highly commended in the international press, effectively demonstrated this country's achievements in design and proved that the United States is involved in making significant contributions in this area. Exhibitions like the Triennale are occasions where the United States should continue to be officially represented and given all government support possible. Realizing the importance of the Triennale as a design exhibition, and continuing to act as a forum for design ideas and design exploration, *DESIGN QUARTERLY* publishes this issue.

In 1954 one of our issues concerned itself with the 10th Triennale. At that time the Triennale was a large product review, a grandstand of well designed objects, products and fabrics. But in 1960 the 12th Triennale departed sharply from the past in that it followed a single general theme ("Schools and the Home") throughout the entire exhibition. Because this year's Triennale again is built around one subject, "free time," supposedly adhered to by all exhibiting countries, we present this documentary and frequently critical account by Judith Miller. It is apparent that the restriction to one theme presents considerable problems. A topic so diffuse yet so important to all industrialized countries cannot be treated within the means of a conventional design exhibition. A routine display of toys, sporting goods, etc. does not examine our recreational needs, nor does it clarify the important function recreation plays in our lives. Elaborate display techniques and use of all possible visual, verbal and acoustical devices employed throughout the Triennale are justified only if they lead to a greater understanding of the theme presented. Obviously, each country's interpretation of "free time" differs according to its social, economic and geographic structure. It would be more rewarding to see the effects of these dissimilar factors, differences in concepts and attitudes, than an "elegant" display of dinnerware and jewels or exhibitions which give great weight to a minor aspect of the theme "free time." Demanding social and economic questions are clearly inherent in the exhibition's theme, but unfortunately in this year's Triennale, only a few countries found it important enough to look for answers.

P.S.



Entrance corridor, by Roberto Crippa, with sounds and images suggesting "good times," such as the advancing and receding image of Marilyn Monroe.



Executive committee for The 13th Triennale:  
P. G. Castiglioni, architect  
A. Fabbri, sculptor  
T. Ferraris, secretary  
E. Vittoria, architect

## The 13th Triennale

Free time is defined throughout the Triennale by a process of elimination as that not demanded in an industrial society by the preparation and struggle for economic or physiological survival (i.e. working, eating, sleeping). For many, there are also the in-roading demands on time of professional, occupational and political survival. Thus, the left-over time of day, week, year or life becomes "free," and through an unconscious inversion is presented as the time of escape—not that time is free, but that persons are freed. And escape means from whatever situation one is in. The city dweller, for example, on his bumper-to-bumper route to open space passes the countryman enroute to town.

Of course, everyone wishes to take with him a good part of that from which he is fleeing, labeling this equipage "necessity." The camper requires a good bed, a match-lit stove, canned goods, a shower (preferably hot) and toilet facilities, plus the gear that symbolizes (and perhaps implements) a good time: kayaks, surfboards, flippers, fishing rods, inflatable rafts, skis, hip boots, hunting jackets, toboggans, portable record players, cameras, binoculars. These things he can buy in Canada, Finland, Great Britain, Holland, Italy or anywhere else he happens to be.

### International Introductory Section

On entering the Triennale the viewer is bargaged by a chequered assembly of flickering images and sounds dealing with variations on the misuse and abuse of free time. Here is a sputtering, unsorted, international melange of cinema, music, theatre, travel, advertisement, cartoon, carnival and "all the temptations that the (world-wide) industry of free time puts at the disposal of the city dweller."

The American passing through this introductory corridor is struck and shamed by the image we manage to present of ourselves and takes little consolation in the fact that listening and looking a while longer reveals the same absurdities in other nationalities, clouded at first by the fact that we tend to recognize the familiar immediately. The twangy voice of the American girl saying on tape, "Oooooooh, I just luuuu-uv thayut!" seems to come on oftener than the voices of other nationalities because, regrettably, we recognize her as one of our own.

The dancing girls, timetables, city noises, suggestive murmurs, drooping attenuated



models (clad in industrially produced *haute couture*) all document the urbanite's battery of symbols of a good time—a good time that costs money, makes noise, may be illicit or sexy or both.

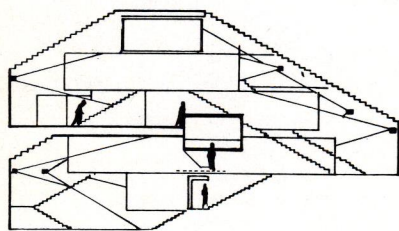
The three telling pinnacles of idiocy in the International Introductory Section of the Triennale are Steinberg's malicious cat-bird-fish ladies at tea, the man idling away the sands of time in the hour glass, and the young couple high in the air in a Coney Island carrousel car, locked in public osculation. The severe and witty social comment of the two cartoons is compact illustration of the position taken by the exhibitors: "In this introductory room, in some ways clearly revolting to the visitor, one does not intend to speak of the things that free time is, but to indicate some of the things it is not." The photograph of the boy and girl is a classic example of a syndrome of our time: Nothing is enough nor can any one thing, or idea, or activity, or person exact full attention. The number of choices is limited, but the range is infinite so that pleasure is always under-



International Introductory Section:  
Eco, writer; V. Gregotti, L. Meneghetti,  
Stoppino and P. Brivio, architects;  
Damiani, designer



Silver hall of the International Introductory Section.



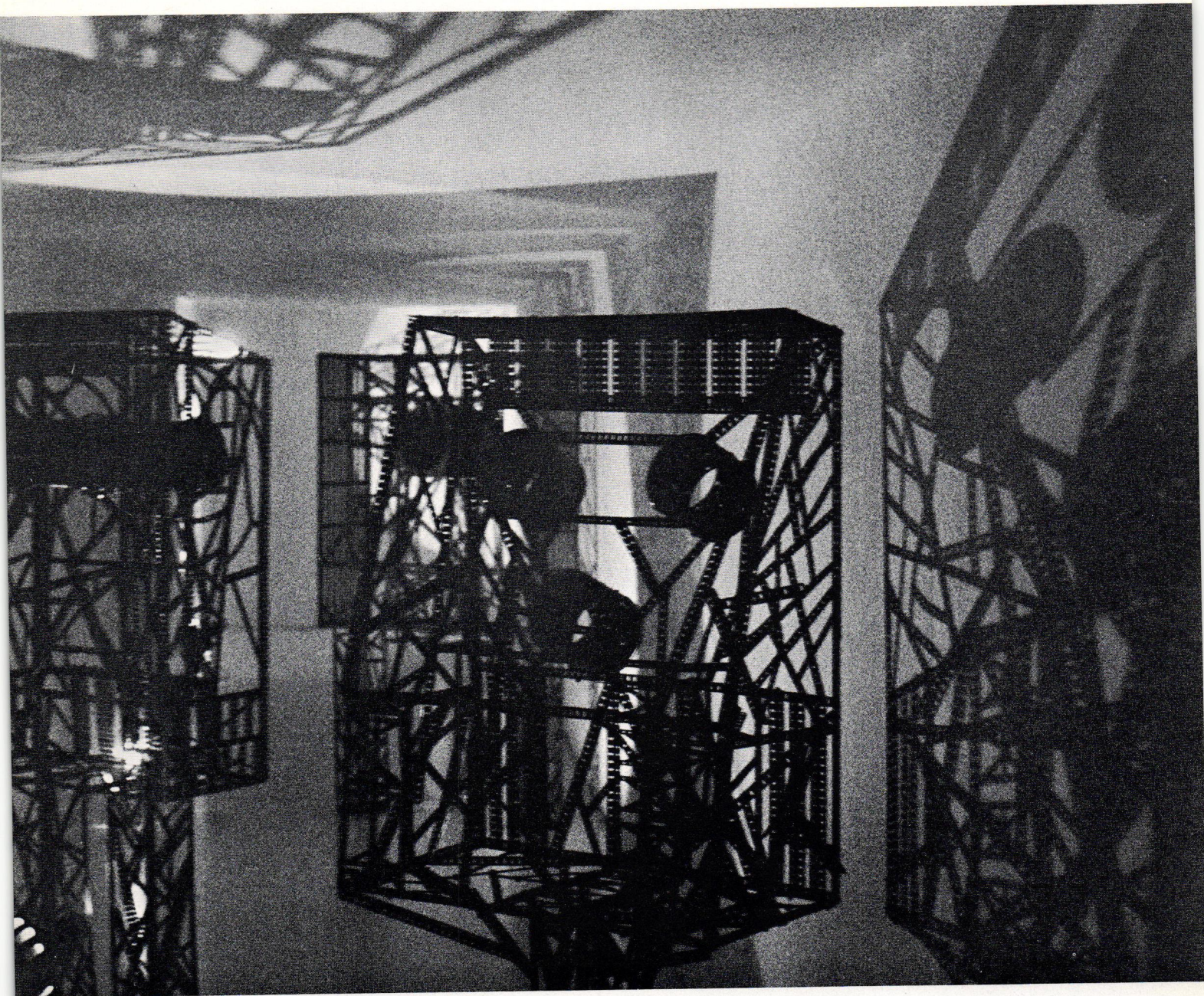
mined by nagging what-if's or by a whirling endeavor to taste everything.

On leaving the first corridor the viewer enters a marvelously simulated canyon of city walls—treeless, sterile, blighted, barren, dingy and scarred with billboard remnants. It is not an image or a mock-up, and certainly not possible to photograph; it is, instead, like the miasmic atmosphere found in some parts of cities everywhere in the world.

Suddenly one is enveloped in the silvery promise of free time—steps leading up, mirrors set in kaleidoscopic, shimmering apposition. It reminded me of a very old silent

movie in which Nazimova stepped lightly a romantic staircase to the rhythm of we read poetry. But the silvery promise is mirage leading to a number of admonitory reminders, reviews and shocking everyday truths.

Visually and verbally we are admonished remember that in allowing for free time it impossible to deny the necessary pace a rhythm established by the work patterns society. Quite logically, the uses of free tin flow in rhythm with those of the wo schedule; economics, if nothing else, demand a logical registry of the two patterns. But, a apparently inescapable condition to t



Abstract constructions, by Enrico Baj, symbolizing free time through technical advancement.

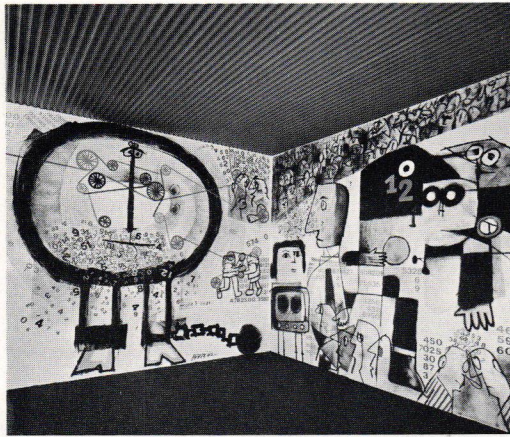
securing of free time for large numbers of people is the reduction of work for many to something sub-human. A man may become a stranger to his own work because of the fragmentation inherent in the industrial process. Thus, as work loses meaning and satisfaction, he becomes obsessed with a desire to advance the hands of the clock and he loses the taste for the creative use of free time so that there are "worlds within hands' reach, but beyond grasp." Outside the work "only the bestial functions remain—eating, drinking, generating."

We are reminded that we are conditioned toward or against certain concepts. Ques-

tions of morality, for example, are often questions of time. "What about idleness?" If work gives nobility to man, then idleness is the father of all devices!

We are compelled once more to read from Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle: "To live as one wishes is the result of liberty; the slave cannot live as he wishes. Nature demands slavery—bodies of slaves and free men are different. It is useful to the slave to be different." Plato: "One has the obligation to give himself to the most beautiful and creative diversions and to pass his life so." (Possible for Plato because he lived in a slave-supported society.)





Mural by Gino Marotta and Emilio Scanavino.

The remainder of the International Introductory Section is presented in several galleries which are woven among the exhibits of the fourteen nations. Subjects treated include garden areas in residential zones; the shift from passive to active sport in Italy; the spread brought about by technical progress of consumership of theatre, motion pictures and television; the influence of publicity campaigns on culture; dancing, popular music and clubs; hobbies; and time lost in traveling to and from work.

The viewer is naturally drawn to demonstrations for which he has prior concern. A prime spectacle was the unadorned tabulation of public park lands in major European cities: Paris and Stockholm are the greenest; Rome and Milano the greyest.

Additionally, the presentation of the statistics of time suspended in travel to and from the place of work for city dwellers is disturbing to an American. Here the problem is presented as aggravated by the increased use of the privately owned automobile. Many Americans have come to believe that the automobile is a destroyer of cities and that the excesses of the automobile industry were peculiar to America. Apparently this disease, too, is international. The exhibitors state the solution in disarmingly simple terms: The problem of the population of a great city which is put in motion every day between home and work is to offer transportation which is faster, more rational and more comfortable. This optimistic list of offerings should have been completed with "and covers shorter distances."

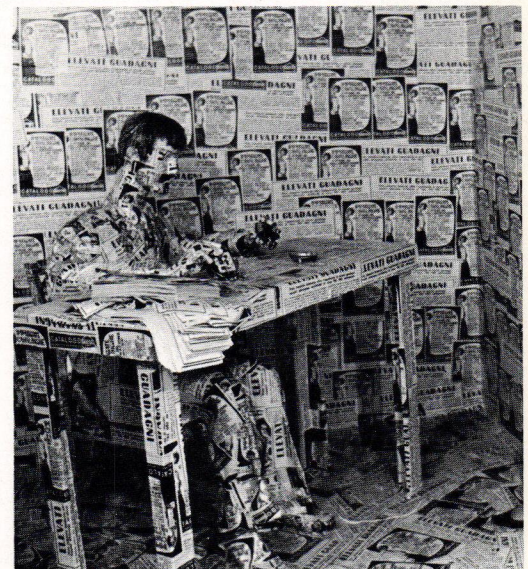
An intriguing gallery is the one touching on publicity campaigns and their outcomes. The designer interpreted the theme with collage

and paper sculpture, using as content the topic of increased earning power through wise use of leisure (e.g. correspondence courses, night school classes, development of office skills) and demonstrating the point by surfacing walls, floor, table and worker with handbills reading "Elevati guadagni!" (Raised earnings!). The claustrophobic quality of the room and the constrained posture of the dummy-worker effectively deny the idea of "free" time.

