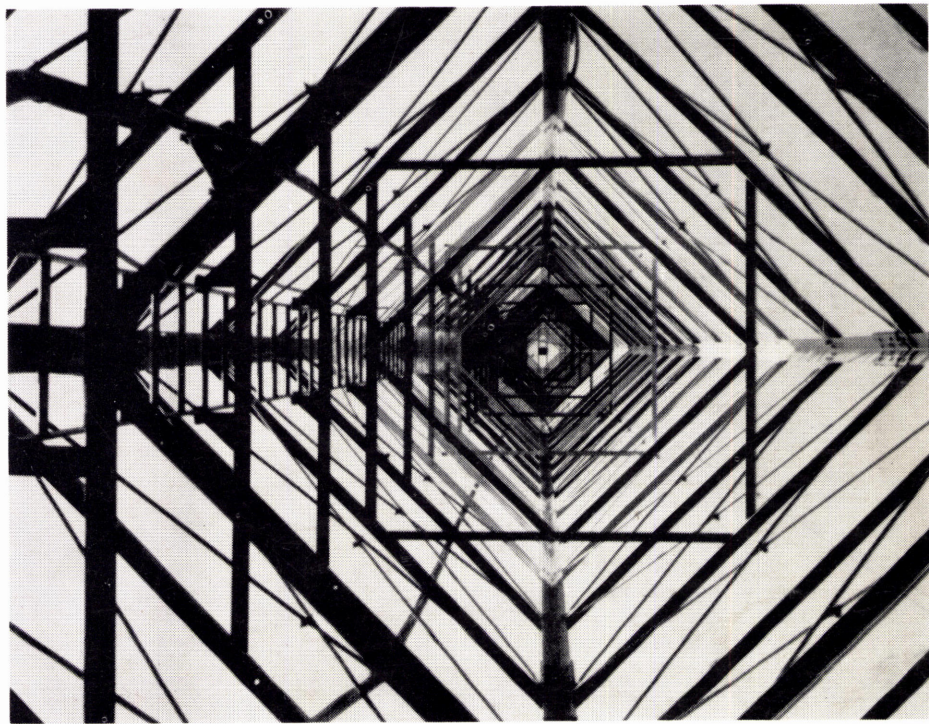


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*Benjamin: B. Taylor*

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# IN DEFENSE OF FILM ART

John R. Lambert, Jr.

During the past three or four years as American society has reached and passed the mid-point of the Twentieth Century, numerous efforts have been made to survey the cultural scene and, in the fashion of auditors and bookkeepers, to prepare a balance sheet—a summary of the changes that have occurred and an analysis of those changes on the basis of credit and debit, progress and retrogression. On the whole, the reports from our “certified accountants” have been optimistic. Frederick Lewis Allen, for example, has concluded that a “Big Change” has occurred—one in which the democratization of wealth has brought real achievement and makes even greater progress within America’s ever-widening grasp. Other writers point with pride at the democratization of our social and political life, note the increase in creature comforts that science and technology have made available to us, and assure us that we are indeed living in the era of the common man.

Now I have no general objection to this process of democratization, nor, for that matter, do I wish to belittle those real achievements that we have made, but I do feel that these optimistic and self-congratulatory reports must be studied with considerable reservation, particularly in specific fields of our cultural endeavor and most particularly in the field of popular art. We should be skeptical about “progress” in such fields for one paramount reason, if for no other: the **quantitative** production and distribution of goods whether they be bathtubs or radio programs, automobiles or motion picture films, is, in itself, no proof at all of the **quality** of the goods produced. In fact, without “quality control,” mass production in any medium can produce myriad forms of trash.

This skepticism that I urge can, and should be directed to mass entertainment and mass art. The application of qualitative standards to these quantitative media will, I am convinced, correct many of our false impressions about the artistic progress that we have assumed should follow from democratization. And these assumptions, be it noted, have been made not just about the motion pictures—the main subject of investigation here—but also about radio, television, and similar forms of mass entertainment and enlightenment.

Let us be specific about the effects of democratization on popular art. What has the American motion picture achieved as a mass art form? The film industry is a good case to investigate, for it has a half-century of “democratization” behind it, has all of the obvious elements of mass production, mass distribution, and mass consumption, and for better or worse has left a strong imprint on the lives of all of us. Literally thousands of movies have come off the motion picture production lines, each the product of tens, hundreds, or even thousands of hands. Audiences, too, have ranged into high figures—hundreds of thousands, even millions of persons see much of Hollywood’s product. And the financial returns often reach millions of dollars from the more profitable films. In sum, the motion picture business is big business with a big influence.

But can the artistic values of this enormous effort be measured in astronomical terms? Are movies—the average movies—artistic successes? Are they really “mammoth,” “stupendous,” “colossal,” and so on? I do not think so. Why? This I shall endeavor to explain.

In the first place, artistic values have not traditionally been measured in terms of financial gain. Even



today—in spite of our so-called “materialism”—there is no general acceptance of the proposition that “quality” and “profit” are synonyms. Yet the whole process of motion picture making is predicated upon the profit motive.

Throughout the elaborate process of creation, production, and distribution of a particular film, the recurrent question asked is “will it be ‘box office’?” rather than “will it be ‘art’?” A film—any film—must be analyzed with “box office in mind at every stage of its history. The originator of the story must ask this question, the producer must ask it when he seeks a budget to produce it, the motion picture company must ask it when it seeks money to finance its production, and the banks, or other financing companies, must ask it before the necessary funds are loaned. Any of these pre-production agencies can—and probably will—veto a given story if the answer to the box office question is “No.”

But the gauntlet that a film story must run is not ended when production actually begins. The “treatment writers,” the scenario writers, the directors, the film cutters (who assemble the finished film), the distributors, and the exhibitors all have it within their power, directly or indirectly, to slow up, to modify, or to halt the production of pictures if they fear they will be unprofitable.

In the second place, artistic values in the motion picture industry are seriously impaired by the assumption—in Hollywood, at least—that art can be successfully created by collective effort. This is, at best, a dubious assumption—and it is utterly false if it includes the notion that no **one** person, in such a collective effort, shall be given both the responsibility and the authority to shape the collective efforts of the group. In a backhanded sort of way Hollywood realizes this. In practice it does recognize the director as the artistic key to film production, and in theory, at least, it subscribes to the notion that the producer, the director, and the cutter should be either a closely knitted team or, better yet, a single person; but the practice and especially the theory are frequently honored in the breach. The most distinguished producer-director-cutter personalities are men like Ernst Lubitsch, Roberto Rossellini, and René Clair, who are either Europeans or else film makers who rarely are invited to the Hollywood studios to work on their own terms.

To make matters worse, the practice has developed in Hollywood of assigning **teams** to supervise many of the important steps of film production. Rare it is that one writer will suffice to prepare the story or the script. Some years ago, for example, James Thurber was transported to California to prepare his story “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” for film production. By the time he had been inundated with assistant and associate writers, his story had been twisted into a starring vehicle for Danny Kaye; and Mr. Thurber had left Hollywood both irate and vocal about his experiences there. There is an old adage that fits this and similar cases: “Too many cooks spoil the broth.” This adage is ignored in the West Coast movie capital with alarming frequency. The result is the emasculated, de-personalized, de-individualized film—long on screen credits, short on art.

In the third place, artistic values in motion pictures are chronically impaired by slavish adherence to convention. Art could and should stem from individual creativity and originality, but American film art, badgered from every direction, often loses these essential ingredients. Instead, a premium is placed upon uniformity and conformity. Now in this respect, the motion picture industry is only partly to blame. True it is that it tends to rely upon tried-and-true formula pictures. Moreover, many pictures are still made to appeal to that “average American” who has been referred to as a sort of 12-year-old imbecile. In addition, there is no gainsaying the fact that actors and directors do tend to become type-cast. For these shortcomings the industry itself must shoulder the blame. But over and beyond these admitted faults, the film industry tends to conform to the dictates of any pressure group that can strike fear into a movie mogul's heart. Some of these pressure groups have economic axes to grind; others are the spokesmen for racial, nationalist, patriotic, or religious organizations. Most purport to be concerned with moral uplift of one sort or another, but all have this in common: they have been able to make their pressures felt. In fact, so sensitive has Hollywood become to the prodding of these groups that it has willingly agreed

to self-censorship. As a result we have seen since the 1930's a succession of self-purging agencies like the Hays Office and the Johnson Office that have been set up under the auspices of the trade association of the motion picture industry—the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry.

This is not to imply that I advocate immoral or pernicious films. I do not. But the process of self-limitation can be carried to the point where only an unimaginative idea, treated in an innocuous manner, can survive. The consequence, to quote a visiting British M.P., is that "anyone who suggest that the American films portray the American way of living is an enemy of the United States!"

Look for a moment at the insistence that "crime does not pay." This is a keystone of movie self-censorship and rarely is attacked, but where does it lead us? Attempting to answer this question, Walter Kerr, in the December issue of **Commonwealth** magazine, cites the case of "A Streetcar Named Desire." Stella Kowalski had every reason to leave her loutish husband, he says—and in the Hollywood version of the Tennessee William's play, she does—but, he adds, is it actually the position of the church that a wife **must** leave her husband for infidelity? What, he asks, in this eye-for-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth world, has become of the virtue of charity? Furthermore, he warns, if religious groups insist that movies emphasize a black vs. white, good vs. evil approach without admitting that graduations are the essence both of life and art, the consequences will be dire both for art and for humanity. As he puts it, our avoidance of "Art for Art's Sake" in the motion pictures can lead us, under the guise of religion, to "Vulgarity for God's sake." "I am not sure," Kerr concludes, "that God is well-served by any dishonesty, by any distortion of the world He made—not even that distortion which enables us to 'take the children'."

Once the assumption is made that the movie industry will give serious attention to the wishes of pressure groups, a veritable Pandora's box of evils is opened. Accept the proposition that friendly foreign countries cannot be treated unsympathetically in films, and this blanket limitation is given automatic extension to the citizens of such countries whether they be real or fictional, heroes or cutthroats. The same restraints are then extended to racial, religious, and occupational groups. In the end, no one except clearly recognized public or national enemies can be depicted as villains, and even here the film producer feels constrained to preface his movies with a disclaimer. The customary one is that any resemblance between the characters portrayed and real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental; but we have curious variations on this theme. Witness the following from the motion picture "Hans Christian Anderson":

Once upon a time there lived in Denmark a great story teller named Hans Christian Anderson.

This is not a story of his life, but a fairy tale about this great spinner of fairy tales.

Fairness to the motion picture industry does require brief allusion to other factors that directly or indirectly hamper freedom of action in the creation of film art. It is true that Hollywood has been badgered by repeated federal investigations, by state and local censorship, and by a dearth of artistic talent. But the point I wish to make is this: even within the circumscription of its activities by causes beyond its control, Hollywood has failed to achieve a consistent quality of film art. Technical perfection has not been matched by an equal degree of artistic perfection. The industry, in sum, has woefully failed to meet its responsibilities to art and to our democratic society as well. In its search for profits it has obtained technical competence in an artistic and intellectual vacuum. Its best films it makes not **because** of itself but in **spite** of itself. Because it blindly seeks the least common denominator, it panders to mediocrity. And the individual artist, be he writer, director, producer, or actor, is frustrated in his efforts to rise above the banalities of the film-making trade.

The present low state of artistry in American motion pictures can be corrected, but it will involve not only a change of mind but also a change of heart. That such a change be made is, of course, both desirable and necessary. Further degradation of film art is not only destructive of the motion picture industry—it is, in the last analysis, a bellwether leading the radio, and especially television, down the same path towards esthetic blight and self-destruction. And behind these three media of mass art falters the American public—democratized but mentally and spiritually betrayed.







# IN DEFENSE OF THE MASSES

George A. Gullette

With much of what Dr. Lambert says about the movies, and by implication about other mass media of communication like radio and television, I have, of course, no quarrel. I applaud his quite proper desire to apply qualitative, and not merely quantitative, standards in judging the arts. I hope nothing I may say here will be misconstrued as a defense of trashy, unimaginative movies, or of soap opera, or of comic books. I too am interested in the richest possible development of the aesthetic life of our society.

But it does seem to me that there are some things that need to be said, and some assumptions that need to be examined, before we embrace too readily the gloomy view that Dr. Lambert represents. In the first place I should like to remind you that the kind of charge here made is of venerable vintage—throughout recorded history artists, and friends of the arts, have been complaining about the low state of public taste. They characteristically feel themselves misunderstood, born to the wrong age, and if they are pessimists, they pine away like Miniver Cheevy in not always sober regret that they were not born in an earlier, more sympathetic time; if they are optimists, they keep themselves going with the fine faith that some day, in some glorious distant future, their work will be rediscovered, its true worth appreciated, and their names emblazoned upon the walls of the halls of history. And that will show those ignorant peasants, their contemporaries, who was right.

Secondly, there is a matter of fact which needs to be made explicit. In even the greatest ages of artistic expressions—the High Renaissance in Italy or the Elizabethan Age in England, for example,—the **average** artistic production was not much to write home about. I suppose—or at least I hope—that all of you have at one time or another been moved by the magnificence of some of Shakespeare's sonnets. But they are only a remembered handful from the tens of thousands of painful sonnets penned in his time and now mercifully forgotten. I have myself drowsed through many hundreds of those thousands, and I assure you on my honor that the poetry of Edgar Guest does not suffer by comparison. And if conformity to a formula or addiction to outworn clichés bothers you, as it apparently does Dr. Lambert, then I urge you to stay away from those Elizabethan sonnets, because their ideas, their imaginery, their form, their very language was virtually unchanged over a period of several hundred years. The point to remember is that you cannot fairly infer a decline in the arts from a comparison of the average product of today with some highly selected works of genius of another age.

But now to Dr. Lambert's more serious charges. It seems to me that in essence they are two: first, that the freedom and integrity of the individual artist, like James Thurber, are being destroyed by mass production techniques and by the various pressures, public and financial, which are exerted on every Hollywood production; second, that the necessity of pleasing a mass audience means that the movies can never rise above the level of pedestrian mediocrity. Before you accept these charges, I invite you to examine the assumptions that lie behind them.

It seems to me that behind the first lies a romantic view of the artist as a lonely, misunderstood individualist, preferably starving in a garret in Paris, pursuing some fragile dream of ineffable beauty.

And basic to this view is another hidden assumption, namely that the artist, like the prophets, has special access to the gods and is indeed one of their chosen spokesmen. He is the instrument upon which the gods play, the voice through which they speak, and this explains why he, like other mystics, must re-

tire from the vulgar distractions of the world in order to attune himself to the spirit which will speak through him. This is why the older poets called upon the Muses to inspire their work.

Now anyone is of course entitled to hold this view of the artist, and I am sure a great many people, including some artists, do hold it. The consequences often include a kind of isolationist view of art which is summed up in the phrase, Art for art's sake. It is a view that art is something sacred and special, removed from life and, characteristically, embalmed in museums for the rarified enjoyment of a small cult of sensitive souls who have been initiated into the aesthetic mysteries. An interesting but very common extension of this view is the notion that if the artist does produce something that is attractive to a larger audience—the masses, as such people will be sure to call them—then there must be something the matter with the art. It just can't be popular and fine art at the same time. I have in my own experience seen this view pushed to what I regard as its logical conclusion. If art for the few is better than art for the many, then it obviously follows that the fewer, the better—and the fewest the best. But clearly, the fewest is one.

