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INTERNAT·L PROGRAM, VOL. II SUMMARIES, PRESS ANALYSES

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

SUMMARIES AND PRESS ANALYSES  
OF  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM EXHIBITIONS

Volume II

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Critical Reviews

The International Council of  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

CRITICAL REVIEWS: U. S. REPRESENTATION, SCULPTURE IN THE OPEN AIR  
BATTERSEA PARK, LONDON, MAY 29 - SEPT. 29, 1963

These reviews are arranged in order of importance, with regard both to the newspaper or periodical and the content of the review.

1. Times, London, May 30, 1963 (daily, circ. 254,694)

...Modern American sculpture has been rather eclipsed by the rage for modern American painting. Calder, who shows here a large black "stabile" of the same sort as, although less effective than, the great scarlet "Crab" exhibited at the Tate last year, is with the possible exception of David Smith, its only widely known representative abroad. It is nevertheless a strong team that the Museum of Modern Art has assembled for Battersea. Almost to a man abstract, its frequent concern for a sculpture of twisted line rather than rugged mass, of crumpled, self-involved shapes with a characteristic emphasis on machine parts and sharp edges of metal, sets up something of a challenge both to its well-mannered, English parkland setting, and to the figurative British sculpture ranged to confront it on the main slope of rising ground.

...An obvious show-stealer among the Americans is George Rickey's mobile, whose six thin, silver fingers reach 13 ft. into the air, swaying and tinkling with each breeze like lazily probing tentacles. As an essentially bodiless, free and open construction, it seems to typify what most often appeals to the American sculptors, whether their forms are as precise and austere as in the example by David Smith (which provides an interesting counterpart to the British austerity of Robert Adams), or full of the textural blandishments and picturesque irregularities of scrap-metal. Two particularly well-represented exponents of the latter are Jason Seley and Joseph Goto, with other characteristic examples by Stankiewicz, Ferber, and Chamberlain. Seymour Lipton shows a stylish, though rather contrived sense of form, and there is a sturdy energy about the sculpture of Peter Voulkos and Dimitri Hadzi.

2. The Studio, August 1963, by G. S. Whittet (monthly art periodical)

At the outset it must be said that the United States contribution gained in its selection from a single body of judgment: the Museum of Modern Art, New York...

The Americans, as Sir Herbert Read remarks aptly in his introduction to the catalogue, are 'individualists, exciting in their inventions, sometimes merely playful, and perhaps more immediately attractive than their English contemporaries.' This immediate attraction, it seems to me, is perhaps their built-in weakness. The chrome-plated glitter of Jason Seley's Magister Ludi ingratiates by its insouciant cannibalization of car bumpers in horned imagery but its source savours

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## 2. The Studio, cont.

of opportunism, a criticism applicable to John Chamberlain's Coo Wha Zee in welded auto metal. Richard Stankiewicz's untitled iron and steel structure provides a three dimensional calligraphic profile that reminds one of Zen.

Alexander Calder contrives a king-sized cut-out in his sheet steel Black Widow not without its humour of exaggeration while in his elder's own field of mobiles George Rickey has grouped six narrow steel blades that swoop and click in the lakeside breeze with diverting energy.

Metal, in fact, ranks as a popular material with our trans-Atlantic sculptors, to be seen in a brushed surface pattern in the thin box slabs with which David Smith has built his Cubi IX. This is one of the most impressive exhibits in its setting and displays an uninhibited approach to the local detail integrated in the mass with real significance.

Reuben Nakian assumes a quasi-figurative genre in his Hecuba with the bronze taking the air-filled contours of blown drapery. Leonard Baskin (known better here as printmaker), subtracts the mortal weight of the form from his six-foot-long Great Bronze Dead Man elongated horizontally but not slimming to twig as a Giacometti might. Harry Bertola's Urn flattens his form to a front and rear view of an outline that echoes the surrounding trees with allusive beauty.

Struggle of heavily contoured figures is suggested convincingly in Peter Voukos' Black Butte in fired clay and weight is implicit in the Delphi III of James Rosati with its elegant nestling of the three superimposed blocks with their complement. Raoul Hague's Walnut-Mink Hollow is a wood carving of strength and simplicity on its already basic form. Seymour Lipton involves movement and light in his Prophet, a walking hooded profile 7 ft. 3 in. high.

In its content, the Battersea exhibition contains much that is muscular (in the British section sometimes flabby), architectonic, mechanical and untraditional.

## 3. The Arts Review, London, June 15, 1963, by Conroy Maddox (fortnightly art periodical)

I found only four works in this year's skipingly arranged Battersea show that managed to rise above the confusion - Jason' Seley's Magister Ludi, Calder's Black Widow, the Battersea Group by Clarke, and Rickey's Summer III. They didn't exactly save the show, or the trek, but at least one remembered them after all else. Not only have these four sculptors been able to concoct striking and incisive constructions, but show a proficiency in handling the materials without permitting the materials to take precedence over the subject.... To return to the first four - Calder's large stationary abstract constructions in sheet metal that he calls 'Stables,' of which the Black Widow is a notable success. Not only does it escape from the slightly huddled qualities that these works of

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3. The Arts Review, cont.

his sometimes have, but it gains wonderfully in delicacy, poise and weightlessness. The spiky pivoted forms of Rickey's Summer III, a restricted mobile, would be even more fascinating in a high wind....

4. Arts Magazine, New York, October 1963, by Gene Baro (monthly art periodical)

One finds there is not as much distance between Bond Street and Battersea as one would have thought. (And still less across the Atlantic?) International styles and concepts are prevailing, though British sculpture remains more sensitive to traditional techniques and materials. (Will the British have to wait until their economy affords more automobile junkyards before their sculptors can come abreast of our own?)

The sculptures are, for the most part, admirably displayed, though some few of them take one clambering up a hillside or virtually put one into the lake if one wants an all-round view. Still, the effect is pleasing, even if it fails to establish that all these sculptures are for out of doors.

Who comes off best is hardly relevant. What emerges from this exhibition is the need for more such, the need certainly to think through as a whole the problems of exhibiting contemporary sculpture. What should be the importance of a controlled environment to this medium? One of the virtues of the present show is the relative informality of the arrangement. The British understand a natural setting and do not merely decorate a garden with sculptures or surround sculptures with greenery. It is a very real delight to "discover" a Barbara Hepworth and an Anthony Caro after a turn in the path, to glimpse a lyrical Henry Moore at the brow of a hill, to see Raoul Hague's beautifully toned and finished Walnut-Mink Hollow against banks of rhododendrons.

All of these pieces respond to their environments, some critically. Herbert Ferber's piece, it seemed to me, would have been better for a gallery ceiling, Lynn Chadwick's Winged Figures seemed more appropriate for the industrial environment of the catalogue photograph. These examples have their opposites. The biomorphic forms of Voukos and Agostini showed perhaps more successfully than a gallery or studio would have allowed. And Bertioia's Urn echoed the environment surprisingly.

But what offered most interest, in one sense, were the sculptures that resisted the weather or that yielded to it. For instance, David Smith's Cubi IX, in a waterside setting, changed its appearance with every passing cloud; the scrubbed steel surfaces of the rigid shapes became tenuous in the shifting light. The metamorphic quality of this work was startling.

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5. The Builder, June 7, 1963 (no information available)

'Isn't that an exhibit,' said the LCC park attendant to the man with the latter at the opening of the 'Sculpture in the Open Air Exhibition.' Battersea Park is the Londoners' pleasure-ground; the park by the river with the fun fair and the candy-floss, and there will be rougher cockney comment than this before the exhibition of contemporary British and American sculpture closes in September. It matters little whether visitors like or don't like what they find there: the important thing is that they should go and see it.

....This is an exciting exhibition; exhilarating and imagination stirring, and those who hate it will love it. Whilst there is a preponderance of abstract forms, there is something for everybody from George Ehrlich's traditional 'Sleeping Calf' to John Chamberlain's frightening car joke with the title 'Coo Wha Zee.' But there is a great deal besides. There is 'Summer III' in stainless steel by the American sculptor, George Rickey, with tall slender spears wafting in the Battersea breezes: here the sculptor's art and the constructor's skill have combined to bring literal movement into sculpture....

6. Daily Worker, London, May 30, 1963; also Beckenham Advertiser, Beckenham, Kent, June 13, 1963 (circ. not available)

....Best known in England of the American sculptors are David Smith, who shows a steel work, 'Cubi IX,' of rectangles and cubes, miraculously hanging together like a child's block building, and Alexander Calder, whose aesthetic 'Black Widow,' of sheet steel, seems to be a gigantic spider upon the green grass.

The most exciting piece in the show, and worth seeing in different weathers, is George Rickey's "Summer III." This is a mobile, a type of sculpture which has enormous possibilities. Its six steel, silver-coloured spears rise up into the sky, swaying in the wind, free in their range of movement as a tree's branches, making this one of the few works which really harmonise with their surroundings.

7. Tribune, London, June 14, 1963, by Sturt-Penrose (weekly periodical)

....One of the most striking features of the exhibition is the importance in the contemporary art world of the British school of sculpture. The visitor is made aware of the affinity that exists between British sculptors at the present time by comparison with the individualism of the Americans. The relationship between the two spheres of development is rather like the inferior work produced by British artists in comparison with the American school of modern art.

The dominating position of British sculptors is well illustrated in the work of the pioneers Henry Moore, Reg Butler and Barbara Hepworth....

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7. Tribune, cont.

For the rest, there is the contrast of John Chamberlain's odd Coo Wha Zee of welded car-crash metal which brings the viewer dangerously sympathetic to Socialist realism à la Khrushchev. The solemn suggestion of power and wisdom in Hubert Dalwood's High Judge is appealing as is the most impressive of the American exhibits Hecuba by Reuben Nakian.

8. Spectator, London, June 1963, by Nevile Wallis (weekly political and literary review)

This summer less imaginative use is made of the water and shrubberies. The mostly abstract pieces disposed on the undulating lawn, crowned by the bony silhouette of Moore's knife-edge figure commanding a knoll, generally have an exhibitionist air which defies the setting. Only Barbara Hepworth's...seems to spring up there as aptly as it commemorates the far-scanning Dag Hammarskjöld.

The innovation is an American contingent of metal craftsmen whose variety of inventiveness is little known here apart from Alexander Calder's, whose giant spider sportively cut in sheet metal straddles the turf. The most elegant (and only mobile) conceit comes from a New Yorker, George Rickey. His sheaf of tapering spears pivoted at the base and clinking in the gusts of air has the flash of reeds swaying in high summer. Idiosyncratic as these American works are, they are often related to the twisted anatomies of the junkyard. Jason Seley's ironic assemblage of car bumpers makes a more effective image outdoors than John Chamberlain's crumpled metal wreck which can deliver nothing as potent as the emotional shock of actual wreckage piled up by the roadside. The only effective contrast to the Americans' fantasy is provided by their geometric constructions. The rectangular rhythms and delicate equipoise of an erection of steel blocks by David Smith, the New York purist who once welded in an armaments factory, quite outmatch the balanced forms of our own Robert Adams.

9. West London Press, Chelsea, July 26, 1963 (circ. not available); also summarized in Kensington Post.

A "compound for crashed cars" was a parallel suggested for the sculpture exhibition across the river in Chelsea's "back garden" - Battersea Park - during question time at the L.C.C. meeting last week.

...Q: In what way did he /the chairman of the parks committee/ find it a worthwhile experience?

A: Not every piece evoked in me an immediate response but I much enjoyed this first opportunity to compare the works of leading British and American sculptors of the present day. The exhibition is both provocative and stimulating.

Q: Does the chairman agree that some of the art exhibits look like the contents of a compound for crashed cars?

A: Perhaps this superficial definition could be applied to one or two of the works,

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9. West London Press, cont.

and these, I think, represent the contemporary artists' search for new media and materials.

Q: Is the exhibition understood by only a very few people; does he consider there is any justification for the lavish use of art advisors; does he agree that there has been large-scale public dissatisfaction about the exhibition on the ground that it is too clever by half and not easy for most people to appreciate?

A: Only one of the 20,000 visitors so far has written in a criticism, and most of the Press reviews have complimented the council on the success of the triennial series of exhibitions. I have no intention, nor has the parks committee, of setting up as a judge of sculpture.

10. Architectural Design, July 1963, by Jasia Reichardt and John Brookes, respectively (monthly architectural periodical)

ART In response to a natural environment the sculptor must present a work that will not compete with nature on its own terms. Thus formal sculptures, whatever their subject, seem better integrated in nature than those pieces which allude to organic life. This is certainly true of the LCC international open air sculpture exhibition at Battersea Park (May-September)...In this context one can mention a number of works which look so marvelous in Battersea that one will be sorry to see them go at the end of the exhibition...Chadwick's Winged figures...Hepworth's Single form ....Exciting for rather different reasons are the mobile in stainless steel by George Rickey, Cubi IX in steel by David Smith, and an extraordinary work called Magister Ludi in chrome plated steel by Jason Seley that looks like a strange musical instrument about to bring forth a sound. These three American artists and the British Anthony Caro, have contributed something so antagonistic, so completely synthetic as a contrast to the soft, germinating, idyllic surroundings, that they seem to have won the battle with the landscape and taken over.

ARCHITECTURE The horizontal plane of the lake contrasts with the verticals of the trees on its edge and forms a perfect setting for David Smith's Cubi IX, for instance, and a copper beech shows up the writhing chrome shapes of Jason Seley's Magister Ludi. Few, even the 'squarest,' could fail to be impressed by this exhibition in its beautiful setting.

11. The Tatler, London, August 28, 1963 (weekly periodical)

But several of the things, especially in the American section of this Anglo-U.S. exhibition, are good for a guffaw and not much more. John Chamberlain's squashed motor car, titled Coo Wha Zee and mounted with a nice sense of the ridiculous upon a handsome stone plinth...or Joseph Goto's rusty Number 1 that looks like an abandoned piece of farm machinery...

...Leonard Baskin's Great Bronze Dead Man lies weightily collecting pools of rain in the hollows of his shroud.

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II. The Tetler, cont.

Alexander Calder, the inventor of mobiles, is represented by a stabile called Black Widow, a huge spidery figure cut out of sheet steel, and so leaves the field clear for another mobile man, George Rickey, to mesmerize us with his Summer III, an arrangement of six steel lances that quiver and swoop like the antennae of some space-fiction creation. The Americans generally show greater invention than our own sculptors in the use of "contemporary" media - Jason Seley's Magister Ludi, for example, is made entirely of car bumpers - but it seems to me that most of their work has nothing more than an initial surprise to offer. From the scrap heap it came, to the scrap heap it will no doubt soon return.

12. Architects Journal, June 19, 1963, by T. M. P. Bendixson (weekly architectural periodical)

This is not the sort of stuff that would introduce a note of pastoral gaiety into a developer's shopping precinct or contrast with the uncomfortable power imagery of a prestige office block. It is a nagging reminder of Hiroshima, inhumanity, car smashes and the beauty of viciousness.

Battersea Park's undulating lakeside glade provides an admirable setting for this clanking urban sculpture, and what could be more English and picturesque? Two outstanding acts of siting concern a voluptuous chunk of dark-red walnut by Raoul Hague which sits in front of puce and pink rhododendrons, and Barbara Hepworth's stippled bronze memorial disc which has a backcloth of green oak leaves and the dark, cool lake.

....crowding is particularly noticeable in the case of Harry Bertola's lacy 'Urn' (quite unlike the mechanistic steel basket chairs he did with Charles Eames)....

13. The Observer, London, June 9, 1963, by Nigel Gosling (Sunday, circ. 721,932)

....The American contribution is more sophisticated and urban than our own, with a pleasingly decisive character.

14. Daily Telegraph, London, June 4, 1963, by Terence Mullaly (daily, circ. 1,253,251)

....It is an exhibition I leave with a sense of grave disquiet, for neither the repudiation of the central European tradition of humanism nor wilful travesties of the human body are conducive to satisfying art.

....With the single exception of Leonard Baskin they /\_the American sculptors\_/ are obsessed by the abstract.

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15. Daily Telegraph, London, May 30, 1963 (daily, circ. 1,253,251)

....Twenty of the pieces have come from the United States, but while works of British artists - Moore, Frink, Hepworth, Armitage, Nimptsch - blend with the setting, the American ones seem more suited to the side of a motorway.

Jason Seley's agglomeration of chrome car bumpers and an engine could have come off the M1. The metal fronds of Rickey's windblown piece called "Summer" give the rattle of rain on a metal roof.

16. Sunday Times, London, June 9, 1963, by Michael Levey (Sunday, circ. 1,110,457)

....And some effective integration of sculpture and setting is undoubtedly lost by placing the pieces on regulation ugly white concrete blocks, recalling only too well the showing of sculpture indoors. The sole exception is Calder's "Black Widow," crawling directly on the grass (provoking a giggle of delighted recognition from three school-girls: "I understand that one").

The English contributions at their best are serious, slightly romantic, very much felt....The Americans are witty (even jokey), highly professional, as polished as Rickey's "Summer III," a clustering mobile group of stainless steel lances, always shifting and creating new long-fingered patterns against the trees.

17. Birmingham Post, Birmingham, May 30, 1963 (daily, circ. 78,787)

Is there a hint of sly chauvinism in the way the L.C.C. have laid out their fifth triennial exhibition of sculpture in the open air at Battersea Park? It is an Anglo-American exhibition and the U. S. Minister, Mr. G. Lewis Jones, came along to open it this afternoon. But the best positions are occupied by British works, so that one leaves with a strong impression that in this field, at any rate, Britain has left the Americans behind.

18. Clapham Observer, Clapham, Wimbledon Borough News, Wimbledon, Streatham News, Streatham, June 7, 1963, by Gloria Walker (circ. not available)

An exhibit which really comes into its own in the open air is George Rickey's Summer III....

Whether it was the intention of the sculptor or not, Alexander Calder's Black Widow in sheet steel reminds one of a monstrous spider.

Magister Ludi, lent by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York, is an 8 ft. high creation of chrome plated steel car bumpers, which is more effective when seen from a distance.

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19. Woman's Story, June 1963 (information not available)

The work of American sculptors is included for the first time this year. One piece, by Jason Seley, is made of welded car parts. I'm not sure whether this can be regarded as a work of art, but it's one way to make use of the enormous car scrap heaps that pile up outside American cities.

20. Dundee Courier, June 1, 1963 (circ. not available)

....Arranged in a quiet glade, the exhibits are futuristic to a piece, They may shock or confound the casual observer.

The most striking exhibit is Lynn Chadwick's massive "Winged Figures." Equally engaging, with its six steel shafts flapping in the breeze, is a mobile by American George Rickey.

Perhaps the wide open spaces is the best place, after all, to site these creations.

21. Yorkshire Post, Leeds, May 30, 1963 (daily, circ. 112,729)

Size matters in this context, and the most immediately striking piece is, no doubt, Lynn Chadwick's massive black-and-white "Winged Figures," which was done for last year's Spoleto Festival....But "Summer III," a mobile by the American George Rickey, is equally engaging, with its six steel shafts swaying and clanking in the wind.

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The International Council of  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

CRITICAL REVIEWS: MARK ROTHKO

The following quotations were taken from newspaper or periodical reviews of the exhibition MARK ROTHKO, which was organized by The Museum of Modern Art under the auspices of the International Council.

First showing: WHITECHAPEL GALLERY, LONDON, ENGLAND, October 11 - November 8, 1961

Reviews of the London showing were prepared separately at an earlier date.

Second showing: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS, November 23 - December 27, 1961

From Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant, Rotterdam, December 9, 1961

It had been very quiet at the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum since last summer 1961. For years the exhibition program had not been so small....The exhibition of the American painter Rothko opens the new dynamic phase.

To us this painter is a very extraordinary artist...with his strong simplified form and his miraculous colors, formed to a most special tone by a refined intensity.

An expansive exhibition, one should say even colossal. Not the least for the fact that Rothko paints canvasses of great, often greatest, size, so that the museum was not able to make a good exhibition of all the material without exception....Actually it would have been better to cut it to a more adaptable size. It would have strengthened the mood, the compelling effect of the paintings...

The exhibition's first part shows the painter developing his own style of composition and color. It makes it clear that the seemingly simple style requires long trial and toil, gradual elimination and careful evaluation....To make the impact of Rothko's color "accords" understandable, we'd best compare it with the sounds from the wide pipes of an organ. Or with a bass, a tuba, a large bronze gong.

...Always heavy colors, of a quiet force, they penetrate as if they reached for the depth of the viewer's subconsciousness. And they alert awareness of hidden tensions.

Actually this is the painter's aim. He wishes both to evoke the chaos of prime feelings and to control it. Thus he paints with his mutually absorbing colors a psychological climate in which to free himself of an obsession....One can scarcely assume anything else in view of the extreme consequent concentration. And in that sense his results free also the viewer, after having caused disturbance first, - sublimation of an outbreak; storm calmed down which still can be sensed in the calm.

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A truly special artistic performance and yet, Rothko is closely tied to the creative evolution of the time which seeks the essential in the psychological context.

Though the artist calls some of his canvases murals, one ought not to think too narrowly of murals in the standard meaning. They could serve only in very special rooms: a meditation center to be set aside somewhere to retire and be alone with oneself. In this sense Rothko's canvases are actually scrolls....they could be placed in a room as the Japanese do with their scrolls, when on certain occasions they use a particular scroll at the wall for contemplation.

We hope to have shown how one must approach Rothko's art to experience its suggestive color language....One ought to contemplate each piece on its own, best concentrate upon a few....Then one experiences best the magic of this - in outer appearance - entirely simple art...better than walking along it wall after wall.

From Haagsche Courant, The Hague, December 9, 1961

Rothko's art is broad or lengthy rectangles on a background of color which often clashes - nothing more is to be seen. It is as if these paintings try to defend themselves with their vacant forms and cursing colors against the annihilation caused by the eyes of the insensitive and the sickness of the impotent....the insensitives who are delighted by Utrillo, Vuillard, Dufy, but not by Rothko; who are deeply touched by Rick Wouters' beauty, Soutine's power of expression, Rouault's emotions but not by Rothko's Number 10, 20, or 30, and the impotent who in untiring surprise look at a Jan van Eyck or a Chinese drawing but feel nothing of this kind towards a Rothko panel.

From Beeldende Kunst, Amsterdam, December 9, 1961

He [Rothko] is convinced of his success: "Many have shed tears before my paintings...." Though tearless, the Amsterdam Vernissage public was nevertheless under the impact of these colossal, cryptic and effectively floating color surfaces at the Stedelijk Museum, which had changed into an Eastern museum....The painter Edgar Fernhout voiced the general impression, "A new form of a deceptively simple art, where it is senseless to question whether one can still speak of the art of painting."

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Third showing: PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, January 6-28, 1962

From letter from Robert Giron, Director of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, to Mark Rothko:

I cannot tell you that it the exhibition has been an enormous success from the point of view of the public, but it was surely one of the most important exhibitions we have had in many years.