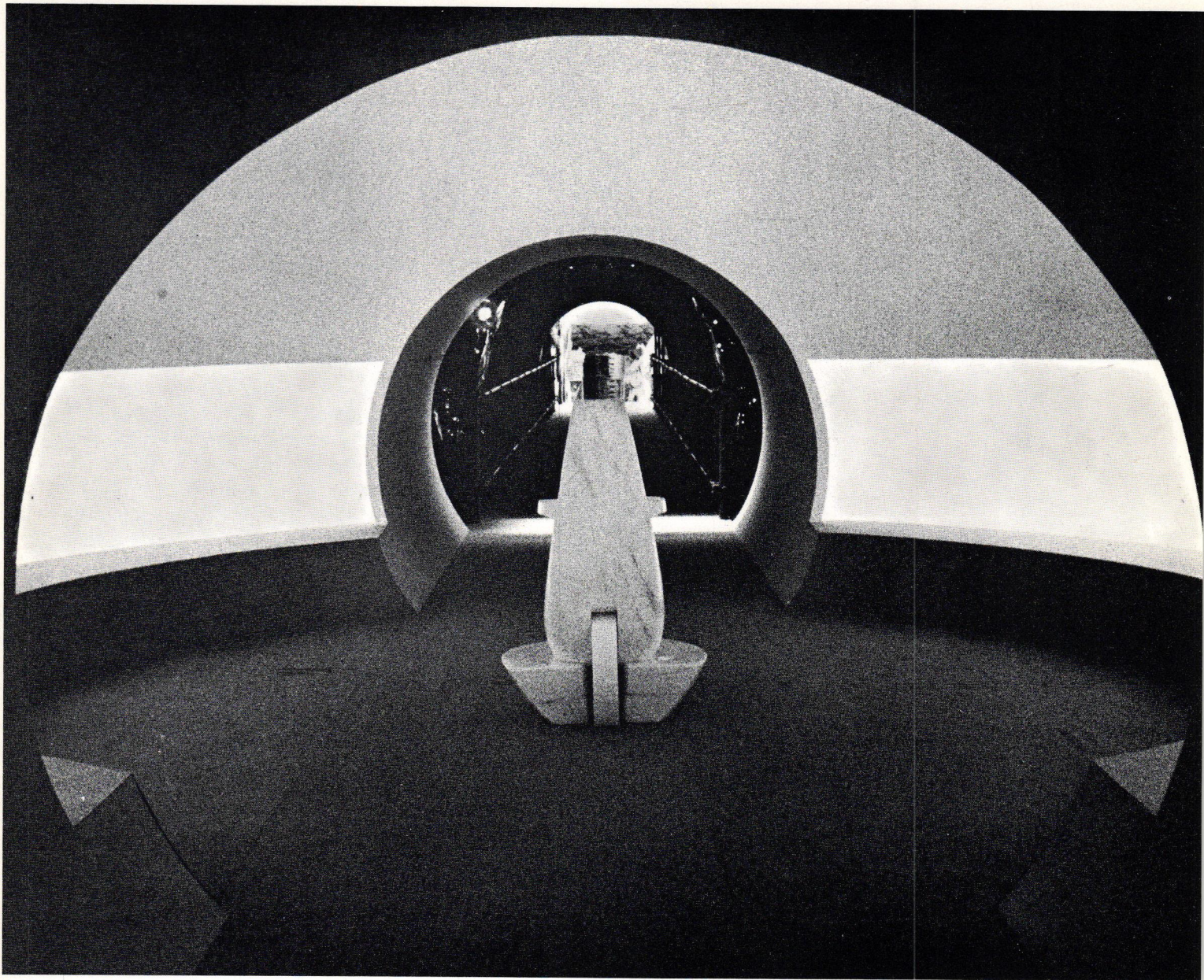
Finally, one of the most amusing concepts in the International Introductory Section is the mural by Gino Marotta and Emilio Scanavino of the ball and chain, numbers and gears with the endless belt-drive. It is particularly cogent in light of the recent explosion of the use of numbering systems in America—most of which do not in any way interlock, thus compounding the problems of their use, but all of which tend to reduce the feeling of identity.

Where the International Introductory Section generalizes, the Italian Section particularizes and thus is established a merging or exchange of viewpoints not noticeable in any of the other sections of the Triennale. This situation is readily explained: geographic proximity, language, exhibition space (many times larger than any other) and staffing. Whatever the explanation, the Italian Section treats specifically—often sardonically—topics and problems outlined in the International Introductory Section.

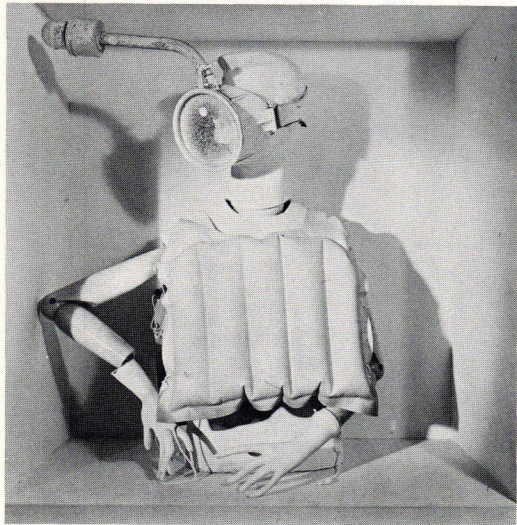
Newspaper sculpture in small room off the entrance hall.



Opposite page: Triangular mirrored corridor with film and slide projections of sports, comic strips, dance, beach scenes and other uses and abuses of free time. Architects Meneghetti, Stoppino, Grejotti and Brivio)

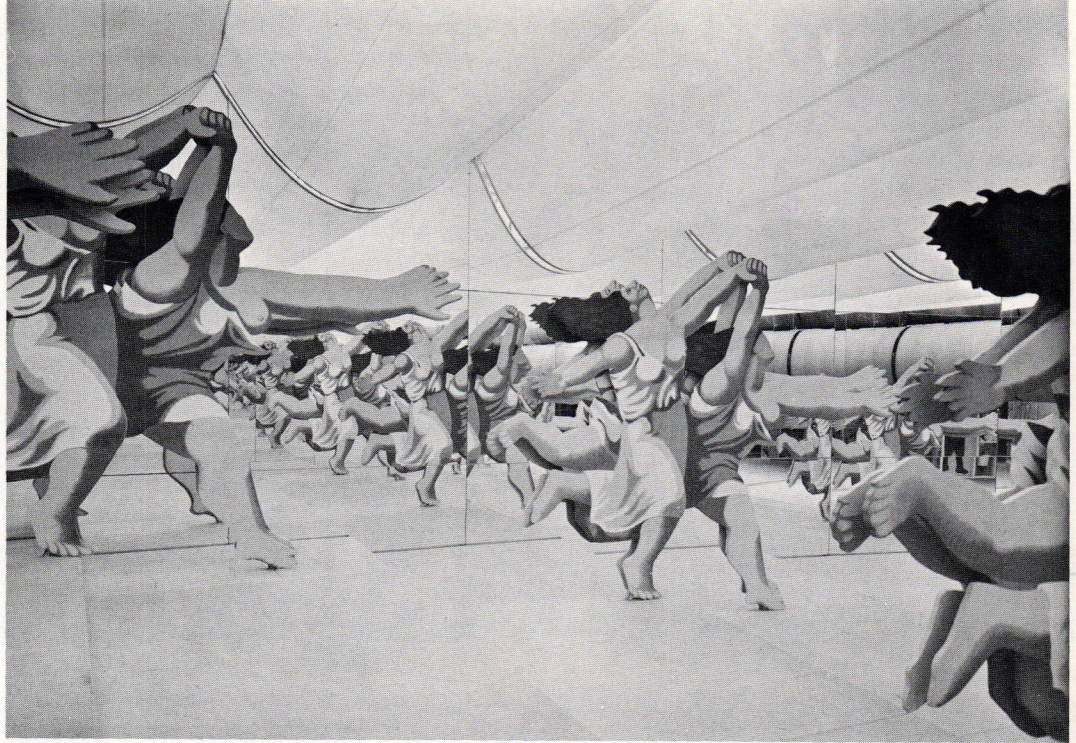


Dark tunnel lined with jostling cars and trailers on their way to the "seaside."



Assemblage of objects and products for use at the beach (sprayed ghostly white).

## Italian Section

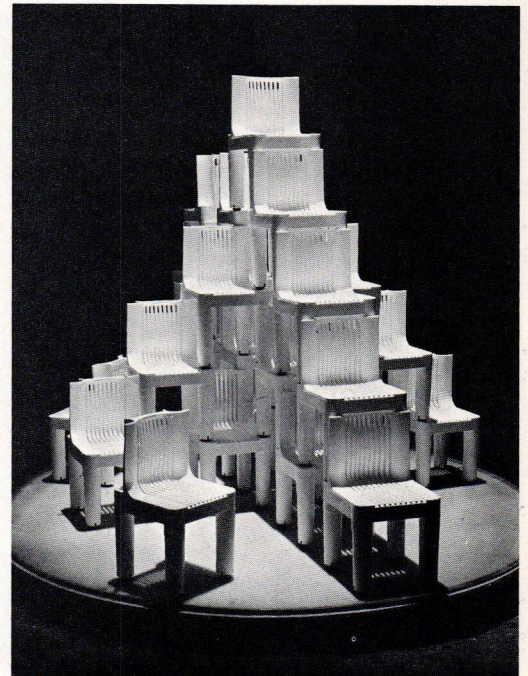


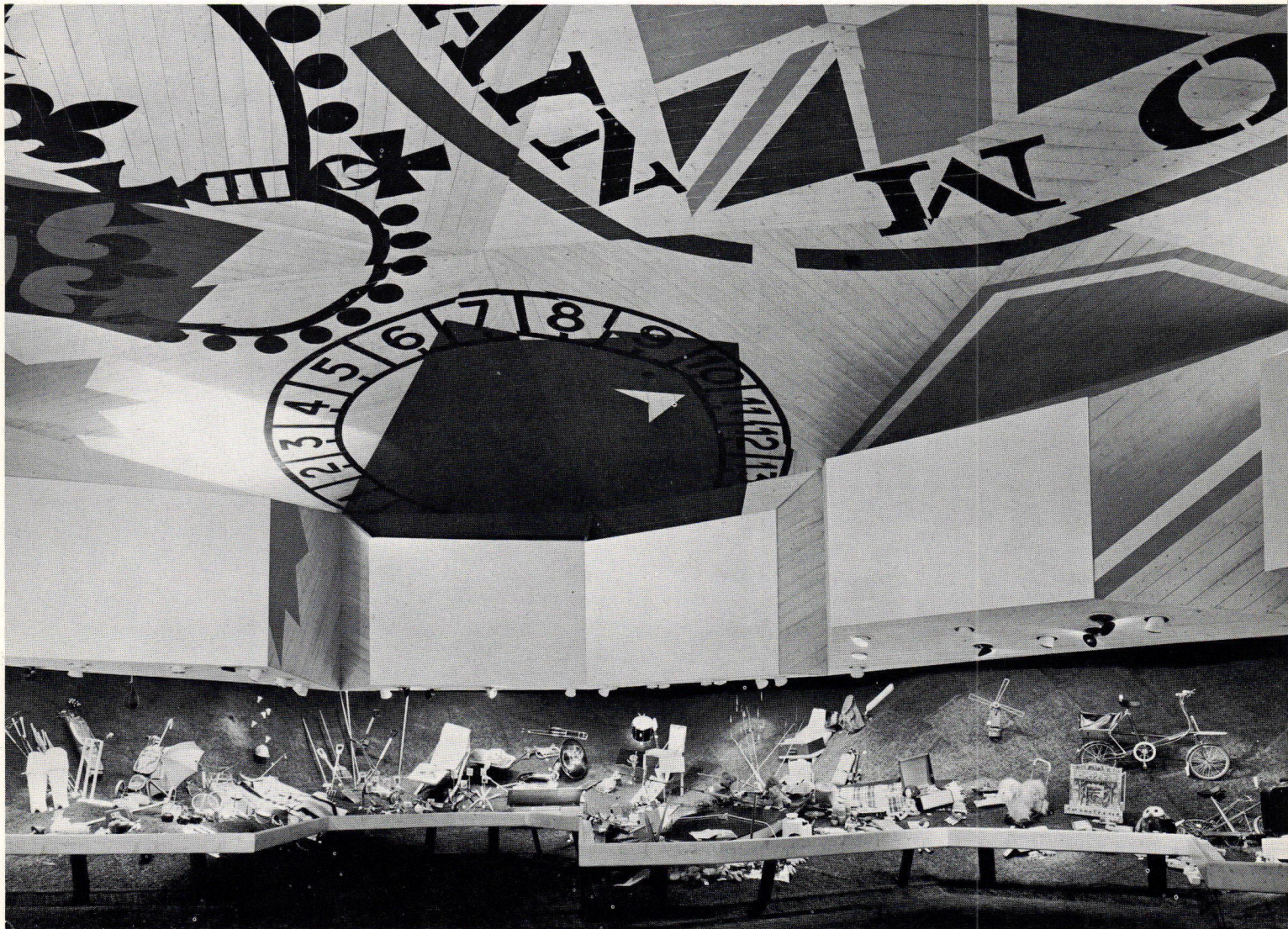
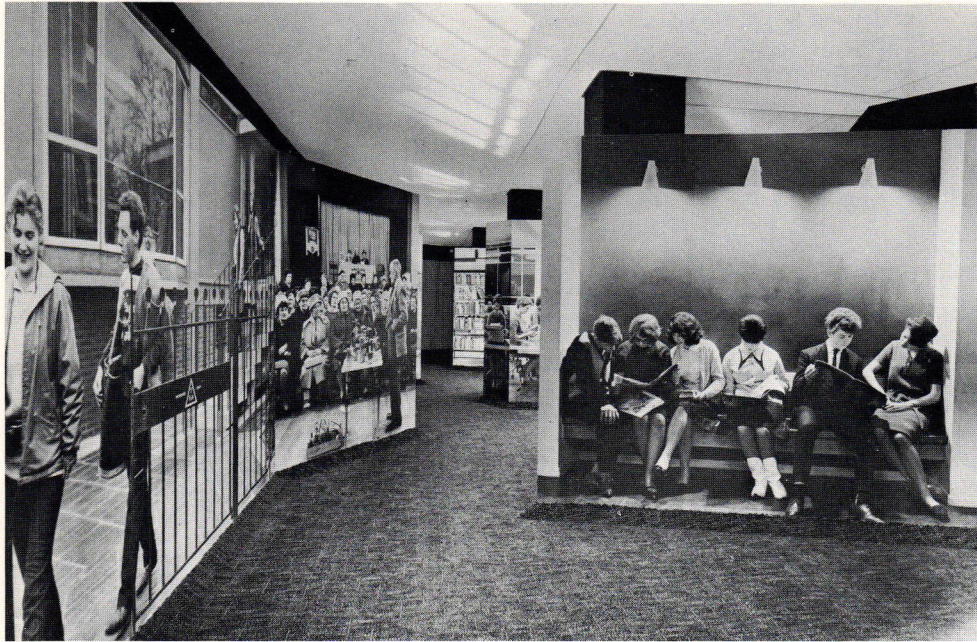
"Arrival at the Seaside"

Divided into six areas, the Italian Section first develops the topic of equilibrium as a privilege for the few, as lost, and as to be found again. The *"vacation al mare"* is presented with horrible accuracy—traffic jam of cars, trailers, boats, horns and blinking lights on either side of a long dark tunnel which leads to the bright seashore and a forest of skyscrapers and endlessly multiplied "shop windows" displaying a plethora of things everyone could do without. Mirrors, larger-than-life size statues, and a rolling sea multiply the force of this section, literally making it necessary to leave.

Not all of the Italian presentation is negative. The units on the re-design of cities (Rome, in particular), the preservation of the Italian coastline, the researching of differing sociological conditions of city and country dwellers are all significant on a broader base than the level of exhibition, for these units represent study that can lead to action and awareness that can lead to change.

Children's white plastic, stacking chairs designed by Marco Zanuso.