Some years ago I knew quite well a rising young poet—a good one, too, who is now widely known and whose name those of you who know your modern literature would instantly recognize. He used to bring me some of his poetry to read, and I remember one occasion when he brought me a particular difficult, abstract, highly symbolic poem about, apparently, some inner experience of his own. When I showed some signs of recognizing the experience, and understanding the poem, he looked disappointed and took it back for more polishing. When, later, he let me see it again and I had to confess quite frankly that I could not make head nor tail of it, he beamed and was satisfied. Quite seriously, you see, he felt that this experience he was recording was so private, so unique, so very specially his own that if anyone else could share it he must obviously have failed to do it artistic justice.

This story may stand as a symbol of what I can only call aristocratic conception of the artist. Opposed to it is the view that the artist is no more fragile than anyone else, that he is a hard-working professional craftsman attempting to understand and to impose order upon the chaotic experience which he shares with all other human beings. It is the first view which has, in my opinion, turned many of you in this audience away from the arts. You have been taken in by this notion that art is something distant from reality, incomprehensible to the layman, and understandable only to a small coterie of the elect who ought to see their barbers more frequently than they do. You have therefore decided the arts are not for you, and you have cheated yourselves, or have been cheated, out of one of the richest shares in your human heritage.

Whether you agree with what I have said so far or not, and whatever place you may want to retain for the individual artist working unhampered by the restraints of his society, I think you will agree that at least there is **also** a place for the artist who finds challenge in the shifting complexity of his own time and adapts himself and his art to it. As Lewis Mumford points out, the symphony orchestra is a characteristic product of industrial society which, like the factory or like our political parties organizes many and varying talents to achieve a product that no individual, however gifted, could achieve in isolation. Perhaps we should not argue whether a great symphonic performance is better than a great solo performance. I will settle for the position that the symphony is at least not inferior. And as for the individual artist, I cannot believe that a first violinist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra feels himself frustrated, or his freedom and integrity violated, because he has to play in time and in tune with some ninety other musicians under the direction of a conductor. He achieves new dimensions to his art that are unattainable by the soloist. The one thing certainly all of you have learned this term about human freedom is that it does not mean doing whatever you please, whenever you please to do it. New dimensions of human freedom can be achieved through the discipline of cooperation, in the arts as elsewhere. And the individualist's lonely garret may be a prison as well as a refuge.

What I have said applies, I think, to the various artists in the movie industry. For a writer to be compelled to work with, and sometimes subordinate himself to the cameramen, composers, musicians, actors,



dancers, directors, producers and scores of others involved seems to me to imperil neither his freedom nor his art. I do not say that the outcome of such an association—the finished movie—is always, or even often, an artistic triumph. But I do say that the causes of failure must be sought elsewhere than in the explanation that the artists are stifled by the system of production.

And now let us turn to the second of Dr. Lambert's complaints, his assertion that the movies must remain mediocre so long as they are geared to mass tastes. This too is an ancient charge with which you are all familiar, though I think in its standard form the mass mind is said to equal a twelve year old's, while Dr. Lambert lowers it to that of a twelve year old moron. I shall not quarrel about such matters of detail—it is the principle I should like you to examine more closely.

And first of all I should like to ask you where, outside the arts, we have heard this kind of complaint before. Well, we have heard it in political discussions, haven't we? It used to be asserted, and sometimes still is, that democracy cannot work because people are too stupid to know what their own best interests are and to govern themselves. We have heard it in social and economic discussions where it is argued that higher wages or better living conditions for the common man should be avoided because he wouldn't know what to do with them. Remember that old saw that it's no use giving the poor bathtubs, because they'd only keep coal in them anyway? In educational circles we hear moaning about the decline in academic standards because every Tom, Dick and Harry is now allowed to go to college. In other words, this hoary chestnut about the unworthiness of the ordinary citizen is dragged out every time any advance in his condition is under consideration, and it should not surprise you to find it being used in connection with the arts.

I must say, however, that I think its use in connection with the movies is rather more unfortunate than usual, since the movies are the industrialized version of the legitimate drama which, you may recall, got its start among illiterates. It was precisely because the common man could neither read nor write that first the church and then the guilds in the Middle Ages encouraged the presentation of plays before the peasantry in the market place. The drama was at first essentially a device for vivid oral portrayal of Biblical stories, saints' lives and the essential steps to salvation for those who did not understand Latin. It was generally frowned upon by the better people, and it was the vulgar masses who became, over a period of several centuries, sufficiently sophisticated in the conventions of the theatre to provide the necessary audience for a William Shakespeare. He lifted the drama to its high eminence among the arts, and I can see no evidence that he regarded it as a handicap to his talents that he had to write for the groundlings in the pit as well as the lords in the gallery. He wowed them both.

Now I do not argue that present day American movie audiences are at the moment ready to support the highest quality of production which the industry is technically capable of producing. I know that education is necessary, and I am only arguing that the mass audience large enough to support costly Hollywood productions is educable. In the field of politics, no one believes that democracy can be exported immediately to the backward peoples of the world. Our founding fathers never thought of democracy as existing in a state of nature—they knew it required a disciplined, educated electorate. All they bet on was that ordinary men could and would achieve the necessary education and discipline; and that is all I am betting on when I welcome the democratization of the arts.

The arts—all of them—begin to pale and sicken when they lose contact with the rich, sensuous life of the people. It is the third and the fourth rate artist who displays contempt for the masses and seeks to bolster his ego with the adulation of small, select group of sensitive worshippers. Any artist or stature would feel such tactics to be a betrayal of the integrity of his art, a narrowing and demeaning of its significance.

Perhaps the full import of the exclusive, aristocratic view in politics, social position, the arts, and everything else may be recognized and remembered if you recall that famous (if somewhat indelicate) remark of the British Lady who had asked her Lord whether it was true that the lower classes also enjoyed the pleasures of sex. Upon being informed that they did indeed, she is reported to have replied: "It should be forbidden, my lord! It's much too good for them!"



## sculpture

*Equilibrium of tensions makes harmony. The forces creating this balance which is harmony are rhythmical. This is the essence of nature, of life. These are the elements with which I work. No regionalism nor nationalism but universalism. With the subject removed, the fundamentals are more clearly, more deeply viewed. The composition of such elements becomes a challenge to thinking and feeling. They provoke search, desire and hope—this is the creation of a civilization and the measure of contentment comes from the degree to which these are experienced.*

The following photographs are presented with the idea of demonstrating to a limited extent the activities and attitudes of one individual involved in a three dimensional expression. A man is what he does—not what he says he will do. Word pictures are of questionable value if they are defined by a painter, sculptor, or architect. Words are not the medium for their expression. Each creative individual communicates best, can be more thoroughly understood through his own specific language. Therefore—a student, (infering in this instance the broad interpretation of the classification) must involve himself as directly as possible in the language used to create the image he seeks to understand. One sculpture will not give a complete impression of purpose any more than on window demonstrates the entire building or one building the entire city or etc. Whereas one detail may have its appeal, their appeal is based upon a personal association. This is alright too, but not complete in its interrelationship with the over all concept of a purpose. The student must look, think, and feel at the same time and frequently. This is second only to material involvement and fabrication itself.

The pictures are arranged chronologically, close together, and small to get as many elements as possible into the rhythm of seeing. If the rhythm is fast enough, more attention can be paid to the essential—greater pattern. Then if the spectator is so inclined he may dig further into the smaller elements; the sculpture, which make up the composition—then still further into elements which make up the elements; material, technique. At the same time—continual reference is made to the entire pattern. The entire pattern then becomes a frame of reference to be related to other frames of reference thereby creating another even greater pattern.

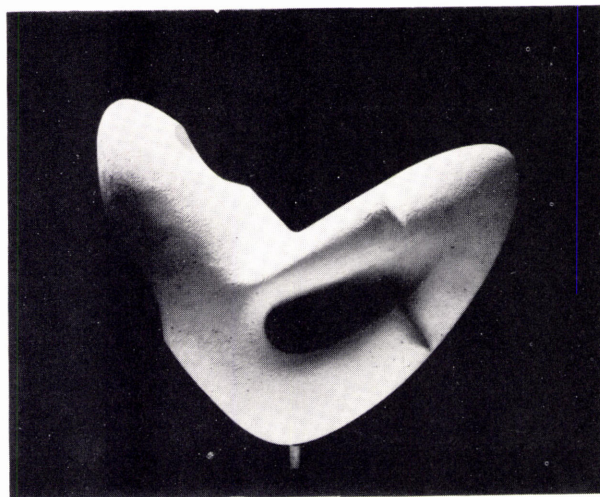
It must be realized that the transposition from the three and four dimensions into the two is sheer fantasy—these documents are photographs,—illusions of sculpture, not sculpture. The experience difference between the sculpture and the photograph of sculpture is very great. The same difference that exists between the floor plan and moving through the building. In some instance “as many as” five views of the one composition have been presented. These are hardly adequate when one compares the five monocular “records” of the camera with the 360 continuous bi-ocular views possible around only one great circle of a sphere.

This is not a complete documentary effort. The composition of the following pages is based upon the availability of photographs and obvious space limitations. Much too, has not been included in the way of drawings and sketches. These would certainly make their contribution. However, if the student will try to visualize the in-between steps—the phases not shown, the inferred, the intangibles, then perhaps he will come close to the real attitude. Though the sculpture is important—to the sculptor—as the manifestation of an idea—its real significance exists in the implied message, not in the mathematical study, psychological interpretation, nor any other arbitrary system of analysis.

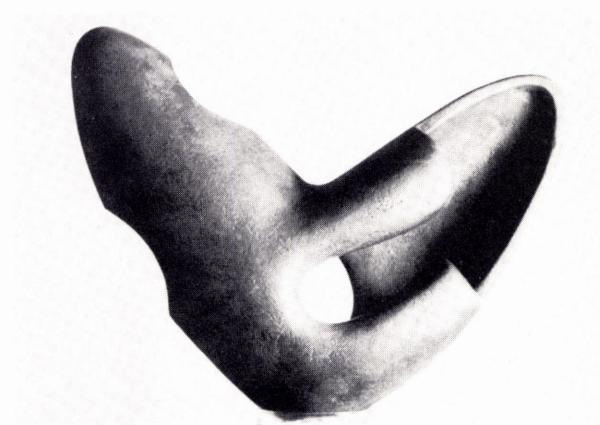
This kind of work is pleasure, it is life, the discipline and the freedom—one within the other, “sport” or mutation, evolution or revolution, but always constructive, where a simple variation becomes a discovery of another course. Problems are presented, emotions aroused, intelligence challenged. Tangible solutions are offered for creative inactivity is degeneration. *Think—feel, calculate,—guess—BUT WORK.*



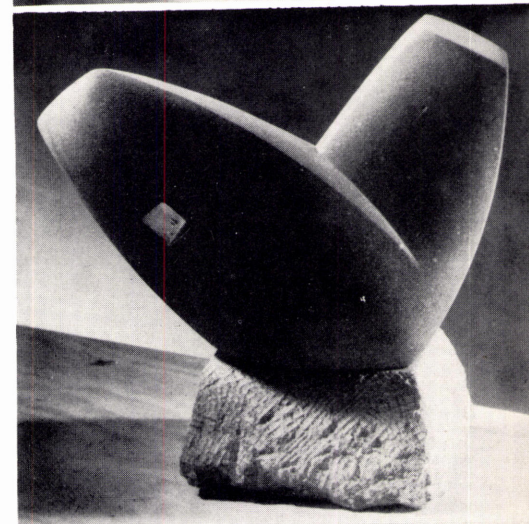
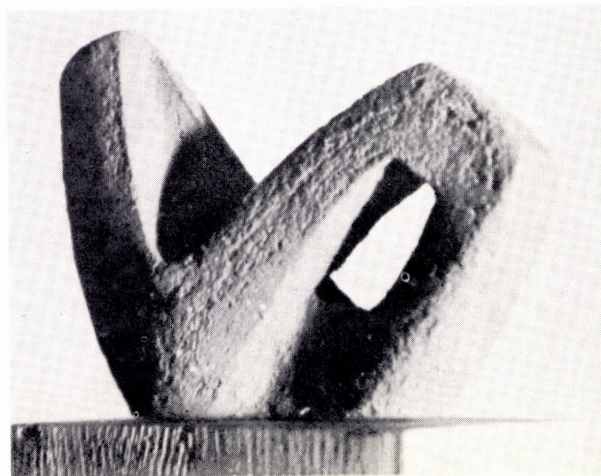
CYCLOID NO. 1—1947  
 plaster 16" x 16"  
*built up directly, carved  
 equiposed perforated mass—  
 two unequal forces in equilibrium,  
 floating quality*



CYCLOID NO. 2—1947  
 bronze plated terra cotta—  
 clay pressed in mold made from  
 No. 1—  
*—bronze was sprayed on fired  
 clay, typical garage operation  
 for building up gear teeth &  
 worn axels*

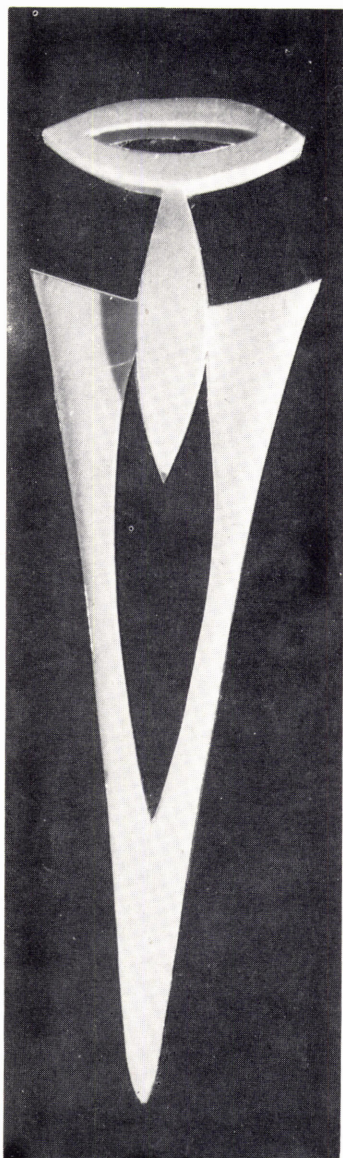


SKETCH—1947  
 pink clay—4" h.  
*a variation of cycloid theme.  
 One of many studies made  
 in preparation for sandstone  
 carving which follows.*



FIGURE—1947  
 red sandstone—13½" x 10" h.  
*comparable theme as Cyloid  
 with variation of elements.  
 The material itself with its  
 resistance, its character had  
 a great deal to do with the  
 variations of the elements*





# KINETIC NUTATION NO. 1—1947

plaster—30" h., 2½" thick  
plaster cast in freely modeled  
clay mold—steel reinforced  
KINETIC: capable of movement

NUTATION: nodding

The entire form balances on  
tip of sharpened vertical ellipse  
above center inside form.