Since your name is not very well-known in Europe and your works are rather demanding, I did not expect great crowds. But I assure you that I was very agreeably surprised to find that the attendance was much greater than I had expected and that the visitors were almost all very enthusiastic, silent and religious admirers of your work.

I learned just yesterday that the Belgian Association of Art Critics has awarded you the prize for the best exhibition of the month, with a majority voice almost never achieved.

...

In any case, I want to thank you for the great pleasure the real amateurs of painting have enjoyed, thanks to you and to the organizers of the exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art.

Fourth showing: KUNSTHALLE, BASEL, SWITZERLAND, March 3 - April 8, 1962

From Badische Neueste Nachrichten, Karlsruhe, Germany, April 11, 1962, by Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert

If the Futurists wanted to pull the viewer into the action in the dimension of time in their paintings, Rothko wants to pull him into the dimension of space. In contrast to the action painting of Jackson Pollock and the other representatives of the young American school, who paint movement, Rothko paints peacefulness. The experience of this peacefulness of space, which brought him to this kind of painting, he - according to his own words - in his youth in front of the endless space of the landscape of Oregon lying covered by wintry snows, in front of the monumental emptiness that is nothingness and at the same time a part of "all." There is something of Walt Whitman's American experience in these pictures, which so to speak, try to conjure into the surface and colors the abstracted experience of space, remoteness and mysterious places. It is a question of the Absolute here being meditated upon with painterly means, and the fact that this question pushes all the way to the borderlines and still remains unanswered, may be an indication of the Russian element in the American painter Rothko.

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From a letter from Mr. Arnold Rüdinger, Curator of the Kunsthalle:

I have the pleasure of informing you that the Rothko Exhibition has met with a very great interest and admiration among the public.

Fifth showing: GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA, ROME, ITALY, April 27 - September 1, 1962

From Avanti, Rome, April 28, 1962, by Marisa Volpi

The exhibition is, without any doubt, the most important event of contemporary art after that of Pollock, shown in the same gallery in 1958.

Some of them [the paintings] make us perceive a lightness of Elysium; others take us with a similar silence to the edge of an obscure, bottomless space; in others the horizontal spots seem to burn mysteriously in the imprecise depths, with which they only have a luminous-chromatic relationship. The color has a liquid quality suggesting primordial elements: water, air, light, dark. It exerts on the spectator a suggestive, almost hypnotic power, as if the strength of thought which the artist shows in his search for a space created by luminous distances without any definition of volume and sign whatsoever (a strength of thought which can only derive from a mature age ...) succeeded in making one perplexed, disconcerted and then finally attracted by a mysterious cosmic beauty, detected in enormous colored rectangles.

From Il Messagero, Rome, April 28, 1962, by Emilio Lavagnino

Mark Rothko is one of the American painters most "engagé" in a modern search for values...

From Il Giornale del Mezzogiorno, Rome, May 10, 1962, by Giacomo Etna

On the whole, no matter what the experts of abstract art say, they [the paintings] do not go beyond the decorative designs for more or less elegant carpets.

Was it worthwhile to put on the Mark Rothko show after the Ben Shahn show, which was far more important?

From La Tribuna del Salento, Lecce, May 11, 1962, by Marcello Beltramme

...One succeeds in appreciating the new relationship between the beholder and the painting. A relationship which is not only based on the emotive factor, but also on a similar influence which the physical space undergoes in the same instant: this because of the deep transformation which the color performed on the light. And it is just in this offering to man the consciousness of his unity with the whole, that Rothko's painting assumes the value of a revelation.

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From a letter from Mr. Arnold Rüdinger, Curator of the Kunsthalle:

I have the pleasure of informing you that the Rothko Exhibition has met with a very great interest and admiration among the public.

Fifth showing: GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA, ROME, ITALY, April 27 - September 1, 1962

From Avanti, Rome, April 28, 1962, by Marisa Volpi

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From Il Punto, Rome, May 12, 1962, by Giovanni Urbani

Then: why is Rothko pleasing? For the same reason that a beautiful textile or a beautiful ashtray is pleasing. Why cannot one say more than has already been told? For the same reason that it is not possible to have a substantial difference of views in the description of a beautiful textile, etc. We agree the conclusion is too simple, even for a painting as simple as Rothko's. However, nothing resembles a great thought more than a great banality or a great jest, just as nothing is more like a work of art than a useless object.

From Il Tempo, Rome, May 11, 1962, by Virgilio Guzzi

Rothko is in his manner a maestro who has benefitted from the technical experience of Matisse and Klee, from the special concepts of Mondrian's concrete art and finally, from surrealism and subconscious theories... It is a school, this of Rothko, which marks the triumph in the entire Western world, of the light, musical, ornamental abstractions of the East.

From Auditorium, magazine, May-June, 1962, by Francesco Guerrieri

Around 1950 nobody felt the duty to go back to Mondrian. In Rothko's paintings space is conceived in its "organic future," in the same manner as it is determined by a color picked in its gradual and large tonalities and lighted from the inside: it is a space-color of becoming (space-color of the future?). It is not the static space of Piet Mondrian. But at the same time today looking at Rothko, one cannot avoid thinking of Mondrian, not for formal analogies which do not exist, but for analogies of thought. At the bottom of either one of them there is a highly speculative and meditative concept of the function of visual arts in modern society. The result is that a painting by Mondrian or Rothko cannot be looked at as one would look at an easel painting or a painting conceived in the traditional formula for exhibition (and Action paintings and paintings of the Informel are not exempt from this). A painting by Rothko does not live exhibited in an art gallery, but lives (in the fullness of its feelings and thoughts) only if it is inserted functionally in an appropriate architecture. And this confirms the modernity of a conception which rejects the painting as an end in itself and demands an uncompromising purity of creative processes.

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CRITICAL REVIEWS - U. S. REPRESENTATION: XXXI BIENNALE, VENICE, 1962

The United States Representation to this year's Biennale was made up of sculpture by Louise Nevelson, selected by Miss Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of Museum Collections; paintings by Loren MacIver, chosen by James Thrall Soby, Chairman of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions; a memorial exhibition of the painter Jan Miller and three sculptures by Dimitri Hadzi, both selected by Peter Selz, Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions.

The excerpts from the critical press which follow have been divided into those devoted to the United States Representation in general and those about the Nevelson sculpture, which received the preponderance of comment from critics.

General

Gazzettino di Venezia, Venice, June 15, 1962

Of vast interest this year is also the United States section.... While Hadzi displays his sculptures outside the pavilion, Nevelson presents two rooms completely decorated with wooden compositions.... Noticeable is the fact that the two American painters clearly draw their inspiration from scenery and the human figure.

Le Arti, Milan, (Mag.), July 1962, by Georges Peilleux

Nevelson is without doubt the most interesting personality of the four artists in the [United States] pavilion. Another sculptor, Dimitri Hadzi, undoubtedly with talent, presents a series of bronzes which will not surprise the admirers of Robert Miller. Another woman, Loren MacIver, although gifted with sensitivity, does not reveal originality of language; and neither does the painter Jan Miller, whose expressionism, shaded with archaism, recalls the great German painters of the first part of this century.

Concretezza, Milan, (Mag.), July 1, 1962, by Sandra Orienti

The pavilion of the United States is, for various reasons, the most astonishing, not only because of...Nevelson...but also because of the presence of two surprisingly figurative painters, MacIver and Jan Miller, the first subtly symbolistic and lyrical, the second of a singularly expressionistic nature, while the fourth artist, Hadzi, presents monstrously aggressive bronzes.

L'Osservatore Romano, Vatican City, July 5, 1962, by Fortunato Bellonzi

Neither the attempt to give significance to an architecture made up of odds and ends (Nevelson), nor fidelity to a moving and expressive art (Miller) can be placed on the level of first rate quality. The present and the tradition of the past have, this time, equally failed.

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Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt, July 12, 1962, by Erhard Göpel

Strangely enough, this world [of Nordic magic] enjoys a happy resurrection in the American Pavilion, with Hamlet and Horatio, with Faust and Walburgis Night. There one finds the work of Jan Müller...although it has, in fact, little effectiveness.

Il Giornale di Brescia, Brescia, July 14, 1962, by Elvira Salvi.

...besides the baroque abstract altars of Louise Nevelson... the lyrical and figurative art of Loren MacIver, bent on rendering the magical atmosphere found in everyday life and that of Jan Müller, heavily and brutally expressionistic and moralistic.

Art News, New York, (Mag.), September 1962, by Milton Gendel

The United States Pavilion, which unlike the others is not operated by the national government but by the New York Museum of Modern Art, has one of the better exhibitions at the Biennale. Dimitri Hadzi shows big, powerful bronze shapes juxtaposed in tense contrast, with titles emphasizing combat: Shield, Helmet and Thermopylae. Jan Müller's prophetic Expressionism makes an almost humorous contrast to Loren MacIver's daintily annotative precision. But most impressive are Louise Nevelson's three-room sculptures in white, gold and black, which are like chapels for the cult of the object.

Arts, New York, (Mag.), October 1962, by Annette Michelson

...The Nevelson rooms, beautifully installed, were something of a knockout. This marked the consecration of a reputation which has been snowballing on the Continent ever since Mrs. Nevelson's first Paris exhibition in November, 1960. The entrance to the pavilion, a small, circular space, had been installed as a glittering golden tabernacle, from which, to right and left, extended the two long rooms, white and black, which composed the rest of Miss (sic) Nevelson's exhibition....One was delighted to observe its imperious, irresistible success. This success has perhaps a drawback: that American sculpture is now almost exclusively identified with her own work and that of David Smith. Really, we desperately need exhibitions of American sculpture in Europe, on a scale which only a lively commerce may be able to provide... The decision to show Dimitri Hadzi's work interested me...His sculpture has many of the qualities and characteristics of his contemporaries in New York. It also has its own power, its "virility," as Peter Selz quite accurately puts it. There were other possible choices for the Biennale, many better in fact, but this particular one was defensible. I cannot by any means say the same for the exhibition of painting by Loren MacIver and the late Jan Müller. I found it embarrassing, and to non-New Yorkers, less sensitive to the nostalgia of a particular milieu and moment, it was simply incomprehensible, historically or on any other grounds.

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Louise Nevelson

Il Giorno, Milan, June 16; article by Mario Valsecchi, "Novelty only from America"

There derives from it [the sculpture of Louise Nevelson] a sense of artificiality, of something fantastically involuted, as in the decadent pages of Tennessee Williams or in the films of Elia Kazan.

Die Weltwoche, Zurich, June 22, 1962, by Maria Metter

By far the most interesting and entertaining [works at the Biennale] are the "assemblages" of Louise Nevelson.... These lovingly broken up little corpses of furniture lie here in coffin after coffin and it is a little gruesome to think that someone has sawed up the contents of whole "haunted houses" and has gloated over the refuse of slums and colonial houses; also a little frightening to see how these additive compositions, which however have been executed with an extraordinary feeling for form, can practically fill unlimited space and grow over whole walls.

Domus, Milan, (Mag.), July 1962, by Alain Jouffroy

In a nutshell, this Biennale seemed arbitrary in its selection, confused in its ideas (if it had any!), and backward in its aim. Exception is made of Louise Nevelson, Hundertwasser, [and others]

In the place of the jury, I would perhaps have given the prize to Giacometti, but I would have preferred it to have been given to Louise Nevelson.

I like Louise Nevelson - and her work speaks to me in a familiar tongue, in which I recognize the terrifying light of poetry. But I am not sure that the installation of her lunar clothes closets ("armoires lunaires") has greatly favored comprehending them: to paint the walls the same color as the works is not a help, but deadens them. One's look sinks into them.

Il Calendario del Popolo, Milan, (Mag.), July 1962

We are here at the extreme frontier of a chilly academicism of avant-garde - the avant-garde embalmed.

Le Dauphiné Libéré, Grenoble, July 8, 1962, by René Derouille

Here we have an anti-art, an approach towards surrealism inspired by the dreams of the postman Cheval or the fantastic Merz objects of Schwitters, but also an approach towards the marvelous, the ordering of disorder, the waking dreams of a hoarder of odds and ends.

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Le Tout Lyon, Lyon, July 12, 1962, by René Deroudille

In the United States Pavilion, Louise Nevelson creates an enchanted voyage in a dreamlike atmosphere of fantasy, whose route is punctuated with halting-places in rooms of gold, black and virginal white, three rooms soberly and tastefully ornamented with strange boxes filled with fragments of objects.

La Settimana Incom Illustrata, Milan, July 15, 1962, by Luciano Budigna

The chief characteristic of these walls [Nevelson's] is that each is painted in a single color, increasing the hallucinatory effect of the ensemble. Thus, in Venice, we have the golden room, the black room and the white room. Even the most disenchanting visitor will find it difficult not to be impressed by the effect, in turn sumptuous, funereal or austere, created by these suggestive chromatic environments.

Gazette de Lausanne, Lausanne, July 21, 1962, by André Kuenzi

One of the most discussed attractions of this 31st Biennale is the United States Pavilion. The sculptress Louise Nevelson gives it, we must confess, a most singular "cachet."...Once shut up in her strange and haunting metaphysical rooms you find yourself in a world by no means reassuring....They [the sculptures] are now the joy or the despair of the spectators of the Biennale. "She is formidable, Nevelson," said Lucio Fontana to us, "but she is not a revelation." ...These three metaphysical rooms are monochrome: the first white, the second gold, the last black. Through them is the gate to eternity.

The Studio, London, (Mag.), September 1962. Quote from Giuseppe Marchioni, senior Venetian art critic and member of the Biennale jury in 1960.

But why was no prize given to Louise Nevelson? After all this is an interesting phenomenon, these relief compositions which are complementary to architecture....

Il Punto, Rome, n.d., by Giovanni Urbani

At the Biennale the greatest success has, undoubtedly, been the American Louise Nevelson; all regret the marvelous exhibition the Biennale might have been if composed only of artists more or less on the same level and just as up-to-date as Nevelson.

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First showing: London, Whitechapel Gallery,  
October 11 - November 8, 1961

CRITICAL REVIEWS: MARK ROTHKO

The following quotations were taken from newspaper or periodical reviews of the exhibition MARK ROTHKO:

1. The Daily Mail, London, October 11, 1961, by Pierre Jeannerat  
(daily, independent-conservative, circulation 2,105,988)

Enormous simple colour patterns on unframed canvases spotlighted against white walls in a spacious hall would have seemed not so long ago to be a paint manufacturer's trade show.

Today, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, E., they are the Mark Rothko Retrospective Exhibition brought at vast expense from the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Rothko's pictures are admirably to scale. They provide subtle blends of restful tones and tints which, by means of a serene emptiness, quieten the jagged nerves of town-dwellers.

2. Evening Standard, London, October 11, 1961  
(daily, independent, circulation 589,706)

My worst doubts were aroused when I heard that he intended devoting an exhibition to Mark Rothko, an American abstract painter whose visions at first sight possess no recognisable point of contact with common experience. The few Rothkos I had seen impressed me as refined to the point of emptiness, huge canvases often containing no more than two large coloured rectangles on a plain coloured ground - the sort of thing which might go down well with a small cultural elite, but would almost certainly be greeted with giggles by the average native of Whitechapel. (West-Enders are now too frightened of appearing philistine to giggle when they want to).

Now, after visiting the Rothko exhibition, I can only applaud Mr. Robertson for his courage. Seen en masse, the sincerity and beauty of Rothko's paintings are undeniable.

They glow from the walls with a strange incandescence, ranging from the fierce radiance of red-or-white-hot metal to the subdued smouldering of dying embers. What I once took for emptiness turns out to be a spacious simplicity. The smallest alteration of design or colour would totally change or ruin the effect of each picture.

I was also mistaken in thinking Rothko a painter only interested in the formal or, if you like it decorative relationship of colour and form. His pictures are sometimes enormously seductive,

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particularly when he paints in clear, fresh springtime colours. But by some curious alchemy of his own he charges his designs with feeling. Each canvas has its particular mood, serene or buoyant or menacing.

How he manages to conjure emotion out of such austere simplicity is impossible to analyse.

The uninitiated may prove his most sympathetic public, finding in his visions not intellectualised relationships of line and colour and texture, but noetic stimulants to the imagination.

3. The Times, London, October 13, 1961, by J. Harrison  
(daily, independent, circulation 248,248)

Sometimes it may be felt that the artist offers us a nothingness, but the infinitude (the word seems the right one) of his simplicity holds constant attention. It has already incited various imitations and vulgarizations which may be quickly or impatiently dismissed as merely empty, but before Mr. Rothko's work it is possible to remain in long contemplation not merely of horizontal shapes and subtleties of tone but of what may well be considered as a mystically unlifting and mentally clensing process.

4. Manchester Guardian, Manchester, October 14, 1961, by Eric Newton  
(daily, independent-liberal, circulation 178,692)

Simplicity could not be carried further and their immense size makes their simplicity their central characteristic.

Described thus, one would expect them to be, at best, pleasingly decorative, at worst pretentiously empty. Yet in their physical presence one begins to succumb to a spell that emanates, goodness knows how or why, from their calm but insistent surfaces. Decorative is certainly not among the first adjectives that occur to one, and empty they emphatically are not.

On the contrary they seem to stare at one and past one like sphinxes. Silent, unhurried, impersonal, devoid of movement or sentiment, they leave it to the spectator to guess at the reason that prompted Rothko to paint them. Yet one knows that if one could become as simple in one's reactions to them as they are in their impact on one's eye - or whatever receptive mechanism is capable of receiving their impact - the reason would become clear. A sphinx, despite its silent inscrutability, is always charged with meaning, even though it may be a meaning that defies translation into words.

The truth is that words were not intended to convey the quality inherent in Rothko's paintings. They are the ultimate examples of an untranslatable language and, as such, they can only be approached on their rather arrogant terms.

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They exist: they remain in the memory: one wants others to visit them and share the memory. They won't mix with other paintings. They almost deny the validity of the walls on which they hang. And certainly no other gallery than the barn-like construction at Whitechapel could adequately house them: and the spell only works because they fill the gallery. Two or three would not do. One can only describe Rothko as a large, magnetic, taciturn simpleton and leave it at that.

5. The Observer, London, October 15, 1961, by Alan Bowness  
(Sunday, independent, circulation 638,074)

Rothko has said that "a picture lives by companionship," and it is extraordinary how the paintings work upon their environment. At Whitechapel you have only to watch a girl dressed in red passing in front of them to see the reciprocal effects on colour and shape. And as one moves up to stand squarely before a picture, it is not difficult to feel oneself absorbed into the great fields of colour with their suggestions of infinite space.

There is indeed an almost religious atmosphere about these paintings. Their purpose seems to be to invite meditation, and they suggest some kind of mystical inspiration on the artist's part that Rothko's Russian and Jewish origins may help to explain. It is this brooding, tragic, quality hanging over the paintings that finally prevents them from degenerating into nothing more than decorations.

From the exhibition anyone can see that Rothko's influence on English abstract painting has already been considerable (and I think largely beneficial). The non-expressionist, non-action nature of his work - for among the New York painters, Rothko plays Seurat to Pollock's Van Gogh - has made it immediately sympathetic and acceptable to English taste. It will be interesting to see whether the public will be as quick as the painters to appreciate one of the most considerable and original artists of our time.

ibid. Feature story "In the Picture"

His enormous totally abstract pictures may lack the expressionist violence of Pollock, Kline and De Kooning, but they share the grand scale and sense of space that has characterised the new American painting.

6. Sunday Times, London and Manchester, October 15, 1961, by John Russell  
(Sunday, independent-conservative, circulation 795,192)

Most rare, mysterious, and not to be missed is the experience which greets the visitor to the Mark Rothko exhibition....  
Before, behind, beside and (in one case) above him is a family

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of huge unframed canvases, some of them over a hundred square feet in area. Though akin to one another in their basic constituents, and made up in every case of flat rectangular forms floating in an undefined space, they are in their impact as distinct from each other as is "The Night Watch" from the Leningrad "Prodigal Son," or the Westminster Rubens from the "Chapeau de Paille." And although each is an independent work, they add up in ensemble to a view of human nature which is as various as it is unified.

Rothko...has perfected a formal device within whose simplicity architecture upon architecture lies hid. For these are not mere decorative panels or sumptuous washes of evocative colour; they are dramas, of which the note varies from heroic energy to the resignation of the spent heart.

7. The Scotsman, Edinburgh, October 16, 1961  
(daily, independent, circulation 58,550)

Since 1950 Mr. Rothko has purified and limited the content of his surfaces until they consist of no more than two or three of these great rectangles, usually dividing the canvas from top to bottom, their edges dragged irregularly with dry brush strokes which are more deliberated than they appeared. These areas are differentiated only by their colour; although Mr. Rothko is quoted as saying that he is not a colourist, this can only be in a traditional sense. For it is the surprising and daring contrasts of colour in a large scale which make his work compelling instead of merely empty.

In fact Mr. Rothko is inexorably pictorial, even if in spite of himself, and it is the sonorous interplay of his choices of hues and values which makes him an uncommon artist.

8. Yorkshire Post, Leeds, October 17, 1961  
(daily, independent-conservative, circulation 112,729)

The apparent simple arrangement conceals a delicate balance, always potentially mobile. Movement is given by the colour. ....Apparently textureless, the colour shifts like a radiant mist: were it not massed in shapes of such ponderous simplicity, it would move with dizzying violence.

For Rothko is a colourist almost without equal. He has a control over the special gamut surpassed perhaps only by Veronese and Van Gogh. Art is indeed more than colour, but this exhibition almost persuades us it is not.

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The power generated by Rothko in his attempt to liberate the picture space from the frame is not to be pinned down; in fact, the viewer of a Rothko canvas has no chance of standing back to admire, or pausing to think, for he is submerged by the rich waves of colour - and it is perhaps this very submission and feeling of 'oneness' with the canvas that constitutes Rothko's greatness.

9. The Listener, London, October 19, 1961  
(weekly periodical, primarily for radio and literature reviews)

The visual-cum-physical experience of moving amongst the specially erected walls of the Whitechapel Art Gallery on which Mark Rothko's large, often immense canvases hang is something unique in the artistic situation of our time, and indeed of this century. The nearest parallel perhaps one can suggest is to be found in the two oval rooms in the Orangerie of Monet's "Lilyponds" or before the sequence of the same artist's "Cathedrals" in the Jeu de Paume.

The spiritual connexion, which several artists and critics have voiced, between these paintings and the work of Mondrian also strikes me as being true; not so much as regards the simplified yet paradoxically rich painted images themselves, as in the moral implications behind them, the issue of life-enhancement which they propose, the implications of living better in the light of these works. However dreamy their expansive and muted tones may become in the mind's eye, these paintings certainly affect one actively in front of them. Their frameless coloured edges, with small cast shadows, are sufficient to identify them as separate presences, as easel paintings of panel thickness gathered together like great space-icons, atmospheric yet as substantial as rocks indifferently contemplating the waves of light breaking over them. They have a tension and a passion under them which gives them a rare beauty. For me they are as generous as "mother images."