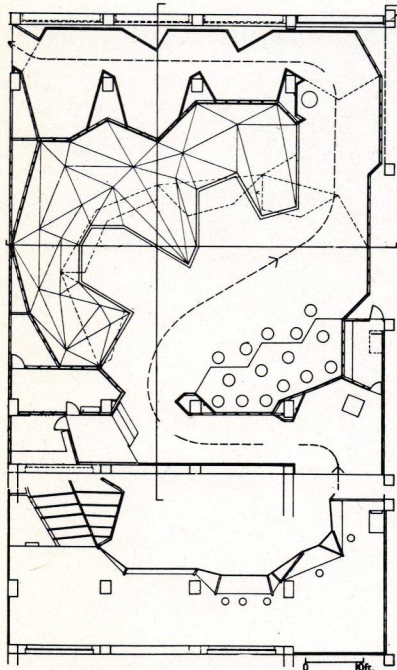
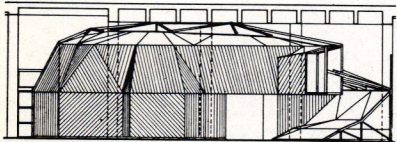
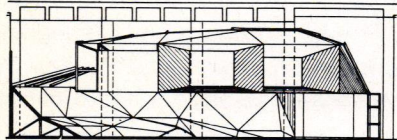
## British Section

Opposite page

Left: Exit corridor, designed by Fletcher, Forbes and Gill, with life-size photographs by Barnett Saidman.

Right: Part of Great Britain's exhibition showing ceiling patterns by Joe Tilson.

Bottom: British Section, designed by Theodoros, FSIA, displaying well-designed equipment for indoor and outdoor leisure. Photographs by Roger Mayne are rapidly flashed on the five protruding cubicles.



A clear demonstration of the twentieth century preoccupation with things is Great Britain's exhibit, drolly sheltered under a great wooden export packing box, complete with labels stenciled in red, blue and green. A rolling green "lawn" supports the exhibit which is essentially a trade show—at first glance reminiscent of the all-American drug-store display window except for the nature of its contents. Here are all the trappings of a "worthy use of leisure," all the blandishments of the manufacturers of such things as binoculars, tennis racquets, musical instruments and gardening equipment.

However, the comment on the Great Britain exhibit makes it quite clear that the staffs of the Council of Industrial Design and the Central Office of Information on behalf of the Board of Trade knew what they were about:

*"The British view of leisure is clouded by a Puritan addiction to work, an attitude which is being rapidly eroded by changing economic circumstances. It is further confused by the existence of a tradition of elegant leisure: hunting, shooting, fishing, landscape gardening, which has survived almost unchanged for two centuries, and a more recent tradition of popular healthful sporting activity which stems from 19th century reformism.*

Left: Ground plan and elevation.

*In a time of increased leisure for the whole population provision must be made for access to and enjoyment of the countryside and official planning is designed to preserve rural amenities.*

*Britain is above all a country of clubs and associations, ranging from the elegant establishments for gentlemen in London, to associations covering every possible interest or activity: from dog breeding to athletics, pigeon fancying to rock climbing, from water colours to coarse fishing.*

*The British section tries to illustrate these complex and idiosyncratic phenomena and to interweave several other themes of particular relevance to the Triennale: the integration of the arts, the influence and effect of the machine in art, design in daily life—and the expression of Britain as a trading nation which has exported its pursuits, games and equipment all over the world . . ."*

*"The exit corridor is concerned with public provision for leisure: the National Parks, National Trust, Nature Conservancy, youth clubs and activities . . ."*

The life-size photographs by Barnett Saidman of sober British leisure are uncommonly effective, so much so that, for example, as one walks toward the one showing the lecturer with the pointer and potted plants speaking before a ladies garden club it is almost impossible not to apologize for intruding.

## Swiss and Finnish Sections

In sharp contrast to the exhibit of Great Britain are the uncluttered Finnish and Swiss exhibits, which, because of a natural circumstance, present striking similarities in viewpoint. Both countries are low density areas; both are small with sparkling waters, pristine woodlands and challenging mountains; in both there is a comfortable harmony of the urbane and the rustic—this last more obvious in Switzerland. Additionally, in both countries the ethic of industry is evident. Economic differences notwithstanding, in Switzerland and Finland leisure demands excellence and pleasure is to be found in first-rate performance. One works at skiing, sailing, climbing. And, as a corollary the tools of leisure tend toward perfection.

Never has the economic fibre of Finland been more aptly demonstrated than at the Triennale. What is produced in Finland is workmanship, mathematical elegance; what is exported is quality rather than goods per se.

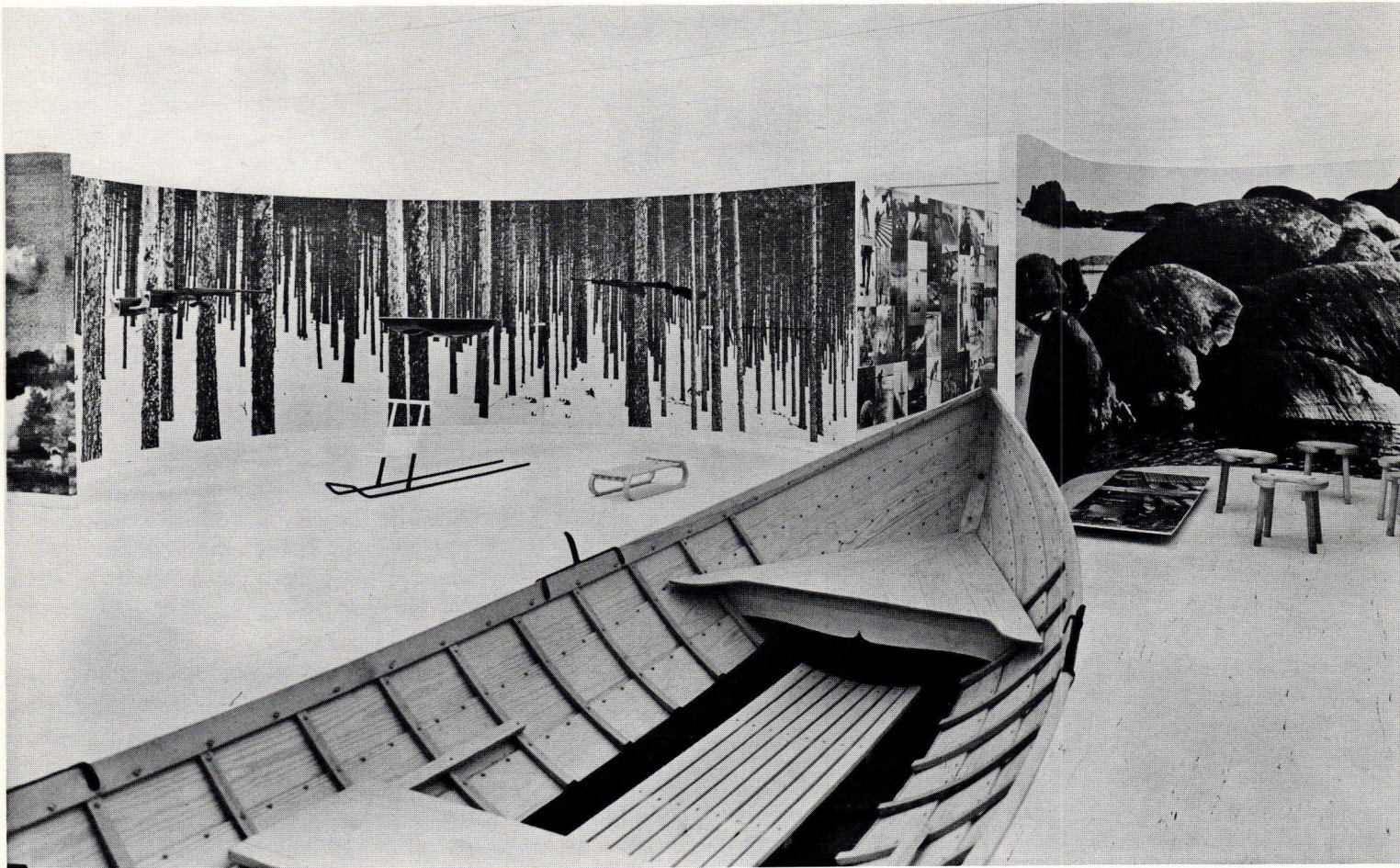
Neither the Finnish nor the Swiss exhibit makes a serious assessment of the problems



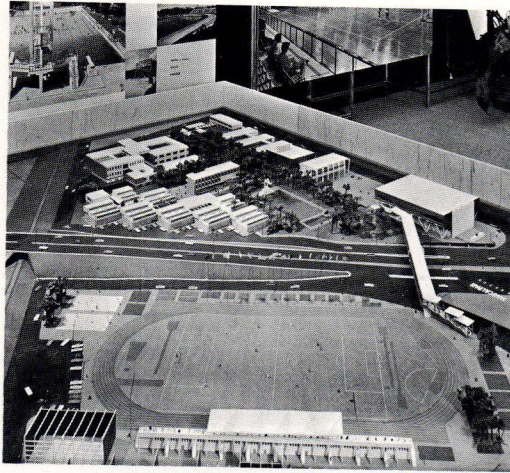
Designed by architect Hans Fischli, the Swiss Section displays toys, photographs and publications.

of leisure at home, because prime solutions are inherent in their geography. The problem of what to do about that segment of the population which has neither free time nor the means to use it is not discussed.

*Below:* Finnish Section, designed by Antti and Vuokko Nurmesniemi, with sporting equipment and sauna stools shown against a background of photo murals by A. Fethulla, H. Heinonen, M. A. Pitkänen and M. Saanio.



## Mexican Section



Mexican Section, organized by L. Lessur and architects A. P. Posada and M. Manino, consisting of architectural models and photographs.

The Mexican Exhibition, full of conscience and self-conscious national pride, presents the government as beneficently insuring full and orderly lives for the citizenry, stating the position of the government as follows:

*"Free time is not synonymous with idleness; it is a complex social problem . . . A problem historically new: how to organize free time . . . This exposition wishes to illustrate the experiment made in Mexico by which have been constructed parks, theatres, museums, libraries, health centers and sports centers . . . The Mexican Institute of Social Security . . . has contributed to the solution of the problem by the creation of complex attractions specially directed to the organization of free time of the worker . . . A typical center of the Social Security offers to the worker and his family a variety of cultural, technical, and physical means of self improvement and elevation of the standard of living of the family."*

There is, of course, a clear contradiction in terms here, but an honorable contradiction, nonetheless. (Time which has been organized for the citizen by the government or anyone else, for that matter, is not entirely free.) But the Mexican exhibit clearly reflects the disposition and conscience of a tax-paying electorate. If the view is rosy, the exhibitors can be forgiven; the fact is that Mexico is emerging as a most favored nation economically with vast and diverse natural resources, a growing and artful technology. She stands alone, a culture successfully hybridized from indigenous, colonial and industrial elements.

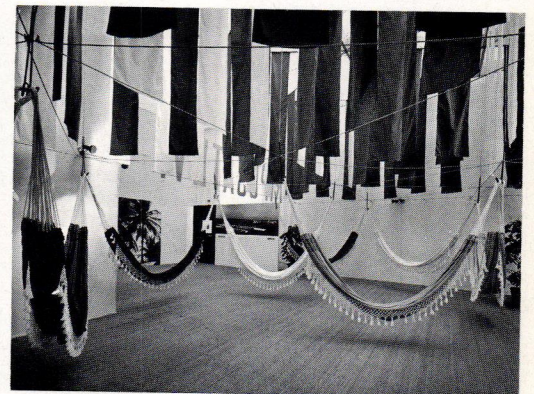
The exhibit is handsome, optimistic, reflective of a young, vigorous, up-and-coming economy. If one can believe the exhibitors,

the government plans to see to it that the citizenry is healthy in mind and body and spirit throughout a long life and that free time will be used, not spent, in pursuit of wholesome, aesthetic, cultural, intellectual and spiritual activities and that one of the consequences of such a program will be increased productivity for the country.

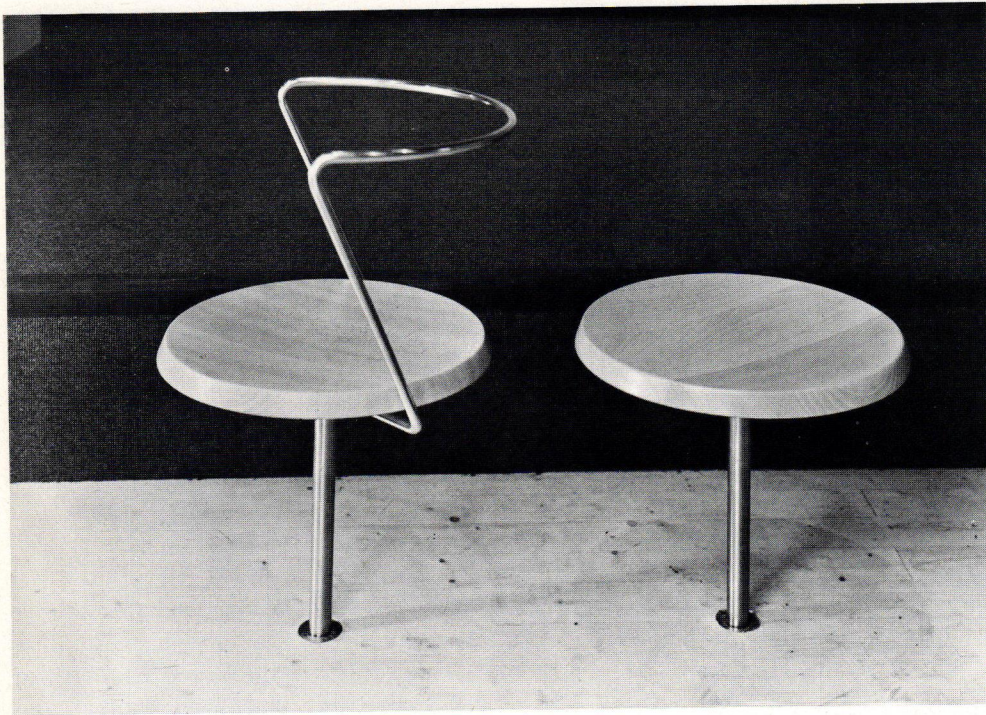
Enroute to security some of the dignities and repose of a less mobilized society will be lost. The new, ever-widening middle class is absorbing the stereotypical Mexican of song, sombrero and siesta. There is no doubt that the process cancels out some of the freedoms (even though dubious ones) of the disadvantaged.

## Brazilian Section

The Mexican and Brazilian exhibits are far apart in more ways than one. Leisure in the Brazilian Section, to quote the English text of the Guide, is "illustrated as rest and amusement." The Italian text goes a little further, saying that the "symbols of the free time of the Brazilian are the hammock and the guitar—fourteen hammocks and some guitars . . . completed with a series of photographic panels illustrating the method of using idle free time." Of all the galleries in the Triennale, the Brazilian is the least demanding. It invites a fashionable, gregarious idleness and is swept clean of any urgings to pay attention, think, improve yourself, swim, climb, make something or go somewhere. Refreshing, to say the least! I would not ask the Brazilian designer-architects to be sociologists, but they could have used a sociologist's help—if only for comment. Without intending to do so, they encouraged the inference that in Brazil the official view of the broad problem of leisure is a fairly somnolent one. Well, it is not all that simple in Brazil!



Right: Colored hammocks from Brazil. Section designed by M. E. Costa, S. Porto and H. Leite.



Pedestal seat, by Arc, Paris, in French "House of Culture" organized by Louis Blanchet, architect. In another version, the tubular backrest is replaced by a band approximately 2 1/2" wide.