This series started with an  
18" x 24" square hanging over the  
edge of a work bench.

# KINETIC NUTATION NO 2—1947

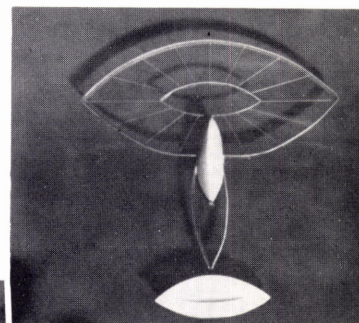
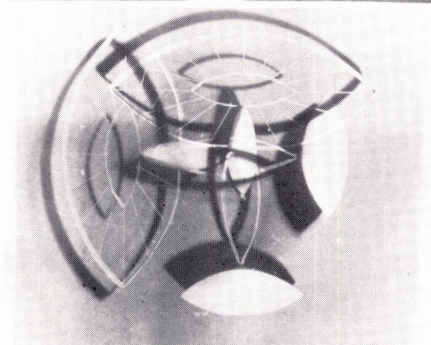
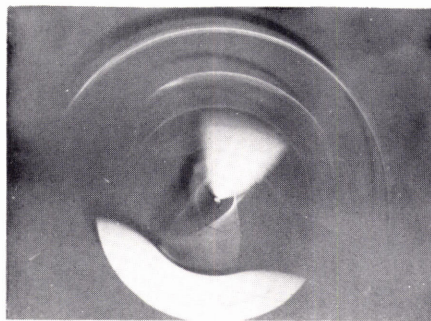
plaster-brass, nylon thread—12"

first K.N. was before no. 1—photo unavailable, very free,  
all inclusive intuitive demonstration. This is second of  
series of more disciplined studies. Form arbitrarily  
selected. Used as a means of distributing weight  
& volume. Positive & negative—flat & round—large  
& small—convex & concave—line & mass.

Pivots in same relative position as K.N. no. 1

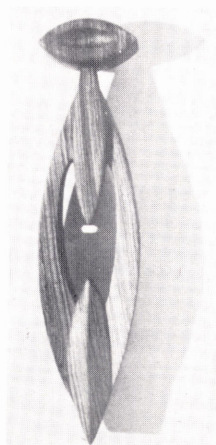
## MOTION STUDY OF K.N. No. 2—1947

Virtual volume created  
by movement of figure &  
slow shutter speed of  
camera. New forms  
based on speed—time  
and space. Volume  
implied—not actual  
Photo immediately below  
made from negative of  
first view of K.N. no 2.  
Form is still—negative  
moved—new  
resulting shapes infer  
another kind of movement

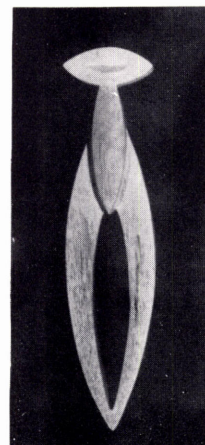


## LINOLEUM BLOCK FROM K.N. N 1947

combination of forms  
deriving from two different  
types of motion studies

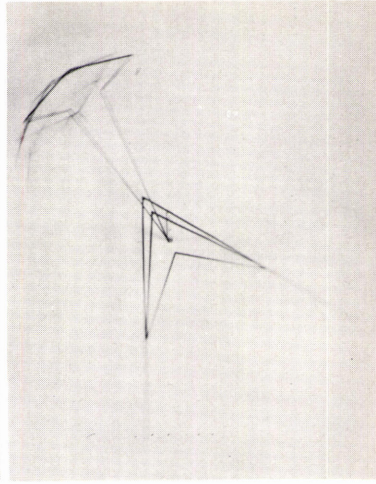
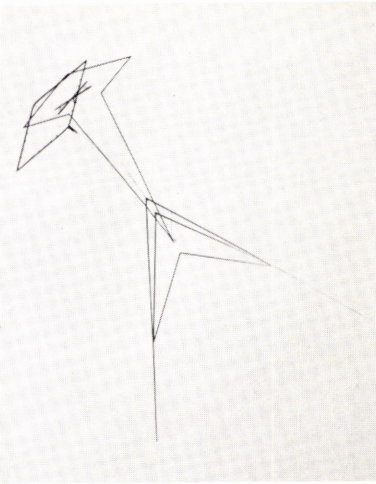
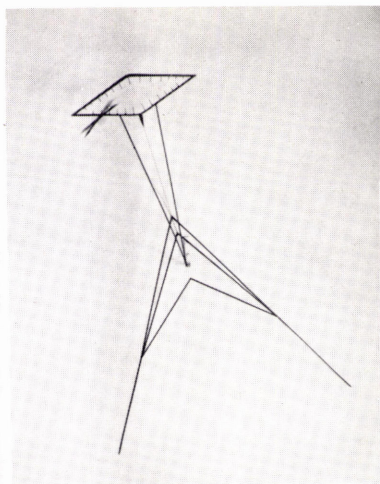
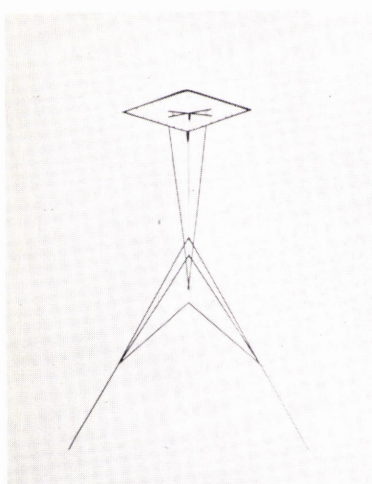


K.N. NO. 3—1948  
porto rican rosewood  
16"

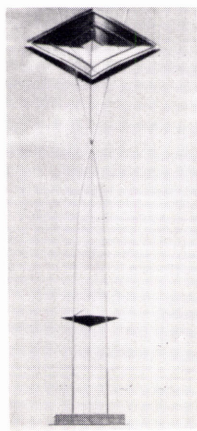
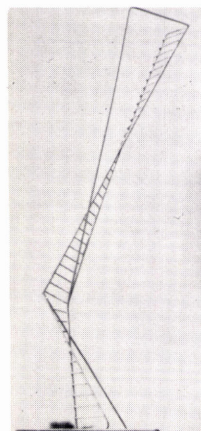
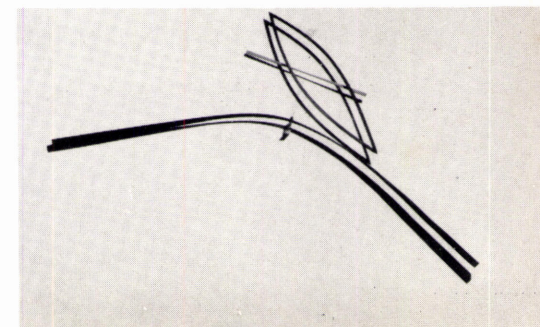
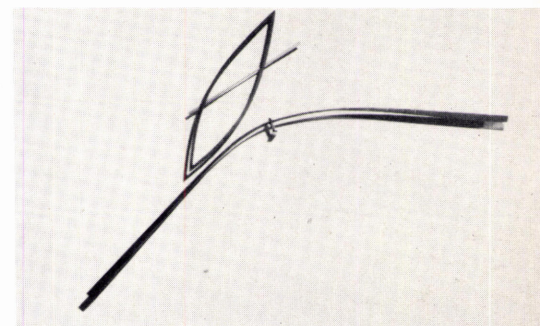
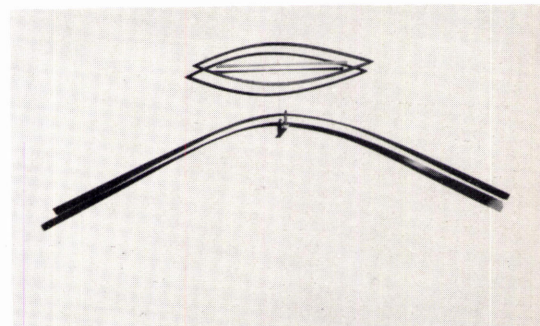
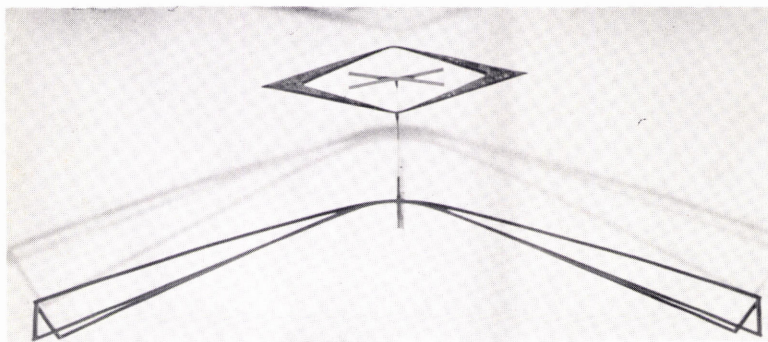


K.N. NO. 4—1948  
balsa wood—21"  
16"





K.N. NO. 12—1950 steel 36"  
all steel variation of wood & steel K.N. no. 7 done in 1948 (not shown). This is a four phase movement with the one phase extending from lower element to top serving as a reference for two phases at top . . . seen clearly in photo second from right at top



K.N. NO. 11—1949  
steel 52"  
unstable quality of wood  
forced the use of metal.  
Similar to K.N. No. 6—Four phase  
movement with variation of  
rhythm due to  
different distribution of weight

K.N. NO. 6—1948  
laminated wood & steel  
20" x 60"  
complete rigidity of composition  
destroyed by means of flexible  
saw blade connecting upper  
& lower elements—four  
movements—two upper, one  
lower and synergetic movement  
of whole composition

LADDER—1949  
brass 42" h.  
use of metal necessitated development of technique

GREEN RHOMBUS—1947  
brass 38" h.



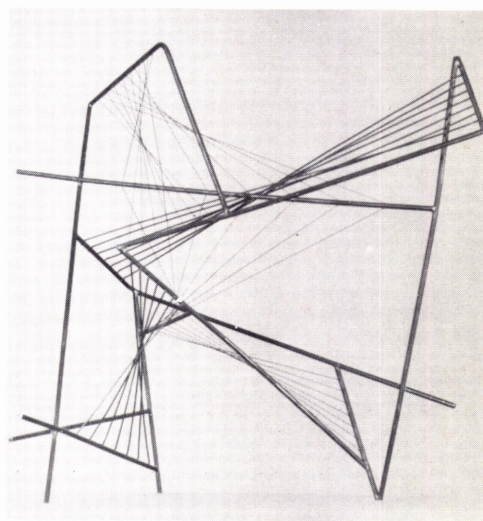


AHLEPH—1950 colorado alabaster—15x20x14" h.

*Though this stone is soft enough to cut with wood chisels—the limitation of the use of stone tools was imposed in order to maintain identity of material. New environment, new interests led to another series of problems . . . surface tension created by a line moving in a volume.*

STUDY—1950, welded steel, 28" h.

*Line in space with the relative of surface tension—adhesion*



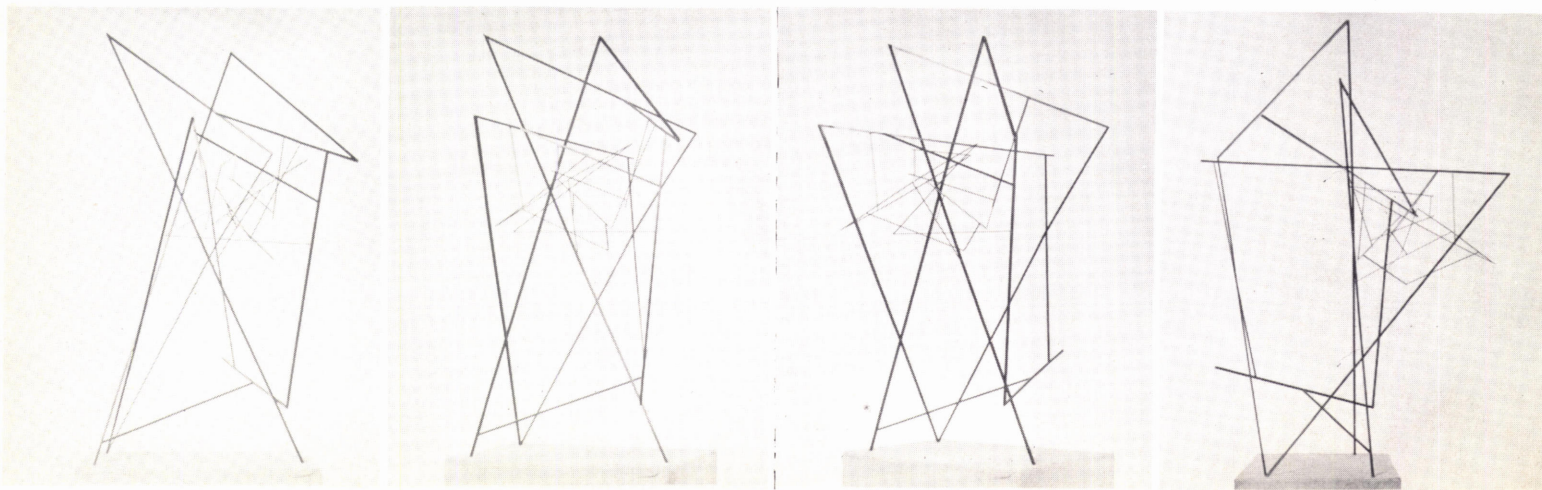
C.S. NO. 1—1950, 13" h.

brass and silk thread

*Surface tension composition as affected by interrelated line in space—line relationship expresses plane*

C.S. NO. 2—1950—steel painted 26" x 33" h.

*interrelated lines in space with surface tensions implied a big jump—technique limited facility—previous drawings demand another technique*



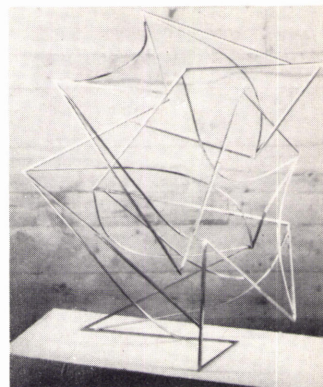


C.S. NO. 3—1950

welded steel, polished, 42" h.