10. Jewish Chronicle, London, October 20, 1961, by Peter Stone  
(weekly periodical)

As colour the result is often enchanting, as it should be if there is nothing else, and Rothko's harmonies and contrasts call to mind Léon Bakst. Rothko protests that he is no colourist, perhaps so that we may find something more in his pictures; but if you take away the colour, as most of the catalogue reproductions do, you have nothing. They are primarily colour.

Yet the very absence of anything else gives them a personality of their own. Size and simplicity usually provide the semblance of strength, and one can get the same kind of feeling from these paintings that one gets from standing on the seashore or beside an elephant at a zoo - a gratifying feeling that everything is all right after all. Or if you bring the idea with you you can find man's loneliness among his fellows and his craving for outer space - escape. Yes, they are arguably escapist. Are they empty?

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Certainly not in the sense in which one forgets pictures the next morning. Yet they seem to be waiting for something to happen, like Bach's first prelude.

With Bach, however, it did happen. I usually resent people standing in front of pictures, but this time it was the superimposed figures (unlike Gounod's tune) that brought the pictures to life. These rectangles floating in space are a positive and individual background and Rothko could, I am sure, paint excellent backcloths for ballet and collaborate well with architects. But one can already see a flood of followers; for, once devised as they have now been by Rothko, they are the easiest things to paint. And what is easy is seldom excellent.

11. The New Statesman, London, October 20, 1961  
(weekly periodical, independent-socialist)

Faced with Rothko's later paintings in the exhibition at Whitechapel, one feels oneself unbearably hemmed-in by forces buffeting one's every nerve, imagines the gravity of one's body to be multiplied as if some weight borne on one's shoulders were grinding one into the ground; one feels oneself rising against these pressures, riding them, carried away into exhilaration and release; pain and serenity become indistinguishable. This complex of feelings is familiar enough in the experiences of tragic art, but tempered and complicated by other appeals to the senses and intellect and imagination - involvement in a specific type of human situation; the re-creation of familiar elements of reality in a way that makes them seem more real than in life; the benign equilibrium of a lucid architectonic structure; the poetic evocation of unexpected connections; the sensuous delight of beautiful colour or sound. There is nothing of all this in these paintings. Here emotion is unadulterated, isolated.

12. Arts Review, London, October 21, 1961  
(published every two weeks; art, cinema and theatre reviews)

The impact of Mark Rothko's present exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery is tremendous - no casual passer-by could leave the show without being stimulated either to dislike or passionate admiration for his work. So much has been written about Rothko as a pioneer of modern painting - as a man who in the mid-forties rebelled against the "easel" tradition of painting, breaking through the limitations imposed by the frame and actual rectangle of the canvas and creating a new pictorial space - that an almost "historical" feeling has settled round his name. Pioneer he undeniably was, but all connotations of "Grand Old Man" are blasted away and one is confronted with a painter of ever-increasing importance.

There is intense power in Rothko's work, not a superficial turbulence but a restrained violence that has been the driving force behind his deliberate progress, and it will be invigorating for a public accustomed to the meteoric rise and disappearance of painters and gimmick trends, to be able to trace through a man's work the slow and logical elimination of all extraneous imagery and to feel the painter's determination to arrive at a truthful visual experience.

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13. Time and Tide, London, October 26, 1961, by Jasper Rose  
(weekly periodical, independent)

It is not difficult to gain a certain amount of pleasure from these paintings by Mark Rothko. The thin washes of paint are applied with an extraordinarily serene sensitivity; the fact that the shapes are so still, so simple and so easily comprehended gives the eye complete leisure to absorb the vibrant effects of colour - effects gained partly by the overlaying of layer upon layer of translucent or opaque paint; partly by Rothko's disciplined insistence on very restricted, though often mildly daring, combinations: muffled plum colour encircled by hazy red, encircled by yet more muffled plum; bleached yellow, ripe red and sleep-drenched red on a blue ground. Altogether the sensation they provide is unusually physical and unusually enveloping. It is like swimming in deep, warm water, or plunging into sleep on the softest of beds.

Rothko's paintings are pleasure-giving, even beautiful: why, then, adopt a teasing, grudging, cavilling tone of voice towards them? I think the answer is that though sensuously gratifying and persuasive, these pictures are intellectually frustrating, and ultimately spiritually enervating. They tell one nothing; they bounce back one's questions with complete impassiveness; they are indifferent as to how one construes them, neither denying nor accepting any meaning one chooses to put upon them. Like the beauty of some women, their beauty is quite meaningless. It intrigues, it entices, it begets futile daydreams. Sooner or later one realises that to take it very seriously is a waste of time.

14. Burlington Magazine, London, November 1961  
(monthly magazine devoted to art)

The soft cunning abstracts of the 1940's (9) prove that Rothko is a painter of high seriousness and subtlety, and the almost monochrome works of the 1960's that he is a contemplative who contemplates on a vast scale. His dark paintings are particularly beautiful: the lighter ones seemed to me less interesting. It is when Mr. Rothko explores the peculiar powers of the colours he calls "maroon" and "plum" that he touches some nerve in us all. But to claim "transcendence" for an oeuvre that seems to have evolved to a point not only of no return but of no advance may be to anticipate greatness a little too early.

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15. The Times, London, November 7, 1961, "Things Seen"  
(daily, independent, circulation 248,248)

Mark Rothko, who has recently stirred the London art world with his exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, may well be accounted one of the most remarkable of living painters by virtue of the canvases, simplified to the nth degree and aptly described as "walls of light", into which he is uncannily able to infuse life and significance.

He struck me as being, in person, typically American. Though he was born in Dvinsk 58 years ago, he shows in his art no such link with his country of origin as does Chagall; which is natural enough in view of the fact that he was only ten when his family left Russia to settle in Portland, Oregon.

It can, however, only be considered a merit in his work that it produces varied flashes of response. There is either a philosophy in it or a strong inducement to attach one. It is the nature of Rothko's paintings not to elude criticism but to lead to thought.

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The International Council of  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

CRITICAL REVIEWS: BEN SHAHN

The following quotations were taken from newspaper or periodical reviews of the exhibition BEN SHAHN, which was organized by The Museum of Modern Art under the auspices of The International Council.

First showing: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS,  
December 15, 1961 - January 22, 1962

From Haagsche Courant, The Hague, January 6, 1962 by R. E. Penning

In one and the same painting he [Shahn] shows vision, caricature, illustration and allegory....The faculty of remaining true to himself in so many fields lends Shahn's art a powerful conviction.

From De Tijd, Amsterdam, and Maasbode, Rotterdam, January 27, 1962,  
by Marius van Beek

[Shahn] belongs to the most independent fighters against injustice known anywhere today.

From Het Vrijevolk, Amsterdam, (date missing), by Gerrit Kouwenar

It is possible that Shahn (after Hartley and possibly Marin) is one of the first and at the same time last typical American painters who, precisely owing to their national characteristics, have reached an international importance.

From Het Parool, Amsterdam, (date missing) by F. van den Berg

Anxiety, suffering innate to man, war's tragic destruction - they fill the restful rooms at Paulus Potterstraat with suffocating anguish....[Shahn is] an important artist and a versatile personality.

From Die Waarheid, Amsterdam, (date missing), by Max Visser

To Ben Shahn man in his very human essence is tragic....It is a great exhibition of a great and sincere artist.

Second showing: PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, February 3-28, 1962

From Dimanche Presse, February 4, 1962

Since youth he has been interested in art and now he is justly considered one of the best painters of his time.

Ben Shahn proves to us the profound engagement that an honest artist is able to bring in his art, as a writer can in his works, to denounce the scandals of our civilization.

But Ben Shahn is also a poet...

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From Pan, Brussels, February 7, 1962

Ben Shahn, who just succeeded Rothko on the same walls, is evidently of another temperament and his show merits an attentive visit. More illustrator than painter, for sure, excellent poster artist as well, letterist of quality, his case is also like that of his celebrated contemporary Saul Steinberg.... Ben Shahn uses a nearly equally vivid caricature, but in a sad and anguished way. His style comes partly from the great nordics, from Edvard Munch notably, also from certain German Expressionists like Campedonk, and there is rapport with our Spilliaert. But he has exploited also the lesson of collage, not that he incorporates cut papers in his works, but he makes analogous effects that permit him to confer an intense accent to certain well-chosen elements...

From Drapeau Rouge, Brussels, February 8, 1962

Here one is no longer playing. This vast ensemble by the American, Ben Shahn, is a major show. It concerns the best contemporary painter of the United States of my acquaintance. One, whether art lover or not, must see his work.

From Le Rappel, Charleroi, February 8, 1962, by Brigitte Goffaux

A spectacular exhibition is that devoted to Ben Shahn by the Palais des Beaux-Arts. What a universal talent! Ben Shahn reveals his mastery as a painter, as a draftsman and as a publicist.... The lyricism of Ben Shahn is not to woo the public: his manner near to that of Kafka and Gheorghiu, his disturbance, his tragic colors provoke everyone to reflection.

From La Libre Belgique, Brussels, February 9, 1962

Following MARK ROTHKO, the American painter of total nullity, who reigned in empty halls during two or three weeks at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, BEN SHAHN, on the contrary, has an indisputable presence.... By courage, by fellowships, by study and courses, taken at night while during the day he worked as a lithographer, Ben Shahn became what he is today: one of the best illustrators and poster makers in the United States. In the manner of a Steinberg, but with a humane depth, a sad and poignant irony, sometimes with powerfully expressionistic thrusts.... Like Goya, Shahn can say that man is the center of his oeuvre.

From Le Phare-Dimanche, (weekly periodical), Brussels, February 9, 1962

An artist. A man. Certainly with his weaknesses, but a benevolent heart and a laughing eye.

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From Le Soir, Brussels, February 9, 1962, by Paul Caso

It is not all of America which shows in the abundance of images which the artist presents to us, but his America, which he discovered at the age of eight, after having left Lithuania....This humming America of Brooklyn never ceases to cling to the feet of Ben Shahn. If he draws and paints it, it is to fix it in a powerfully human relief, not to arouse our pity, but to instruct us and to convince us that the fate of everyone concerns us all....But Ben Shahn also likes baroque fantasy like Steinberg where the simple pleasure in plasticity inspires personal alphabets and other compositions of an ardently individualistic nature. Because the defender of the wrongly electrocuted anarchists and the companion of Diego Rivera is a man who loves all the liberties.

From La Métropole, Antwerp, February 10-11, 1962

The humanitarian problems haunt him to the point of making him forget the exigencies of the art of painting. That is why illustration occupies so great a place in his work, which, without that, would have perhaps evolved towards a bookish pre-Raphaelism.

From Dernière Heure, February 12, 1962

Ben Shahn...is certainly a "naïf", but a developed naïf, we would tell ourselves. There is in effect, in the many works and surely in the drawings and lithographs, the touch of an artist favored with an affirmative technique and who knows when and how to use his strong points.

From Le Matin, Antwerp, February 10-11, 1962 by Yves Bourdon; also in Flandre Libérale, Ghent, February 16, 1962

...Ben Shahn is a distant descendent of Daumier and other accusers. Ben Shahn denounces the vices of society. If he does not have the sense of humor of Saul Steinberg, he possesses a penetrating mind (see his caricatures of Truman and Dewey. etc.). Unpitying denunciations are subordinated to a high humanitarian ideal. The work of Shahn is an affront to smugness.

From Drapeau Rouge Magazine, Brussels, February 17, 1962, by Jean Cimaise

Yes, an American painting exists! ....this American national painting exists and the American pavilion at the 1958 show gave us a rich sampling. With the exhibition BEN SHAHN, at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, one has another example of it....the most authentic manifestation of a properly American painting. An art of simple and frustrated people, of immigrants, naively telling a story by means of popular art from all over, the americanizing of their lives, the story that they make; also like a popular song, this other artistic

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richness from the USA, the airs imported from Europe, the Lutheran chorals, the Irish ballads, are transformed, are remodeled under the air and the life of Texas or of Kentucky and find a new freshness and rich human intensity. Art pure, direct, where the heart beats lively, which ignores the Esthetic with a capital "E" and where all is real and spontaneous poetry. It is in having understood the value, for having understood that there beat the true pulse of the first American art, that Ben Shahn can be considered the most authentic painter of the United States, and one of the most significant painters in all international art of the present.

From Le Monde du travail, Liège, February 24-25, 1962

If one would study and analyze the social art of Ben Shahn, one would find oneself before a new phenomenon, rare in the plastic arts: that of putting respect for others, principally the proletariat, before himself.

...the exhibition offers us a sensational panorama by a very great artist who is nearly unknown here and whose singular genius we have been particularly happy to see.

From La Cité, Brussels, February 25, 1962. (Caption under a reproduction of Miners' Wives)

At the Palais des Beaux-Arts, too often devoted to the joys of the abstract, an extraordinary exhibition at present holds our attention. It is that of Ben Shahn who, with an inspired and cruel realism has given himself as a goal to paint the struggles and miseries of the American working class. Here is an example of that cruel and "engagée" art.

From Présence de Bruxelles, Magazine, Brussels, February-March, 1962

A great graphic master whose exceptionally personal painting ignores all the styles of the day. Technique often close to naïf painting, transcended by the intentions and the liberty of the drawing. Painting which haunts the memory by its pictorial eloquence and technique, the profound style and moral content.

Third showing: GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA, ROME, ITALY, March 31 - April 20, 1962

From Paese Sera, Rome, April 24, 1962, by Marcello Venturoli

The exhibition of 124 works by Ben Shahn has aroused the greatest interest, not only because.../it/ is among the most complete ever shown in Italy of this artist, but also since his 1954 showing at the Venice Biennale until now the change in taste has created different perspectives in judgment - both for and against Ben Shahn's achievements:

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there are frequent discussions about the "attualità" and "inattualità" of his art. There are many attacks from certain irreconcilably abstract groups and from the realists. The former proclaim the lack of value of certain works in which he becomes "figurative" to the point of illustration; the latter, on the other hand, claim that there is an involution toward an avant-garde touch of abstraction.

From Momento Sera, Rome, April 28-29, 1962, by Valentino Martinelli

The impressions, opinions and comments, generally very favorable on that first meeting [at the 1954 Venice Biennale] come up again today with some contrasts and reservations....Not always and not all his works have an absolute purity and a full formal vitality ....This show, so varied and so rich with both works and problems might require many further critical observations. At the moment, let us try only to understand better Ben Shahn's realism, his poetic world, so close to the most painful problems of the Western world.

From Il Giornale di Mezzogiorno, Rome, May 10, 1962, by Giacomo Etna

Was it worthwhile to put on the Mark Rothko show after the Ben Shahn show, which was far more important?

From Auditorium, Magazine, Rome, April 1962

The coherence - which in many painters of today identifies itself with the repetition "ad infinitum" of formal inventions - in Shahn's works is a result which originates naturally: each sign, each image has deep roots in the artist's conscience, humanity, political and religious ideas, humor. Shahn's formal coherence, therefore, is nothing but a reflection of man's coherence.

From Il Secolo, Genoa, May 20, 1962, by Emilio Lavagnino

Being a figurative painter, he has always commented on the facts of the world, expressing his precise, passionate opinion on the conditions of the oppressed and of the most wretched people. He expresses his social interest vivaciously and with immediateness and accomplishes this through a subtle, acute and very sure way of drawing with the precise illustrative aim which he evidently pursues.

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Fourth showing: ALBERTINA, VIENNA, AUSTRIA, May 23 - June 24, 1962

From Die Presse, Vienna, May 23, 1962, by Jorg Lampe

(Begins with a review of a Käthe Kollwitz exhibition)

....In juxtaposition to this art [Kollwitz'] which even in its best female pathos, and just because of its pathos, is a little removed from our admiration, Ben Shahn presents us with a world, that although its theme is largely the same is seen in a completely different way. Here we find no expression, no pathos, not even a complaint (rather an accusation, by means of the style which is hard and subtle at the same time). Only the facts are seized, with utmost clear-sightedness and sobriety reduced to their most significant elements and given an unequivocal victorial appearance, in spite of all its graphic subtlety.

In the early works.... the drawing, supported rather shyly by color, is somewhat awkward, but from about 1943 on.... Ben Shahn achieves a firmness, greatness and a power, manifest also in his colors, in conveying images, that is quite overwhelming.

Pictures like Age of Anxiety, and also the Lucky Dragon Series... and others, have a background full of strong allegory that makes us feel that, and also in which way, Ben Shahn's art is charged with an inner richness that extends far beyond the social formation of the human image. On the whole, the increasingly penetrating awareness of human loneliness constitutes an elementary factor in Ben Shahn's experience of the world and humanity.

And when, finally...one looks at the enchanting picture Dream with the reclining pair of lovers in a landscape that seems to become green and blossom only in the atmosphere of love, then one feels that Ben Shahn's human world, so narrowed down by misery and emptiness that it is almost starved, is redeemed into such a purity and peace, ...that all grey emptiness is obliterated. A miracle has here become painting.

From Neues Osterreich, Vienna, May 24, 1962, by Johann Muschik

He [Shahn] has stature. He has remained an American. There is something of the masculinity of Hemingway in him and also of that author's "death-shadowed" quality and melancholy. The thing that strikes one in viewing Shahn's work is the iron-hard consistency with which he has followed his own path, without leading himself into any kind of fashionable foolishness.

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Ben Shahn shows us an aspect of the United States that does not occupy any significant place in the songs of praise bestowed upon this immense country: the things that happen because of inhumanity, the naked misery that can be found behind a glossy front...

From Arbeiter Zeitung, Vienna, May 25, 1962

Why does this art speak so strongly to the public? Because Ben Shahn always takes a definite stand and has a very definite thing to say: he is speaking for the social, for the positive, against the provincial, for peace, for humanity.

From Osterreichische Neue Tageszeitung, Vienna, May 30, 1962, by Karl Maria Grimme

...The painter Ben Shahn...is governed by the same political passion as is Kollwitz, one could say that his starting point is somewhere between her and George Grosz. But this passion is never transferred to us directly, it is distilled in order not to repel us, the emotionally shy, with its pathos and thereby weaken the impact of the accusation. That is why there is rather a condensation, an analysis. The people seem like silhouettes, like paper cut-outs, isolated, even from their surroundings that mostly consist of vast empty spaces and naked walls; the outlines of the faces are distorted, the color often does not relate to the drawing. In this way the impact of these pictures of workers, of big industrialists is indirect in its accusation, the indirect means is nowadays the direct one...

From Express, Vienna, June 5, 1962, by Franz Tassié

The thing Ben Shahn does with colors is a chapter by itself. Here he is inspired in the strongest sense and largely independent of the intellect. His blue radiates in metaphysical gradations as if used by the prophets of the Old Testament.

As an artist Ben Shahn is a critic of our times of the first merit and his pictures will one day be considered as having the same importance as documents of our history of civilization as the sheets of Daumier. However, these two artists are as different as night and day.

In his art Ben Shahn is perfect and full of originality. He has given us a hard, acid and bitter art, because in it the content is as important as the form. Most likely it is not an art one is able to love, but a great, strong, most personal and fascinating art. Undoubtedly Ben Shahn is no genius of Picasso's stature; but on the other hand, in no line of his is he such a

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performer and a grimasseur as Picasso. What he creates has moved him in all of his soul. He presents the façade of things and one can see right through it. He who only sees the façade in Shahn's work, see nothing. But is it not the case with every artist? And are not graphic art and painting, paper and canvas exactly that mysterious veil which appears to separate the seen from the unseen in order to with this means, as if in a wonderful osmosis, unite spirit and matter?

Ben Shahn is among the great artists of this century, because he has drawn and painted the chronicle of this century....He is a well-rounded man and always remains Ben Shahn.

From Volksstimme, Vienna, June 15, 1962, by Axl Leskoschek

Buildings constitute the natural environment of the big-city-born Ben Shahn, and they have their share as carriers of the action....the color red plays an important part in Ben Shahn's work. The red is not interwoven with the other colors, but superimposed upon them. This is how red comes to have that impact. One example among many: of the "three musicians" two are dressed in overalls, the third one in a good suit, and his head also shows him as belonging to another class. His cello is red. In this way the trio has been given a meaning beyond their music making. It is an acknowledgment on the part of the artist of belonging to a certain community. The accordion of the "blind player" is red too, he who expresses his grief on behalf of Roosevelt's death in music, a grief that also shows us the eyeless face in a way which makes our hearts ache.

The eyes of the blind ~~we~~ are as real as the feeling that radiates from this, in every sense, unique work. Truth, the constant consort of Ben Shahn, shows him things deepened through its loving and caring observation.

We find the same thing in his commercial graphics, for instance in Phoenix.

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MODERN AMERICAN DRAWINGS  
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CRITICAL REVIEWS: MODERN AMERICAN DRAWINGS

The following quotations were taken from newspaper or periodical reviews of the exhibition MODERN AMERICAN DRAWINGS, which was organized by The Museum of Modern Art under the auspices of The International Council.

First showing: PALAZZO ANCAIANI, SPOLETO, ITALY (under the auspices of the IV Festival of Two Worlds), June 15 - July 16, 1961.

1. From Avanti, June 20, 1961 by Nello Ponente

In trying to represent various trends, the exhibition is not selective enough. Recently Americans got rid of their old inferiority complex towards European art and French art in particular. They are aware of having created an original style of painting, of having artists whose great personality has, in recent years influenced art throughout the world, and they are aware of the strength and validity of their propositions. But one should remember that American art developed only after 1945; before that there is nothing, or at least nothing original...

Therefore the attention of the visitor is concentrated on artists of the great generation who are the real poets of our time and the most sincere interpreters of the contrasts existing in present American civilization. Next to Gorky, Pollock, de Kooning, one can enjoy some wonderful Tobey drawings; among the best in the exhibition are Kline, Nakian, Guston and a dramatic gouache by R. Motherwell belonging to the group of studies for his "Legies". One would also like to see works of other artists like Rothko - the greatest American painter - Still, Brooks, whose absence was incomprehensible. When we look at the drawings of the younger artists we realize, as we have already mentioned, that the selection has been less felicitous. Abularach, being extremely young, might develop well; Brice, however, is completely useless. We have already indicated that Feinberg and Rivers are among the worst because they are outside history and the world. On the other hand Rauschenberg's drawing, representative of the high level of this recent trend in American art, is of high quality and extreme refinement. But in spite of the above reservations, the exhibition is interesting and worth seeing.

2. From Il Punto, July 1, 1961, by Giovanni Urbani

The exhibition, gathered by specialists of The Museum of Modern Art of New York and under the auspices of the International Council of the same Museum, suffers from the extravagant criteria of "cultural policy" particular to events organized by the above institution and behind which it would be of no use to look for any critical position. There are about 70 works unequally distributed among 44 painters and sculptors of various and very contrasting trends. Therefore a selection so ample that it can hardly be called that, if it were not for some incomprehensible omissions which have made even scantier the group of the best artists.