### French Section

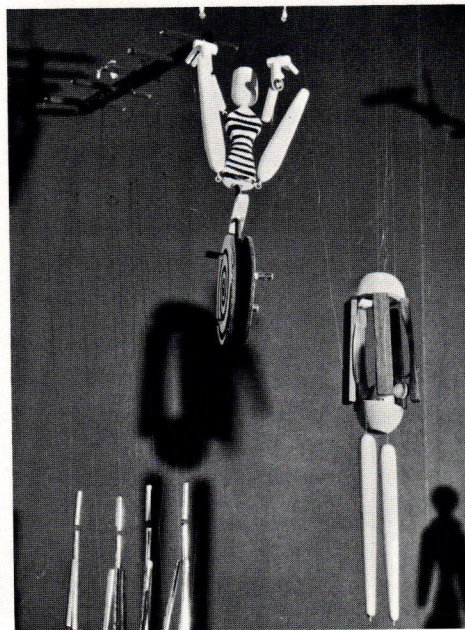
The French "Maison de Culture" translate literally but badly into English. It is a pleasant room, equipped with diversified opportunities for enjoyment of music, discussion board games, film viewing or merely watching the change of the projections on the walls—projections of bucolic and leisure scenes of the past. On view also is a charming collection of the toys of princely French children. The deft design of the seating used in the French theatre deserves comment. Immobile disc seats, supported by a gleaming metal post; the revolving back rests make it possible to direct the attention of the audience to any wall in the room.

### Austrian Section

The Austrian section is more properly a display than an exhibit; objects are presented rather than ideas. Still the idea stated in the catalog comes through: "Love of art and of liberty are fundamental components of the national character of Austrians. The concept of free time is presented as depending on the principle that it must be used freely and without any restraint." The gallery is restful but not in the same way that the Brazilian gallery is. It is ordered, cool and crisp. Objects displayed are for the most part industrially produced accoutrements of leisure.

Posters, photographs and models for the theatre are displayed in the German Section. Exhibition designed by architect P. Nestler.

Marionettes from Marionettenstudio der Staatlichen Hochschule für bildende Künste Kassel, Ernst Roettger.



### German Section

This gallery, with the scope of free time narrowed to cover only theatre arts, is mysterious and shadowy and has limited impact. A series of scale-model stages, carefully detailed and furnished, exact and fragile, is presented as "a collection of objects created by artists and artisans along with products of the industry, in direct relation to the performance, its needs and its exigencies." Of the entire collection the unit on marionettes was most exciting—the old system of suspension and control, but the form of the marionettes themselves was sculptural and evocative and seemed not to need the usual trappings of characterization, the role of the figure being clearly indicated in its size, form and posture capabilities.



Yugoslavian lattice structure by architects B. Bernardi and V. Richter.

### Yugoslavian Section

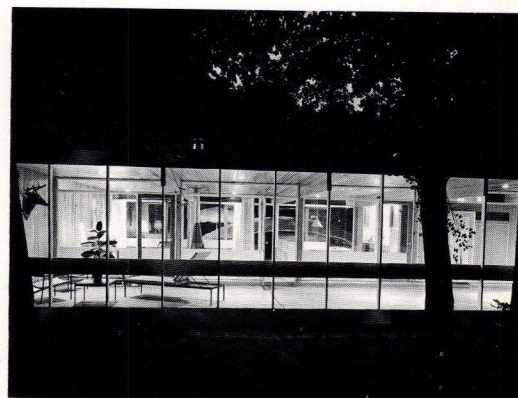
If the viewer passes through the Yugoslavian Section quickly he finds it one of the most vibrant galleries in the Triennale. An open lattice-like structure with bands of photographs sliced into pieces the width of the lattices and mounted on them fills the room, establishing a series of corridors. The floor is striped in similar fashion. The text reads: "The use of free time is an important element in the life of the individual and of the community. This section wishes to give a demonstration of the freedom of choice which exists in Yugoslavia for leisure and which can be developed as well in the house of culture as in all the other activities which surround the sphere of divertissement." The concept of the gallery seems to be better than the pictorial support.

### Dutch and Canadian Sections

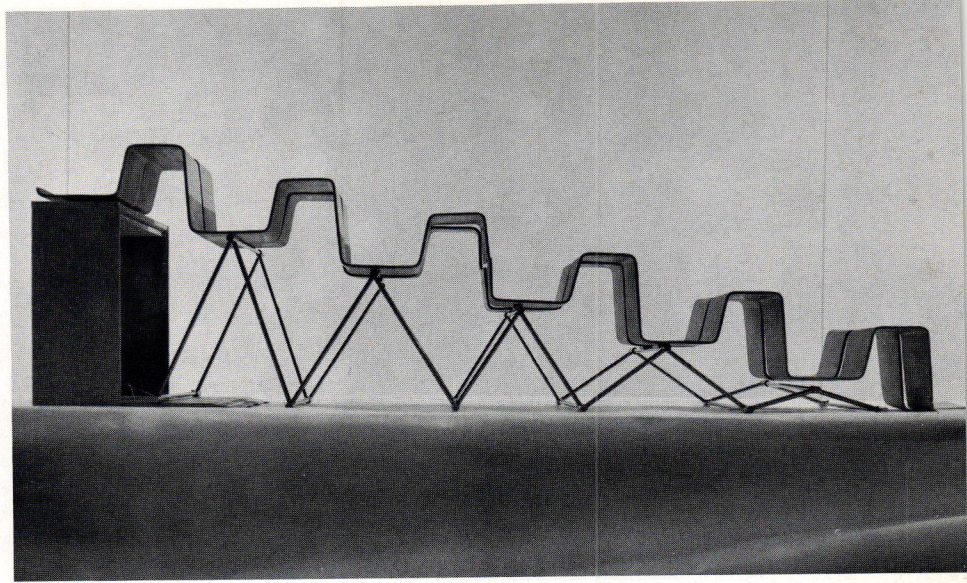
Although in no way alike, these two galleries can be described in similar terms: fresh, in-

dustrial, prosperous but unpretentious and affectionately respectful toward the wonders of nature. The Dutch gallery is a precise reflection of the beautifully woven fabric of Dutch city and countryside. The Canadian gallery emphasizes Canada's vastness, the opportunity there for the free life, and the need for well designed equipment to facilitate the use of the kind of leisure available in Canada.

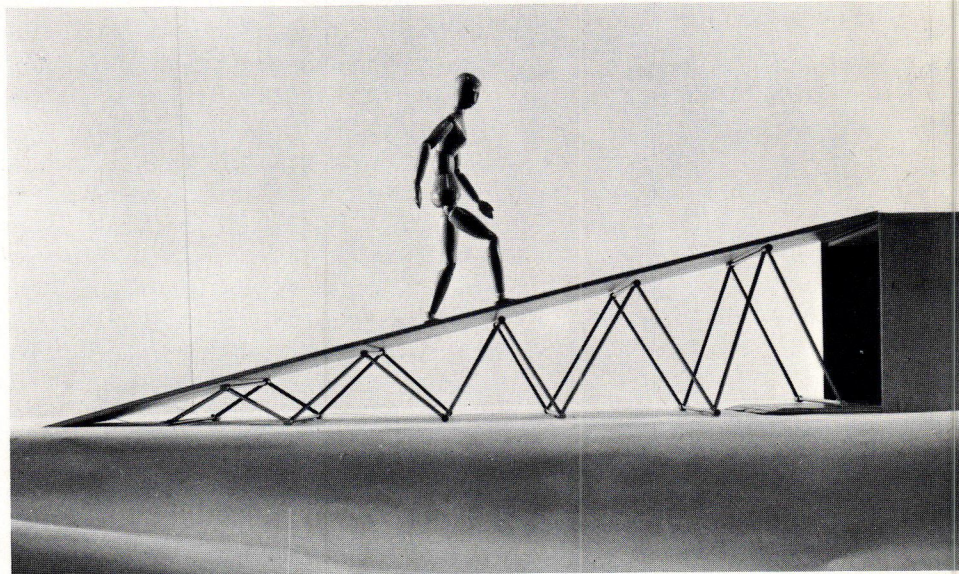
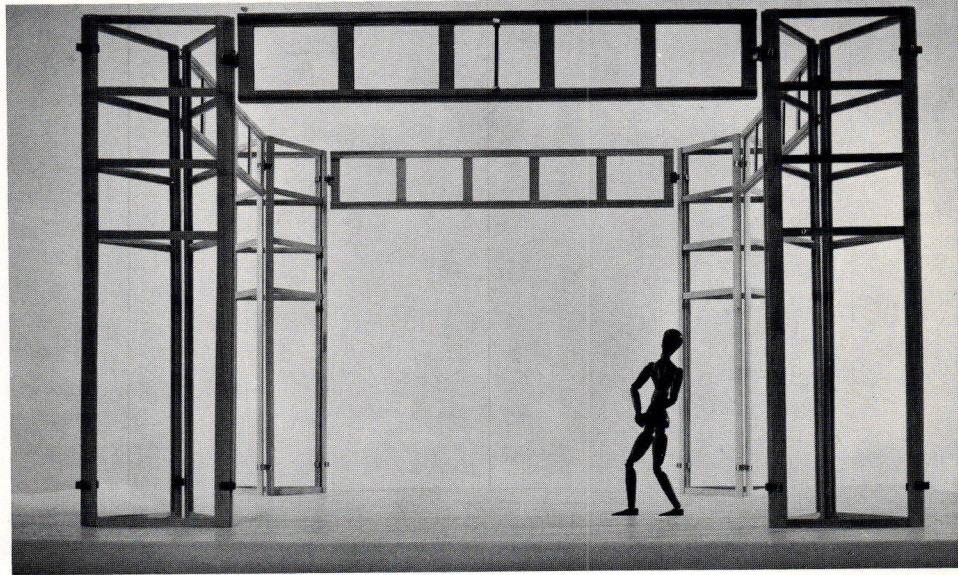
Right: Canadian pre-fabricated holiday house by architects Scholer and Barkham.



## Belgian Section



The Belgian exhibitors, as the German, concentrate on the theatre, their position being that a new idea (at least in Belgium) would be the development of systems by which the spectator could actually take part. Of far greater interest, however, was the De Coene Freres' sprightly, demountable theatre which is significant for both technical and esthetic reasons. Simply assembled and demounted, easily stored and capable of a variety of settings and lightings, it nevertheless has none of the shabby, jerry-built characteristics of the usual demountable stage and seating. Its special appeal grows from the fact that such a treatment gives an amateur or a transient production a self-respect hardly possible with the standard risers, folding chairs and improvised proscenium.



Demountable Theatre designed by the Design Office of the "Ateliers d'Art de Courtrai De Coene Frères S.A."

*Top:* Seating arrangement of moulded plywood supported by aluminum framework.

*Center:* Proscenium arch and lighting towers.

*Bottom:* Aisle, reinforced by two steel cables when in use.

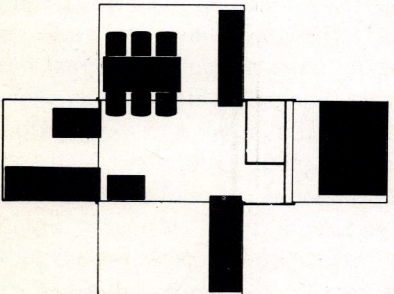
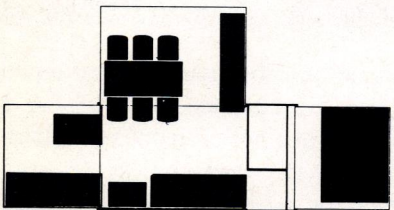
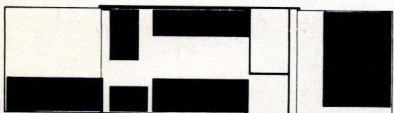
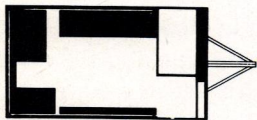
**Triennale in the Park**



Mobile Vacation Shelter designed and produced by students of Hornsey College of Art, England.



Park furniture by P. L. Spadolini, F. Drugman and F. Nicolitti.



Of all the "vacation houses" in the park the Mobile Shelter, designed and produced as a group project by students of Hornsey College of Art, England, practicing designers, technicians and manufacturers (group headed by Clive Latimer, FSIA), is the most exciting, practical, unpretentious and complete. It is also capable of functioning in situations other than vacation. The modest straightforward specification sheet which names no names and sells no wares and makes no claims is a refreshing change from the usual graphic support—not that better

graphics would not have helped the paper, but that graphics were not used to support the absence of content.

And, of all the park furniture, the most impressive is a moulded park bench designed by a student of Pier Luigi Spadolini of Milano. In general the park furniture is too heavy, at least in appearance, for the service it is asked to perform, although one using a dry slotted assembly of fountain, bench and refuse container is sensible, if not comfortable. (Fred Drugman and Franco Nicolitti, designers.)

Diagram 1 at left and photograph below: Mobile Shelter closed for traveling. Diagrams 2, 3, 4 and 5: Various arrangements of the shelter.



Translucent plastic dome, inflated and kept at a constant air pressure by an electric ventilator. Made by Plasteco, Milano.



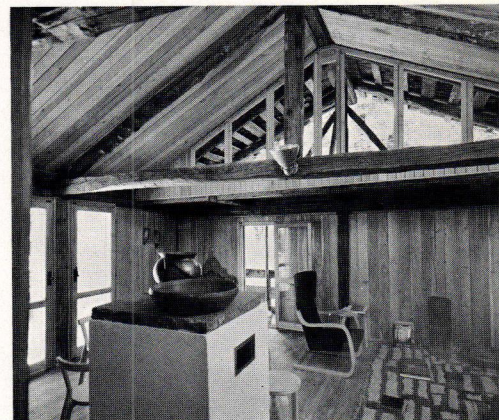


Photo murals by I. Negri, M. Provinciali and I. Tovaglia.

### Trentino Exhibit

Within the Alpine province of Trento is a tiny community proposed for development as a tourist retreat. The exhibit, attempting to demonstrate the techniques to be applied and the results to be achieved, is composed essentially of two elements: A photo panorama of the scene, the wild life, the configuration and the human activity possible in this remote and fantastically beautiful area. A cottage brought down from the mountains and re-assembled in the park and modified just enough to provide logical creature comforts without destroying the monastic purity of the house itself. The furniture and equipment introduced are faultlessly appropriate.

Alpine Cottage from the Trento region restored by architect S. Giovanazzi and Studio Albin and Helg.



There are, of course, social implications here that cannot possibly be clear to the outsider, but it looks both logical and beautiful. Still, it would be interesting to know what happens to those presently living in Trentino. Would there be dispossessions and displacements? As roads and services go in error, route to Trentino will they bring poles, overhead power lines, speculative tourist development, billboards (which are all over the European countryside) and destruction of the beauties of this mountain fastness? If the plan comes to pass and none of these things happens, then architects Samonà, Andreatta and Giovanazzi know something that American community planners do not.

## United States Section

*"Technology, plus time to explore, yields unorthodox forms of abundance. The rich records of the past, plus time to explore, yield unexpected inspirations. These new freedoms are explored by United States designers in some examples presented here to show that leisure leads to play and play to creation, producing new resources for American design and American living . . ."*

—Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.

Thus, economically, do the exhibitors state the case for the United States exhibit, combining in it the beautiful, the playful, the commonplace, the hand-made and the machine-produced.