*linear composition in space with adhesion of earlier study.*

*This was done directly from a drawing. The discipline imposed clearly demonstrated the different spatial experience between 2 and 3 dimensional—adhensive line supposed to represent planar surface tension—unsuccessful solution to problem.*



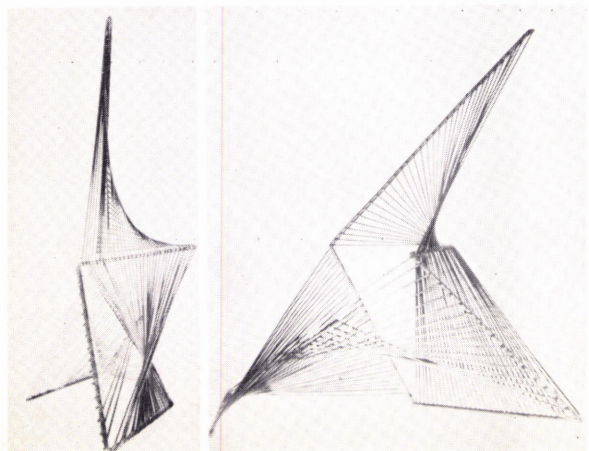
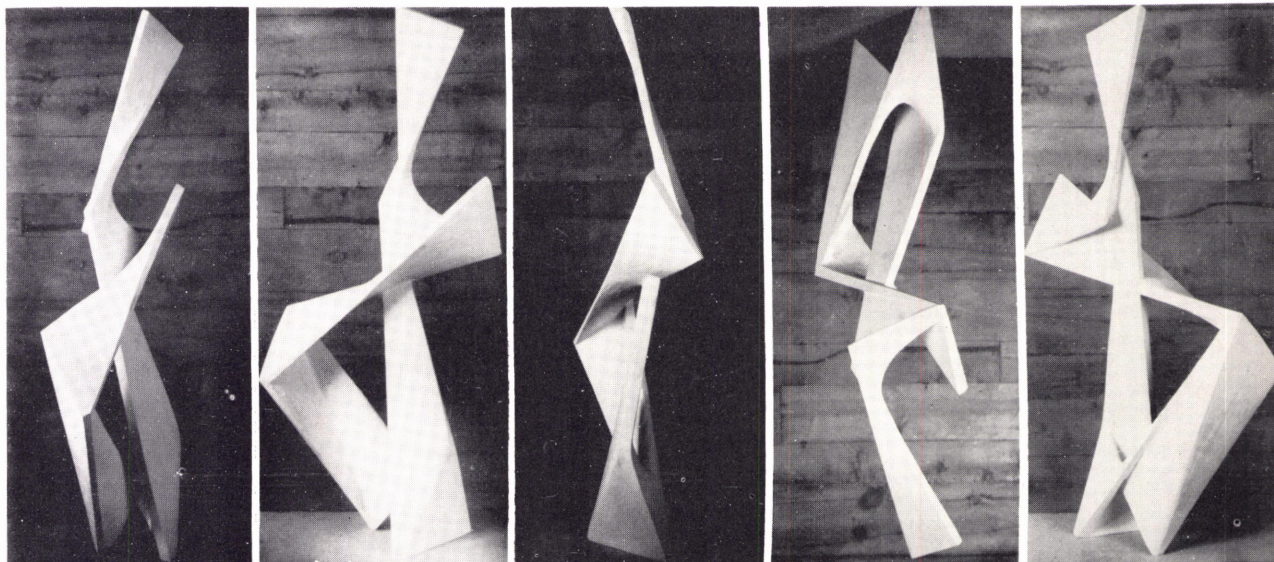
MADIN—1950—plaster 52" h.

*back to the actual plane—planar mass or massive plane.*

*linear composition in space. Lines completely defining planes.*

*three months to finish. At same time a different*

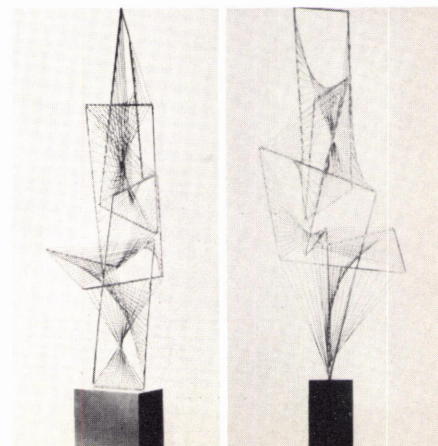
*series was followed—involving metal furniture design and study of found steel object relationships (not shown)*



AMBAGE STUDY 1951

welded steel 13" h.

*line-plane-adhesion-  
surface tension*



AMBAGE—1951

welded steel

35" h. with base

*refer to Madin above*

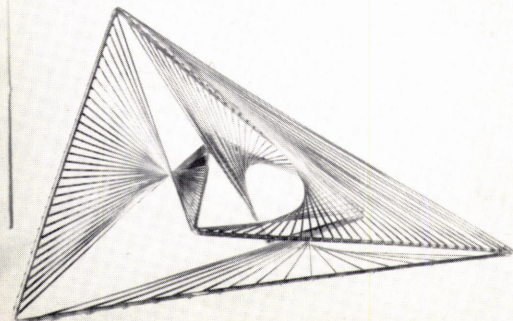
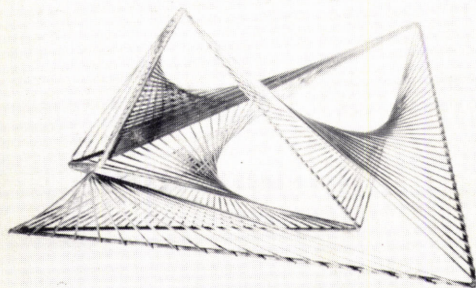
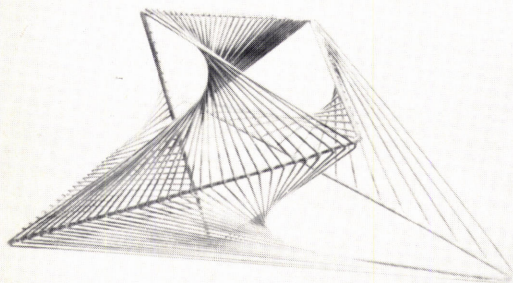


PERISTALTIC—1951

welded steel 12" x 16" h.

variation of PREPERISTALTIC

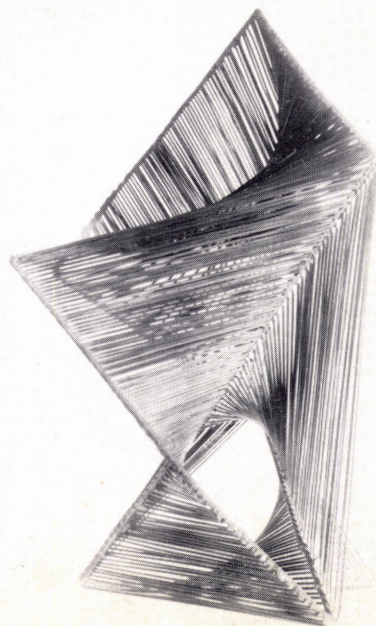
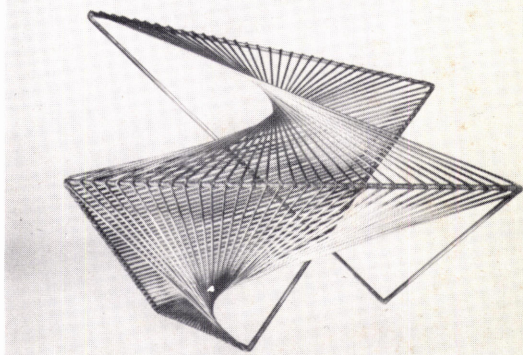
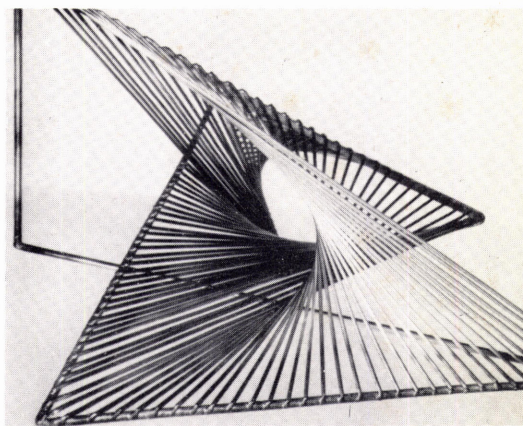
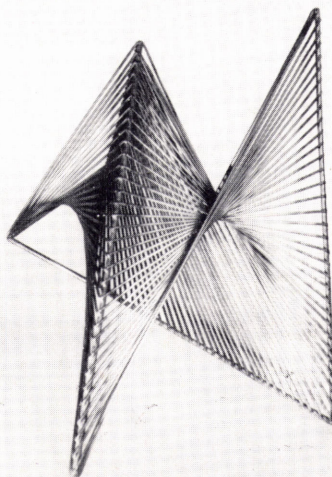
line becomes plane—plane envelopes  
space—shell like



PREPERISTALTIC—1951

welded steel 21" x 12" h.

continuous rhythmic line in space—  
almost volume enclosing  
completely in the round—a new  
experience at every degree



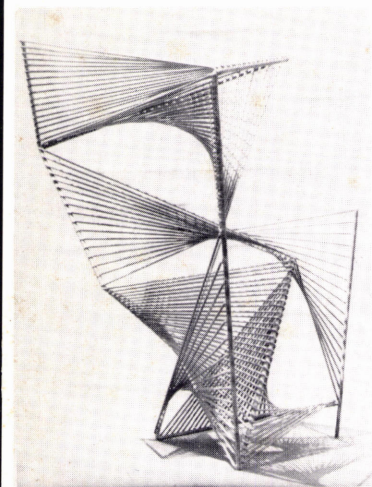
CATENATION—1951

welded steel—14" h.

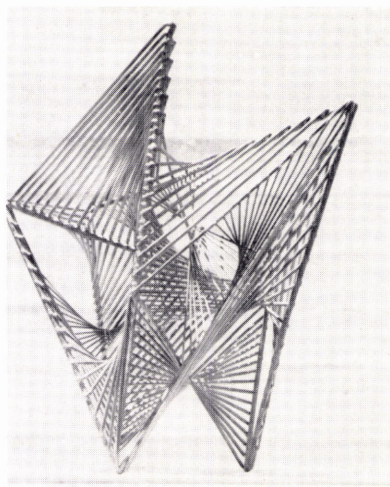
all planar—volume-like—

refer to AHLEPH and CYCLOID

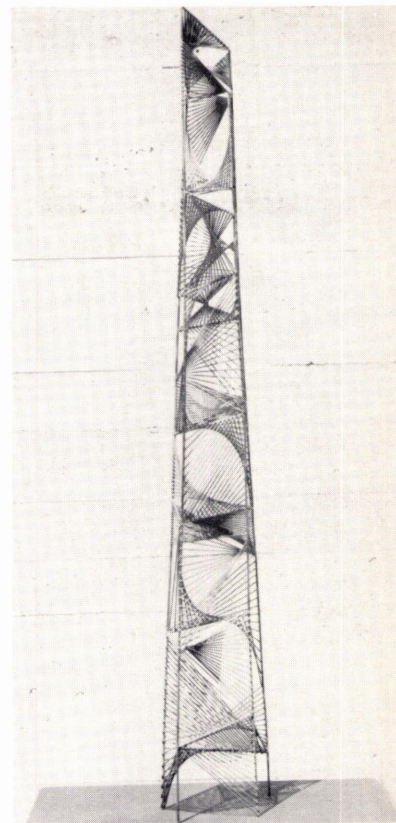




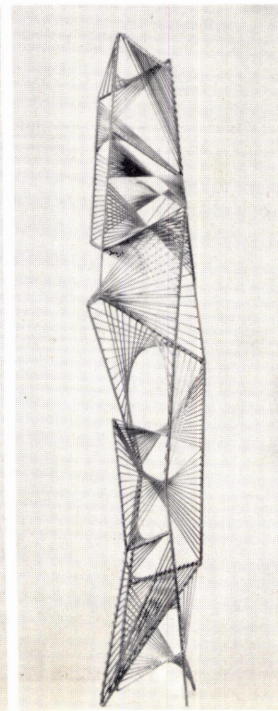
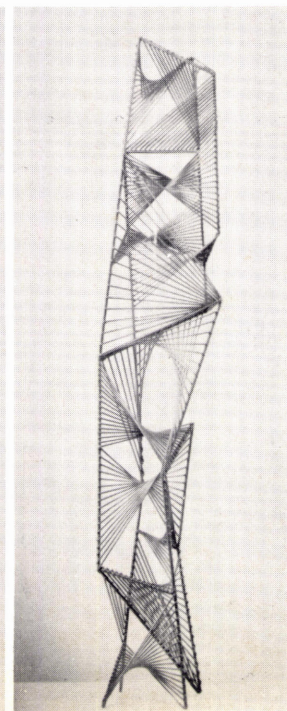
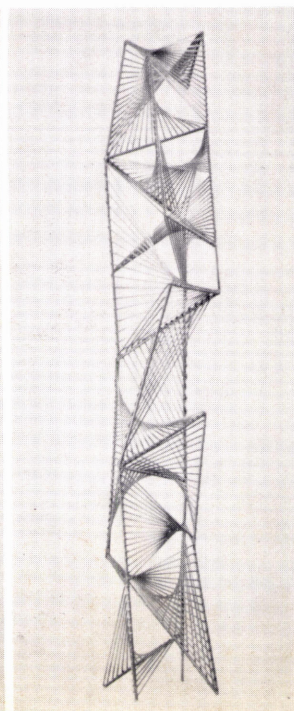
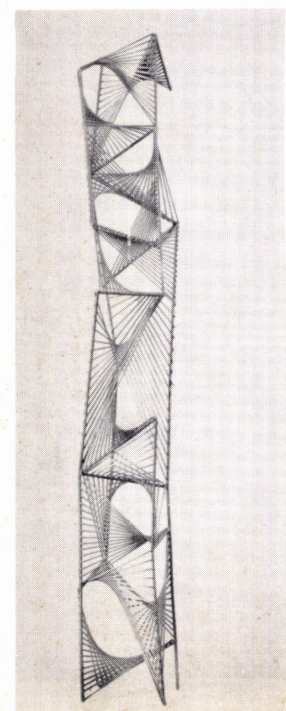
MEM—1951 steel 29" h.  
line in space as basic structure  
is now broken—discontinuous—  
combined plane & enclosing shell



EXPANDED W—1951  
steel—14" h.  
continuous linear structure traveling  
within itself—complex interrelated  
rhythms.