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They are rare, but the exhibition offers also some good surprises, because it is a surprise to find in this hodge-podge two excellent de Koonings, three Pollocks and four Gorkys. The last two seem to have been selected rather at random, but not as badly as Kline or Tobey, so much so as to give the impression it was done on purpose, in particular for Kline, so as to denigrate them. Well-represented is Motherwell, and it seems proper here to confirm the absolute pre-eminence of Motherwell and de Kooning over the rest of contemporary American art.

3. From Paese Sera, July 1, 1962, by Marcello Venturoli

Very instructive, almost for specialists, was the visit to the exhibition; but the strict selection and felicitous installation make it possible also for the average visitor to follow profitably the discourse of the works of three generations of U.S. artists...

The quality of the exhibition is very high. Of course not every work is an exceptional one, but the neo-surrealist drawing by Pollock is magnificent...

(The review continues with high praise for Levine, Gorky, Kline, de Kooning, Kuniyoshi, Ben Shahn and others.)

Second showing: BEZALEL NATIONAL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, August 21-October 3, 1961.

1. From Jerusalem Post, August 25, 1961

The "meat" of the show largely belongs to that group that have regrettably passed away in the last decade - Feininger, Kuniyoshi, Tchelitchev, Gorky, Pollock. Jackson Pollock's black-and-white drawings exemplify his action painting experiments and show his sound sense of composition. The earlier drawing shows the influence of his colleagues, notably by that of the surrealist Gorky, who is well represented with four large works. The little coloured Feininger is in marked contrast to an earlier academic study.

Three of the outstanding Americans still working are also well represented: Wyeth, de Kooning and Tobey. Both technically and aesthetically, Andrew Wyeth is one of the world's most outstanding exponents of classic underpainting and glazing, and his study here of an old woman reveals his mastery, particularly in the drawing of the hands. Mark Tobey, who has inherited the mantle of Pollock as the leading maker of overall patterned and textured surfaces, is an ex-"illustrator" of formidable technical achievements, as can be seen from the completely controlled technique of his watercolour abstractions.

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There can be no doubt that the high technical standard of commercial art in the U.S. (perhaps the highest in the world) has had a great effect on the standard of U.S. drawing. It has also made for certain compromises with semi-popular taste, resulting in a style that is at once a little commercial but still masterly in handling. This is evident in the works of the highly talented decorator and formalist Ben Shahn, and in those of his lesser "followers," Alcalay, Rattner, Takal, Drumlevitch and Glasco.

Many of the artists are Jewish, but not significantly so; some of the weaker works in this show are those that are obvious about incorporating Hebrew lettering.

America's figurative satirist is Jack Levine, whose savage oil portraits blend with caricature, a field the leadership of which he shares only with Australia's William Dobell. Levine draws with complete and deft assurance as seen from the fine head of the "Mourner."

The leader of the abstract expressionists is Willem de Kooning, represented here with two vibrant nudes that are bursting with life. The abstracts are led by Franz Kline, who is also an international influence. Of especial interest is his beautiful little academic study of a seated woman, alongside later metamorphoses of the same theme.

Third showing: ATHENS TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, ATHENS, GREECE, January 3-21, 1962.

1. From Kathimerini, January 14, 1962, by Angelos G. Prokopiou

The introversion of American art is a witness to the freedom of the individual in the U.S.A. The individual strives to make up for the deficiencies he suffers in his spiritual life, thanks to the development of technical civilization, and to achieve a balancing of the internal private world with the external public one.

2. From Vima, January 17, 1962, by Marinos Kalligas

The exhibition was put together with great care and attention by staff of the New York Museum of Modern Art. Works of the highest quality have been chosen, whatever the approach of each to art. Although it may be that there are one or two shortcomings, as for example in the choice of works by Ben Shahn, and although one or two important artists may be missing, yet this does not matter very much since the level is still high.

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Fourth showing: ART HALL, HELSINKI, FINLAND (under the auspices of the Finnish-American Society and the Finnish Art Society), March 23 - April 8, 1962

1. From Hufvudstadsbladet, March 27, 1962

...The American works of art have at least a character of prudently applied modernism.

Fifth showing: KONSTMUSEUM, GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN, April 16-May 9, 1962

1. From Ny Tid, April 21, 1962, by Gösta Andréén

In two galleries at Göteborg's Konstmuseum a selection of modern American drawings is on display. It is a representative exhibition which allows us to follow the change in American pictorial art from realism, busy with lines, all the way to the dance of the blots over the surface of the sheets of paper. Naturally one finds all the affinities to European tradition in the work of the middle generation. One finds cubism and French elegance adapted. But the really powerful and most unique quality is of course the younger artists' final successful battle with the conventional. There is a surrealism here which covers the sheets with a confusion of strange shapes. Here is a naïve expressionism which nervously tears its models into shreds. De Kooning is doubtless the most vital of the artists in this group, his sheets have a disturbing sensual nerve which appears truthful and genuine to us in its every line. It also seems as if Jackson Pollock received his determining influences from multifiigural sketches of a surrealistic type. The step from massing of deformed shapes over to dancing blots and swinging arches of lines was not a very long one to take.

Sixth showing: CENTRE CULTUREL AMÉRICAIN, PARIS, FRANCE (under the auspices of the United States Embassy), June 6-July 10, 1962

1. From France U.S.A., June-July, 1962

For the first time in France, we have the opportunity to see a collection of drawings done by the contemporary American artists celebrated up to now more for their tachist paintings.... We find here about sixty drawings chosen from among the most important artists of the last twenty years. We recognize first of all the names and the violent, subjective and expressionistic styles of the generation which developed during the last war and whose immense paintings have recently made a sensation throughout the world: Gorky, Pollock and Kline, all dead now,

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Kline having passed away just a month ago. In their drawings, we see translated into ink and pencil the forms and methods of their big "machines," but thanks to the intimate quality of their drawings we feel in a more immediate fashion a contact with the troubled and uncertain spirit of these three artists. Their drawings are independent of their paintings and they also take an important place if one wishes to consider the total work of these artists.

Next to these examples of the new American school, we see an entirely different group which maintains in a more direct fashion the tradition of drawing as a study of the painting-work and devoted entirely to the human subject (in contrast to the complete abstraction we see in Pollock). Among these artists are the critical and caricaturing accent of Jack Levine and the astonishing Cadaver in sanguine of Hyman Bloom, a drawing whose violence of expression reminds us of the Rue Transnonain by Daumier, as well as the work of certain sixteenth-century mannerists.

Besides these two principal groups, the exhibition encompasses other names already well-known in France - such as Mark Tobey, who shows a big drawing full of minute and mysterious details; Joseph Albers, whose MM 1 continues his preoccupation with the changing effects of pure line; and finally, the surrealist and tender style of Loren MacIver, recalling again its similarities with the literary style of Carson McCullers.

After having considered the artists already well-known in Paris, although much better known for their paintings than their drawings, the spectator at this exhibition has the pleasure to discover several "new talents," whose methods of expression are perhaps less astonishing but also perhaps more lovable. We find, for example, a charcoal by Edward Corbett, which recalls, with its calm and delicacy, the most beautiful drawings of Seurat; in another corner, the Aureole of Rodolfo Abularach, which illuminates in one stroke the sombre world already known in the lithographs of Redon.

In summing up, this exhibition permits us to see at the same time an unknown and intimate side of artists already known in France and at the same time, new forms and the more subtle and hidden spirit of our own generation.

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Seventh showing: USIS GALLERY, UNITED STATES EMBASSY, LONDON, ENGLAND  
July 16-August 17, 1962

1. From The Queen, July 31, 1962, by Jane Stockwood

In the United States, an extra guarantee is sometimes offered - the name of the selector, as authoritative in art as it is in wine. These drawings come with the approval of The Museum of Modern Art, and they live up to it.

2. From The Daily Telegraph, August 7, 1962, by Terence Mullaly

Much of the character and achievement of the best and also the most fashionable of contemporary American draughtsmen can be grasped from the exhibition....Almost everything in this exhibition, from Jackson Pollock to the tough realism of William Brice's Man at Table is marked by a refusal to be seduced by the pretty.

Eighth showing: HAUS DER STADTISCHEN KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN, BONN, GERMANY  
August 28-September 30, 1962

1. From General-Anzeiger, August 28, 1962

To the visitor who looks first at the pictures and then at the catalog, it will hardly be surprising to find that this artistic activity has been produced by a fusion of national origins stemming from all over the world in the truest sense of the word "fusion."

Particularly striking is the objective section, which is not bound by European tradition but which in several drawings (Andrew Wyeth) seems to go back to Pioneer Times.

The constructivists are also outstanding, reminiscent at times of Mondrian and at times of the Bauhaus.

The most important group is that of the "action painters." Action painting, which is not a return of Abstract Expressionism, but rather means "arising from the action of the process of painting," and is synonymous with impulsive, ranges from non-objective abstractions to tachist works. In summary, one would designate the objective and the action painters as the most typically American, not only as individual painters, but also because of the fact that in them the irritating and the satisfying stand face to face. If one type of painter carries farther a tradition that has come to be greatly beloved, the other type is entirely devoted to the future, dynamic; indeed in many instances, they appear to be representations of a status nascendi within their small, vibrant chaos, truly in a state of flux....

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The limitations of the black-and-white world of drawing brings out very pointedly in this exhibition the many facets of contemporary American Art. It is hoped that some day an exhibition of modern American painters can complete this view for us.

2. From Bonner Rundschau, August 28, 1962

...packed in American style, that is to say, packed with exceptional skill and care in cases in which each picture has its own particular storage groove...

Three generations of artists are represented; contemporary, expressionist and abstract. For European style experts they present nothing overwhelming, even though the encounter with many original works brings new elucidation, since the Bundesrepublik is not over-supplied with American exhibitions. In Bonn, for example, this is the first collection of original North-American works to be shown.

It would be difficult through the drawings in this exhibition, to demonstrate the individuality of American painting; difficult because of the limited choice and because of the naturally international character of modern art. Perhaps the American artists possess greater directness in comparison with their European colleagues, who often overstress the problematic in their works.

This relaxed way of creating art manifests itself especially in the aims of the "action painters," who paint "from the wrist" so to speak, and who are well represented in the Bonn exhibition. Directness is also seen in the installation: works of realistic precision are hung alongside of coarse-surfaced abstract compositions.

3. From The Bulletin, September 18, 1962

A large public, among them many local artists, are showing interest in what is being produced in the United States....

The whole span of possibilities of expression becomes evident when Feiningers and Pollocks are seen side by side, the former in their almost classic severity and the latter in their scintillating tachisme. Both Pollock and Tobey, in their Action Painting are in search of the laws governing chance. Their informality is not formlessness - as with some of their enigmatic followers in Europe....

For German eyes, an item by Ben Shahn that is on display is extremely significant. The artist has framed a handwritten text by the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke with big, golden Hebraic letters, and a Chagall-style violin-player sadly plays an accompaniment: Rilke embedded in a timeless Jewish attitude of reverence and devotion.

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The most important currents in contemporary American art are clearly recognizable in the little exhibition. The relatively large proportion of non-abstract works tends to come as a surprise to many a European viewer, since it is widely believed that almost all modern American art is Action Painting. Nor does the present display include any drawings of the immense size that Germans are acquainted with in American painting.

Another lesson of which the exhibition reminds Germans is that American art has achieved an exciting blend of impulses from many lands older than the United States - and has given as the result its own special stamp. European traditions of the past 150 years complement the "Americanism" of many of the works on display.

The varied roots of the artists themselves is also an object lesson in modern international living...

How national characteristics, acting as a filter so to speak, can enhance the beauty of an international work of modern art is best illustrated in the exhibition by the drawings of the Japanese Yasuo Kuniyoshi. As for the voluptuous figures by Willem de Kooning, from where could they be but from the land of the Flemish zest for life? "Rubens in America," commented one critic.

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CRITICAL REVIEWS: ABSTRACT DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS:USA

The following quotations were selected from the clippings available on this exhibition, which was shown in twelve Latin American cities - Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santiago, Lima, Guayaquil, Quito, Bototá, Panama City, Mexico City - between January 14, 1962 and May 28, 1963.

Third showing: MUSEU DE ARTE MODERNA, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, May 10 - May 30, 1962.

From O Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, May 27, 1962.

....These drawings and watercolors should not, as in the catalog and title of the exhibition, be called "abstract," because the idioms of Motherwell, of Rauschenberg (who had shows in Paris as a surrealist and in the V Bienal of São Paulo as a neo-dadaist) are permeated not only with references to, but fall within the framework of, the utilization of the figure....I find expressionism in Jack Tworckov and in Arshile Gorky in their use of symbolic forms....

Debating this point, important enough since the exhibition also includes other works besides the work of the abstractionists, we became aware that these drawings and watercolors were enriched by different styles that add weight to this showing of contemporary artists of the United States and their various techniques....

Franz Kline ...is very well represented in this exhibition. To the extent that in his drawings matter is achieved through the perfect use of black and grey, this device brought Kline very close to achieving a quality of paintings done on paper. Furthermore he projected the feeling that he would not bow to concession.

As for Motherwell's drawings, we have seen many of his extraordinary works in the VI Bienal; they are imbued with a vitalizing eroticism that is manifest in the lyrical allusions permeating them. He employs and suggests eroticism in a manner that goads and at the same time restrains as eroticism should.... A fine drawing consisting of seven lines marked only by a vivid black spot, and he creates an effect that is overwhelming.

Another significant artist is de Kooning - ...to whom we owe a reminiscence of the "de Stijl" school. Jean Xcéron's art is also noteworthy ....Xcéron makes a very personal contribution that is well represented here, its restraint, its bare elements, add a pleasant note to the final product.

As for Hofmann, unquestionably a master, he has the power to capture in his drawings a quality that is almost oriental-like in its lightness, which enables him to connect the scattered elements through a tense rhythm that is essential in bringing life to his drawings.

James Brooks, Fritz Glarner, William Ronald, Esteban Vicente, and others are also well represented in this exhibition of drawings and watercolors

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the U.S.A. with which the Museum of Modern Art, New York, gave one more opportunity to our own Museu de Arte Moderno for establishing a cultural and artistic interchange that should be one more link in the communication between our communities and our artists. Choosing artists that come from different backgrounds, but work in the United States, the Americans have also proved a capacity for amalgamation that is far from the racial prejudices that sometimes mar their national image and are nothing more than ridiculous manifestations of selfishness. What has been important here, what really did matter, was the quality of the production of these artists.

Fifth showing: SALON OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY,  
August 3 - August 19, 1962.

From El Pais, Montevideo, Uruguay, August 6, 1962.

At last we have in Montevideo a show of abstract drawings and watercolors of the United States. For the first time, despite the tremendous production in that field, a fairly representative synthesis of the whole action painting and abstract expressionism movement arrives in these parts of Latin America.

This may be the beginning of an intense interchange with the great country of the North. In general, drawing, pencil, and watercolor are techniques less effective than painting and more difficult for the great public to like.

....A magnificent oil on paper of 1948 and an ink drawing of 1951 give the exact measure of that extraordinary creator Pollock, who wrote in 1947: "I paint better on the floor, nearer to the canvas, with which I integrate myself, encircling it and attaching it from four different sides. I almost could say that I enter the canvas."

....When the surrealists spoke of automatic painting they did not comprehend that the unique way possible was utilization of line. This simple truth Pollock intuited. And his complex calligraphy expresses his individuality as does the signature of the man who writes.

That impact of an interior unburdening is given with extraordinary facility in Pollock's work.

The grand rupture brought to a head through the American master is consequently an affirmation of man, of the individual in his most recondite inwardness.

Still, the revolutionary sense of that artistic movement has not been dwelt on sufficiently. There is in that picturemaking a passionate wish to smash all the formal established systems of a way of life and the domain of political ideology.

In that country founded on the principle of equality, where one sees that the cult of the average man is almost a worshipped cause, the artists,

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as eccentrics, are looked on with a certain contempt. Such powerful anti-artistic prejudice has always been one of the characteristics of the puritan culture of the United States.

A tendency toward romantic fervor was accentuated after the last war and increased in the decade of the fifties. The artists sought to create something new and they avoided all reference to established traditions.

....Both [Pollock and de Kooning] exercised, and still continue to do so, a fruitful influence on the more recent generations of the whole world.

....Pollock's automatism differed from surrealist automatism most in that it was an authentic language for translating the psychic world.

Four works, a pastel, oil on paper, ink drawing and pencil drawing, are by de Kooning, the most powerful expressionist personality in the show. Born in Holland, de Kooning arrived in the United States in 1926. He contributes to American art his strong and brutal version of northern expressionism.

Contrary to Pollock, de Kooning works from a definite model....He rejects cubic perspective and substitutes for it multiple perspective.

His violent stroke is what is most impressive in his painting, imposing itself on his theme, which is always literary. His celebrated series on women is executed with enormously suggestive technique. The interesting aspect of his canvases is the ambiguity of the space and the forms. He uses a heavy grease pencil to extend his colors, using the side of the pencil.

The energetic surface he creates with his distinctive pencil stroke is typical of a great part of contemporary American painting.

Mark Tobey, a painter of the West Coast, is represented by three works.... The fact that the Orientals saw in the pencil stroke the incarnation of vital forces opened a new horizon for him and was his response to the searches that the majority of New York artists were making at that time. ....With his fluid and suggestive meandering Tobey achieves a poetic climate of extraordinary refinement. The linear graphism was conceived as a direct language. By turning to the use of the total surface, of the lateral plane that extends itself in space, the American artists annex elemental time or space.

From El Dia, Montevideo, Uruguay, August 9, 1962

In the Municipal Building a preview vernissage for government authorities and the press inaugurated the exhibition of drawings and watercolors belonging to The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Present were the United States Ambassador, ministers, diplomats, artists, intellectuals, and many members of the public.

This is an exhibition of 80 works which represent the evolution in the plastic arts toward a casual informality bearing no relation to nature,

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although having different shades of treatment of color and free forms. Certainly, in this exhibition, we see works of famous artists who with their new theories fundamentally motivated a revolution in the history of painting.

But if the theories mentioned above have found many ways of expression, there are certain drawings and watercolors included which lack serious commitment. We see drawings of large forms which occupy places next to other drawings whose playfulness bears no relation to art. There are also superficial works. Certainly there is value and interest in much of what is exhibited here. Those who are now no less than hallowed as artists leave us traces of their delightful personalities. We are thinking of the good compositions of Carone, his original use of charcoal, giving it practically the values of paint, of the drawing abilities of Corbett and the watercolors of Frankenthaler. Our attention is captured by the play of pencil and eraser in the circular graphics of Glarner and we might add that there are suggestions in the surrealist lines of Gorky.

We note that the three works of Marsicano are of great interest, although slightly decorative in character, but we must say that we do not find artistic comprehension in the three "suites" of Motherwell. There are rhythms in Pollock and a weaving of perfectly attuned colors in the hidden penetration on which his concept is based, just as the intensity of shadows in Tobey's "Space Rituals" shows us the orchestration of detailed drawing.

The three charcoals of Tworkov are well-conceived and in their treatment of planes carry out a pure and clear esthetic. And finally we single out the lovely entwined colors in the watercolors of Xcéron, who although he adheres to non-formal concepts, enriches his shapes with rare skill.

From Accion, Montevideo, Uruguay, August 28, 1962.

The inevitable lack of space, as a non-specialized columnist would say, often obliges one to postpone indefinitely comments on exhibitions which take place in our galleries. However, there are certain artists who have a certain presence even after their closing. Such is the case with those in ABSTRACT DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS: USA. Most commentaries preferred to skip the exhibition itself and take refuge in an unexpected eulogy of "the great country to the north," in the history of art, or in delicious proclamations of what a mistake it was to have had the exhibition.

The important thing, however, I believe, is to point out the complex and curious phenomenon which has taken place in American art. On one hand there is the popular line of pictorial objectivity, responding to the idea of Roosevelt's New Deal, which has had versions throughout the world. The second line, on the other hand, has been the process of Europeanization of the American (from 1913 and the Armory Show and continuing with the massive immigration of European artists made to flee by the war), which in the past decade turned into an aggressive and surprising boomerang, conquering and influencing not only Europe, but the whole world.

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In the objectivity of the American (they are comrades before they are friends), there is a concealed sentimentality which arises from the collision of the individual with a suffocating collective social structure. From this comes that essential inability to communicate which the average American, inventor of the singular conversation piece, has. One cannot affirm that Americans are romantic nor that they are practical, since the diffuse mechanization of American life is neither. In particular, business, cultural and athletic associations, as well as tranquilizers and drinking (it is exaggerated to say that the American is a systematic drunkard) are the means for combating solitude.

Perhaps this is why surrealism, expressionism, and oriental art have been of such interest to them. Their revered artists include both Mondrian and Picasso, as well as Albert Ryder, with his magical charm.

From this strange and contradictory marriage of objectivity and subjectivity has been born an American School, which has its great centers in New York and San Francisco, but which today has extended throughout the whole country. Jackson Pollock is without doubt one of the most natural geniuses of all time, formed in the heat of Picasso's forms and the Mexican muralists, and then finding a feverish world of fireworks.

Robert Motherwell is represented by a fascinating lyrical group of pencil drawings, in which unfolds a whole theory of eroticism, without ever touching on pornography or bad taste. Franz Kline, who died recently, is represented by black-and-white contrasts; Willem de Kooning by his powerful abstractions; Mark Tobey with his "white writing" - minute irrational explorations; Arshile Gorky with his astonishing and disconcerting fantasies; and James Brooks with his brilliant coloristic forms. Also included is Hans Hofmann, the authoritative teacher of youth and enthusiasm. In fact, much of the best in American painting is represented in this important exhibition. The works, although only a pale reflection of the work of the artists, were enough, however, to give some idea of the enormous creative capacity and the great originality of a justly famous and admired avant-garde.

Sixth showing: REIFSCHNEIDER GALLERY, SANTIAGO, CHILE, September 24 - October 6, 1962.

From El Mercurio, Santiago de Chile, September 25, 1962.

Ambassador Charles Cole yesterday opened the exhibition ABSTRACT DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS: USA in the Reifschneider Hall at Gallery Alessandri, Agustinas 1151. Now on tour, this is the first collection of this type presented in Latin America, and will be two weeks in Santiago. Lectures by well-known national artists will be given in conjunction with the exhibition....

Some opinions: "El Mercurio" asked opinions on this exhibition from various visitors to the opening. The Ambassador, Mr. Cole, felt that "it is very interesting and representative of the various styles used in the United States today. There is much vitality in the works. This is an attempt by the artists to find new forms of expression."

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For his part, Antonio R. Romera, a critic, declared: "This exhibition represents the most forceful of abstract expressionism which, to a certain extent, was born in New York during the past war, when Matta and other artists left their imprint on some artists faced with reality."

More than a hundred persons were present at the opening, among them Jorge Caballero, Director of the Institute for Promulgation of the Plastic Arts of the University of Chile; Mrs. Maruja Pinedo, President of the Chilean Association of Painters and Sculptors; Carlos Pedraza, Director of the School of Fine Arts; Nemesio Antunez, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art; Francisco Otta and Camilo Mori.