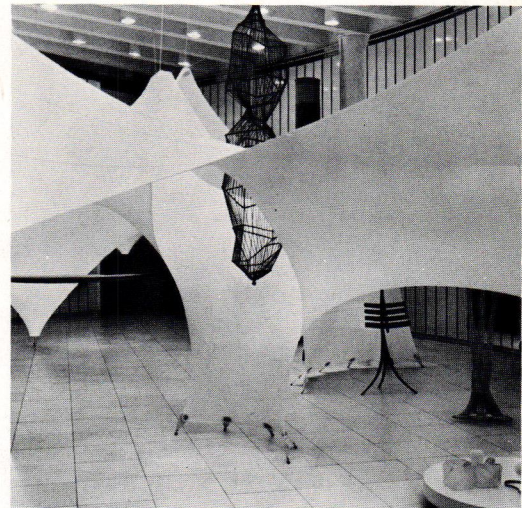
The United States exhibit deals with the abstraction of free time in more nearly precise and accurate terms than does any other national exhibit, with the exception of the Italian exhibit, to which it cannot reasonably be compared. Free time is here presented as a national and cultural resource which permits the enjoyment of effort, the assessment of quality, the pursuit of ideas, the use of creativity—each for its own sake. Thus, free time provides for the doing for love those things one could not afford to do for hire.

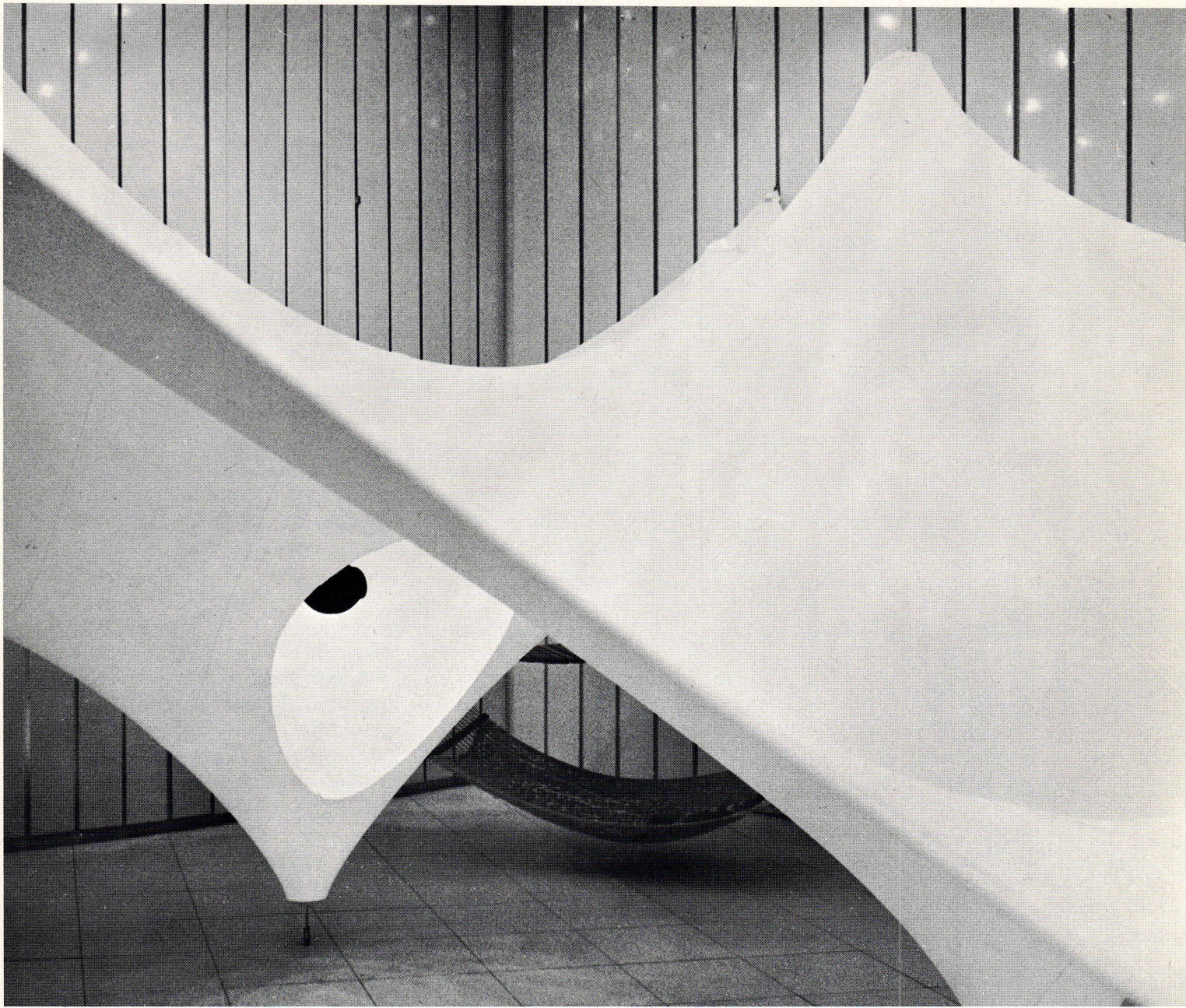
Charles Forberg's white shelter for the exhibit is luminous, tethered lightly, a free, ballooned fabric—almost giving the effect of a translucent chambered nautilus. The curves of the structure are mathematically pure, Candellan, paraboloid, tensioned. Quite simply, and perhaps erroneously, one reads into the shelter an admonition on the part of the architect: Freedom and restraint are the two ends of the same concept.

### Committee for American Participation

Edgar Kaufmann, president  
Jack Lenor Larsen, U. S. Commissioner and design director  
Charles Forberg, architect-designer  
Sergio Dello Strologo, design coordinator  
Lee Epstein, executive secretary  
Mildred Constantine, Olga Gueft, Edgar Kaufmann and Jack Lenor Larsen, selection committee.

Floating structure of nylon stretch fabric designed by architect Charles Forberg and used as background for objects in the United States Section.

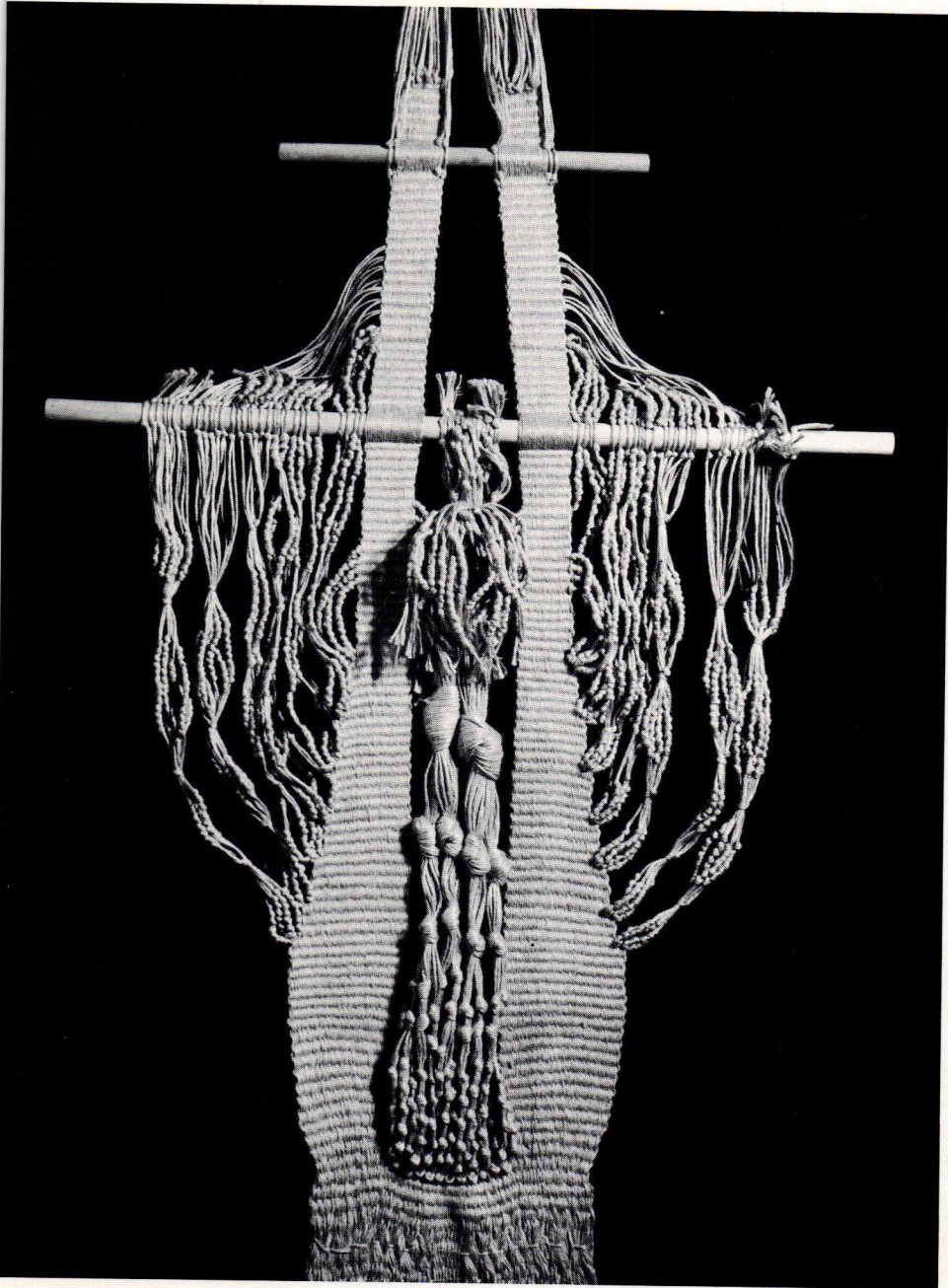




View of United States Section.



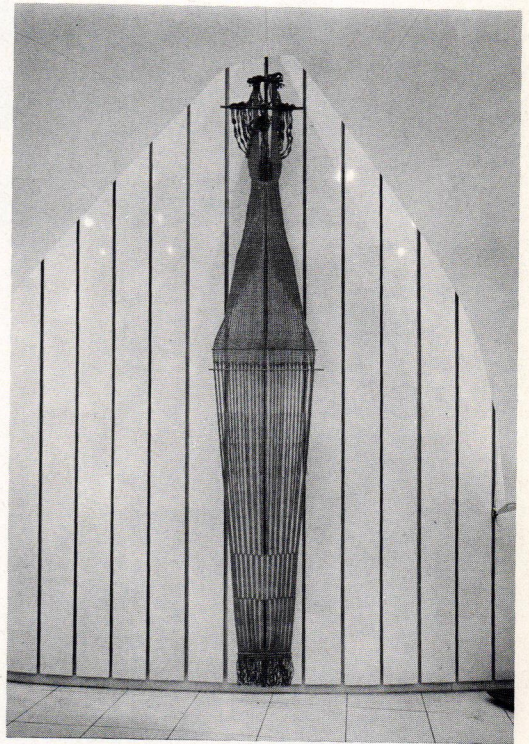
Prototype of folding chair by Eva Zeisel with hand-knit cover by Mary W. Phillips.



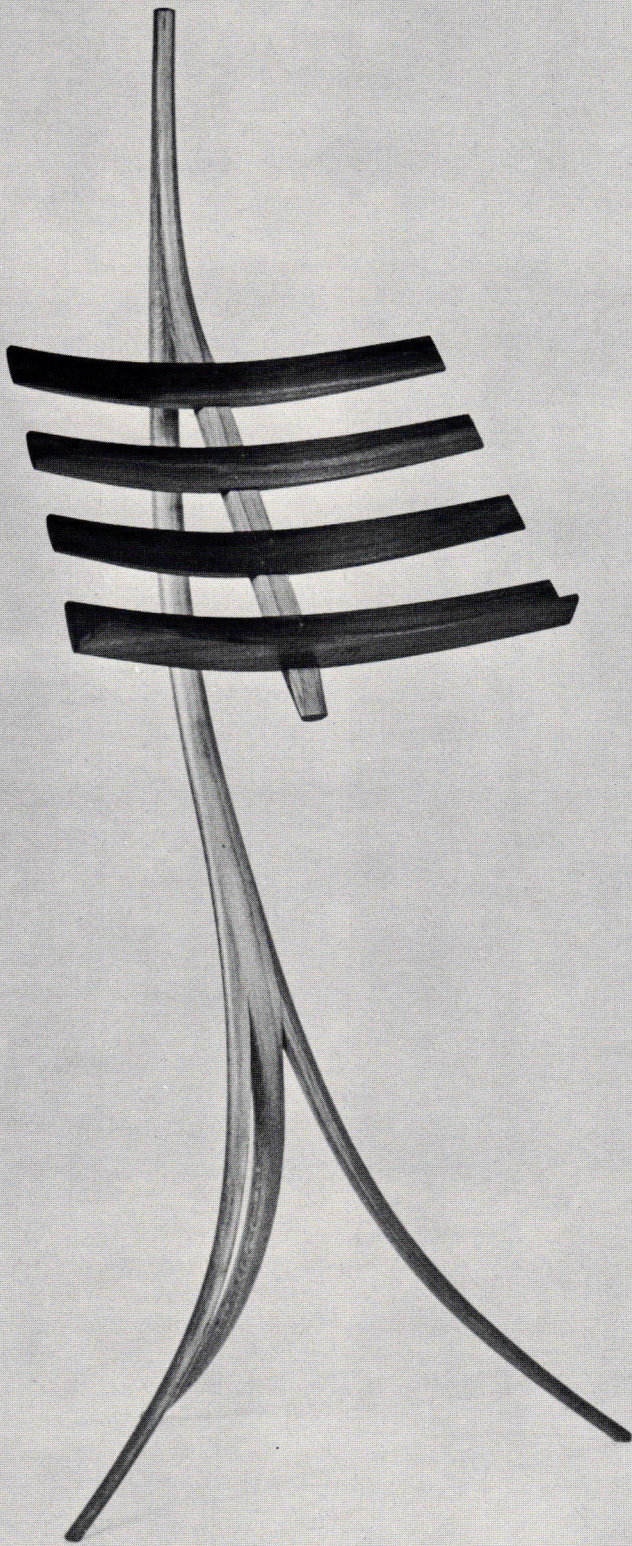
Lenore Tawney's "The Queen," woven in linen.

Perhaps the exhibit tends toward the precious; it is also not broadly reflective of the American, but it is still a valid American image.

We have certainly clocked time and set a monetary value on it and priced it out of existence; yet many things in the United States' exhibition are clear presentations of the disregard for time—that is the measure of time—as a limiting factor in the use of leisure. If Lenore Tawney had measured the cost in working time of producing "The Queen" (woven in linen) or Dominic di Mare had kept books on "The Box" (12 panels, triple weave wool), both might have been obliged to abandon the project.



Implicit in the United States exhibit is a disdain for our life and times reflected first in a healthy preoccupation with things uneconomic, and second, as demonstrated by the Hobie surfboard, in a respect for an art and a pursuit which are clearly disdainful of this life and these times. The design and production of surfboards is a subtle pursuit, each board (ideally) being an extension of the physiology, skill, limitations, potential and temperament of the user—designed for him alone by a craftsman whose skills include slojd, mathematics and a grasp of contemporary materials and techniques. Like skiing, surfing is a contest, not with



others, but with nature, except that surfing raises the odds, for the surfer personally challenges the moving sea rather than the static mountain slope. The board is an emblem of an atavistic and beautiful folly. And like the powered lawnmower, it exists in greater numbers than do its users. It is for many a symbol of escape, disdain and loneliness—power—and it rests emblematically against many a garage wall.