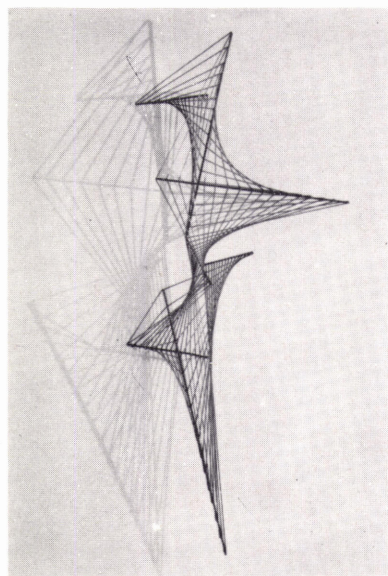
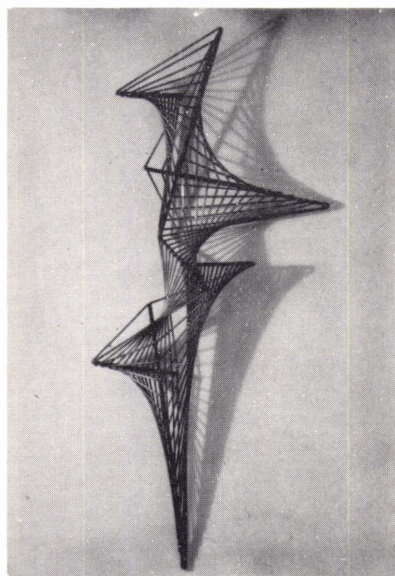
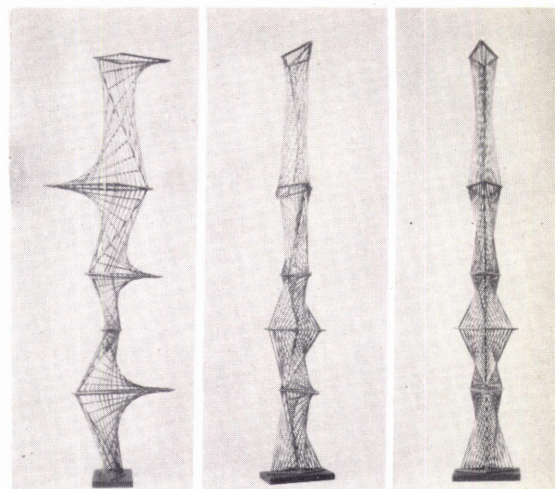
PERISTALTIC VERTICAL—1951  
steel—78" h.  
continuous line structure is now  
columnar instead of spherical



BROKEN PERISTALTIC—1951  
steel—56" h.  
vertical linear structure  
discontinuous or diverse.  
Looser planar arrangement



COUNTERPOINT—1951  
 steel—51" h.  
*line acts as expression  
 of force within mass.  
 the lines make the mass •*

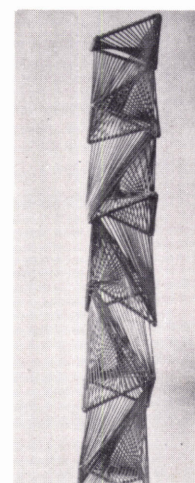


PHOENIX NO. 1—1952  
 steel—30" long  
*a wall relief—after a series of  
 two dimensional studies.  
 The two dimensional concept  
 becomes apparent.*

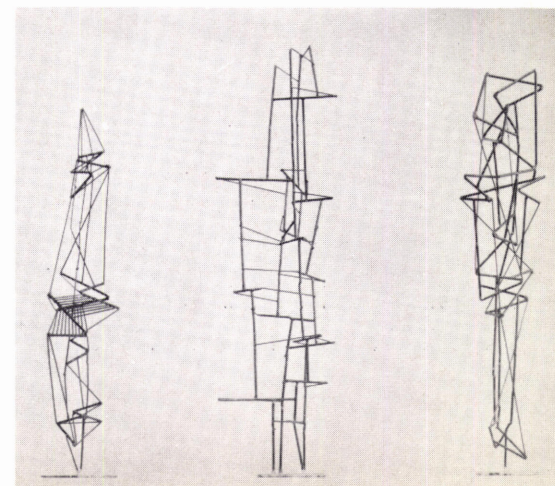
*There is a great difference  
 between thinking three  
 dimensionally and working two  
 dimensionally and thinking &  
 working three dimensionally •*

PHOENIX NO. 2—1952  
 steel—60" long  
*Same as PHOENIX No. 1 using same  
 elements same size stock but  
 doubling the proportion. Results  
 are refinement of form. •*

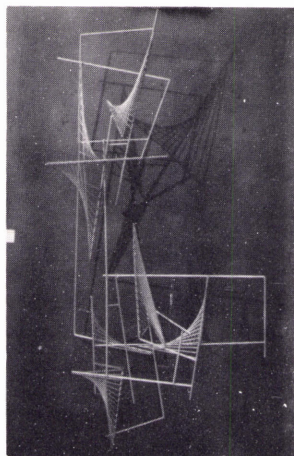
SKETCHES—1952  
 steel 18", 21", 19" h.  
*free space drawings using  
 "chance" dimension elements  
 exercise in natural order—  
 spontaneous discipline •*



SKETCH—1952  
 steel 21"  
*one element  
 repeated regularly  
 in vertical-radial  
 axis •*



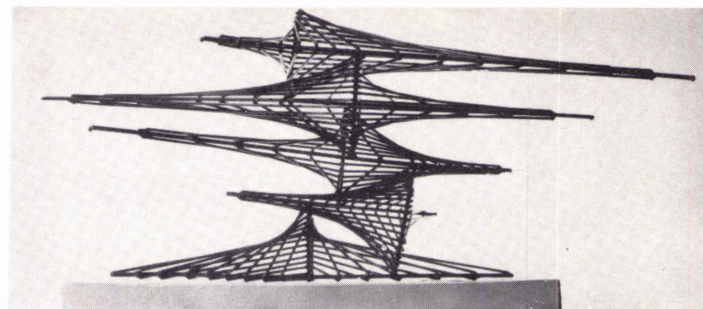




**COMPOSITION—1952**

stainless steel—60"

*for a specific environment  
discontinuous line—separate plane.  
planar and linear tension expressed.  
and implied—two opposing volumes  
in equilibrium •*



**SHIFT—1952**

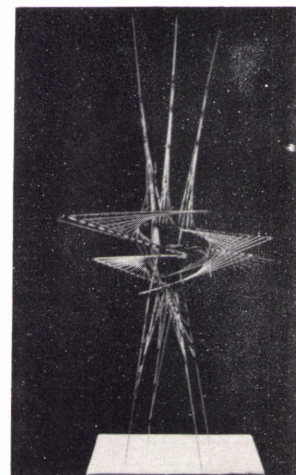
steel 22" x 12" h.

*variations of one form spiraling  
horizontally on a  
broken vertical axis, line  
makes shelled mass. •*

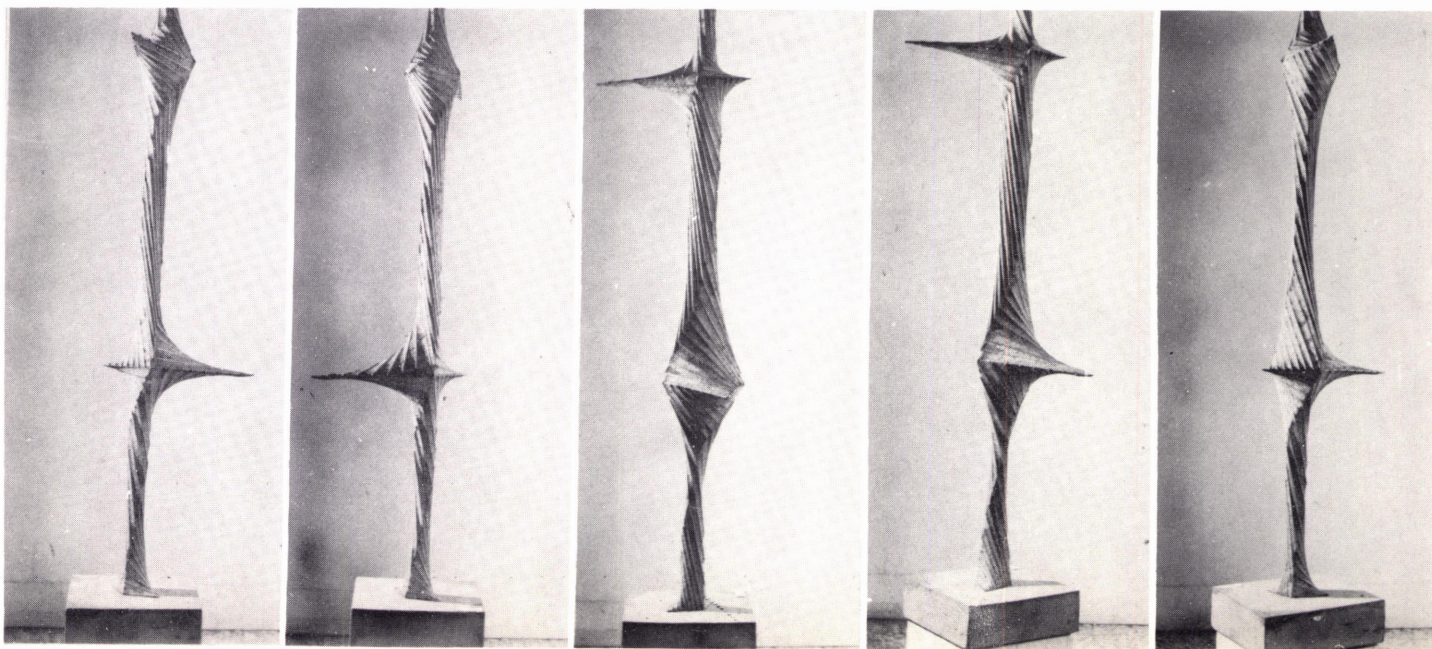
**METAPHASE—1952**

stainless steel—48" h.

*disconnected tensile planes  
in tension—line as line  
line as plane •*



**FIGURE A/1—1953, 65" h.** stainless steel and concrete  
*rythmic column of interrelated forms—line to plane to mass—disciplined freedom  
based on vertical arrangement of short horticzontal forces tied together  
and developing the form created by the surface expressed by these lines •*





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## THE ARCHITECT, SOCIETY AND THE LAW

There is a problem in public relations which requires the immediate attention of all organizations of architects everywhere. Strangely enough the general public has only a vague conception of what constitutes an architect's services. Many people, including those who certainly should know better, think of an architect principally in terms of supervision of construction and as one closely related to what the architect would designate "a clerk of the works." The public knows the value and duties of a lawyer and doctor; everyone understands the financial worth of design (as distinguished from tailoring) in woman's clothes; all appreciate that an inventor is entitled to a monetary return for a novel idea or design embodied in a patent. But for reasons unknown, the architect is not properly regarded as one whose ideas for design embodied in sketches and working drawings are compensable. Those who understand the true function of an architect in building form a very small minority. This is one of the basic problems facing the profession. Just as no one should think in terms of disease, actual or potential, without also thinking of a doctor, so no one should think of the problem affecting construction without also thinking of an architect.

It is unique that the general public, (which group includes individuals contemplating the building of their homes and business concerns entering into large construction projects) fails to realize the extreme importance of the services rendered by an architect. The attitude has long been that the fees paid for such services are merely evils preliminary to actual construction. The fact that without the architect the private dwelling or plant, when completed, would fail to perform its desired function, is completely overlooked. It is for the benefit of the general public who cannot judge for themselves, that legislation controlling the practice of architecture has been enacted.

As in most public relations problems one must consider the group seeking to promote itself, as well as the general public. There are some among architects who do not feel the need of proper registration legislation. These individuals misconceive the purpose of such legislation and advance some of the following arguments: (1) the statutes set up a favored class; (2) State Registration Boards have acted arbitrarily and their examinations have encompassed controversial material; and (3) a "good architect" does not need this political crutch.

It is the purpose of registration statutes to provide for the public, qualified architects and engineers, and such qualification should concern itself with: first—the ability of the applicant, and second—his character. Everyone is aware of the importance of proper planning not only in connection with proper materials, construction and other particulars dealing with safety, but also that of design. It is the responsibility of the architects as a group to see to it that the modern developments of today do not become the slums of tomorrow. A "good practice statute" insures the public that the practicing architects are qualified individuals.

The second requirement—that of character—requires equal consideration. The relationship of the architect and his client reaches the same fiduciary standard as that which exists between attorney and his client

or a physician and his patient. The standard to which your profession must be held has been aptly defined in an analogous situation by Mr. Justice Benjamin Cardozo in these words:

"Many forms of conduct permissible in a workaday world for those acting at arm's length, are forbidden to those bound by fiduciary ties. A trustee is held to something stricter than the morals of the market place. Not honesty alone, but the punctilio of an honor the most sensitive, is then the standard of behavior. As to this there has developed a tradition that is unbending and inveterate. Uncompromising rigidity has been the attitude of Courts of equity when petitioned to undermine the rules of undivided loyalty by the 'disintegrating erosion' of particular exceptions. Only thus has the level of conduct for fiduciaries been left at a level higher than that trodden by the crowd. It will not consciously be lowered by any judgment of this Court."

In ordinary practice the attorney or physician owes his allegiance to his client or patient alone. The position of the architect is however more complicated. In almost every case he must act as arbiter between his client, by whom he is paid, and the contractor, by whom he is not paid. In performing this task he must be scrupulously fair to both, a situation which sometimes requires divine guidance. Furthermore, under recent Supreme Court rulings, an architect may be placed in the position of sole judge and jury in connection with the performance of construction contracts. From the foregoing, the necessity for proper registration legislation can be easily seen. The practice of architecture requires persons qualified not only by reason of their ability, but also by reason of their character and temperament, to carry out the purpose and aims of their profession.

### **LICENSING LAWS GENERALLY**

The need for proper licensing laws is quite ample. The problems are: What are proper statutes? How are they secured and maintained?

Considerations of public health, safety and welfare have impelled all but a negligible number of states to enact legislation controlling those who engage in occupations dealing with the planning and construction of buildings and other structures. Regulatory legislation has been enacted in recognition of the need to protect the public against persons who are not qualified by training and experience to render successfully and efficiently the services they offer to perform for compensation.

Broadly speaking, the statutes require those intending to engage in the normal pursuits to secure from proper authorities a license or certificate to practice. Under these enactments, Boards, Commissions, or other authorities, are given the task of certifying those candidates who meet the qualifications set up by the legislature. These authorities have broad powers, in many instances, to prescribe their own rules and regulations within given standards.

It is well settled that a state may, in the exercise of its police power, regulate the conduct of such occupations. The registration laws of some states specify the purpose of the act is "to safeguard life, health and property, and to promote the public welfare."

While the courts have justified such statutes on the grounds of public welfare, these laws are also necessary to protect the qualified individual from unethical competition by unskilled and incompetent practitioners. It is important that professional societies recognize the unfortunate consequences of such competition and it is largely due to their efforts that such protective legislation has been enacted, but more on this precise point later.

### **TITLE STATUTES**

However, the mere fact that the state within which you practice your profession may have adopted an "Architectural Registration Law," does not of itself mean that the public as a whole and the qualified architects as a group have been amply protected. Any survey of the licensing provisions of the regis-



tration statutes now in effect through the United States would show a remarkable diversity in scope and effectiveness within such laws. These various statutes may be placed into two general categories (a) Those which restrict the use of the title "architect" and (b) those which restrict the practice of architecture. The first group may be referred to as "title" statutes and the second as "practice" statutes.

These "title" statutes merely restrict the use of the word "architect," but do not ban the practice of architecture by unqualified persons. The recent Wyoming Statute, approved February 17, 1951, is a typical *Title Statute*. Section 13 reads as follows:

"Section 13. No person or persons shall be required to qualify or register as an architect in order to make plans and specifications for buildings or supervise the construction, erection, enlargement or alteration of any building, provided such person or persons do not use the designation of the word 'Architect' or any term derived therefrom."