From El Diario Ilustrado, Santiago de Chile, September 26, 1962, by José María Palacios.

There are children who are geniuses. Moreover, there is hardly a child who is not an immature genius. And when they paint they usually show their natural genius. They explain it after their own fashion and one can be surprised to see one's son paint in an extremely personal style. And you smile, satisfied, because in these times abstract painting convinces...and costs, my God, how it costs....!

Now it is our turn to see abstract art from the United States. In that country there are exalted names in abstraction: Pollock, dead scarcely six years, creates a tremendous sensation in Europe. His works bring millions in profits. Mark Tobey is another giant, with first prizes at the Venice Biennale and the Carnegie International. Franz Kline was also awarded prizes at the Biennale and the International. Thus this exhibition brings its individual and collective pedigree. To prove this it must also be noted that the exhibition was organized by none other than The Museum of Modern Art, New York, center for the masterpieces and barbarities of abstract art.

Until a short time ago, abstract art shocked. No one understood it. Now, no. Now, almost everyone "understands" it.

[The critic goes on to say that he is neutral to hostile toward abstract art.]

...As we stand before the abstract watercolors and drawings from the United States, not a few attract our eye for their purely sensory impact, and in some cases, vibration. The sketches of Nicolas Marsicano have a robust vigor. And those of Jack Tworkov have very expressive rhythms. The painting of Jean Xcéron is very beautiful and subtle in color.... Observing the show of North American art from many points of view, therefore, one should accept the fact that art has reasons that convention does not yet recognize.

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From La Nacion, Santiago de Chile, October 7, 1962, by Ricardo Gelcic.

In regard to this exhibition, one can only say that a more appropriate exhibition could not have come to our country; it could even be stated that it was needed with urgency and could not be postponed. In contrast to other contemporary art exhibitions which it has been possible to see lately, in which a more or less tired attitude to the evolution of abstract art has been typical, this exhibition shows the real spearhead of abstract art - its most advanced lines, which have the power to conquer a new language for today's artist.

The works one can see in this exhibition do not constitute the highest level of creation of the artists represented. The simplicity of the media - watercolor, charcoal, ink - constitute a limitation sufficiently strong as not to permit a fair judgment on the real degree of value of the artists. But in spite of this it is possible to show in any case which are the dominant directions in this most recent art.

Not one of the painters represented here seems to be obsessed with the idea of an absolute; not one seems to care to give plastic expression to a kind of timeless, Platonic archetype. Equally, the "cosmic" and and speculations on space are in need of an adequate pictorial translation, except for the works of Edward Corbett and Mark Tobey. It would appear, on the contrary, that the dominant sensibility is on the other side. And if the expressive language is not enough to prove this, there are explicit and categorical declarations in the catalog. Robert Motherwell opposes the existence of pure colors... This means, of course, the rejection of the color theories of Kandinsky, who attributes to color the intrinsic capacity of revealing through itself alone an invisible spiritual world. Willem de Kooning shows himself to be equally repulsed by the mathematical space of the physicists - where the successors of Mondrian search for their absolute - and he reclaims a human space, concrete, near, in a manner of speaking, tactile, in which the sensibility can most comfortably reside.

To turn one's back on the absolute world of the classic abstractionists in order to put in its place the material and the environmental, means, on the one hand, to open the doors to a play of textures, and on the other, to point out the configuration of a human world, not yet escaped, from which one tries to grasp a fresh vision.

Perhaps for this reason the present exhibition, called ABSTRACT DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS, surprises one by works which frankly fall into the figurative category. To prove this there is the Nude of Jack Tworok, achieved by the same formal recourses the artist employs in his non-figurative forms is not found in the extreme abstractions of Pollock, Hans Hofmann, or James Brooks.

From La Nacion, Santiago de Chile, October 7, 1962, by Alicia Santaella.

....Discussed with applause, or simply with grimaces of aversion, it produced a far from indifferent atmosphere. It reveals, moreover, that art continues through the centuries to an artistic expression for all.

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This commentary, aside from that of the technical person, the professional, the amateur or the usual run of viewers, gives the condition of vitality inimitably part of art. To discuss something has always been to affirm the existence of something. To criticize, as an expression of our understanding, is also to find the quality which engages one. The exhibition of North American Modern Art has had everything - criticism, discussion, praise, perplexity, and even some apathy. This indicates, even for those of us who do not recognize the majority of the technical aspects of art, that the sketches shown have a life of their own, and that the people, all of us, can discuss them because they exist.

From Las Ultimas Noticias, Saturday Supplement, Santiago de Chile, November 13, 1962.

The exhibition...represents more exactly than any other way the particular disposition of the United States' artist.

...the exhibition translates in essence the new spirit of a young country, which finds its greatest field of expansion in the indeterminate and secret paths of the world of introspective explorations. Like cosmonauts of a space which is not stellar but magnetic and of the nerves, the United States artists of the avant-garde speculate, in the 80 exhibited works, with blots, sketches and compositional relations in the non-formal field....

These forms which fly dizzily into space, represent, better than the realism practiced by artists of the U. S. formerly, the position of a country which still shows the roughness of impulses in evolution and which reveals in its works of art all the vigor of a primal purity. The indefinable configuration of abstraction thus has as a result an expression which very much conforms with the most intimate principles of the "Vikings" of the severe country to the North, discoverers of new astral worlds - cosmic or pictorial - but always up to the struggle and the revelation of talent.

Eighth showing: CASA DE LA CULTURA EQUATORIANA, GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR, November 10 - November 16, 1962.

A show of what is (in part) North American painting today...perplexes us, disorients us....

Headed by Pollock, Yunkers, Tobey, de Kooning, Cajori, Glarner, Carone, the North American paintings show us from whence come the artists' inspiration, where they search for beauty, what preoccupies them. And indeed we find that that which is gravely serious arrests them, that which is serious dominates them, that which is serious they present as their main topic.

...But indubitably the artist started on this path must not exaggerate, must not lose himself in arabesques, should not throw himself blindly into execution of construction only and achieve only pictorial harmonies and rhythms.

We began this article saying that first we feel disoriented before these works by "Yankee" artists. Of course afterwards, after the surprise

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and the astonishment, after putting ourselves and the show in order, we continue to find interesting things for meditation. Not everything is an arabesque, not everything is solely dexterity. In many cases the inspiration is serious and commands and leads the rapid brush or pencil to the spot which falls from or is extended spontaneously by the finger. And for this we must muster the liberty of all, the freedom which these artists show, the independence with which they act before the paper. Lines and forms make up a series of compositions which add to life, which have a reason to be and to exist, because they reveal to us a series of great yearnings, a series of discoveries. But sometimes we blunder upon works made lightly, with devitalized visions which mean nothing, which produce nothing in us. Others are achievements which, on setting oneself to excell at a given moment, one might be able to obtain, and most certainly increase the marvelous, noble and elevated position of art. Perhaps the North American painters spend a great deal of time in ivory towers and do not hear the call of those below where the man and the artist is nurtured. In any case, the exhibited paintings aside, we see that the Yankee painters are all of a rebellious group, a great number of people with the desire to transform, an army loving beauty and culture, and by any path seek to lead their country to the truth in art, which is the truth in life, which is peace, in the end.

Eleventh showing: INSTITUTO PANAMENEO DE ARTE, PANAMA, March 11 - March 26, 1963.

From El Panamá-América, Sunday Supplement, Panama, R. de P., March 24, 1963, by Prof. Leo Cardona.

Now an exhibition is presented which permits us in one gulp to come close to and even identify ourselves with the artistic movement from one of the greatest centers in the world: New York. With the exhibition, which is closing as these lines are written, the most independent contemporary artists of the American Babel descend upon the Panamanian public and bare their souls to show the "themes" of their desires and deliriums.... In 80 works, almost all abstract, are shown artists of the stature of Jackson Pollock, whose oil on paper and drawing in ink are examples of his strong, eminently decorative art that has placed him at the top of the non-figurative contemporary painters. Edward Corbett, splendid in his drawings No. 4 and 18. Adja Yunkers, who in his gouaches with ink stains or ink blots knows how to impress all the force of a waterfall, a whirlwind or a celestial storm. William Ronald with his vibrant, flashing colors....Rauschenberg, with his type of commercial catalog diluted in discolored inks. Motherwell with his sketches of infantile lyricism and his wife Helen Frankenthaler with her tropical colors in an excessively personal symbolism, are the artists who form the first squadron of the pictorial parade that we are commenting on. But we do not want to say that we are establishing a successive order of notoriety, as we did not allow for Xéron and Corky especially.

...there are many clearly defined styles, of which the most popular is that of the "entanglement" or "disorder" of lines. In these "entanglements" the most difficult element to follow is the "rhythm" of the composition. In the exhibition to which we are referring, this style is the most popular for such as Cajori, Carone, Guston, Cacere, de Kooning, etc. Among them Cajori stands out rhythmically, while Guston has an impressionist strength.

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Another style also well popularized is the futurist type of geometric, or that having as its theme things or elements suggesting the mechanical or manufactured.

The geometric style of Mondrian is also here, represented by Burgoyne Diller. His two compositions include little touches of cardboard used as "collage." Possibly the manufacturers of shawls or handkerchiefs will be attracted by these works of Diller, which offer a strong contrast to the examples by Miriam Schapiro, almost all of which are influenced by the presence of the "egg" that has brought her to dedicate a whole series to this essential culinary element. The complementing of the eggs of Schapiro with her Treasury 1961, seems to show a certain resentment toward the government tax collectors, whom she subtly paints as functionaries comfortably reclining in a chair, while a sheep symbolizing the flock stands in front of a paying window. The eggs, seen after the painting of the treasury, appear to indicate that all that remains to this painter, having paid her taxes, are a pair of eggs that she can cook at her whim....

A very personal style also is that of Esteban Vicente, born in Spain, who has based his abstractions on remembered inspiration of the caves of Altamiro, or, that is to say, of scenes of runic things. Marsicano gives us a genial nude; that of Jack Tworok, executed in abstract lines, is evidently a grand nude. ...Mark Tobey's very pleasant technique shows in his painting Tattooed Space....

The public, very much interested in contemporary work, arrives uninterruptedly at the building of the Magistrate of United Panama, where the Panamanian Institute of Art has its Exhibition Hall. Some with sarcastic comments, others with talk of technical subtleties, not a few with real gratitude, the groups leave the area, carrying in their minds the existence of an art which is synonymous with life. It is through art that the testimony of civilizations remains through time. It is in art that the transcendence of the spirit is shown. But it is also through art that the harmony of rhythm and the balance of proportions speaks a unique language which is the Glory of Humanity.

Twelfth showing: PALACIO DE BELLAS ARTES, MEXICO, D.F., May 8 - May 28, 1963.

From Novedades, Mexico D. F., May 23, 1963, by Jorge J. Crespo de la Serna.

....It is a true sampling of what is being done everywhere these days: combinations of pigments, weavings and designs which spring up by themselves, barely directed by the artist, plays of intuitive graphic spontaneity - in reality erasings and erupting hieroglyphs from nowhere - to sum up, a process of filling at will an empty space, which is not space until it no longer relates to the incident which blemishes it (this is the truth), or tries to animate it. This so-called abstract art, under the pretext of freeing itself from pre-conceived ideas and orientations already proved, which desires to make innovations, to transform, with a great appetite for purity and independence, has fallen upon a product in which the coloristic associations and the extemporaneous

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surging forms (not objects, that is, not visions of an external reality, which is known) create surfaces with a certain vibration, rhythms, and also counterpoints between forms and straight or curved lines. These experiments, almost all fortuitous, produce things with a certain value, purely decorative, superficial and nothing more. But this has been propagated in all the world and today one cannot, at a given moment, distinguish between the product of one country and another. In the United States exhibition one can test such an assertion, that is, that abstract art, since it contains no images of any kind, has made itself universal in its yearning for emancipation from ancient methods.

Certainly in these experiments - everywhere - it is soon revealed who is the painter and knows about mixtures and harmonies and who isn't. ....For this reason it is interesting to see the work of Jackson Pollock, of Willem de Kooning, of Mark Tobey, of Arshile Gorky, of Franz Kline, of Miriam Schapiro. One must admit that the techniques, in general, are impeccable in all. Their painting is painting, but nothing more. Or rather, one does not see in all this a transcendency which fulfills one. Insensibly one thinks of artists like Ben Shahn, Levine, or Kuniyoshi, or the one who brought a new vision of art to the United States, the German Grosz, etc. In them and others like them there is liberty of expression, intention, clear message, good technique, tactile values and subjective values, and not only more or less decorative values, more or less pleasing to the eye....

From El Nacional, Mexico D. F., May 26, 1963, by P. Fernandez Marquez.

....It is an interesting collection, in that the most diverse facets of abstractionism are given precedence, the methods of that form of pictorial expression which dominated the majority of works in the North American section of the last Interamerican Biennial, being exactly those least represented now. On that occasion the abstract expressionists were represented amply and with showy demonstrativeness. Today, the abstractionism which visits us in its maturity is represented by works which suggest forms, volumes, and in some cases even figures!... That is to say, as the organizers of this exhibition very well point out, abstractionism has come to include all that which in some way may be an abstraction of real representation. In this case, the simplification and stylization which so excited our artists at the beginning of the century, has gained force again in the actual panorama of abstract plastic art.

Many times we have made fun of the fact that the abstract artists baptize their works, in many cases, with a highly concrete, figurative meaning. We claimed that the art might be really abstract, and it did not seem to make sense that, after we made the closest possible examinations as regards representation, a tachist painting would be presented to us with the following title, for instance: "Workers leaving the factory in the afternoon...." This comes to mind now because with the immense majority of works shown in the Hall of International Friendship, we are given justification. Some of the works are entitled simply with a number, and others, nothing, in the simplest manner possible, "untitled." So that abstraction arrives at the authentic principles which gave impulse to its birth.

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The International Council of  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

CRITICAL REVIEWS: VI BIENAL, SÃO PAULO

The United States Representation to the VI Bienal, held at the Museu de Arte Moderna in São Paulo, Brazil from September 10 to December 31st consisted of two one-man shows devoted to the work of Robert Motherwell and Reuben Nakian, a group show of eleven artists (Lee Bontecou, John Chamberlain, Richard Diebenkorn, Burgoyne Diller, Robert Engman, Sonia Gechtoff, Leon Golub, Stephen Green, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Pousette-Dart and Richard Stankiewicz) and a selection of prints by Leonard Baskin. Baskin received the prize for the best foreign engraver.

The excerpts from the critical press which follow have been divided into those devoted to the United States Representation in general, those about the two one-man shows, those concerning the group shows and those on Baskin.

General

The New York Times, September 9, 1961, by John Canaday

The American painters and sculptors were lucky enough to get their crates off the ship at the last minute. The section has been beautifully installed in a central position by Waldo Rasmussen of the Museum of Modern Art and Reuben Nakian, our major representative in sculpture, and by Larry McCabe and Charles Egan, Nakian's associates.

From syndicated article in several Brazilian newspapers before opening:

...it should be said that the North Americans never failed to give the utmost care to the qualitative and quantitative aspects of their contingents. In fact ever since the first Bienal -- when we were shown Feininger's works and others -- to this day, the one-man shows of the U. S. Representation are as valuable in quality as in the number of works exhibited. And now the one-man shows of Motherwell's paintings, Nakian's sculptures, and Baskin's woodcuts make real the great importance of the fine arts in the U. S. in 1961...

Folha de São Paulo, August 31, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

The North American wing will unquestionably be very interesting, and ...it should be pointed out that the collection is displayed in a manner as to enhance its graphic and plastic values.

Folha de São Paulo, September 9, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

It is interesting to pay attention to the artists constituting the U.S.A. representation to the Bienal. We could say that in a certain way they convey the impression of being Left-wing individuals doing art under obligation. It is necessary only to examine the whole of Motherwell's thirty-four politicized works; Nakian's sculptures, the terracottas, and Baskin's woodcuts.

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Because works such as Pancho Villa, Dead and Alive, the series Europa, or the Sorrowing and Terrified Man by Motherwell, Nakian and Baskin respectively, although apparently abstract are completely imbued with revolutionary potential and dialectical pitch.

Nevertheless there is not an indoctrination of the "engagé" type as a direct result. There is a sublimated art acting as spokesman to a period. Art that reflects a conscience-searching attitude by the artists.

#### Motherwell

Folha de São Paulo, September 9, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

I have the feeling that Motherwell's paintings are exactly what Hemingway would have done if he had ever turned his talents to painting. For the North American artist -- who for the second time is represented at the São Paulo Bienal -- not only painted the series Elegies to the Spanish Republic, begun in 1948, but some of his collages still show certain Picasso influences.

Motherwell is a virtuoso of the black and white technique; he is a painter under the spell of printmaking; he is an abstract artist greatly influenced by objective themes.

His inspiration also stems from Iberic sources and we can find ever present the same Andalusian daemon Lorca celebrates. In Motherwell's paintings this "duende" is a sort of contrapuntal leitmotiv, very much the same that in Hemingway's writings the leitmotiv was the bull fighter or a masculine personification of death.

O Estado de São Paulo, November 5, 1961

Once more the U. S. Representation at the VI Bienal stands out by the numerous and impressive relation of avant-garde exponents and by the presence of other exponents of a more fully cristallized production.

Among the latter Motherwell's painting is the most significant and Nakian's sculpture the one showing a complete evolution and an ultimate fulfillment.

In the heterogeneous selection of Motherwell's works - so difficult to approach in one single review - we have painting that is alive in time; intimate painting in the full force of its avowal, painting always striving to not only a meaningful plastic experience but an artistic one as well. Heterogeneity thus becomes immediately understood because in everyone of his works Motherwell goes through a mode of

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life -- he reacts against certain obvious solutions and plunges himself into a confession and a protest thus emerging from the deep with a brilliant solution, very bitter at times, but always aglow with splendid vitality.

Had Motherwell's selection been less heterogeneous we would have had only a few sides of his expression - he employs several techniques, he makes use of either black and white or of colors that are outstanding, vibrant, and harmonious with an admirable sense of rhythm.... Even the habit of giving titles using foreign words adds something of a universal view to Motherwell's subject matter. Viva, La Résistance, At Five in the Afternoon (the tortured refrain in Lorca's elegy to the dying bullfighter), all this makes of Motherwell a complex human presence, adamant in face of dogmas and oppressions. The same is valid regarding his admirable drawings.

The New York Times, September 10, 1961, by John Canaday

The American Robert Motherwell's are largest of all, and even in an exhibition where other competitors are guilty of gigantism and clamor, there is a crudeness here that leaves on feeling a bit as if a fellow countryman had committed a vulgarity.

Reuben Nakian

Folha de São Paulo, September 3, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

His metal sculptures seem to have been forged and tortured at the points of an anvil. His drawing is paroxysmal although reminding one of the wash. A monumental tendency is all pervading and even there he betrays his Middle Eastern origin.

Nakian is an artist, who like Picasso, has a driving energy, working with themes from the past and the present, from mythology and from automation.

The drawings are for him nothing but impressions, mere sketches for the terracottas and the sculptures in plaques. In sculpture his expressive mode is the repletion and the emptying of the median spaces between forms and blanks, between massive zones and gaps. Dialectically it is a monumental and energetic art, having a metaphysical expressionism quite à la Kirchner. As pure craftsmanship Reuben Nakian's work represents almost a guild, being at the same time so multivoiced and omniform.

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O Estado de São Paulo, November 5, 1961

Nakian -- with whom we are personally acquainted -- is man as an artist, the documentary evidence of his drawings, the small scale sculptures and the terracottas support well the large shapes finally expressed in welded steel. There is represented the complete history of a sculptor. From the head of Marcel Duchamp in 1913 to the works of the last decade and of the present year, Nakian carries out with honesty and conviction all these important, disconnected, alive, reminiscent and critical themes. The visitor should examine at length the process used by the artist in his continuing and expressive conquest in order to cut later through the space with the creation of images requiring shapes as boisterous, as wide, and as powerful as can be seen. These sculptures demand much more room than was given them. They demand to be seen all by themselves.

Leonard Baskin

The New York Times, September 10, 1961, by John Canaday

Leonard Baskin (American), with a series of nearly life size wood engravings of tormented figures, is far and away the great printmaker here.

Folha de São Paulo, August 31, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

Large in size and longitudinal in orientation, the twelve works of Leonard Baskin, the North American printmaker, appear as doors opening from the darkness into dimly lit enclosures. This is because the printmaker shuns all color and hue effects exploiting only black and white contrasts. His woodcuts are expressionistic in execution and tragic in subject matter as their titles well indicate: Man of Peace, Hydrogen Man, etc...

These woodcuts...act as allegorical posters of human awareness of the destruction that threatens mankind.

His fame as a sculptor is as widespread as the renown of Reuben Nakian and John Chamberlain. However, undoubtedly his expressiveness is best conveyed through the printmaking medium.

He knows how to associate technique and subject in a close expressionistic rhythm. His human or angelic figures have all of them an anatomy reminding one of people that have been skinned alive and it is as if their nerves, muscles, ganglia, veins, arteries and souls were exposed to full view. One could say that Baskin is still influenced by the painting and printmaking of the concentration camp period. Baskin's leitmotif is "Death." Of all the works sent to the VI São Paulo Bienal undoubtedly the most beautiful is Death of the Laureate. Leonard Baskin's work possesses strong lines, violently carved, whose black contrasts are reminiscent of Hartung's adventures in line.

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Folha de São Paulo, September 26, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

The printmaking award was given to the North American Leonard Baskin, whose characteristics were already analyzed by us in a previous article. ....It is through woodcutting that Leonard Baskin is able to instill his somber themes with the drama of our time and with its social and political problems.

Folha Ilustrada, November 2, 1961, by José Geraldo Vieira

To be precise his woodcuts are "engagé" art by their subject matter and the expressionism that permeates through them. Themes such as Hanged Man, Sorrowing and Terrified Man, Death among the Thistles, Torment, Death of the Laureate cause the American contribution to the VI Bienal to be participating much more directly in the anxieties of the world and of the human mind than the contributions of artists from behind the Iron Curtain.

This is tragic art, with Goyaesque overtones, witnessing and registering mankind at a brink point in this tense period filled with anxious expectations.

As it is manifest in this period of an art so paradoxically removed from life, printmaking remains faithful to its role of social documentation, thus becoming a true indicator of day and night hours and of the reverberations and darkness of today's world.

O Estado de São Paulo, November 5, 1961

Baskin -- who won the award for the best international printmaker -- makes excessive use of space in his woodcuts and if his expressionism is not so convincing it is mainly due to the large scale in which it is portrayed. Here allegory reduces itself to a tragic aspect of existence. We would have liked to see more prints in a small dimension such as Death Among the Thistles.

Art International, Christmas 1961, by Gert Schiff

A young American, Leonard Baskin, was awarded the prize of "best international graphic artist." His artistic language reminds me of some by now nearly forgotten German expressionists of a socialist persuasion, like Bernhard Pankok or Otto Dix. The subjects of his large-size woodcuts are human suffering in prisons and concentration camps or the blown-up laureates of a society still dreaming away their time in terms of the humanistic tradition of the Renaissance. If I cannot consider him a very great artist I must admit there was no other graphic artist of outstanding merit.