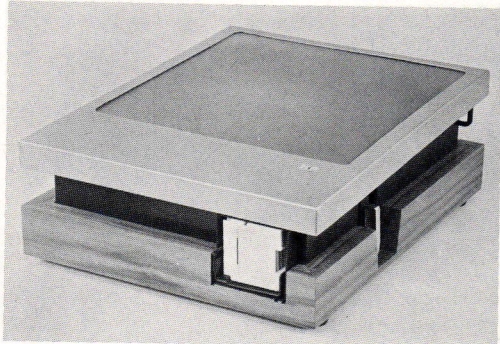
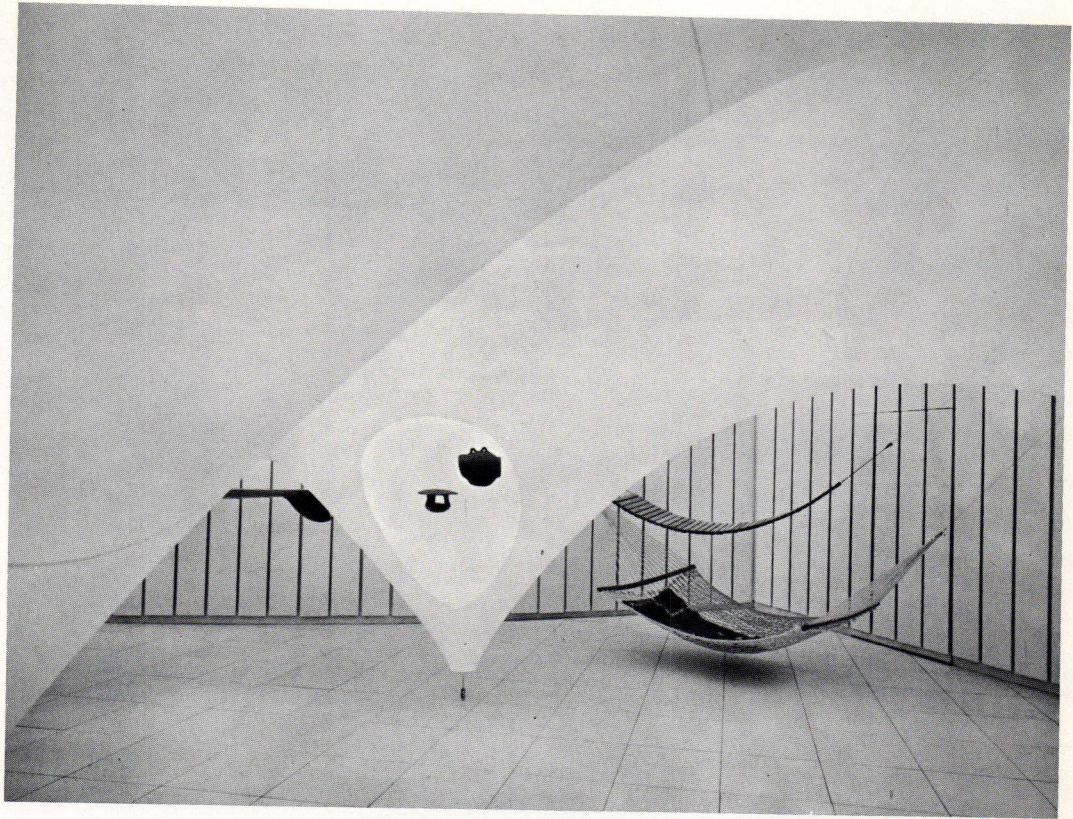
Americans have always been great producers and distributors of consumer products and have accepted them as substitutes for realities. We tend to permit the trappings of enjoyment, for example, to take precedence over enjoyment—even to intrude on it. The "after-ski" industry caters to persons who probably neither own nor rent skis; many bathing suits that have been worn on the beach have never been in the water.

And so the American exhibit is a fresh and exhilarating change; clean and uncluttered it asks "What is the smallest number of objects that can be shown to illustrate precisely the position of the exhibitors?" The attitude reflected by the articles is in some cases more important than the objects themselves. (Granted that it is good to explore non-traditional materials in the designing of outdoor furniture, still the choice of stone ware for this purpose may be too recherché and the form and materials chosen too self-consciously primitive.)

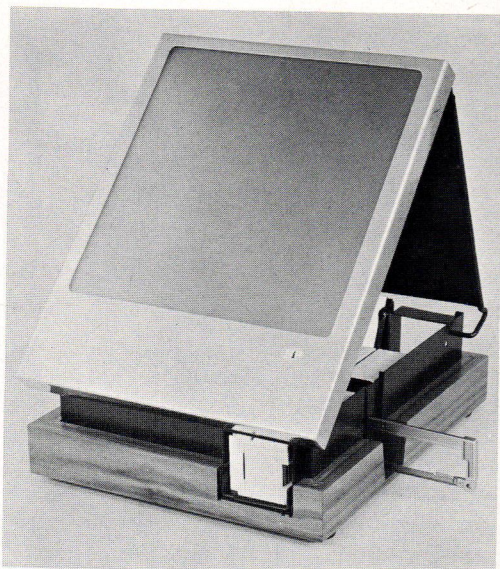
A corollary to the problem of the industrial production of consumer goods is the creation, largely American also, of a broadly based, industrially supported Free Time and its attendant problems. The American exhibitors look on these with serenity and thoughtfulness. It is as though they have survived a costly communicable disease and now, being immune, can consider how to avoid catching it again. This is not to say that Americans have got over their obsession with things, but only that some Americans have.

Laminated oak and rosewood music stand by Wendell Castle.

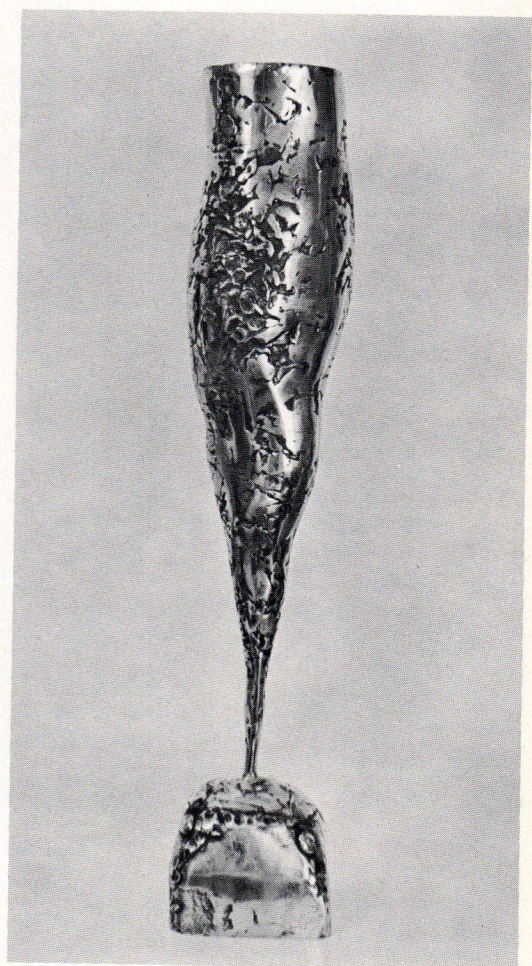
United States Section showing a hammock of cotton twill twine from The Hammock Shop, and one of wooden slats designed by Richard Thompson.



Desk top slide projector with walnut base and polished chrome top, designed by Gene Martinez for Hudson Photographic Industries, Inc.

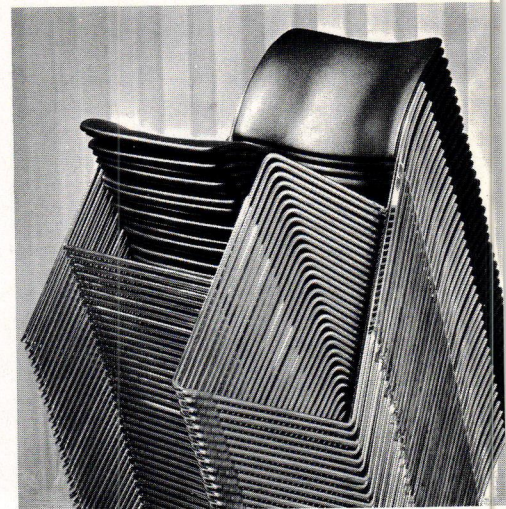
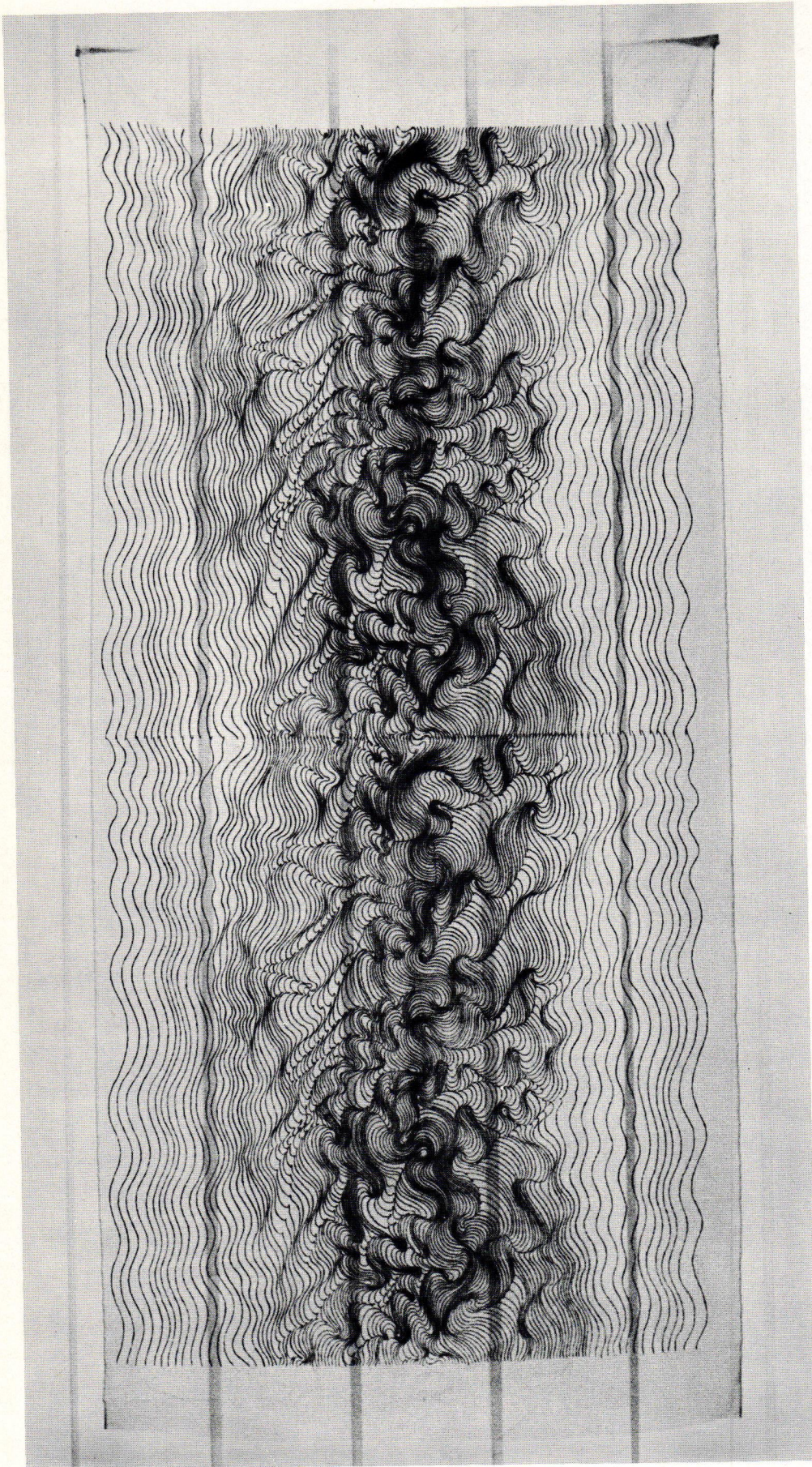


On the right: "Flame Pot 1," bronze, designed by William Underhill. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Monte Johnson, New York City.



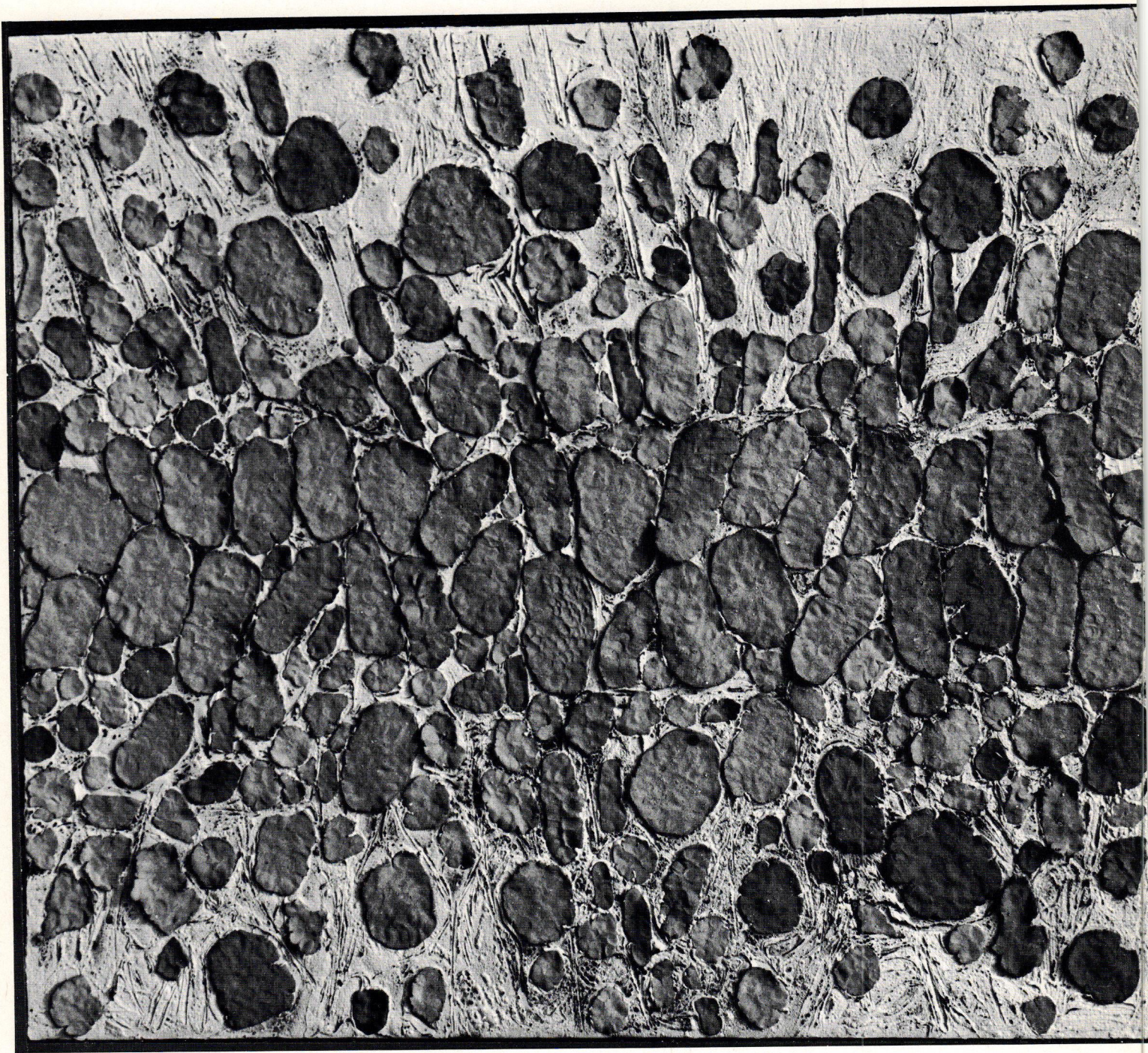
Meantime, free time and possession, once the privilege of the few, have become the right of the many. And the flow of consumer products has increased in volume and rate so that they, like the salt in the old folk tale, threaten to engulf the industrialized countries of the world. (The Triennale says nothing of the problem of disposal of out-worn or out-moded products, yet even in Europe these create problems; open-pit graveyards for old cars—so common in America—already exist in several European countries.)