The Courts, when confronted by statutes of similar import have held that the purpose of such statutes is the protection of the public from misrepresentation and deceit and its prohibition is no greater than called for by this purpose. This present Wyoming statute and similar provisions in eleven other states have had the fantastic result of permitting anyone to practice architecture, without regard to the public health, safety and welfare. The practical effect of such laws upon the qualified and trained architect, is to compel him to compete against those, who, but for the laxity of the registration laws, would merely execute his plans and specifications.

### PRACTICE STATUTES

In sharp contrast to the "title" statutes are those which are designated "*practice*" statutes. Under this type of statute, only qualified professionals are permitted to practice architecture. An effective statute of this type reads as follows:

"In order to safeguard life, health, and property, no person shall practice architecture in this state, or use the title architect or any title, sign, card, or device to indicate that such person is practicing architecture or is an architect, unless such person shall have secured from the regents a license or temporary permit as architect in the manner hereinafter provided, and shall thereafter comply with the provisions of this article."

Not only is the title "architect" restricted for the use of qualified persons but only such qualified persons may practice. The result which is obtainable under statutes of this character is obvious. The public as a whole, as well as the architects as a group, share the benefit of such legislation.

### OTHER TYPES OF STATUTES

There are other types of statutes, some restricting the practice of architecture to qualified persons in one section then only to emasculate this by some late proviso allowing anyone to practice as to certain types of buildings and structures. Others exempt the buildings erected for the use of the builder, while still others exempt certain buildings and structures not exceeding in cost a given figure. While these latter statutes are preferable over the typical "title" statute they still leave a great deal to be desired.

One could scarcely imagine a statute which purports to regulate the practice of medicine by merely restricting the use of the title, doctor, while allowing anyone to practice medicine; or exempting from the scope of the statute the treatment of certain named diseases. Yet, there is little or no difference between the position of the physician and architect in relationship to the general public, which each serve.

A clause emasculating the purpose of a statute was recently adopted in Oklahoma, whereby a rather effective practice statute was seriously weakened. The 1949 Oklahoma amendment stated in part that the provision making it mandatory for architects to be licensed was inapplicable to:

"... any building, or to the repairing or remodeling of any building, to be used for one family residen-

tial purposes, duplexes, or apartment houses not exceeding two (2) stories in height, Hotel, Lodge or Fraternal or Institutional building not exceeding two (2) stories in height, or to any schoolhouses where the reasonably estimated total cost of such building, remodeling or repairing does not exceed the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.) . . ."

The practice statutes of Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas, contain similar exemptions.

The purpose of a registration law is to restrict the practice of architecture to those certified by the State authority as qualified professionals, in order to insure the public's health, welfare and safety. Excepting provisions of this nature are a retreat from the position which should be held, and to an extent nullifying the benefits of the statute. While some might take the position that the exception contained in such statutes is not great enough to affect the practice of architecture in a given state, it should be pointed out that such exemptions allow the practice of architecture by incompetents, bilks the public and cuts into the livelihood of qualified architects.

In December of 1951, I spoke before a similar gathering of architects at Atlanta, Georgia. At that time I pointed out that the then effective statute of Georgia was the typical "Title Statute." Said statute read as follows:

"Nor shall anything contained in this Chapter prevent persons, mechanics or builders from making plans and specifications for, or supervising the erection, enlargement or alteration of buildings or any appurtenances thereto to be constructed by themselves or their employee: Provided, that the working drawings for such construction are signed by the authors thereof with their true appellation, as 'Engineer', or 'Contractor', or 'Carpenter', etc., without the use in any form of the title 'Architect'."

Recently, I received a copy of the new licensing statute of Georgia, and was gratified at the change. The former title statute has been scrapped and an effective practice statute substituted. The new law states:

"Certificate of Qualification to Practice Under Title of Architect: An Architect within the meaning of this Act is an individual technically and legally qualified to practice architecture and who is authorized under this Act to practice architecture. Any person wishing to practice architecture who prior to the passage of this Act shall not already have been registered to practice architecture in the State shall before being entitled to be known as an architect secure from the Georgia State Board for the Examination, Qualification and Registration of Architects a Certificate of Qualification to practice under the title of Architect as provided by this chapter and the amendments thereto. The renewal of Certificates of Registration issued to architects registered prior to the enactment of this amendment shall carry the obligations required by this amendment to the original Act under which their previous registrations have been granted. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, no person shall practice architecture in the State of Georgia or use the title 'architect' or 'registered architect' or any words, letters, figures, or any other device indicating or intending to imply that he or she is an architect without having qualified as required by this Act. No firm, company, partnership, association, corporation, or other similar organization shall be registered as an architect. Only individuals shall be registered as architects. Firms, companies, partnerships, associations and corporations may prepare plans, drawings, and specifications for buildings and structures as defined by this Act and perform the services heretofore enumerated common to the practice of architecture, provided that at least one of the chief executive officers of such firms, companies, partnerships, associations, corporations, or similar companies, are registered architects in the State of Georgia under this Act and provided further that the supervision of such buildings and structures shall be under the personnel supervision of said registered architects and that such plans, drawings and specifications shall be prepared under the personal direction and supervision of such registered architects and bear their individual signatures and seals."

It is possible therefore to secure proper legislation.



## HOW EFFECTIVE PRACTICE STATUTES ARE SECURED AND MAINTAINED

The type of legislation which is required by architects within any state can be readily ascertained. The question, however, is the methods employed to see to it that such legislation be enacted.

Any discussion of legislation must of necessity involve, if not resolve, about lobbying—a word which too often conjures up something evil and sinister in the minds of most people. A notable exception to this point of view is the experienced member of the legislature. He welcomes information from reliable representatives of particular interests. It is often his only way of knowing how those who would be most directly affected feel about proposed legislation. There must be within the ranks of A.I.A. chapters in this state, public spirited individuals, who are interested in the welfare of the public as a whole and are undoubtedly the leaders in their own profession. There should be no question of the propriety in requesting these individuals to aid in legislative matters, but, these individuals, important as they may be, are not enough. If a state organization is to lobby effectively, the presence of a full time representative at the state legislature is of primary importance.

The effectiveness of any lobbyist is in direct proportion to the degree of confidence and trust in which he is held by the legislators. False, or misleading information is a cardinal sin. Truthfulness, even to the extent of pointing out the possible interests of those who have raised some objection to the proposed legislation, is essential.

No stigma should be attached to ethical lobbying. Architects, through their state groups have a responsibility to preserve and protect their profession.

There is a wide variety of methods which may be used to produce desired results. Extensive entertainment, usually associated with lobbying is not only unnecessary, but often in poor taste. It is also generally agreed that the so-called "one-shot" policy is not very successful. This involves appearing at the Capitol and approaching legislators only when legislation affecting architects is to be considered. In such cases the representative is a stranger and the legislator has not been advised by groups within his own district.

If architects consider legislation important, they should be properly represented. This is not as extensive a problem as it might appear, since most state legislatures meet only during short periods each year.

Architects throughout the United States should be aggressive in dealing with the problem of weak licensing statutes which permit incompetent designers to prey upon the public. This procedure is applicable not only for the enactment of proper legislation but also to forestall the passage of provisos emasculating the purpose and effect of a good practice statute. We have but to look at the events which ensued in Oklahoma to realize what can follow once the authorities become lackadaisical. As I have previously stated, there, a practice statute was rendered ineffectual by the subsequent exemption of a great deal of construction work from the operation of the statute. Proper legislation is not accidental, and only eternal vigilance keeps it effectual.

Unfortunately there is some muddled thinking even within the profession on this problem. It is sometimes stated that such a statute "protects" the architects and creates a "favored" class. Such an illogical argument would be applicable to the practice of medicine, pharmacy, law, or any other professional where licensing is necessary "for the public health, safety and welfare." This is the test and not whether architects are benefited. When the question is squarely put—"Is it necessary for the 'public health, safety, and welfare' for architects to be licensed?", the answer is not only plain, but has already been answered in the affirmative in almost every state in the union. The recognition of this as a fact should permit no exceptions which endanger life, health, safety and welfare.

**Bernard Tomson**

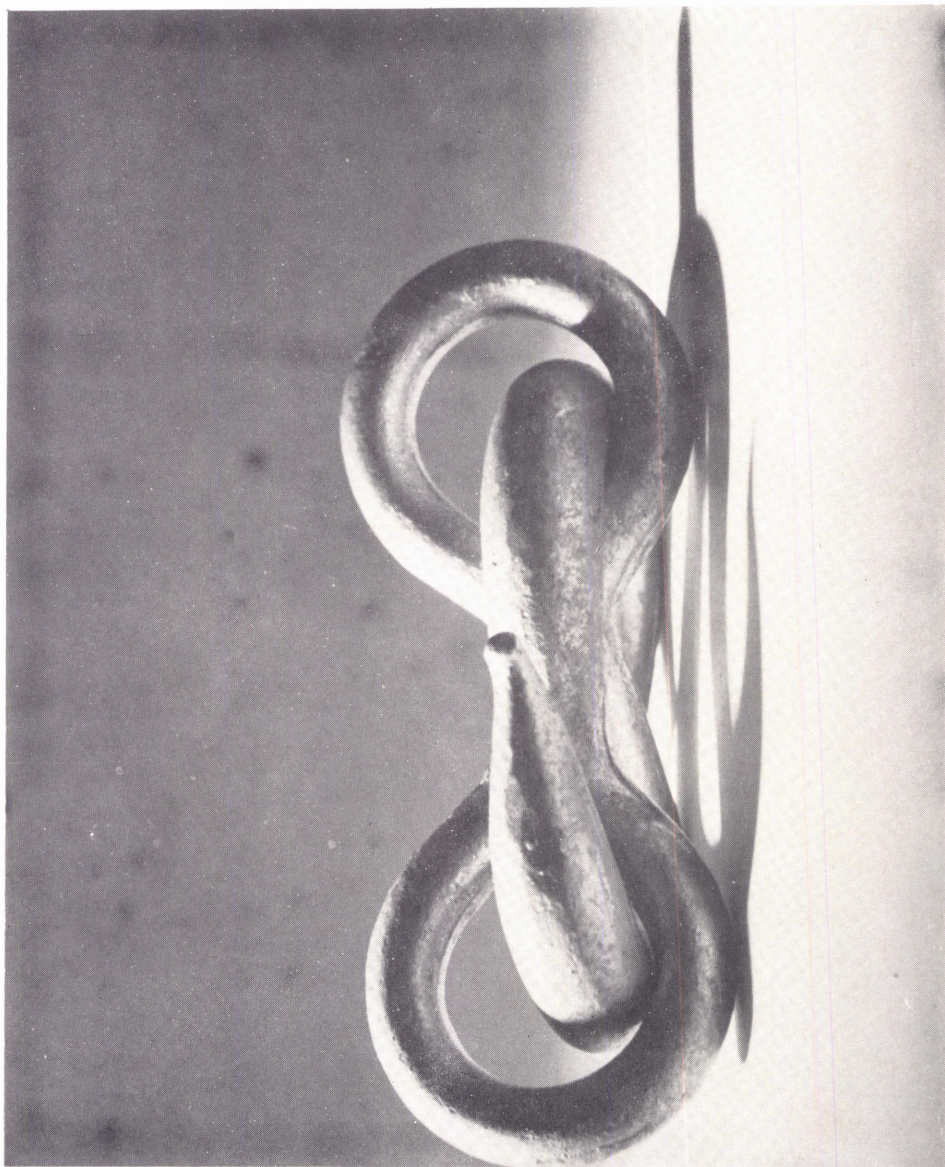


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LOUIS J. BRUNETTI, JR.  
2ND YEAR CONSTRUCTION  
1ST OUTDOOR SUBJECT  
1ST STILL LIFE