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Group Exhibition

O Estado de São Paulo, November 5, 1961

There isn't much to be singled out among the eleven younger artists that came together with the delegation of the "great" North Americans. However, Lee Bontecou and John Chamberlain's sculptures more than ever pose a problem to the Bienal: that is to know how far research, undeniably the artist's right, should be shown to the public thus increasing its perplexity. To a certain extent it is detrimental to the better understanding of the phenomenon that is so far modern art -- the art of this century.

Art News, October 1961, by Harold Rosenberg

The American exhibit displayed the effects of a disturbing susceptibility to pressure and to calculating for the future - Baskin, for instance, is one of the few American artists who receives the approval of the critic of The New York Times. Having assembled an excellent small Mother-well retrospective and an exhibition of Nakian that presented the most individual talent in the Bienal, the Museum of Modern Art hedged its bet with samples of eleven artists representing as many "tendencies" as could be crowded in, from the prophylaxis of Diller and Ellsworth Kelly to Lee Bontecou's canvas and metal nightmare of an adolescent boy fighting inhospitable corsets. This unheroic diffusion for the sake of the record - no one is going to accuse the Museum of discrimination - was particularly costly to Nakian, less well-known than Mother-well, and moreover a sculptor whose bronzes are curiously hard to see: the eye seems to roll across their continually modulated surfaces. In the turmoil of a Bienal, an artist like Nakian needs a firm expression of confidence, like that accorded to Julius Bissier by the Germans in turning over to him their entire section; but while the selection and placement of Nakian's sculptures and drawings were first rate, the presentation was put under a handicap by the Museum's flight to safety in numbers.

Jornal do Comércio, Rio de Janeiro, December 5, 1961, by Miranda Netto

It is most interesting to notice in our days the appearance of a few examples of collage that are to a certain degree replicas of the 1910-1920 collages. In the U.S.A. stand we can see sculptures making use of scrap steel and sections of automobile bodies. Mr. Blue by John Chamberlain or Richard Stankiewicz's model for a monument are a good example of the above. Once more mankind feels that the world is on the verge of exploding and not by the naive shells of Krupp's Big Bertha that threatened Paris but with the cosmic violence of the megatons.

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As always reflections of social situations are present in the arts. This is one of the interesting aspects of the VI Bienal. The debris are no longer torn paper, splinters of wood or cardboard pieces. For the modern artist working with ruins the materials are found in heaps of rusting scrap steel.

Art International, Christmas 1961, by Gert Schiff

The United States representation was much more interesting, though I must admit that neither of the artists who were given large one-man shows convinced me. I do not see the mythological implications of Nakian's confused assemblages of sheet-steel and piping, nor, til now, have the languid arabesques or the peremptory black Spanish clusters of Motherwell conveyed their mystery to me, though there may be some wit and charm in his smaller collages. Yet there is much that is stimulating in the work of his younger compatriots. So are, to my mind, Leon Golub's scarred Roman boxers a new and powerful approach to the seemingly worn-out theme of classical figure painting. Among the neo-dadaists, there is perhaps no other sculptor who combines his excitement about rusting scrap metal, automobile parts etc. with formal control more than Richard Stankiewicz. Lee Bontecou, by stretching pieces of coarse canvas on a welded metal framework, creates a most appealing kind of tableau-objet, no matter whether one finds in them, with William C. Seitz, references to "volcanoes, industrial complexes, war equipment," or just an ironical play with the void which stares at you out of the several dark bulls-eyes of varying size.

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PRESS REACTIONS TO THE EXHIBITION DOCUMENTA II, HELD IN KASSEL, GERMANY FROM JULY 11, TO OCTOBER 11, 1959, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATION, ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

February 12, 1960

I. Excerpts from newspaper articles, arranged alphabetically, first by country, then by title of newspaper:

1. France

Carrefour, Paris, France, August 19, 1959, review unsigned

...In Kassel there is at the moment an important exhibition of modern contemporary art. Under the name of Documenta this is a majestic panorama of the painting of the world since 1945, in which Germany, Britain, France, Italy and the U.S.A. are those best represented.

L'Information, Paris, France, August 22, 1959, review by Jean-Jaques Léveque

There in Kassel opened the II Documenta in which 24 nations are showing painting and 12 sculpture. The best nations: Germany, U.S.A., France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Japan, Yugoslavia  
.....

Le Monde, Paris, July 17, 1959, review unsigned

The only room devoted exclusively to one artist is dedicated to the American Jackson Pollock who killed himself accidentally several years ago and whose dynamic and passionate writing tends more and more to polarize the aspirations of young abstract schools in many countries. Moreover, the exposition is composed almost exclusively of abstract art as the freest expression of plastic art.

2. Germany

Die Abendzeitung, Munich, Germany, October 17, 1959, review by Wolfgang Christlieb

Kassel wanted to "document the art after 1945." In reality it was like this, according to a visitor to the department of painting: 6% of the works exhibited were from the first five-year period after 1945, 8% from the second five-year period, 84% from the third five-year period-- out of these, however, the major part was from the year immediately preceding the opening of the exhibition 1958-59.

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Die Abendzeitung, cont.

That is: well over half, or up to 80%, of the exhibition was painted for the exhibition. 62% of the exhibited works belonged to the international art-buyers, above all West-German, Dutch and American private galleries.

This means: the Documenta in Kassel was no report, but a sales fair, a sample show.

The visitor keeps asking himself: How am I to react if I really like something? Because this happens. I liked many things in Kassel, even some among the most recent works, the same happened to me already before, in Venice. What did you for example think of Cavallon? Or Brooks? Or de Kooning? Good, weren't they? I thought so too. But don't say that in a loud voice! It might be, you see, that one of these artists is on the black list of the Secret Art Mafia and in that case you have made a fool of yourself.

So you had better take my advice: Always keep smiling. Smile mildly and wisely, acknowledge everything offered in a friendly and amiable manner -- but never praise anything. Because you could be praising the wrong thing. Do not expose yourself as an enthusiast, that would not be clever.

Seen from this point of view, the German audience of Documenta II behaved excellently.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt, Germany, July 25, 1959,  
review by Albert Schulze Vellinghausen

The Pollock room is not only a memorial to a great artist who died too young. It is a true demonstration of an "oeuvre" which has set a new date for our time, so that we already speak of "before" and "after" Pollock.

Some difficulties prevented this "world communication in speech" from being a complete demonstration (which was the goal of Documenta II). They have to be indicated here, without over-emphasizing their importance. Among these difficulties are that the ambiguity of the American section, which was undertaken by official authorities over there, could not be "moderated" from here.

Handelsblatt, Dusseldorf, Germany, July 17, 1959, review by Gottfried Sello

In artistic prestige Documenta can today be equated with the Venice Biennale.

Hersfelder Zeitung, Hersfeld, Germany, July 16, 1959, review by "AvS"

After (seeing) these works one is ready to give all the Americans an important place in the orchestra of the Abstract (painters), even though the paintings displayed represent only a section of their many sided creativity.

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Iserlohner Kreisanzeiger, Iserlohn, Germany, July 25, 1959, review  
by Fritz Nemitz

On the map of painting, America is about to fill a place that is constantly growing and increasing in importance. For Documenta alone 100 pictures were chosen. During a long period of time influenced by Europe, America now comes with a powerful and healthy language of its own....

Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, Germany, July 18, 1959, review by Erhard Gopel

The picture gallery is crowded. The emphasis is on the post-tachists from all over the world, especially the young Americans....

In the Orangerie dominate, through marvellously selected examples, Marini, Moore and Calder....

3. Great Britain

The Times, London, July 20, 1959, review unsigned

The extraordinary wholesale and international acceptance of the postwar abstract idiom is thus clearly brought out (22 countries, from Japan to Chile, are represented), but the effect of such a universal style is less depressingly uniform than might have been feared. A French, an American, possibly a Spanish, and definitely an English manner remain distinctive, and seen *en masse* like this, post-war abstract painting creates an exciting sense of variety, freedom, energy and sensuous enjoyment.

Sunday Times, London, July 19, 1959, review by John Russell

As is usually the case when abstract expressionism is the chief constituent of an exhibition, the massive American section impresses everywhere by its fluency and its power.

4. Sweden

Hälsinge Kuriren, Soderhamm, Sweden, August 1, 1959, review by Gunnar Hellmann

(Article headed: "World Sensation in Kassel")

Regional boundaries are eliminated. Everywhere one finds likenesses between Germans and Britons, Poles and Americans, Yugoslavs and Spaniards. In spite of this, however, the specific qualities stand out strongly; seldom has the specific artistic personality been so clearly distinguishable: such as for example the Germans Wols, Baumeister and Nay, the French de Staël, Dubuffet and Soulages,

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Hälsinge Kuriren, cont.

the Italians Afro, Burri and Vedova, the Americans Pollock, Tworkov and Tobey....

The recently deceased "Automatist" Jackson Pollock certainly was a provocateur with an unsatiated longing for "Freedom for Something." To him, painting was a direct action. The 16 big paintings by him in Documenta II are volcanic eruptions -- expressions of his own existence and of a kinetic energy.

5. Switzerland

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zürich, Switzerland, August 15, 1959, review unsigned

...It was a question of piety to bring attention to Baumeister, Wols, Pollock and de Staël. They all died comparatively young under tragic circumstances, almost victims, creative spirits exposed to contemporary life. Wols, Pollock and de Staël at least have left legacies which influence younger people, and these retrospectives were therefore needed ....

35 names in the exhibition add much to it by their clarity of expression and the courage of their abandon: the North Americans .... Whether what they represent is the beginning, the middle or the end, who can decide?.... Burri is a fake sensation compared to the real one, Robert Motherwell, an American. Motherwell, together with Hartigan, de Kooning, Brooks, Kline and others are part of the American "Aggressive" school, as compared to a no less important group of "Contemplatives." The "Aggressives" go way beyond what a European would dare to undertake in size alone. The picture plane is as wide as the prairie, the mood more impudent, gayer and more tenacious. Morally they are a complete balance of good and evil. Their presence has an immediacy which European nerves can hardly endure-- expressed perhaps by the catchword "abandon." Abandon of self in relation to the viewer, abandon of traditional ideals and systems of thought in favor of.... immediacy, abandon above all of the individual....

We consider the American "Contemplatives" at least as qualified a group, although this did not appear to be the opinion of the jury, because their selection was uneven.... To us the leader seems to be Russian-born New York Mark Rothko, a mystic who makes colors drown and slowly burn out in each other, who lives so strongly and deeply with color that he remains indifferent to the European collapse of form.... Barnett Newman is close to Rothko, as are Still, Stamos and Sam Francis, all with a real gift for color.

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II. Excerpts from articles in periodicals, arranged alphabetically.

Art International, Vol. II/7, 1959, article by Lawrence Alloway

...a majority of the Europeans included do seem to have a common font, from which a part of their art derives. This unity is a strong sense of the past, of the time-bound thickness of the present: it is felt in Europeans as unlike each other as de Staël and Sutherland, Poliakoff and Afro.

By comparison the American section revealed, not the products of a new race of men (as enthusiasts sometimes appear to claim) but, at least, an art with a greater emphasis on present performance. The American artists are not, of course, separated from the past, but their intention seems to be to occupy the present as bulkily, as absolutely, as possible. De Kooning, for example, made in his Women paintings works of art whose fragmented iconographies were packed with cultural cues. However, he says of his new paintings, two of which were at Kassel: "I have to do it fast. It's not like poker, where you can build to a straight flush or something. It's like throwing dice. I can't save anything." This statement implies a hit-or-miss technique, and de Kooning's is just that in his recent work; but it also reveals a concentration on the present, defined by gesture and by thought.

...The American section (though it had some names new to The Museum of Modern Art's traveling list--Cvallon, Frankenthaler, and Rauschenberg) suffered from two omissions which harmed the exhibition's documentary intention. There was no recognition of mid-Western expressionism (Golub, Cohen, etc.) which has connections with l'Art brut and Brauner without losing its highly personal character; and there was no sign of hardedge<sup>1</sup> painting, a mutation of geometric painting which is found on both coasts of the USA. It is an emergent of considerable potential which it was shortsighted of the Museum to miss.

...The proximity of Nay and Brooks, to mention one lesson of the show, made it clear why Brooks has always appeared hollow compared to other American abstract painters. His is abstract art without 'subjects,' decorative effusions like Nay's festivals of coloured balloons.

...Much of mid-century art as an emergent is in the hands of artists opposed to the procedures and values of earlier 20th-century masters. This is the meaning of the "conversions" in American art, those sudden veerings of American painters who, by simplifying suddenly their means and intensifying their feeling, created a new style.

...Another kind of difference between new and established elements concerns Baumeister and Still: laumeister uses crack- and crevice-like forms which resemble the forms in some of Still's paintings. However,

<sup>1</sup> Hard-edge: phrase coined by Jules Langsner, used here to refer to painters like Ellsworth Kelly, Leon Smith, Myron Stout, Naassos Daphnis (to keep to the New Yorkers), sometimes called "precisionists" in the US. Their art rests on cleanly and simply painted flat two-color positive-negative dualities.

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Art International, Vol. II/7, 1959, article by Lawrence Alloway, cont.

the paintings of Still are geared to a different (mid-century) idea of space, whereas Baumeister's space is traditionally recessive, in shallow depth, and contained; Still's space, even in his small pictures, is scenic and expansive. This observation is not intended to diminish Baumeister, only to differentiate him from painters like Still who are specifically post-war.

...From Documenta's sample of the past fifteen years it is obvious that malerisch values are dominant, in "informel" and formal. But this hackneyed observation is not much use without some differentiation between tendencies within the general movement. It is not just one big paint bath (as puritanical critics have suggested): the painterliness is, on the contrary, compounded of various interests, some conservative, some radical, some delicate, some rugged. Perhaps this complexity can be suggested approximately by a spectrum:

1. Sensuous paint, applied traditionally as to speed and facture; the latest form of la belle peinture: de Staël, Bazaine, Guston, Marfaing.
2. The cult of the sketch, which aims to retain to the end the charm of sensitive beginnings, freshness, handwriting, the fragment: Bissier, Motherwell, Tal Coat.
- 3.1 Expanded oil paint: fat paint used with post-expressionist density, complexity, vehemence: De Kooning, Hofmann, Jorn.
- 3.2 Expanded oil paint: oils used with unaccustomed directness in linear forms: Mathieu.
- 3.3 Expanded oil paint: diluted paint used with unaccustomed liquidity: Rothko, Francis.
4. Expanded oil paint, plus enamels: Pollock's use of Duco and de Kooning's use of Ripolin. Note: these enamels were used in ways that stayed well within the technical-esthetic limits of painting in oils.
5. Matter painting: paint, plus sand, plaster, plastics, etc., as thick surface or crust, with a density far in excess of oil painting; close to relief sculpture; monochromatic tendency: Dubuffet, Burri, Tapies. Having made such a chart certain groupings appear which correspond closely to one's visual experience at Kassel. American painters, for example, keep mostly to the centre of the spectrum as I have laid it out to run from extreme refinement to brutish relief. They rarely bury the canvas under a thick skin of matter, but keep contact with the taut white linen.

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Art International, Vol. II/7, 1959, article by Lawrence Alloway, cont.

...The decision to concentrate on painters over thirty-six is one of the reasons for the European contribution having the conservative character discussed above; it might have been different if the age-limit had been lowered by about eight years. This would have admitted American-influenced European painters, but the fact is that the American avant-garde has been, during the period under review, the main pace-setter for abstract art. Though American art may have been plagiarised and parodied in Europe it is, also, the body of art that other artists feel they must come to terms with. Younger painters may risk banal Americanisation but they are, also, less subject to the preceding generations' programmes of conservation.

The definition of sculpture in the 40's and 50's is something of a problem, even without psychology. Its present promotion by a European and an American establishment naturally provokes doubts and skepticism. On the other hand, the presence of artists like Giacometti, Wotruba, and Paolozzi from Europe, and Smith and Noguchi from America, makes one sympathetic. The sculpture show at Kassel was big enough (seventy-seven artists) and representative enough to force one to try an assessment. The problem hinges on linear sculpture. Clement Greenberg, writing late in the 40's, said that in sculpture the monolith was dead, killed by Brancusi. In its place he put "the new construction-sculpture." When he wrote it looked that way, but after ten years of construction-sculpture it is no longer possible to think the constructors have it as a gift from the Zeitgeist. It is typical of the slack state of present sculpture that construction methods have been largely identified with linearism. Only a few efforts have been made to use welding for nonlinear sculpture and these have not been pursued with much rigor so far.

The fact is that linear sculpture, in the ten years since Greenberg wrote his original article, has been killed, not by somebody doing it superbly (like Brancusi in the case of the monolith) but by almost everybody doing it so badly. Already linear sculpture, based on a constructive technique defining a space inherited lock, stock, and barrel from cubism, is decadent. This shows very clearly when it appears as big jewellery, a taste sampled at Kassel (Calder, Cousins, Ferber, Kricke, Lassaw, Linck, Mejer-Denninghoff, Tajiri). The central target of my objections to current open-work sculpture, however, is not the Martian Princess look. It is those sculptors who, discontented with creating cute ornaments, aim at a "mysteriously human" iconography.

...Deriving ultimately from Gonzalez, iron sculpture (and bronze sculpture that has been influenced by iron) continues to manifest personages. Butler (early), Capello, Cesar, Chadwick, D'Haese, Lipton, Meadows, Minguzzi, Mirko, Paolozzi, Richier, Roszak, Smith all create personages that rest pretty complacently on a pre-1945 theory and practise.

...Smith and Paolozzi alone seem to have the imagination and discipline to substantially advance, in their very different ways, the formal and expressive potential of the personage.

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2. Art International, Vol. II/7, 1959, article by Pierre Restany

...Sam Francis is represented by three large canvases of different periods (1951, 1955, 1958), all three very well chosen, which give a very clear picture of the development of the artist, one of the most original and most interesting personalities of American art....

...As usual, the group (of Tobey's paintings) is of high quality, highlighted even more by the presence of a painting of exceptionally fine quality: "City Radiance" (1944).

The large room reserved for the Pollock anthology is at first glance disappointing. Undoubtedly because, conceived as an historical retrospective, the presentation, which is very objective, is rigorously balanced in point of time, which only serves to underline the briefness of Pollock's maturity which extends over a period of barely seven years, from 1946 to 1953. Before and after these dates, it is nothing very much. The canvases painted prior to 1946 show the contradictory influences and the uncertainties of research carried on with avidity by a personality obsessed with terrible personal exigencies. It is a strange surrealist-cubist cocktail, moving from Picasso to Masson to Miro and vice-versa, which must have decanted itself beginning with 1946. After 1953 the tension is eased and Pollock's energies dilute themselves in more conventional attitudes. In this very faithfully recreated context of the intimacy of an artist's adventure, three or four extraordinary canvases of 1949 and 1950 demonstrate the full range of this brief explosion of genius....

...Sam Francis and Rothko make the transition between Paris and New York at the end of a corridor leading to action painting by way of a boudoir reserved for the last devotees of geometry. I do not question the reason for such a symbolic position - apparently for the eye and the spirit - but I cannot see that it gains anything, by association, for the work of Rothko which demands of the viewer silence and meditation. Group exhibitions are almost always unfavorable to this painter whose art, which rests entirely upon a mystic faith in the emotional power of color and light, reacts badly to intrusions of work of a different nature. The New York representation is a useful complement to the traveling exhibitions which have circulated in Europe during the past season. The de Kooning representation gains here in quality (mostly because of the presence of a 1950/51 canvas belonging to Mrs. Martha Jackson: "Night Square"). He dominates without question the whole group of abstract expressionists of the Brooks, Tworokov, Grace Hartigan type. Motherwell surprised me agreeably in two recent canvases of 1958 and 1959 which show a plastic quality and a direct expressiveness seldom evident in his often too intellectual work.

Guston, who is very gifted, remains very much himself. The painting of 1958 here shown is rich in promise. The works in color by Franz Kline are disappointing. A black-and-white of 1954 is happily reassuring.

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Art International, Vol. II/7, 1959, articles by Pierre Restany, cont.

A strange sort of scaffolding - a wooden gallery stretched over the upper part of the room - permits one to admire without climbing up two remarkable paintings by Still (the comparison is fatal to Newman whose obsequious vertical canvases are seen beyond this optical effect in a sharp void). I do not know what Clyfford Still would think of this way of hanging his paintings with a bed canopy, as it were, over them. In any case his paintings, which are of very wide format, are very moving. The one vertical painting, which is in contrast to the general effect and is richly warm, arresting and mysterious, could very well have dominated the group if it had not been placed so high.

...The impression that emerges is that of a certain inferiority on the American side. De Kooning is disappointing in the final analysis. We need not speak of Brooks, Gottlieb, Newman. Kline holds up poorly, despite the talent I recognize in him and the esteem in which I hold his painting, in comparison with Hartung and Soulages. On the other hand, Guston impresses me, to his own advantage, as a sort of American Bazaine; Sam Francis, Rothko and especially Tobey and Still are personalities of the first rank. But one has the impression that only Pollock reaches the level of those great and rare heights on which one places without a doubt a Hartung or a Wols.

But that is only a first impression, to be corrected in large measure at the level of the third generation. We have an immediate example in Rauschenberg (who is 34 years old). Rauschenberg, with his extraordinary mountains, frankly discloses his dadaist derivation. The only "young" one among the great, his unconventional and unorthodox works display a fine intransigence, coupled with a very sure instinct for the possibilities of the specific plastic materials he employs (which, on the technical plane, makes him the equal of Burri and places him a thousand leagues beyond Marca-Relli)....

...Through her willingness to search for an organic equilibrium, Joan Mitchell cuts strangely across the group of abstract expressionists. By her very personal use of calligraphic gesture, Helen Frankenthaler introduces a new style of action painting. Pousette-Dart is already too academic.

The European public will also have an opportunity to have greater contact with two of the most original personalities in American Painting - Gorky and Hofmann. Gorky, who committed suicide in 1948, is truly the leader of what one could call abstract American surrealism. The presentation of this group seems to me to be superior to that of the works included in the circulating exhibition: "The New American Painting." One feels here the progressive abandonment of a semantic approach such as Miró's in favor of a cosmic pantheism. The influence of Gorky makes itself felt directly - and is still perceptible - in his followers such as Bazliotes and Gottlieb.

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The three canvases of Hofmann are rather indicative of his development; (the most recent, "The Prey," is very curiously an "outburst"). There is no question of the importance of the role this painter has played in American artistic life since his arrival in the U.S.A. in 1933. Trained in Munich, Hofmann introduced German expressionism to New York and extracted its essential philosophy from it for his students. As director of a private school, his art instruction had a considerable influence and a great many personalities highly regarded today are directly indebted to him for their training...

