

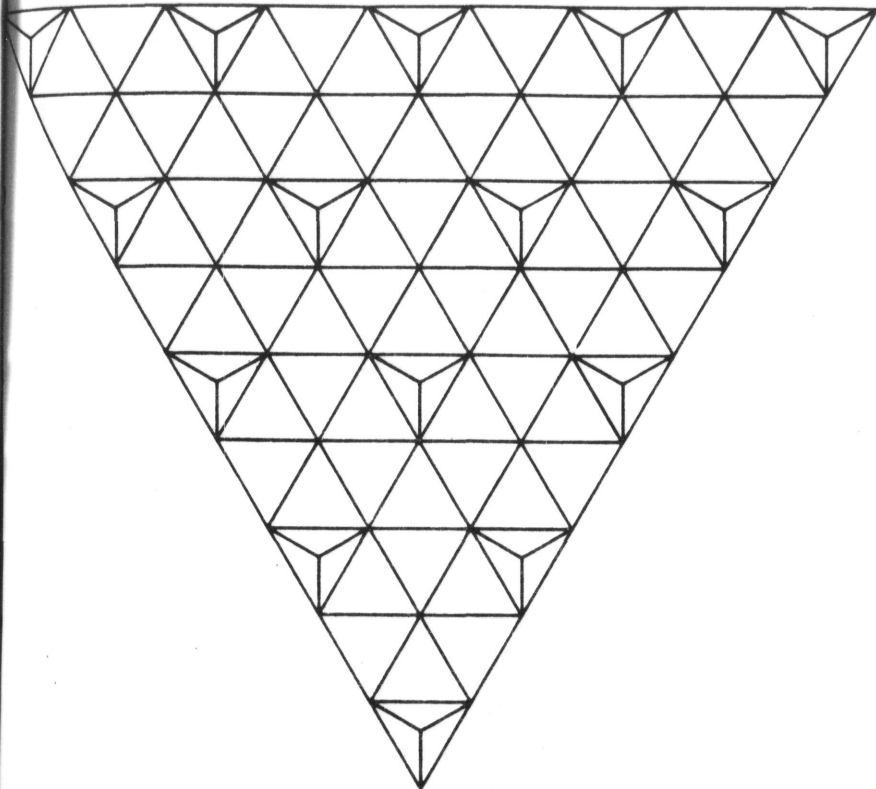
The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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TONY SMITH/81 MORE AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

81 More, the first large indoor environmental piece to be constructed in New York by the distinguished sculptor Tony Smith will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from November 30 through January 31. 81 More consists of tetrahedral modules of four feet forming a triangle with nine units on a side, or a total of 81 triangles. It is painted a dark red, a symbolic choice, the artist says, based on the color of Orozco's frescoes. In its geometric austerity 81 More seems to allude to the mythic. The director is Kynaston McShine, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture.



Tony Smith was born in 1912 in South Orange, New Jersey, where he lives. As a young man he studied architecture and design as well as painting. For the past 25 years he has taught at various schools and colleges and is now a professor at Hunter College.

Although well known to many artists, particularly of the Abstract Expressionist genre, his work was not shown publicly until 1964 when he was 52. His sculpture was

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included in an exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, where his first one-man show was held two years later.

That same year, 1966, his work was included in a show called "Primary Structures" at the Jewish Museum. Since then he has been represented in many national and international shows including the "Art of the Real, USA 1948-1968" organized by The Museum of Modern Art and shown in London and Paris after its initial showing at the Museum in New York. For "Scale as Content" at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., in 1967, he created his first monumental sculptural environment, Smoke. Another complex large environment, Bat Cave, was first shown at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan, and recreated for "Art and Technology" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art this past summer.

81 More, the artist says, is related to such earlier pieces as Stinger and a project subsequently abandoned called Haole Crater, which was his first project made up of 81 squares, and Hubris, one square of 81 square slabs and the other square of 81 half-octahedra. "Project for a Parking Lot for Minneapolis" was made up of 81 squares each of which contained 81 squares. "Part of this had to do with the practical matter of how large granite slabs could be made; but another part of it must have to do with the use of similarly formed modules of different scales used in Mexico in Teotihuacán (site of the Pyramids of the Sun and of the Moon)," Smith says.

"The essential link here is that the intention is monumental and dramatic For me, the dramatic consists of the confrontation of an individual with the most intense expression of a specific time and place. What is monumental consists in giving this expression the clearest and most economical form.

"When I did 81 More I hadn't realized that a triangle with nine units on a side would be made up of 81 triangles. It was only after the piece was designed that I happened to count them."

And, in conclusion, speaking about the color, Smith says "... the red of the pyra-

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mids in that postcard of the Orozco frescoes in the Baker Library at Dartmouth College sent by my wife, and my memory of the red in Orozco's New School frescoes, determined this choice of color. I feel that my unvarying use of black in the past was primarily based upon aesthetic considerations. The use of red in this case is more symbolic."

Recently Tony Smith, whose work is in many important collections, has been more preoccupied with large commissions like Hubris and Mountain Piece, a gigantic triangular sculpture to be inserted in a California mountainside. 81 More was created at the invitation of The Museum of Modern Art. Smith now visualizes it as being one-fifth the size of a possible sculpture for an airport.

Tony Smith was a close friend of the late Barnett Newman whose one-man retrospective is now on view and which Smith assisted in installing.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501, -7504