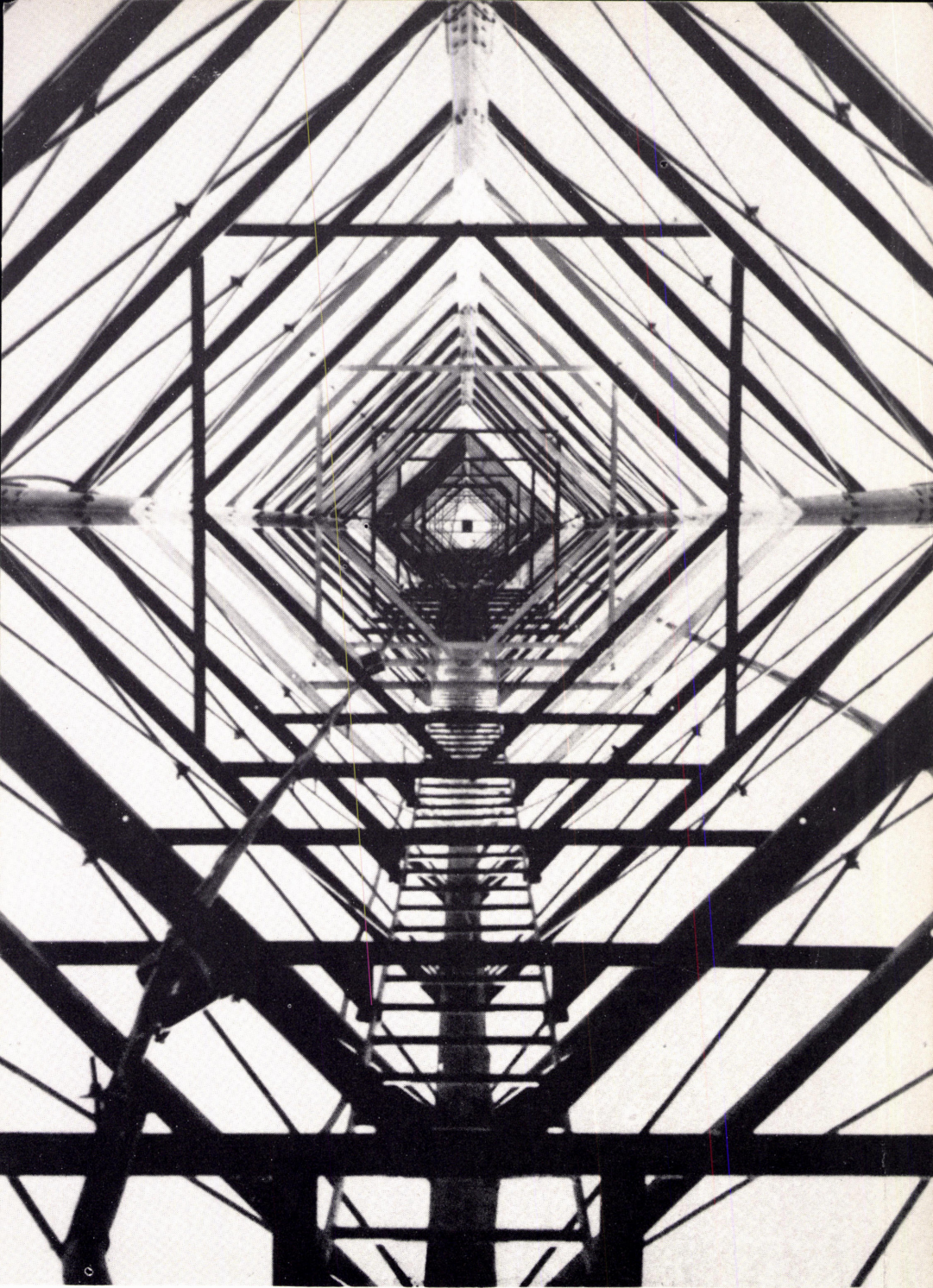




VICTOR M. DAVIS  
5TH YEAR, NUC. ENG.  
1ST PORTRAIT







CHARLES H. WINECOFF  
3RD YEAR SCHOOL OF DESIGN

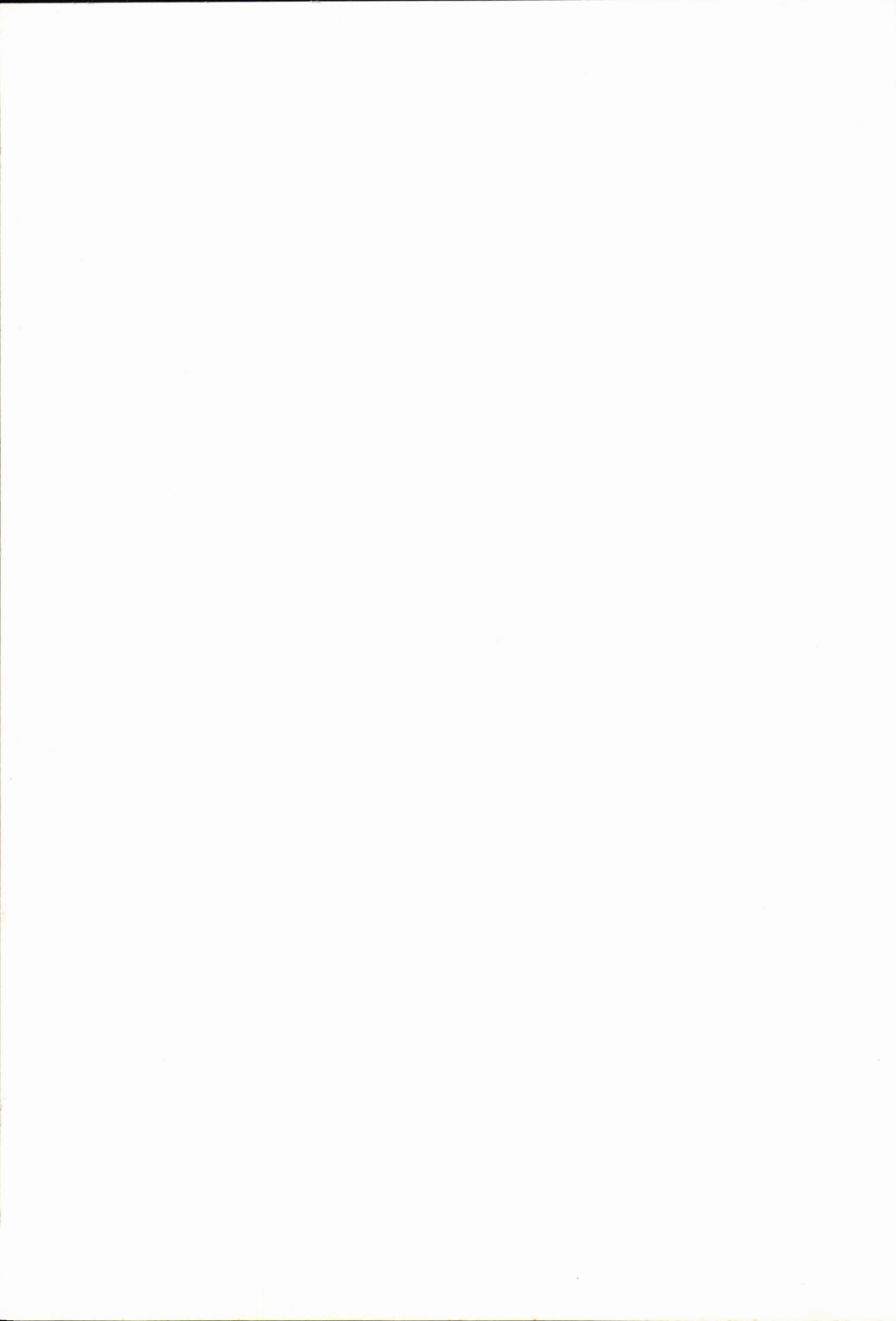






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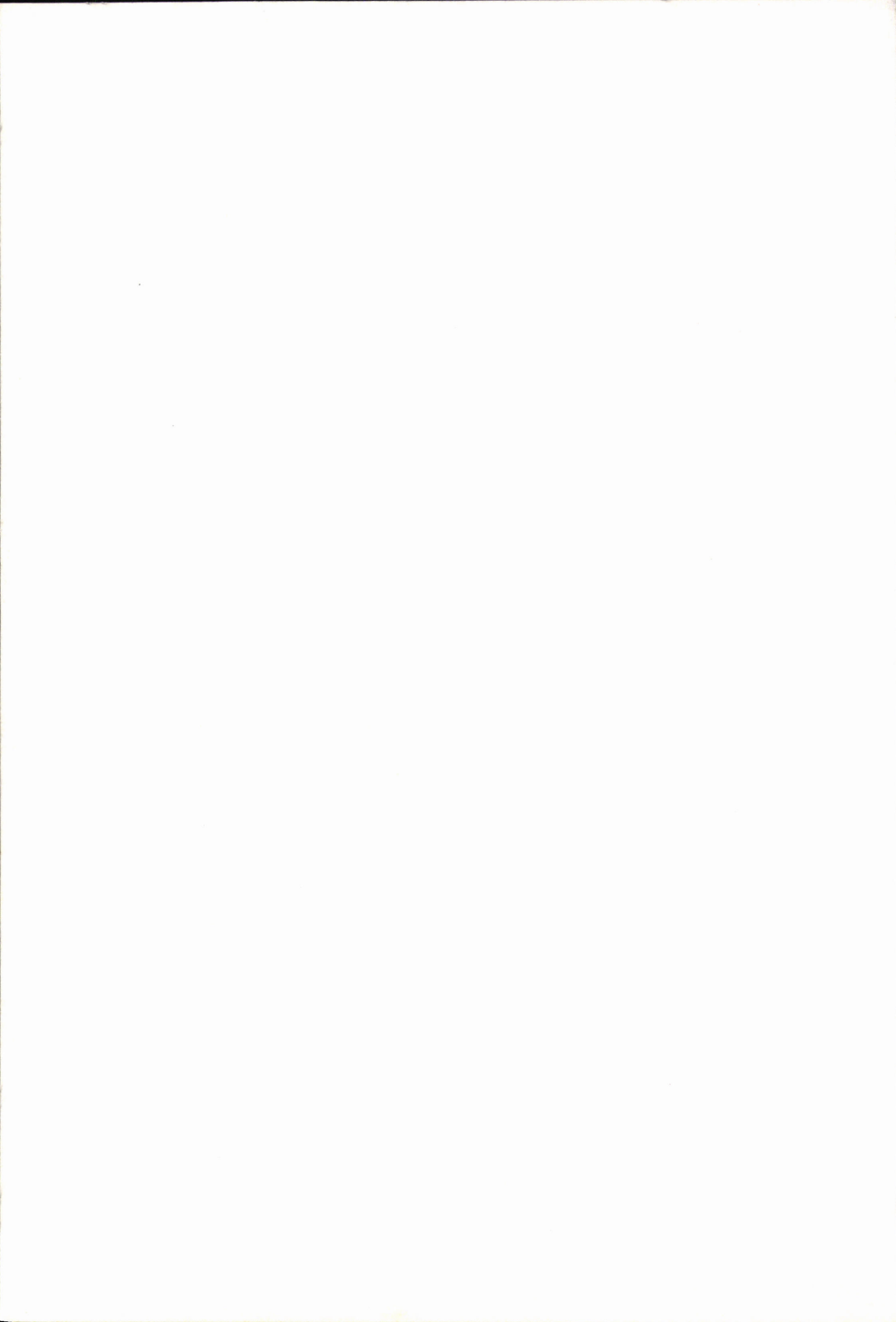






HARRY J. SPIES  
4TH YEAR SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
2ND OUTDOOR SUBJECT



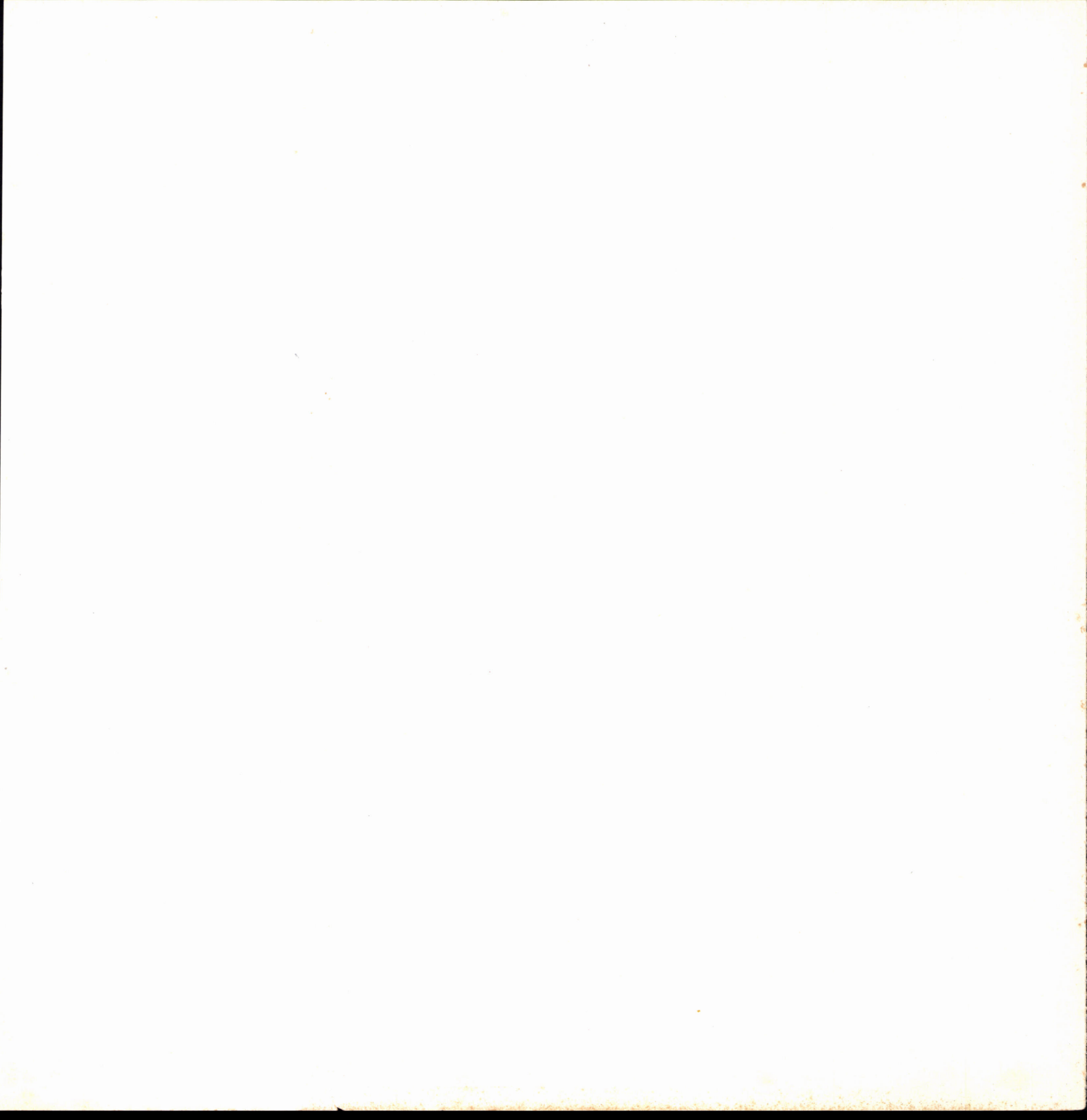




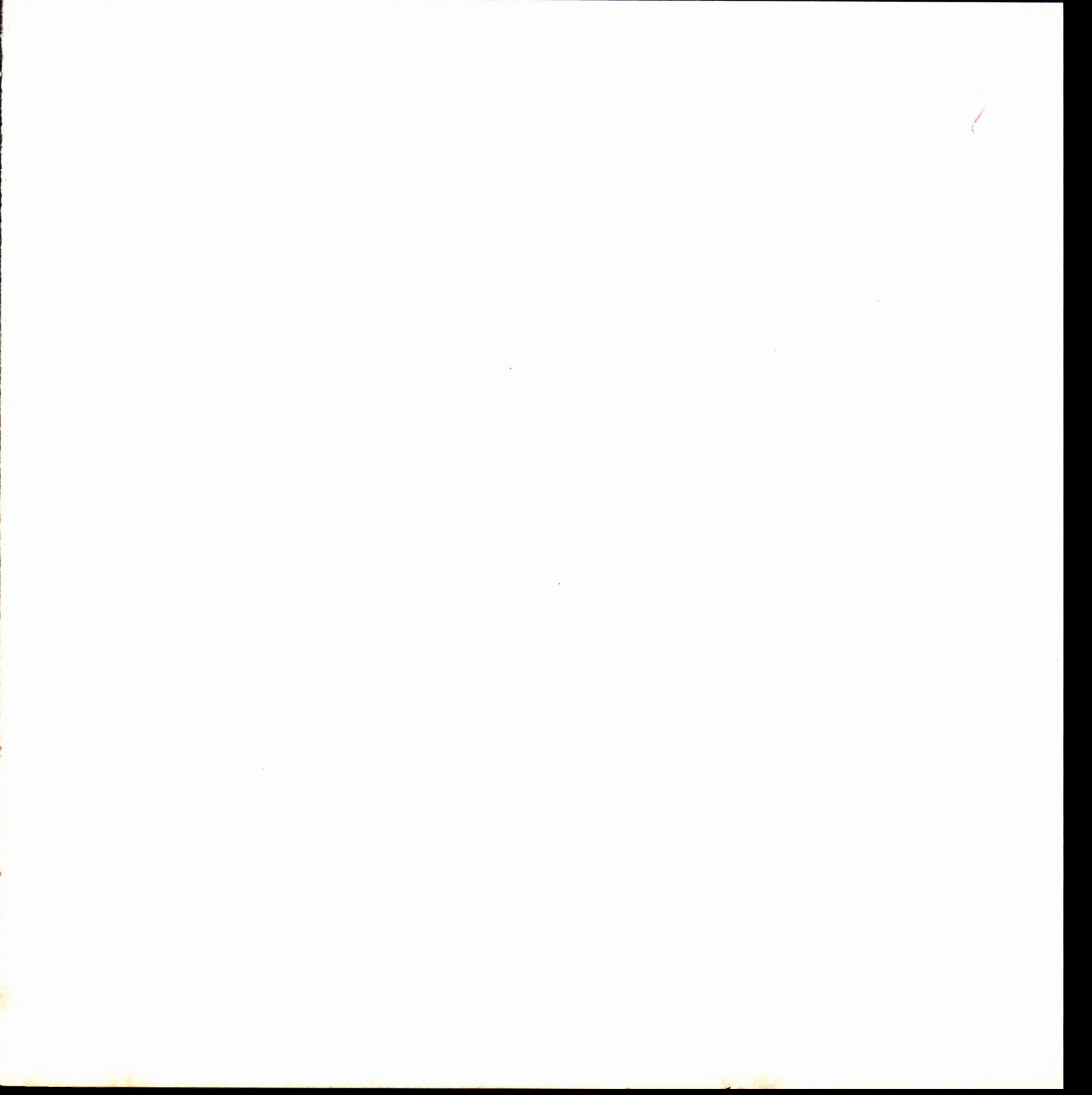
LOUIS J. BRUNETTI, JR.  
2ND YEAR CONSTRUCTION  
1ST OUTDOOR SUBJECT  
1ST STILL LIFE











# 'THIS IS THE BEAT GENERATION'

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CLELLON HOLMES is the 26-year-old author of the novel "Go," and therefore one of the generations which he describes in this article.