The setting of the Orangerie lends itself admirably to this kind of exhibition. The wing of the building which has been constructed harbors a general exhibition gallery and the exhibition continues into the garden, in the open air, between panels of wall against panels of sky. Thus most of the artists have their works exhibited both inside and out, which permits the visitor to employ simultaneously two fields of vision. On the interior the space is theoretical; the structures face each other, as do their forms, directly. Outside in the open air the sculptures must find their own places and must conquer their space. In the first case the work of art is judged according to its function and its relationships- external or relative - with the others; in the second case it is appreciated according to its possibilities of being and existing by itself.

Aside from these purely technical considerations, it is no exaggeration to say that the exhibition at the Orangerie is an even greater success in terms of its plan of selection...

Calder has also been placed apart and removed from the two poles of attraction. His iron plaques, strangely ambiguous, rugged, powerful and light, cutting, sharp and softly blunted, would not have got along very well with the bathers and the seated women. Placed at the extreme end of the exhibition, bordering on the grass of the park, his stables do not show up badly - quite the contrary. Perfectly integrated in nature - just as much so as Moore's human figures - monstrously symbolic and sacred - the stables acquire new dimensions. They have found the open air which they desperately called for in Paris, closed up as they were in the Galerie Maeght several months ago. It is necessary to have seen the works of Calder in this exhibition (his representation is completed by a remarkable mobile of 1950: "Red Lily") to get an idea of their real greatness.

Calder unquestionably dominates the American representation. David Smith is an original personality, unfortunately of uneven talent. "Sentinel II" (1950) or "Australia" (1951) are captivating. All his works have not, alas, this quality. Lipton's forms, technically perfect, lovingly worked out and impeccably placed (real dentist's work) are marred by a gratuitous aestheticism. The false aggressiveness of Roszak is not very convincing: the Swiss Robert Müller succeeds better in this type of sculpture. Lassaw should have been better represented: only the compli-

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cated filigree work of his "Counterpoint Castle" (1957) give an approximate idea of the plastic possibilities of this linear baroqueism. One remains puzzled before Noguchi, whose mysterious and cold objects seem to belong to the ritual of an unknown cult. For my part, I regret that this American group has been thus limited. I should have liked to see Richard Stankiewicz (whose two sculptures shown at the XXIX Venice Biennale interested me enormously) and Richard Lippold. All the American artists selected work in metal: why have they ignored a whole important group of sculptors who work in wood, such as Gabriel Kohn, Louise Bourgeois and especially Louise Nevelson? Through a series of discreet recollections, the exhibition calls to mind the greatest personalities of contemporary sculpture...

Three days is hardly enough to get an exact idea of the ensemble of the three manifestations which constitute Documenta II. It is in the painting section that the spectator experiences the greatest difficulty covering the abundance of material presented. It is also the Fridericianum Museum that leaves him with the most contradictory and most confused impression. But after long analysis, rendered easier by the passage of time, I can say in all conscience that the experiment of Documenta was worth while. Documenta constitutes, on its positive side as well as through its lacunae, its imprecisions and its errors, a source of information rich in profit for the future. Precisely, I hope that many organizers of international exhibitions will profit by this experiment. In any case, this manifestation fulfills the aims of its organizers to present an artistic accounting of 15 years' work - or they can reasonably expect - with certain reservations - that it will. It is the direct opposite of a stalemate. I await with impatience a Documenta III dedicated to the art of tomorrow.

3. Cimaise, September - December, 1959, article by Herta Wescher

...Not only were the Americans given the privilege of having the largest room, that allowed a suitable presentation for the group of works by Pollock, but also were favored by the fact that these works were chosen by a native specialist, Porter McCray, from the Museum of Modern Art, whereas for all of the other countries, it was the German committee that made all of the decisions. Besides this, the works sent by the Americans were grouped together, with special installations made by Director Bode in the bombed building, specially for exhibitions: the space divided by intercalation of the walls, and by the system of stairways that allowed different viewpoints--in perspective or transversely--a principle that awakens a desire to see a Documenta show one day in Paris, in the new building at the Place de la Défense with galleries opening onto the central hall, giving you, on a broad scale, a detailed view, or a panorama, as you might wish.

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Cimaise, September - December, 1959, article by Herta Wescher, cont.

The people that organized the American section clearly tried to present a show that was different from the show seen the year before, and this is perhaps why certain major artists such as de Kooning were not well represented here. However, other artists such as Tworkov clearly stood out. We were shown several new painters such as Michael Goldberg, Norman Elum, and Rauschenberg with his picturesque collages, and also we were finally able to see some recent paintings by Hans Hofmann.

...After the tiring and distracting coming-and-going through the building reserved to painting, that had become "a labyrinth with multiple rooms," in which, for hours on end, you could no longer find what you had just seen, the garden in the Orangerie, where the sculptures were placed, was especially attractive on the torrid opening day, with its calm and coolness. In the primitive masonry cells built in front of the ruins of the castle, it was possible to really concentrate on the works; however, it was deplorable to see sculptures conceived for open air, to be seen from all sides, pushed against a wall, thus unable to give their full effect. Only a few rare privileged persons such as Calder, Lardera, d'Haese, and Capello profited in the vast and magnificent background of the park.

4. Die Kunst und Das Schöne Heim, (no date), an article by Kurt Leonhard

...One hopes that this year's Documenta in Kassel -- this highly official display of works of art intended to be highly unofficial -- will go down in history as the second of several German Quadrennials...

Undoubtedly, this show has as its result a clear refutation of the often-heard stupid idea that since the war nothing new has happened in art. But is the grand gesture of which most of the critics speak really the definitely new thing? "The movements of the arms that are necessary for painting of a canvas contain already in themselves too much of ambitious intention. The movements of the fingers and the hand are sufficient for expressing everything." He who wrote this, Wols, according to the catalogue, stood "in the beginning of the new art movement." Compared to Pollock, however, who started at the same time a similar movement on another continent, Wols stands in the same position to Pollock as Klee to Picasso. But Pollock is no "gesticulator" either, but a "man who forms." Surely every single one of his pictures is a field of catastrophes, a confusion of trails filled with destiny; but every stroke has its right place in the whole, large leading lines go through it and assemble those barbed hooks thrown on the canvas in rage, and the result is just that unity of expression, that harmony of proportions, which can be found in the works of all artists that have succeeded in creating "new realities;" not only in works by Pollock and Wols, but also in Vedova and Fautrier, Emil Schumacher and Bernard Schultze, Rothko and Burri, not to speak of classicists such as de Staël

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and Afro. This standard has, on the other hand, to be bearded by the skilled "spreaders" and "wideners," the Clyfford Stills, Newmans, Pousette-Darts, Goldbergs, and whatever their names be.

The great merit, the unique occasion of this exhibition, is that almost all of the remarkable leaders in the most recent painting can here be studied in special collections, and can be, on one hand compared to the founders of 1910, on the other, to the followers of all movements and of all nations. Certainly even so-called Tachism already long ago ceased being revolutionary; if there still are pictures that are able to shock, then it is rather the empty surfaces of Rothko as well as the montages of various materials of Burri...

5. Das Kunstwerk, August - September, 1959, article by Klaus Jürgen-Fischer

The core of the paintings section at the Fridericianum are the rooms with the Americans. The giant sizes form the all-dominating centre of this representation. Out of the phalanx of these artists, three are no longer alive: Jackson Pollock, who lost his life in an automobile accident in 1956, Arshile Gorky, who died in 1948 and Bradley Walker Tomlin in 1953. The pictures of Pollock are spread out over one big room. Today the art critics are ready to acknowledge this artist as a genius in every respect, since he, besides Wols, was mainly the one who gave the starting impulse to Tachism. The liberating impulse of this deed, with its disregard for all the existent boundaries in art, cannot be questioned. However, one misunderstands this form of painting, if one is looking for results in it. This form of painting is --whether there is the question of a struggle within the existential or the vital sphere-- an act of despair, that does not succeed in finding any real form. Pollock's relationship to color remains unelucidated. A motley confusion of several layers of paint does not yet provide any continuity of colors. Also in those works where Pollock uses a white coating violently forcing together those nuances that do not harmonize, the result shows all the qualities of a tentativeness and none of the maturity. In his spatial writing, which covers the canvas in a fine mesh of color strands, Pollock places here and there a figurative hint, through which he partly revokes his new arguments and makes the validity of his conception questionable. However, even though he lacked genius and despite his bold attempt, his paintings, taken all together, have an overpowering quality.

Mark Tobey, whose works in a much less representative way, are hung closely opposite a window front, shows a much tighter net of color-writing, in smaller sizes. Jean-Paul Riopelle, a Canadian living in Paris, spreads out the never-ending monotony of color-nets by assembling the colors to one homogeneous nuance, but by mixing together small spots of red and green, blue and yellow, in complementary contrasts. Except he and Pollock, others belonging to the painters of the American continent who press hard on the tube, are Willem De Kooning, Franz Kline, Joan Mitchell, Hans Hofmann (who, coming originally from Germany, made a strong impression), James Brooks, Jack Tworlov

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Das Kunstwerk, August - September, 1959, article by Klaus Jürgen-Fischer, cont.

and Grace Hartigan. Their works show all the qualities of that spontaneity that by accident has come to play a leading role in art, but which it, however, cannot play forever. Its validity is contained in its polemical intensity, not in the intensity of its painting itself, in which an anti-pictorial, rather than a pictorial idea is realized. Philip Guston's works represent a milder, impressionistic tachism of the same sort as Gaul's works in Germany. Arshile Gorky, who is on the borderline of this movement, transcribed the swelling forms of Miro into a looser manner, a manner which was alternatively form-tightening and form-loosening. This manner has a close relationship to the pictorial gesture of the early Kandinsky. The pictures of Sam Francis are also on the borders of Tachism. He is one of the few who has been able to establish a legible order out of the color chaos, by assembling color spots into clusters. The foundation for his recent works is a comfortingly clear outlook, which on another level is realized by Clyfford Still in his giant monochromatic surfaces. To the Americans of a clear pictorial sense who, more essentially than Pollock and de Kooning, contribute to the pictorial problems today, belongs also Marca-Relli, (an American) now living in Rome. His collages, made of brown-tinted material, tightly joined together, seen from a distance remind one of Burri; they make an urgent impression because of the order and quietness contained in them. Mark Rothko's pictorial idea of pure color space is not very well shown in this selection of works with dull colors and lack of light...

6. L'Oeil, September, 1959, pp. 19-27, article by Guy Habasque

Let us express our pleasure in at last seeing a manifestation of this kind which excludes the academic tendencies which still too often encumber the biennials and the great international exhibitions. The debate nowadays is no longer between figurative and abstract art as it was twenty or even fifteen years ago, but between the various modes of abstract expressionism.

The choice of the works of American artists was entrusted to Mr. Porter McCray, Director of the International Program at The Museum of Modern Art... Among the generation of painters now about fifty years old, first place must be given, I think, to Mark Tobey, then Willem de Kooning, Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko and the late (regretted) Arshile Gorky. Tobey... has more than one point in common with Klee; he is a sort of non-figurative and more mystical Klee. Despite his great popularity, he seems a solitary seeker, a relative stranger to the problems posed by his younger colleagues. Gorky and Willem De Kooning personify the two vital sources of present-day American art - surrealism and expressionism. The former is the high priest of the unconscious.

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and of pure revolt; the latter represents the direct and somewhat vulgar power of brute sensation. In a different plastic language Still gives to his values their maximum intensity. When I saw Rothko's canvases for the first time in the United States several years ago he seemed to me to be going curiously counter-current to the majority of his American colleagues. This impression has since confirmed itself. In any case, he is the only one, along with Barnett Newman, who has not entirely rejected the logic of sensations and has sought, beyond all geometry, an "internal" spatial order which it is necessary to arrive at if the entire movement is not to veer in another direction.

Among those over forty years old, Kline seeks to create a relative equilibrium between constructive elements and emotional content, while Motherwell seems to pursue, by the most extreme procedures, an impossible solution. Among the young ones, Sam Francis is surely the one who is among the most gifted. He poses with force the problem of the existence of an afocal space without fixed limits. It is true that this path was opened for him by the great and so uneven Pollock, who remains the American pictorial genius par excellence and in whose memory a gallery has been dedicated at Kassel...

Despite certain faults perhaps inherent in this type of manifestation, it is undeniable that the organizers have succeeded in assembling in Kassel a mass of "Documenta" which make this peaceful little city a veritable provisional capital of the arts.



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The Museum of Modern Art  
International Program

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"MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES"

SHOWN AT THE TATE GALLERY, LONDON, JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 12, 1956

The painting, sculpture and print sections of the International Program's exhibition MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, originally shown in Paris as 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS and subsequently circulated to Zurich, Barcelona, Frankfurt, The Hague and Vienna as well as London, was shown at the Tate Gallery in London from January 4 to February 12, 1956 under the auspices of that Gallery and the Arts Council of Great Britain, in cooperation with the American Embassy. Lack of available space unfortunately prevented showing the architectural and other sections of the exhibition. Although a retrospective exhibition of American art from the 18th to 20th century had been shown at the Tate Gallery 10 years ago, this was the first major exhibition exclusively devoted to contemporary art in the United States to be presented in Great Britain.

The official opening on January 3 was preceded by a reception the evening before, given by the Trustees of The Museum of Modern Art for approximately 300 guests representing officials of the British and American governments, art institutions, artists, writers, composers and collectors. The press view took place the next morning and was attended by journalists and critics representing papers throughout the United Kingdom as well as foreign publications. On the afternoon of January 4 the exhibition was formally opened by Walworth Barbour, the American Chargé d'Affaires, with speeches by Lord Reading, Minister of State and Denis Proctor, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Tate Gallery. The exhibition was opened to the public the following day and although no exact record of attendance was kept, an informal report estimated the number of

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visitors throughout the duration of the show as 1,300 per day -- the second highest attendance since the highly successful exhibition of Mexican Art held several years ago. The Tate Gallery included a number of talks on the exhibition in its regular series of guide lectures delivered by its docents during January and February and also scheduled several additional talks by outside lecturers.

Under the sponsorship of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London two American authorities were invited to deliver lectures in connection with the exhibition. On the evening of January 26 Professor Meyer Schapiro of Columbia University spoke at the Arts Council headquarters on "Recent Abstract Painting in America" under the joint auspices of the Arts Council and the Institute of Contemporary Arts; his travel to England was financed by the Specialists Program of the U. S. State Department. The artist Ben Shahn spoke on "Realism Reconsidered" at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on February 2, 1956; his travel expenses were contributed by The Museum of Modern Art's International Council which also paid certain expenses in connection with Professor Schapiro's trip. Both Mr. Shahn and Professor Schapiro delivered a number of other related lectures to special audiences during their sojourn in England.

In addition to the press coverage, summarized in the attached report, there were several broadcasts relating to the exhibition. A lecture on "Younger American Painters of Today" recorded on tape by Professor Schapiro was broadcast over B.B.C. and reprinted in its publication, the Listener. An interview with the Director of the International Program who had traveled to London to install the exhibition

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and represent the Museum at the opening was beamed by B.B.C. to North America, and a talk by Colin McInness broadcast by B.B.C. on its General Overseas program was reprinted in its journal London Calling.

A SUMMARY OF THE BRITISH PRESS REACTION TO THIS EXHIBITION IS ATTACHED

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SUMMARY OF BRITISH PRESS REACTION TO THE EXHIBITION "MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES"  
HELD AT THE TATE GALLERY, LONDON, JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 12, 1956

The exhibition MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, organized by the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art, New York and presented at the Tate Gallery in London from January 5 to February 12, 1956 received extensive coverage in the form of both news articles and reviews. In addition to the numerous articles that appeared in newspapers and periodicals not only in London but throughout England and Scotland as well, items on the show were published as far afield as Bermuda, Canada and Australia. The French and German press also published reports on the London showing, although the exhibition had previously been seen in Paris and Frankfurt as well as in Barcelona and Zurich. The present summary, however, deals only with the press reaction in England and Scotland.\*

I. Volume and Nature of the Coverage

The most striking impression derived from the material on hand is not only the quantity of articles devoted to the show but the remarkable variety of publications in which these appeared. These ranged from reviews and critical articles in every type of London paper from the daily and Sunday Times to sensational journals like the Star or Evening Standard or political organs like the Communist Daily Worker. A number of publications evidently considered the exhibition sufficiently newsworthy to be included

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\* See attached chart of "Principal British Newspapers and Periodicals Carrying Reviews of the Exhibition MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK."

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as an item or feature in several different issues. Among the out-of-town papers carrying stories on the show were the Manchester Guardian, the Liverpool Daily Post, the Yorkshire Post, and in Scotland, the Edinburgh Scotsman, the Glasgow Citizen, Glasgow Evening Times and the Glasgow Herald. Syndicated articles appeared in local papers of many midland and north-western areas.

Aside from specialized periodicals on art and architecture which might naturally be expected to consider the exhibition of interest to their readers, the show was also written up in more unexpected organs, such as those primarily devoted to economics, politics, finance, entertainment and engineering. The exhibition was featured in most of the major weeklies ranging from the Economist and New Statesmen and Nation to Country Life, Reveille, the British Broadcasting Company's London Calling and Listener, and religious journals like the Catholic Herald, Tablet and the Jewish Chronicle. Among the fortnightlies, monthlies and quarterlies covering the exhibition were Architectural Design and the Architectural Review, Art News and Review, Burlington Magazine, Connoisseur, House and Garden and Studio Magazine. Practically every leading critic in Britain wrote one and sometimes several reviews, including Lawrence Alloway, Nancy Balfour, Robert Melville, John Russell, Denys Sutton and Basil Taylor. Three English critics wrote summaries of the reaction in Great Britain for American publications, adding their own comments: Eric Newton in the New York Times, Patrick Heron in Arts and Horace Shipp in Pictures on Exhibit.

In addition to articles dealing with the exhibition itself, several were devoted to the lectures delivered by Ben Shahn and Meyer Schapiro. The Listener reproduced a broadcast talk by the latter, while Shahn was

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featured in a photograph with caption in Douglas Glass's weekly spot in the Sunday Times and also in the front page of Art News and Review which reproduced a self-portrait drawing by the artist.

Illustrations were plentiful and well selected. A full-page spread in the Illustrated London News featured 8 reproductions ranging from Man Ray and Feininger to De Kooning and David Hare. Denys Sutton's 2-page article in Country Life reproduced 5 illustrations (4 paintings and 1 print), and Xavier de Salas' note on the exhibition in the February issue of the conservative art periodical, Burlington Magazine, was accompanied by a page of plates illustrating 3 items in the show. The B.B.C.'s weekly, the Listener featured Frascioni's print The Storm is Coming on the cover of its January 5 issue.

Among the paintings, Wyeth's Christina's World was favored in reproductions as in the written reviews; and in sculpture, Calder's Whale. Otherwise the selection was surprisingly widely dispersed among the various artists and tendencies represented in the exhibition; the choices in most cases seem relatively independent of the respective popularity of the works, as indicated by the written comment, or of the amount of discussion devoted to the individual artists. Paintings selected for reproduction ranged from older moderns like Feininger, Prendergast, Man Ray and Marin, realists like Blume and Levine, or romanticists like MacIver, to contemporary abstractionists like De Kooning, Kline and Motherwell and primitives like Kane. In sculpture excepting for Lopez' Adam and Eve and the Tree of Life the more abstract work was generally chosen: in addition to Calder, already mentioned, Ferber, Hare, Lipton and Roszak were selected. Although prints were much admired by the critics, they were relatively seldom reproduced.

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II. Summary of Comments on the Exhibition in General

The exceptional response to the exhibition, reflected on so many levels ranging from popular to professional, and with comments varying from facetiousness or disparagement to unrestrained enthusiasm, indicates that MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES had a tremendous impact on British public opinion. This may in part be accounted for by two significant factors. To begin with, although 10 years ago the Tate Gallery had had a retrospective exhibition, AMERICAN PAINTING FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY, which included a large number of modern works, this was the first comprehensive showing in Great Britain to be devoted exclusively to 20th-century art from the United States. It was therefore regarded as an important event:

"As the first major exhibition devoted to 20th-century American art to be shown in this country, it gives a valuable opportunity to study the artistic trends now current in the United States...This exhibition of American art is being illustrated because it is an especially important event in this winter's London art programme."

--Illustrated London News.

"The history of modern art in the United States, which is of the utmost fascination, has not yet received the attention it deserves in this country; and the present circulating exhibition at the Tate Gallery...goes some way to remedying the defect."

--Denys Sutton in Country Life.

"(The exhibition) is clearly of service to those on this side who know little or nothing of what is happening in the contemporary art world in America...This exhibition...enlightens our darkness."

--Horace Shipp (English correspondent) in  
Pictures on Exhibit (New York).

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"This exhibition, which is now long overdue, stresses how little we know of American painting."

--Star.

In the second place, the exhibition included a large representation of a kind of painting which was not only striking in itself but hitherto was almost unknown to the public in Great Britain -- abstract expressionism, which soon became the center of heated critical discussion. Largely because this was the first appearance in London of American avant-garde painting, the exhibition was considered a provocative and somewhat disturbing one, but the notices suggest that the energy and radical nature of the American art as a whole acted as both shock and stimulant to its viewers.

The first articles to appear in the London papers directly after the opening indicate that the writers (many of them journalists rather than professional critics) seem to have been a bit stunned. Together with some rather facetious headlines, such as "Mixed Bag at the Tate" and "Love of Mud and String" (Manchester Guardian), "Yankee Doodles" (London Sunday Times) or "The Stillies" (American "painted" as opposed to "moving" pictures -- London Daily Mail), the writers tended to affirm their admiration for earlier masters like Prendergast or Hopper, primitives like Pickett, or the more familiar abstractionists like Marin, Davis or Spencer, while dealing with the recent work in a negative or generally antagonistic way revealing general confusion and lack of understanding. As the more carefully considered reviews by professional writers on art appeared, this initial attitude of shock and rejection gave way to a more thoughtful evaluation of the meaning and importance of the advanced abstract work. Though many critics had reservations as to its ultimate meaningfulness or lasting value, others were equally convinced that here was a vital force which

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would significantly influence the course of contemporary painting in countries outside the United States.

The novelty, interest and provocative nature of the exhibition were repeatedly stressed:

"Whether you like realistic or abstract pictures, don't miss the show of modern American art at the Tate; both kinds are well represented, and the exhibits, whatever their school, buzz with trans-Atlantic vitality."

--Tom Driberg in Reynolds News.

"All in all, it is a tonic exhibition...It will certainly arouse controversy."

--Glasgow Evening Times.

"The sensation of the opening year in London (is) the exhibition 'Modern Art in the United States'."

--Horace Shipp (English correspondent) in Pictures on Exhibit (New York).

"It is undoubtedly 'the talk of the town'."

--Patrick Heron (English correspondent) in Arts (New York).