Casement of dacron and silk designed by Sewell Sillman for Jack Lenor Larsen Inc.

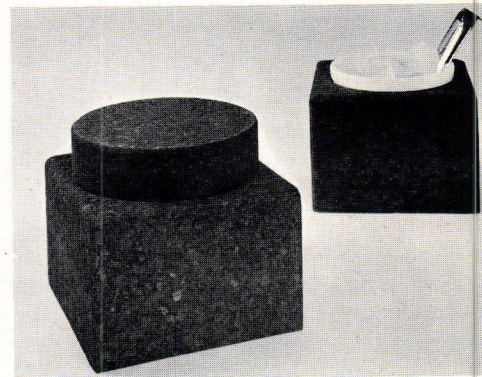




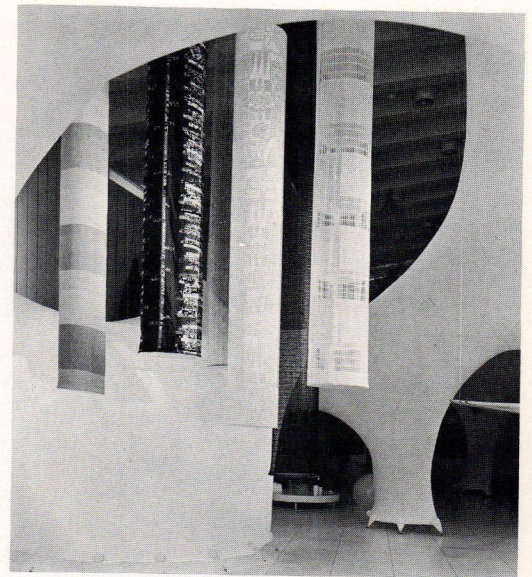
*right and opposite page:* Stacking chair of chrome-plated steel and vinyl coated formed metal, designed by David Rowland for The General Fireproofing Company. (Stacks 40 high in 4 feet)



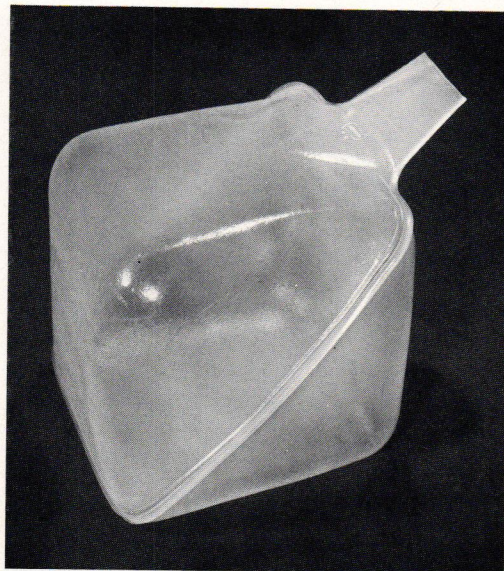
Hanging ceramic and epoxy panel by Tauno Kauppi.



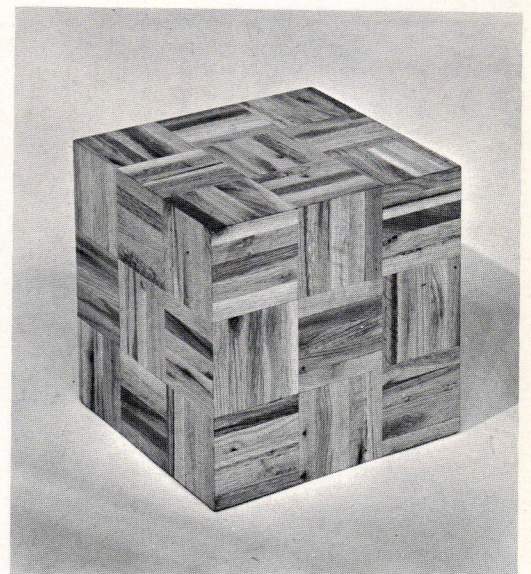
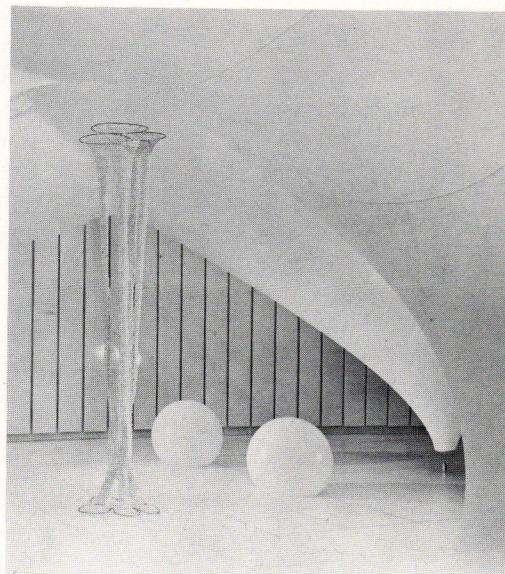
Cork ice bucket with milk glass lining by Mort and Beryl Marton for Mort N. Marton Corp.



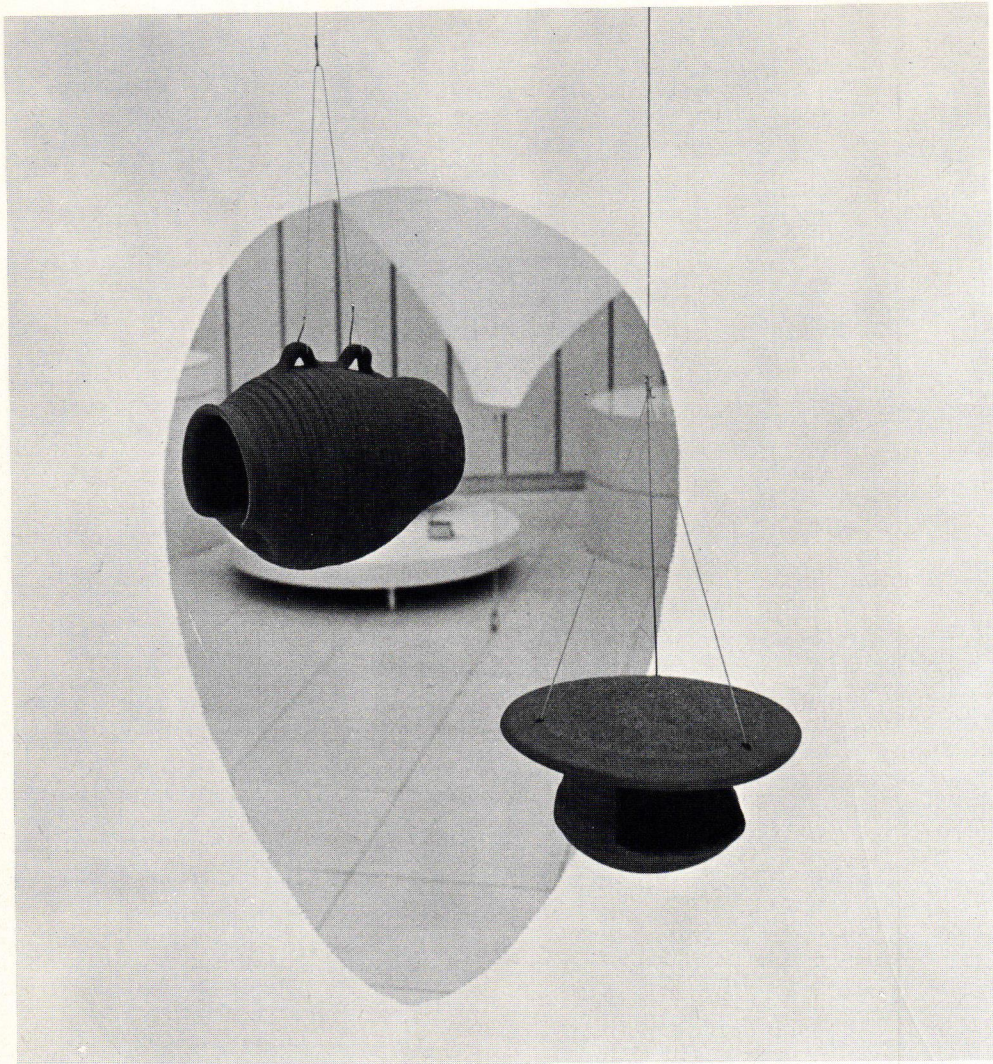
*right:* Dunbar walnut chair with leather cushion designed by Edward J. Wormley.  
*far right:* Interior of United States exhibition with fabrics by Jack Lenor Larsen Inc.



*right:* Collapsible polyethylene container designed by Thomas W. Winstead for Hedwin Corp.  
*far right:* Racing helmet with snap-on face shield designed by Frank Heacox and Roy Richter for Bell-Toptex Inc.



*right:* Spherical polyethylene outdoor seating by Paul Mayen for Habitat, and Fred Hallman's interlaced sculpture.  
*far right:* Oak parquet cubes designed by John Van Koert for Fields Products Inc.



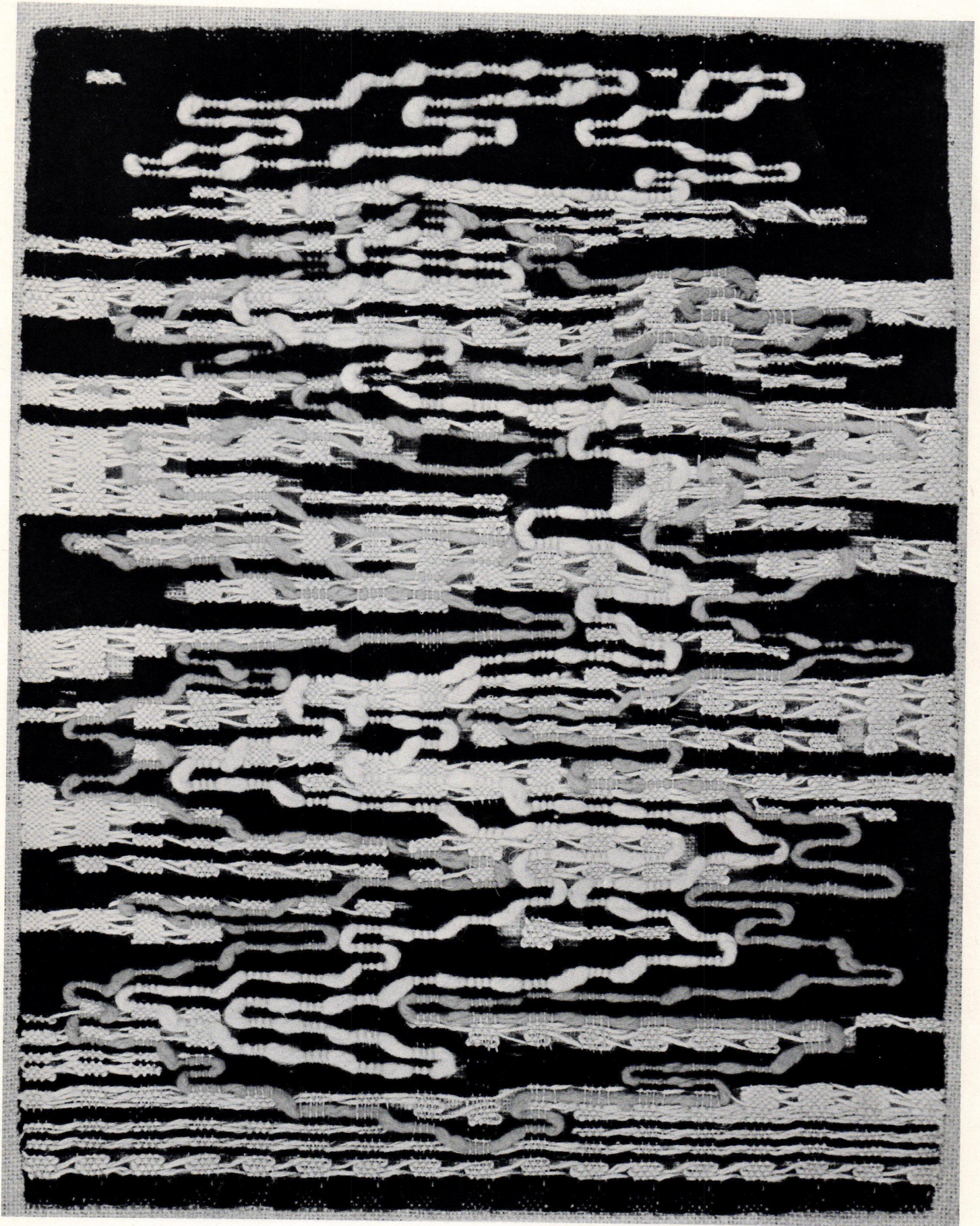
*Left:* Stoneware bird feeders by Karen Karnes.

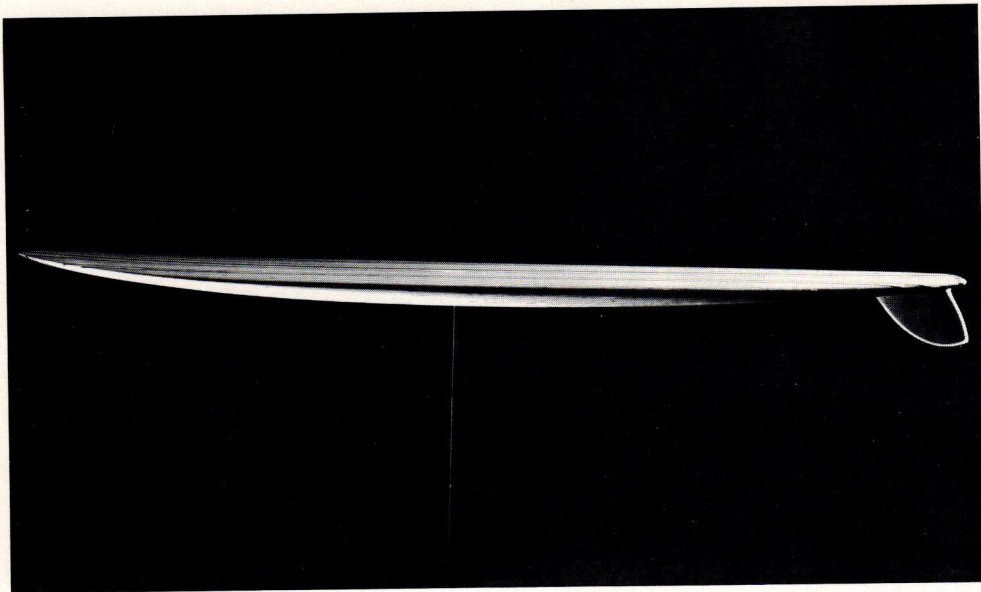
*Below:* Forms, blown glass, by Harvey K. Littleton.