SEVERAL months ago, a national magazine ran a story under the heading "Youth" and the sub-head "Mother Is Bugged at Me." It concerned an 18-year-old California girl who had been picked up for smoking marijuana and wanted to talk about it. While a reporter took down her ideas in the uptempo language of "tea," someone snapped a picture. In view of her contention that she was part of a whole new culture where one out of every five people you meet is a user, it was an arresting photograph. In the pale, attentive face, with its soft eyes and intelligent mouth, there was no hint of corruption. It was a face which could only be deemed criminal through an enormous effort of righteousness. Its only complaint seemed to be "Why don't people leave us alone?" It was the face of a Beat Generation.

That clean young face has been making the newspapers steadily since the war. Standing before a judge in a Bronx court house, being arraigned for stealing a car, it looked up into the camera with curious laughter and no guilt. The same face, with a more serious bent, stared from the pages of Life magazine, representing a graduating class of ex-G. I.'s, and said that as it believed small business to be dead, it intended to become a comfortable cog in the largest corporation it could find. A little younger, a little more bewildered, it was this same face that the photographers caught in Illinois when the first non-virgin club was uncovered. The young copywriter, leaning down the bar on Third Avenue, quietly drinking himself into relaxation, and the energetic hot-rod driver of Los Angeles, who plays Russian roulette with a jalopy, are separated only by a continent and a few years. They are the extremes. In between them fall the secretearies wondering whether to sleep with their boy friends now or wait; the mechanics, beering up with the guys and driving off to Detroit on a whim; the models studiously name-dropping at a cocktail party. But the face is the same. Bright, level, realistic, challenging.

ANY attempt to label an entire generation is unrewarding, and yet the generation which went through the last war, or at least could get a drink easily once it was over, seems to possess a uniform, general quality which demands an adjective. It was John Kerouac, the author of a fine, neglected novel "The Town and the City," who finally came up with it. It was several years ago, when the face was harder to recognize, but he has a sharp, sympathetic eye, and one day he said, "You know, this is really a *beat* generation." The origins of the word "beat" are obscure, but the meaning is only too clear to most Americans. More than mere weariness, it implies the feeling of having been used, of being raw. It involves a sort of nakedness of mind, and, ultimately, of soul; a feeling of being reduced to the bedrock of consciousness. In short, it means being undramatically pushed up against the wall of oneself. A man is beat whenever he goes for broke and wages the sum of his resources on a single number; and the young generation has done that continually from early youth.



ITS members have an instinctive individuality, needing no bohemianism or imposed eccentricity to express it. Brought up during the collective bad circumstances of a dreary depression, weaned during the collective uprooting of a global war, they distrust collectivity. But they have never been able to keep the world out of their dreams. The fancies of their childhood inhabited the half-light of Munich, the Nazi-Soviet pact and the eventual blackout. Their adolescence was spent in a topsy-turvy world of war bonds, swing shifts and troop movements. They grew to independent mind on beachheads, in ginmills and U. S. O.'s, in past-midnight arrivals and pre-dawn departures. Their brothers, husbands, fathers or boy friends turned up dead one day at the other end of a telegram. At the four trembling corners of the world, or in the home town invaded by factories and lonely servicemen, they had intimate experience with the nadir and the zenith of human conduct, and little time for much that came between. The peace they inherited was only as secure as the next headline. It was a cold peace. Their own lust for freedom, and their ability to live at a pace that kills, to which war had adjusted them, led to black markets, bebop, narcotics, sexual promiscuity, hucksterism and Jean-Paul Sartre. The beatness set in later.

IT is a post-war generation, and, in a world which seems to mark its cycles by its wars, it is already being compared to that other post-war generation, which dubbed itself "lost." The Roaring Twenties, and the generation that made them roar, are going through a sentimental revival, and the comparison is valuable. The Lost Generation was discovered in a roadster, laughing hysterically because nothing meant anything any more. It migrated to Europe, unsure whether it was looking for the "orgiastic future" or escaping from the "puritanical past." Its symbols were the flapper, the flask of bootleg whiskey, and an attitude of desperate frivolity best expressed by Noel Coward's line: "Tennis, anyone?" It was caught up in the romance of disillusionment, until even that became an illusion. Every act in its drama of lostness was a tragic or an ironic third act, and T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" was more than the dead-end statement of a perceptive poet. The pervading atmosphere was an almost objectless sense of loss, through which the reader felt immediately that the cohesion of things had disappeared. It was, for an entire generation, an image which expressed, with dreadful accuracy, its own spiritual condition.

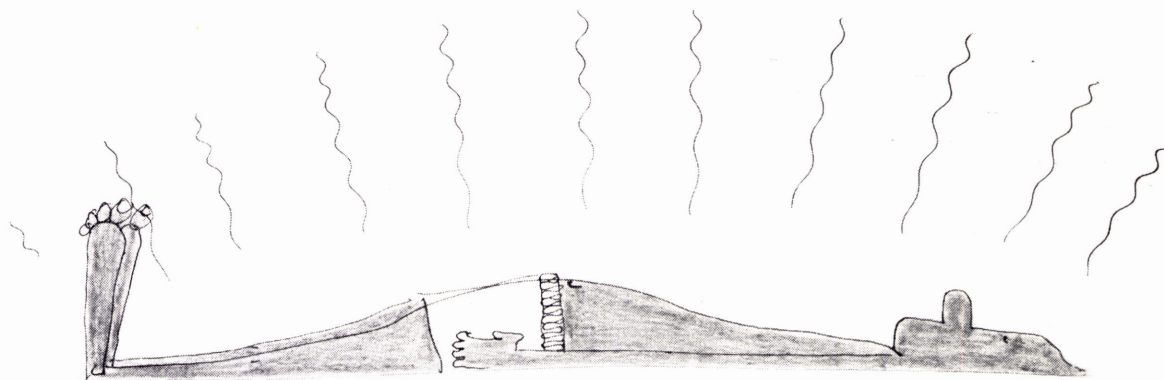
BUT the wild boys of today are not lost. Their flushed, often scoffing, always intent faces elude the word, and it would sound phony to them. For this generation conspicuously lacks that eloquent air of bereavement which made so many of the exploits of the Lost Generation symbolic actions. Furthermore, the repeated inventory of shattered ideals and the laments about the mud in moral currents, which so obsessed the Lost Generation, does not concern young people today. They take it frighteningly for granted. They were brought up in these ruins and no longer notice them. They drink to "come down" or to "get high," not to illustrate anything. Their excursions into drugs or promiscuity come out of curiosity, not disillusionment.

Only the most bitter among them would call their reality a nightmare and protest that they have indeed lost something, the future. But ever since they were old enough to imagine one, that has been in jeopardy anyway. The absence of personal and social values is to them, not a revelation shaking the ground beneath them, but a problem demanding a day-to-day solution. *How* to live seems to them much more crucial than *why*. And it is precisely at this point that the copywriter

and the hot-rod driver meet, and their identical beatness becomes significant, for unlike the Lost Generation, which was occupied with the loss of faith, the Beat Generation is becoming more and more occupied with the need for it. As such, it is a disturbing illustration of Voltaire's reliable old joke: "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent Him." Not content to bemoan His absence, they are busily and haphazardly inventing totems for Him on all sides.

FOR the giggling nihilist, eating up the highway at ninety miles an hour, and steering with his feet, is no Harry Crosby, the poet of the Lost Generation who flew his plane into the sun one day because he could no longer accept the modern world. On the contrary, the hot-rod driver invites death only to outwit it. He is affirming the life within him in the only way he knows how, at the extreme. The eager-faced girl, picked up on a dope charge, is not one of those "women and girls carried screaming with drink or drugs from public places," of whom Fitzgerald wrote. Instead, with persuasive seriousness, she describes the sense of community she has found in marijuana, which society never gave her. The copywriter, just as drunk by midnight as his Lost Generation counterpart, probably reads "God and Man at Yale" during his Sunday afternoon hangover. The difference is this almost exaggerated will to believe in something, if only in themselves. It is a *will* to believe, even in the face of an inability to do so in conventional terms. And that is bound to lead to excesses in one direction or another.

THE shock that older people feel at the sight of this Beat Generation is, at its deepest level, not so much repugnance at the facts, as it is distress at the attitudes which move it. Though worried by this distress, they most often argue or legislate in terms of the facts rather than the attitudes. The newspaper reader, studying the eyes of young dope addicts, can only find an outlet for his horror and bewilderment in demands that passers be given the electric chair. Sociologists, with a more academic concern, are just as troubled by the legions of young men whose topmost ambition seems to be to find a secure berth in a monolithic corporation. Contemporary historians express mild surprise at the lack of organized movements, political, religious or other-





wise, among the young. The articles they write remind us that being one's own boss and being a natural joiner are two of our most cherished national traits. Everywhere, people with tidy moralities shake their heads and wonder what is happening to the younger generation.

PERHAPS they have not noticed that, behind the excess on the one hand, and the conformity on the other, lies that wait-and-see detachment that results from having to fall back for support more on one's human endurance than on one's philosophy of life. Not that the Beat Generation is immune to ideas; they fascinate it. Its wars, both past and future, were and will be wars of ideas. It knows, however, that in the final, private moment of conflict a man is really fighting another man, and not an idea. And that the same goes for love. So it is a generation with a greater facility for entertaining ideas than for believing in them. But it is also the first generation in several centuries for which the act of faith has been an obsessive problem, quite aside from the reasons for having a particular faith or not having it. It exhibits on every side, and in a bewildering number of facets, a perfect craving to believe.

Though it is certainly a generation of extremes, including both the hipster and the "radical" young Republican in its ranks, it renders unto Caesar (i.e., society) what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's. For in the wildest hipster, making a mystique of bop, drugs and the night life, there is no desire to shatter the "square" society in which he lives, only to elude it. To get on a soapbox or write a manifesto would seem to him absurd. Looking out at the normal world, where most everything is a "drag" for him, he nevertheless says: "Well, that's the Forest of Arden after all. And even it jumps if you look at it right." Equally, the young Republican, though often seeming to hold up Babbitt as his culture hero, is neither vulgar nor materialistic, as Babbitt was. He conforms because he believes it is socially practical, not necessarily virtuous. Both positions, however, are the result of more or less the same conviction—namely that the valueless abyss of modern life is unbearable.

A GENERATION can sometimes be better understood by the books it reads, than by those it writes. The literary hero of the Lost Generation should have been Bazarov, the nihilist in Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons." Bazarov sat around, usually in the homes of the people he professed to loathe, smashing every icon within his reach. He was a man stunned into irony and rage by the collapse of the moral and intellectual structure of his world.

But he did nothing. The literary hero of the Beat Generation, on the other hand, might be Stavrogin, that most enigmatic character in "The Possessed" by Dostoevski. He is also a nihilist, or at least intimately associated with them.

But there is a difference, for Stavrogin, behind a facade very much like Bazarov's, is possessed by a passion for faith, almost any faith. His very atheism, at its extreme, is metaphysical. But he knows that disbelief is fatal, and when he has failed in every way to overcome it, he commits suicide because he does not have what he calls "greatness of soul." The ground yawned beneath Bazarov, revealing a pit into which he fell; while Stavrogin struggled at the bottom of that pit, trying feverishly to get out. In so far as it resembles Stavrogin, there have been few generations with as natural and profound a craving for convictions as this one, nor have there been many genera-

tions as ill-equipped to find them.

FOR beneath the excess and the conformity, there is something other than detachment. There are the stirrings of a quest. What the hipster is looking for in his "coolness" (withdrawal) or are the stirrings of a quest. What the hipster is looking for in his "coolness" (withdrawal) or "flipness" (ecstasy) is, after all, a feeling of somewhere, not just another diversion. The young Republican feels that there is a point beyond which change becomes chaos, and what he wants is not simply privilege or wealth, but a stable position from which to operate. Both have had enough of homelessness, valuelessness, faithlessness.

The variety and the extremity of their solutions is only a final indication that for today's young people there is not as yet a single external pivot around which they can, as a generation, group their observations and their aspirations. There is no single philosophy, no single party, no single attitude. The failure of most orthodox moral and social concepts to reflect fully the life they have known is probably the reason, but because of it each person becomes a walking, self-contained unit, compelled to meet the problem of being young in a seemingly helpless world in his own way, or at least to endure.

More than anything else, this is what is responsible for this generation's reluctance to name itself, its reluctance to discuss itself as a group, sometimes its reluctance to be itself. For invented gods invariably disappoint those who worship them. Only the need for them goes on, and it is this need, exhausting one object after another, which projects the Beat Generation forward into the future and will one day deprive it of its beatness.

DOSTOEVSKI wrote in the early Eighteen Eighties that, "Young Russia is talking of nothing but the eternal questions now." With appropriate changes, something very like this is beginning to happen in America, in an American way; a re-evaluation of which the exploits and attitudes of this generation are only symptoms. No simple comparison of one generation against another can accurately measure effects, but it seems obvious that a Lost Generation, occupied with disillusionment and trying to keep busy among the broken stones, is poetically moving, not very dangerous. But a Beat Generation, driven by a desperate craving for belief and as yet unable to accept the moderations which are offered it, is quite another matter. Thirty years later, after all, the generation of which Dostoevski wrote, was meeting in cellars and making bombs.

THIS generation may make no bombs; it will probably be asked to drop some, and have some dropped on it, however, and this fact is never far from its mind. It is one of the pressures which created it and will play a large part in what will happen to it. There are those who believe that in generations such as this there is always the constant possibility of a great new moral idea, conceived in desperation, coming to life. Others note the self-indulgence, the waste, the apparent social irresponsibility, and disagree.

But its ability to keep its eyes open, and yet avoid cynicism; its ever-increasing conviction that the problem of modern life is essentially a spiritual problem; and that capacity for sudden wisdom which people who live hard and go far, possess, are assets and bear watching. And, anyway, the clear, challenging faces are worth it.



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