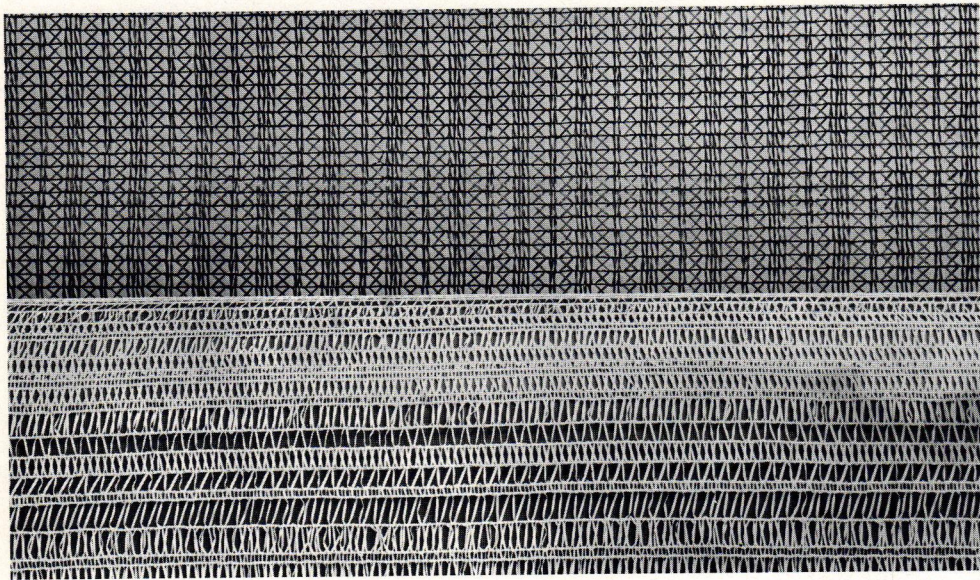
*Opposite page:* "Under Way," from a series of pictorial weavings by Anni Albers.

And so, the theme "Free Time" was a brilliant choice for the Triennale, even if there is no consensus as to its meaning (is it the same as leisure?) and no agreement as to whether there is a problem or, if there is, how it should be solved. It is of some moment that some exhibitors see the field of free time as an opportunity for the expansion of the range of manufacturing and the amount of export (England, Canada, Holland, Norway) or others regard the solution to the problems presented as the responsibility of government (Mexico). Still others view the enjoyment of leisure as intellectual and therefore reserved for the elite (France). Some do not take the problem seriously (Brazil), others view it with irony and feigning indifference (Italy). And the country which can be said to have at least multiplied the problem, but not created it, looks toward answers, both far and away from the present day situation (United States).

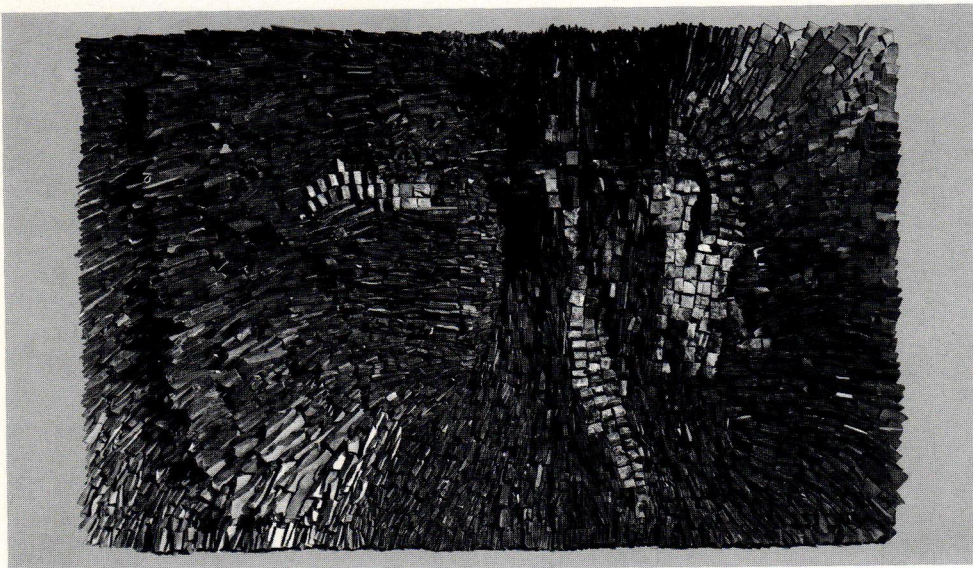




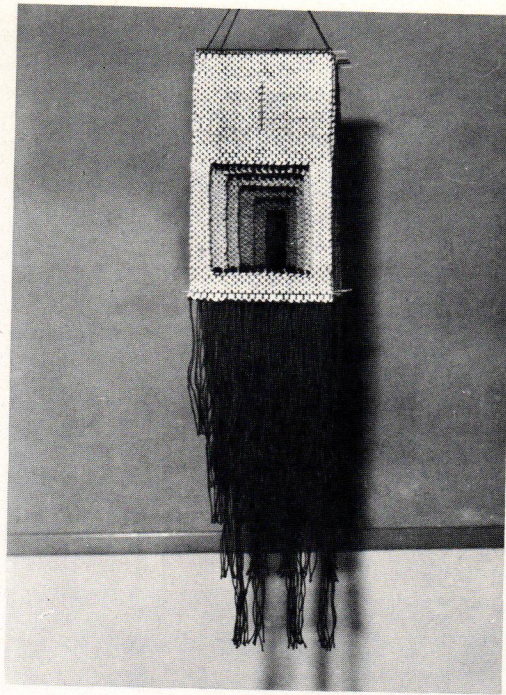
Surfboard, balsa wood covered with fiberglass, Hobart L. Alter for Hobie Surfboards. Collect Museum of Modern Art, New York City.



Warp-knit Rovana casement, "Interplay," from L sen Design Studio, Jack Lenor Larsen Inc.

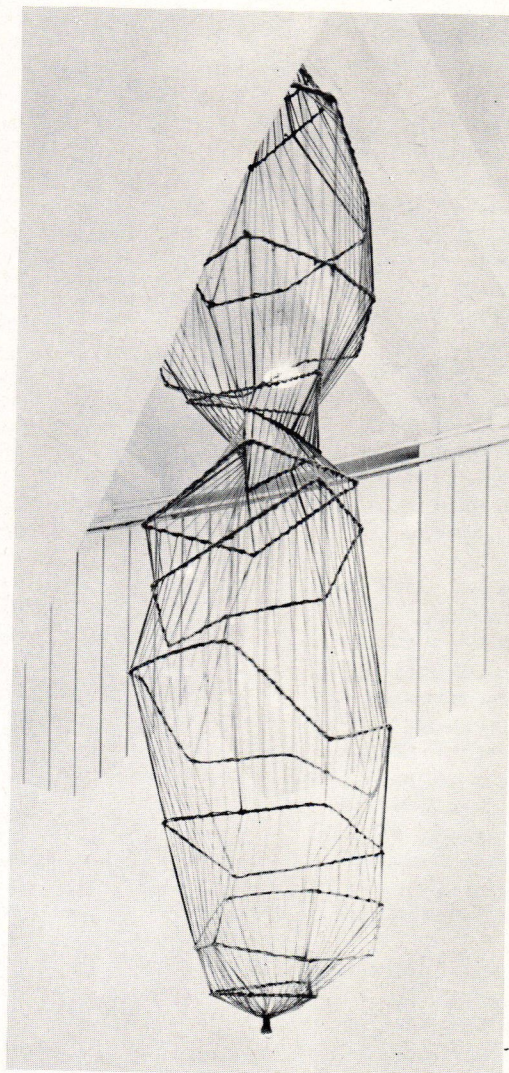


Relief of shale and Roman stone by Glen Michael



*Left:* Woven box of linen, wool and wire, designed by Dominic Di Mare.

*Below:* Construction of interlaced rayon and steel by Ted Hallman.



Although the Triennale was billed in placard and poster as a tourist attraction, the viewer asks himself in retrospect, "For whom was it really planned and further, whom does it reach?" The reply for many is most certainly, "Well, not me! I don't read Italian." Thus is wiped out a great viewing segment. It is not really necessary to read Italian to follow the Triennale, but to get at its subtitles a grasp of Italian is necessary. Lucid translations are very important so that meanings are neither lost nor distorted. Assuming that the viewer does read Italian, he is vulnerable to some ideas in the International Introductory Section and the Italian Section which he may regard as attacks and he may even feel that his view is shared by some of the exhibitors in galleries of other nationalities. The divergence is fair, but an explanation is owed.

As for the question, "Whom does the Triennale reach?" here we are on safer ground, for even if you have never heard of Frank Lloyd Wright or even Camus you may still be profoundly influenced by both. On this count I would have wished for the Triennale a heavy attendance of sociologists, legislators, economists and policy makers, but feel sure that all of these were in short supply.

Of course, as with all efforts of this kind, those who conceived, organized, developed, edited and tied together the exhibits will benefit more than will mere observers, because these processes teach them what they were trying to say. And so the Triennale will have a benign effect on designers, architects, and others and on the purchasers of design services and will thus ultimately shed a better light on the life of the ordinary citizen.

We are in a time of demand for answers; often the demand ignores the fact that both questions and answers are predicated on input. The Triennale is not less appealing or valid because it makes no point of offering answers or solutions, but it is less comforting. Nevertheless, there is input and there are questions.

Judith Miller



**About the writer:**

Judith Miller, a native Californian, was educated at the University of California at Berkeley (B.A. in English) and the University of California at Los Angeles (M.A. in Art).

Judith Miller now teaches in the Extension Division at the University of California at Los Angeles, is West Coast correspondent for **INDUSTRIAL DESIGN** magazine and frequently writes articles dealing with industrial design and related subjects.

**Photographic Credits**

- Anni Albers, New Haven, Conn., page 31
- Ancillotti Fotografie, Milano, pages 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19
- Attilio Del Comune, Milano, pages 26, 30
- Aldo Ballo, Milano, page 12
- Bell-Toptex Inc., Bell, Calif., page 29
- Ferdinand Boesch, page 23
- Wendell Castle, Rochester, N.Y., page 24
- Carlo Cisventi, Milano, pages 3, 4, 7, 10
- De Coene Frères, Brussels, page 18
- Committee for American Participation in The Triennale, Inc., pages 21, 29
- Council of Industrial Design, London, pages 12, 19
- Dominic Di Mare, Tiburon, Calif., page 33
- Dunbar Furniture Corp. of Indiana, Berne, Indiana, page 29
- Charles Forberg, Brooklyn, N.Y., pages 22, 30
- The General Fireproofing Co., Youngstown, Ohio, pages 26, 27
- Habitat Inc., New York, N.Y., page 29
- Hedwin Corp., Baltimore, Md., page 29
- Tauno Kauppi, Newtown, Conn., page 28
- Baltazar Korab, Birmingham, Mich., page 32
- Jack Lenor Larsen Inc., New York, N.Y., page 32
- Mort N. Marton Corp., New York, N.Y., page 28
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y., page 32
- Pan-Ad Associates, New York, N.Y., page 25
- Publifoto Milano, pages 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 33
- Rat für Formgebung, Darmstadt, Germany, page 16
- Richards Morgenthau & Co., New York, N.Y., page 29
- William W. Underhill, Byram, Conn., page 25
- Eva Zeisel, New York, N.Y., page 22

**Acknowledgements:**

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Jack Lenor Larsen, Committee for American Participation in the Triennale, Inc., New York; Mr. Philip Fellows, Council of Industrial Design, London; Mr. Philippe Neerman, De Coene Frères, Brussels; Mr. Hans Fischli, Zürich; Frau Mia Seeger, Rat für Formgebung, Darmstadt; and Mr. Eugen Gomringer, Schweizerischer Werkbund, Zürich.

**UNITED STATES AWARDS**

**Grand Prizes**

Design of the American section  
Stacking chair designed by David Rowland for The General Fireproofing Company

**Gold Medals**

Surfboard designed by Hobart L. Alter for Hobie Surfboards

Chair and Ottoman designed by Darrell Landrum for Avard Inc.

Racing driver's helmet by Frank Heacox and Roy Richter for Bell-Toptex Inc.

**Silver Medals**

Cork ice bucket designed by Mort and Beryl Marton for Mort N. Marton Corp.

Floating compression structure designed by Kenneth Snelson

Desk top slide projector designed by Eugene Martinez for Hudson Photographic Industries, Inc.

Archery bow designed by Bill Stewart for Bear Archery Company

Fireplace designed by Karen Karnes

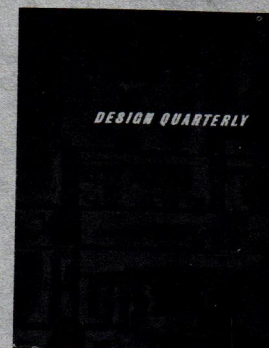
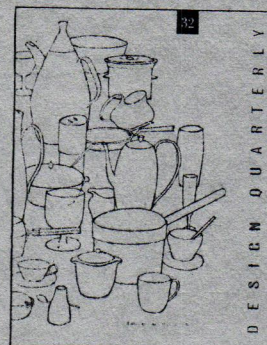
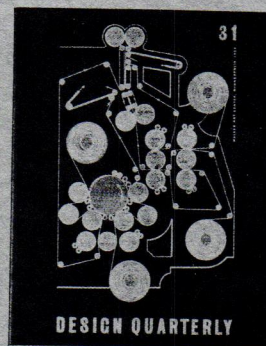
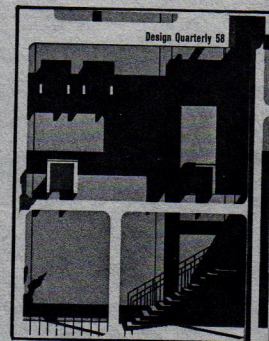
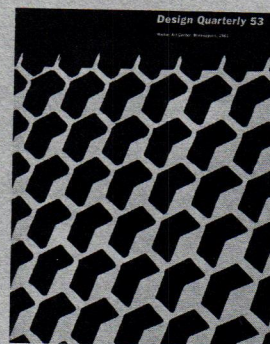
**UNITED STATES SECTION**

**Participating Designers**

- Anni Albers  
New Haven, Connecticut
- Wendell Castle  
Rochester, New York
- Dorothy Dehner  
New York, New York
- Dominic Di Mars  
Tiburon, California
- Warton Esherick  
Paoli, Pennsylvania
- Ted Hallman, Jr.  
Souderton, Pennsylvania
- Sheila Hicks  
Tasco, Mexico
- Karen Karnes  
Stony Point, New York
- Tauno Kauppi  
Newton, Connecticut
- Harvey Littleton  
Verona, Wisconsin
- Glen Michaels  
Birmingham, Michigan
- Mary Walker Phillips  
New York, New York
- Ed Roszbach  
Berkeley, California
- Kenneth Snelson  
New York, New York
- Paul Soldner  
Claremont, California
- Lenore Tawney  
New York, New York
- William W. Underhill  
Byram, Connecticut
- Katherine Westphal  
Berkeley, California
- Eva Zeisel  
New York, New York
- Designers and Manufacturers**
- Hobart L. Alter  
Hobie Surfboards  
Dana Point, California
- Frank Heacox and Roy Richter  
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