The organization and installation of the exhibition were praised, as well as the enterprise of The Museum of Modern Art in making it available for showing abroad:

"An outline of American art movements...has been performed by Holger Cahill in the long introduction to the catalogue. Visitors to the Tate Gallery should read it and they will be aided by the clear hanging of the exhibition...The paintings, sculpture and prints...are presented with that efficiency and clarity long associated with the Museum of Modern Art's activities."

--Times.

"The extent of the Museum's resources and the cogency of the individual purchases and bequests compell admiration."

--Lawrence Alloway in Art News and Review.

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"The arrangement of the show, the hanging, the numbering, and the catalogue information are as near perfection as I have ever seen."

--Glasgow Herald.

Several critics expressed regret that lack of gallery space had made it impossible to display in London the architectural section of MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES which had been included in previous showings of the exhibition on the Continent.

Almost all the critics commented on the impression of freshness, strength, variety and uninhibited experimentation that marked much of the work in the exhibition -- qualities that many of the critics regarded as peculiarly American:

"There is yet to appear the Hemingway or Faulkner of the visual arts, but like the musical plays which have conquered the English theatre since the war, this exhibition is an impressive demonstration of the vigour of American art. Indeed it is the energetic rhythm which pervades so much in this show which stays in the memory rather than any impressive or permanently affecting image."

--Times.

"The general impressions of the exhibition at the Tate were of boundless energy, great technical achievement, and a bewildering diversity of styles. In fact, it is clear that it is not a particular style that is characteristic of American art but rather a tremendous, almost reckless spirit of investigation, of inquiry."

--Colin McInness in London Calling.

"What...principally concerns British eyes is the pervading flavour of the whole show. And that flavour I would define as a kind of innocent, uninhibited adventurousness, a willingness to experiment and a freedom from preconceptions... that accounts for its variety, its occasional violence and its almost habitual vitality."

--Eric Newton (English correspondent) in the  
New York Times (New York).

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"The characteristic American vitality shouts at you everywhere in these rooms and makes it quite an exciting show."

--Mrs. A.E.J. Rawlinson in the Derby Evening Telegraph.

Basil Taylor, author of the unsigned review in the Times, attempted to relate these characteristics to other aspects of American culture:

"The 'Older Generation of Moderns'...show qualities which are equally to be discovered in the most recent work and can readily be identified as national traits. There is a particular energy which is unlike anything European. Marin...brings into his small watercolors an explosive force.... (Hartley and Marin)...can be seen as the early representatives of an expressionist current deriving...from association with an intensely dynamic and rapidly expanding society, where the pressure of events and action is intense, spontaneous, and where some aspects of the 20th century have found their most characteristic and assertive utterance.... The technological drive and inventiveness which has been so important in the growth of American society has revealed itself artistically...in the harsh, machine-tooled industrial landscapes of Joseph Stella and of Charles Sheeler, and in the bold, masculine forging of the Calder mobiles."

Similarly, another critic pointed out:

"It must be remembered that experiment for its own sake is part of the American nature."

--Denys Sutton in the Financial Times.

One writer, however, thought such generalizations too glib and possibly misleading, since they tend to emphasize the differences rather than the likenesses between American art and that produced elsewhere and thus might impede its acceptance:

"The question arises: what is American in American art? There are too many artists working in too many styles to permit convincing generalisations about this. One complex of ideas labels as American characteristics independence and violence as opposed to precedent-conscious and civilised Europe....The idea that Americans are perpetual pioneers is now a stock response and often used complacently. ... It seems to me that any definition of Americanness needs to be built up slowly, by carefully qualified and limited generalisations....Although visual art is basically affected

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by its environment it has wider currency than other forms of communication. Therefore, visitors to the Tate Gallery who look at De Kooning, Pollock, Kline, Still, Rothko, will be faced by the art of a new esthetic which, though it is the product of a different culture than ours, is no more alien to us than any other kind of art."

--Lawrence Alloway in Art News and Review.

In contrast to the sense of liveliness which the majority of critics stressed as the dominant impression produced by the show, some felt that behind the vitality there was little assurance. They pointed out that many works reflected a pervading and disturbing sense of melancholy and uncertainty:

"If the temper of a nation may be partly observed from its significant art, then a prevailing uneasiness is suggested by the modern American works....More often inquisitive than truly creative, exploiting the bizarre, the eerie or the novel, most of these artists seem to reflect the character of a continent at once inquiring, energetic, assertive and ill at ease."

--Neville Wallis in the Observer.

"The dominant feeling which I brought away from two visits to the Tate Gallery's exhibition of modern American art... is the sense of loneliness which seems to afflict so many artists. Time and time again one comes across solitary, desolate figures, lost in a world of suburban gardens, concrete streets or rural wilderness. At the same time, of course, there is a great awareness of the contemporary scene; many American artists seem to be journalists manqués, and others are obsessed with a vindictive sense of caricature."

--Connoisseur.

"Any general unity of outlook...springs from a preoccupation with the nightmarish and the nostalgic. The result of all this is nevertheless an absorbing exhibition, one which leaves the visitor with a strong sense of disquiet."

--L. S. Le Roux in the Evening Standard.

"Wit, exuberance and nimbleness are American characteristics and they are to be found in American arts no less than in

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American life...But below the wit is hard satire, behind the exuberance a profound spiritual dissatisfaction, and behind the nimbleness a fundamental uncertainty about where to place the next foot."

--Iris Conlay in Catholic Herald.

"Surroundings of an ugliness from which the painter must at all costs escape, that is the uncomfortable impression one takes away from the exhibition."

--Liverpool Daily Post.

"One feels that many modern artists in the U. S. are even more isolated than those in Europe....If we look at 'paintings' by Still, Pollock, De Kooning, Motherwell, Kline and others...this feeling of isolation becomes acute....All those 'abstract Expressionists' are represented in great numbers in the exhibition. In their isolation they are outside every current of art....Painters like Ben Shahn, Max Weber, Jack Levine, Hyman Bloom still maintain the same sense of continuity....But what loneliness and sadness emanates from all their pictures....Mondrian, Kandinsky, Miro, Dada, Cubism, Dali, Chagall...and many others cast their protective shadows over the Atlantic but the feeling of kinship is lost and only sadness remains."

--Georges Simunec in Art.

### III. Summary of Comments on the Various Sections of the Exhibition

#### A. Painting

Although abstract expressionism was certainly the most frequently discussed and controversial section of the exhibition, there was an overwhelming preference for the more realistic canvases. In England as in this country there has recently risen a neo-realist school of painters who work in violent reaction against abstraction, with the explicit purpose of reaffirming what they term "humanist" values and establishing direct visual and emotional contact between artist and viewer. Whether through conversion to this doctrine or innate conservatism, the majority of English critics found the older generation of moderns, and the realists, romantics and

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primitives in the exhibition far more comprehensible and commendable than the recent abstract work. Among the older moderns Weber, Feininger and Hartley were admired; one critic wrote: "The vigour and conviction of an older generation of moderns...lends the first room an authority unequalled elsewhere" (Nevile Wallis in the Observer).

Of those working in the realist tradition, Shahn and Wyeth were preferred. The former was familiar through his extensive representation in the XXVII Biennale at Venice in 1954; according to Stephen Bone in Time and Tide, his "angular, laconic realism has its imitators in many London art schools."

"Among the realists Ben Shahn is outstanding; he is one of those rare painters whose work has both social content and artistic significance."

--Tom Driberg in Reynolds News.

"Shahn is undoubtedly one of America's most gifted artists, and although working in an austere, sharply focussed, realist style he is capable of great subtlety of color and composition."

--Xavier De Salas in Burlington Magazine.

The Times critic Basil Taylor, however, dissented from this view: he termed Ben Shahn's painting "not much more than brilliant journalism, the artist being absorbed by picturesque effects and his own dexterity."

Though Shahn was sometimes compared to Hopper in mood, the meticulous realism of his Pacific Landscape was frequently paired with Wyeth's

Christina's World:

"Andrew Wyeth's detailed rendering of 'Christina's World'... is probably the most truly American painting in the show. It has a noticeable affinity with 'Pacific Landscape'...by Ben Shahn, who is in many ways the most remarkable American painter alive."

--L. S. Le Roux in Evening Standard.

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"A disquieting realism seems to me the most significant contribution to American painting...Andrew Wyeth's 'Christina's World' depicting with delicate precision a girl lying alone in a field of stubble and contemplating her home, so crowded with associations that they seem almost palpable, is a poignant essay in this kind; and as forlorn is another tempera, by the familiar Ben Shahn, of a mutilated soldier washed up on a shingly beach that all but fills the picture."

--Neville Wallis in the Observer.

Christina's World was undoubtedly the most popular painting in the exhibition among critics and public alike. John Russell in the Times termed it "that most haunting of images"; Horace Shipp stated in his summary in Pictures on Exhibit: "We found the emotive human quality of Wyeth's Christina's World to our taste"; while other critics wrote:

"One of the most fascinating and strangely disquieting pictures in the exhibition is 'Christina's World' by Andrew Wyeth...a very simple, almost photographic painting...The whole effect is unemotionally rendered with extremely delicate brushwork and gives a frightening impression of the odd phobia which can be felt in the wide open spaces of the American prairie."

--Yorkshire Post.

"Wyeth's crippled Christina, whose loneliness has captured all but the stony-hearted, is a kind of pathological excrescence on the face of the cornfield. No one would claim that the girl is an outstanding contribution to the art of delineating the figure, and it is the living coat of wheat flowing across the canvas in a million fine brush strokes that gives the picture its strange distinction."

--Robert Melville in the Architectural Review.

Other critics were interested in the social comment implicit in such paintings as Shahn's Sacco and Vanzetti and Hopper's urban scenes, or more explicitly stated in Blume's Eternal City and Levine's satire:

"The realists show as much concern for form and space as for politics and human emotion -- which is admirable and unusual."

--Frederick Laws in Manchester Guardian.

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"A few of the painters catch splendidly the nostalgic old scenes or the mechanistic modern scenes of their homeland."

--Syndicated articles in the Yorkshire Observer (Bradford) and the Northern Echo (Darlington).

"The speed at which the continent has been transformed in the past hundred years accounts perhaps for the important stream of painting describing and commenting upon the changing face of the American scene as well as social occasions and conflicts. In this tradition, Mr. Edward Hopper proves to have been the most original artist."

--Times.

" 'The Eternal City' by Peter Blume is highly imaginative with its ruined peoples and buildings, so flawlessly wrought. ... More in the manner of the time is 'The Feast of Pure Reason' by Jack Levine...his floridity being sometimes on the leash and sometimes on the loose."

--Scotsman.

"Another typically Transatlantic picture is that meticulously painted bit of surrealist sarcasm in oils, 'The Eternal City'."

--L. S. Le Roux in Evening Standard.

The primitives were generally liked and considered "typically American":

"More endearing and more unmistakably one hundred percent American (than the abstract expressionists) are the primitives and those which depict in painstakingly realistic but imaginative manner social life in the big cities and the small towns."

--Birmingham Post.

"It is a relief to turn to the show's primitives where the radiant simplicity of J. Pickett's 'Manchester Valley' gives abstraction a lesson in humanism."

--T. W. Earp in the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post.

Kane was not only of special interest to the Scottish press but also received separate articles in the London Evening Standard and the entertainment weekly Reveille.

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As has already been stated, it was the abstract expressionists who excited the most discussion and formed the controversial center of the show. Even those in whom the avant-garde work evoked a strongly hostile reaction tended to concede that it was not only a new but probably important contribution to art:

"Our critics, though they like other sections of the show much better -- Andrew Wyeth, Ben Shahn, Edward Hopper and the primitives, Kane or Pickett, are natural favorites in such a literary climate -- even our critics nevertheless acknowledge, often unintentionally, the pressing importance of the abstract expressionists."

--Patrick Heron (English correspondent) in  
Arts (New York).

"American non-figurative painting, though dismissed by The Times and sneered at in the Sunday Times, must be, for many, the heart of the show."

--Lawrence Alloway in Art News and Review.

"First by their equation of technique and action, secondly by their foundation of an iconography capable of repetition, without, however, destroying the early freedom, American painters have led the world."

--Lawrence Alloway in Architectural Design.

"The purely abstract work is very varied and probably needs to be seen again. There is plenty of vigour here."

--Frederick Laws in the Manchester Guardian.

"A score of examples of contemporary abstracts are so livening that it may well be in this genre, for those who like it, that a new poetry of color may emerge to challenge what is, or so it would appear, a fading phase on this side of the Atlantic."

--Glasgow Herald.

"These pictures, particularly the examples by Pollock, De Kooning, Rothko and Still, have a great technical accomplishment and vitality and considerable formal interest; they are not to be written off or treated lightly...For the first time, it seems to me, the United States has produced a body

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of painting which matches the scale and vigour of its technological enterprise and architectural expansion."

--Basil Taylor in the Spectator.

"The aim of an artist such as Jackson Pollock, who practices a sort of automatic painting, is to extend the artist's vision; the results may not outweigh the rashness of the means; but the sincerity of the attempt and the gains it may even secure ought not to be despised."

--Denys Sutton in Country Life.

The new work was regarded as being a force of international significance because it was already influencing European and British painters and would probably do so even more in the future:

"For the first time important artistic influences are crossing the Atlantic eastwards....Jackson Pollock's elaborate tangles of splashed and dribbled paint have their imitators in Paris; the construction of mobiles in imitation of those by Alexander Calder goes on in many studios."

--Stephen Bone in Time and Tide.

"One development in American art, that which has been called abstract expressionism...has gained for the United States an influence upon European art which it has never exerted before."

--Times.

"There is no doubt that the dominant trend in American art today, and one that is making its influence felt abroad, is abstract expressionism."

--Winifrede Wilson in the Tablet.

"In the past ten years...American painting has begun to influence that of Europe. What has...led to the growing influence...has been the rise of...abstract art in Europe.... It is the American abstract artists who have recently given this style a shot in the arm, so to speak, and who have won such acclaim in recent years in Europe."

--Colin McInness in London Calling.

"I was instantly elated by the size, energy, originality, economy and inventive daring of many of the paintings....I

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rate Motherwell's 'Granada' the finest painting in the entire exhibition...Rothko is the most important explorer. Like others in this group, he is discovering things never before known...He evokes the layers of the atmosphere itself...To me and to those English painters with whom I associate, your new school comes as the most vigorous movement we have seen since the war. If we feel that far more is suggested than is achieved, that in itself is a remarkable achievement. We shall now watch New York as eagerly as Paris for new developments."

--Patrick Heron (English correspondent) in  
Arts (New York).

Many attempted to relate this vigorous, experimental quality to aspects of American culture:

"The advanced painting of the younger set...succeeds in expressing much of the American spirit; a delight in virtuosity for its own sake and a refreshing belief in progress. When this art is in turn enriched, as it may well be, by a deeper sense of humanism, then the result may prove of considerable significance."

--Denys Sutton in Country Life.

"Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still...invest the abstract pattern with a certain dynamic quality, so that it becomes, to my mind, a symbol of change, of active renewal, of unimpaired energy behind the successive transformations in life. Here I would say is the positive aspect of what appears negatively or by inference in the older painters...I think the rhythm of these works, once perceived, is proof that in the blend of impulses and traditions from which the American character draws strength, a vision and poetic power are now embedded, such as deserve our attention and respect."

--Julian Hall in Truth.

Other critics, however, who did not find the avant-garde work at all to their taste, tended to deny that it was either meaningful in itself or capable of exerting any lasting influence:

"The large uncompromising canvases of the past few years by the abstract expressionists...have a monumental impermanence, show a defiance of art and a kind of strange anonymity. They should be given the favourite American word 'projects' and

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seem intended for abandonment as the frontier advances, for are they not shock troops in the American invasion of painting?"

--Times.

"In J. Pollock's 'Number One, 1948', C. Still's 'Painting' and R. Motherwell's 'Granada,' the forces combine in a void. Nothing is communicated beyond an apparently fortuitous anarchy of pigmentation."

--T. W. Earp in the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post.

"Their works already wear an air of impermanence."

--Neville Wallis in the Observer.

"The artist's job, as I see it, is to communicate a basic emotion: and here are too many pictures that, despite the fluency with which they use the contemporary language of art, are content to regard it rather as a kind of grammar than as a means of communication, playing gaily with its parts of speech but rarely calling on its deeper emotional levels."

--Eric Newton (English correspondent) in the Times (New York).

"The deliberate pursuit of accidental effects is a contradiction in terms, and...these induced accidents have very often an insincere, factitious look about them which may not be apparent when they are a subsidiary part of the whole but become so when...they form the chief (or only) theme of the painting."

--Stephen Bone in Time and Tide.

The Communist press expressed its disapproval in the usual doctrinaire, pseudo-sociological terms:

"The pointless shocking violence of these works represents the unconscious suicidal desperation which is one feature of the American scene today."

--Robert Stowe in the Daily Worker.

"That most of the work is anti-intellectual and anti-human, and that this is the steady trend of choice at The Museum of Modern Art, to the exclusion of the rich, native tradition of realism, is a reflection of the tragic fact that

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in her arrival at maturity the United States has become the leader of every reactionary policy."

--Charles Morris in the Daily Worker.

One critic denied that there was anything whatsoever independent or original to be found in the exhibition:

"As this is the first notably representative exhibition of modern American art to be seen in this country, one looks for signs of a movement independent of European influence -- for characteristics of specifically American creative activity. At first sight to European eyes the show is interesting without being deeply impressive. There is much individual, exciting work but no overwhelming masterpiece, no seducing master or theorist likely to lead young artists ahead or astray."

--Frederick Laws in the Manchester Guardian.

Other critics, however, called this an inversion of facts or, ardently championing the most recent painting, chided their compatriots for their prejudices:

"Whatever one may ultimately feel to be the value or direction of the American abstract expressionist painters, three facts are already obvious: first, they do constitute a movement; secondly, this movement is specifically American, is notably free of European influence; and thirdly, Pollock (in particular) is just such a seductive artist, as anyone acquainted with the youngest non-figurative painters of Europe or America can testify."

--Patrick Heron (English critic) in Arts (New York).

"I was shocked at the smug assurance with which English critics 'dismissed' the most mature and civilized paintings in the Tate Gallery exhibition of MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES. It is insulting and insensitive to go on praising American realism...and at the same time treat the work of Tobey, Pollock, Still, Rothko and Guston, which brilliantly exemplifies a new kind of painting, as a brash and uncouth reflection of European abstraction... 'Edge of August' (Mark Tobey) was the object lesson and pivot of the exhibition... (Tobey) is, of course, far more the esthete than Shahn or Wyeth, pre-occupied by story-telling, are ever likely to be, but one feels that he understands their essential vision better than they do themselves, and he makes us

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see that the edge of sky in one picture (Wyeth's 'Christina's World') and the edge of sea in the other (Shahn's 'Pacific Landscape') are thin, illusionist stand-ins for his margin of uncovered panel."

--Robert Melville in the Architectural Review.

#### B. Sculpture

Although one reviewer called the sculpture "untidy...and curiously undisciplined," this section of the show was much admired:

"American sculpture possesses a dynamic, brutal strength.... Gaston Lachaise's 'Standing Woman' is an almost overpowering statement....The sculpture section as a whole has an air of assuredness and purpose."

--Xavier De Salas in the Burlington Magazine.

"How many people know that Britain's recent iron age of sculpture was anticipated in America? The sculpture at the Tate Gallery is a reminder that Butler, Chadwick and Clarke were preceded by David Smith (by more than ten years) and by Herbert Ferber, Seymour Lipton, Theodore Roszak and Ibram Lassaw."

--Lawrence Alloway in Art News and Review.

Calder, the only sculptor whose work was already well known, was generally the favorite:

"Alexander Calder's mobiles dominate the sculpture."

--Frederick Laws in the Manchester Guardian.

"Of the sculptors, Calder stands out immeasurably."

--Builder.

"Perhaps Calder, with his fluctuating aerial patterns, his bold organic forms and confident grasp of materials is the essential embodiment of the present art of the United States."

--Times.

In an interesting article in the professional journal Engineering, one writer commented:

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"There was...an exquisite and delicate cocoon of steel petals, called 'Sanctuary,' which was truly graceful and fascinating to the eye....Then our eye lighted on a mass of tortured bronze entitled 'Spectre of Kitty Hawk.'... The catalogue confirmed that it referred to the site of the pioneer flight....As we peered at this malevolent creature...we suddenly recognized the anger and bitterness felt by the artist towards the relentless growth of machine civilisation....The artist had perhaps given a valid warning...a mirror for mankind; he helped us to see, and above all to see ourselves....Art had to be about life and life was dangerously approaching an inhuman state of mechanism....Engineers were as much responsible as anyone else; and because in a technological age the engineer's opinion was respected, had he not a greater share of blame? This was what the artist seemed to have said; we went away wondering if what he said was true."

### C. Prints

Regardless of their stand on the painting or sculpture, critics seemed generally agreed that graphic art in the United States represented a truly original and significant American contribution to contemporary art. It is especially noteworthy that many of the conservative reviewers who were most antipathetic to the avant-garde painting, especially that of the abstract expressionists, admired the technical command, virtuosity and vitality of the printmakers. Though some commented on the influence of the British pioneer Hayter, others stated that in this medium the English graphic artists had much to learn from their American colleagues:

"Many people may consider the group of eighty-one prints to be the finest part (of the exhibition)."

--L. S. Le Roux in the Evening Standard.

"The section of prints should not be missed by those who still hold that art is, after all, a department of the humanities."

--John Russell in the Sunday Times.

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"A collection of prints remarkable alike for their inventiveness and technical resource."

--Nevile Wallis in the Observer.

"Among the prints section are several...demonstrating a new thirst for exploration in a medium's potentiality -- by etching, woodcut, lithography and combination processes, also one which is not greatly developed in the U.K. ...the serigraph."

--G. S. Whittet in Studio Magazine.

"It is in this field that the Americans have broken fresh ground....It is most refreshing to see engravers returning to a large scale....The British engraver Stanley William Hayter has inspired many of the present generation of American printmakers."

--Xavier de Salas in the Burlington Magazine.

"One outstanding difference between this exhibition and anything to be seen in Europe today is the American development of printmaking. The lithos, woodcuts, etchings and aquatints are done with a confident sweep and they range from life-size to miniature. They are mostly exquisite and in every case the medium chosen can be felt as the only one possible for the particular expression of the subject inspiring the artist."

--Glasgow Herald.

"Among the prints...this technical brilliance and inventiveness...has revitalized the various engraving and other reproductive processes which in England have fallen into timidity, dullness or comparative misuse."

--Times.

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PRINCIPAL BRITISH NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS CARRYING REVIEWS AND ARTICLES  
ON THE EXHIBITION "MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES" \*

I. <u>LONDON: DAILIES</u>			
<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CIRCULATION</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
DAILY MAIL	independent conservative	2,174,000	Pierre Jeannerat January 7, 1956
DAILY TELEGRAPH AND MORNING POST	independent conservative	1,019,000	T.W. Earp January 5, 1956
DAILY WORKER	organ of the Communist Party	91,300	1. Robert Stowe January 11, 1956 2. Charles Morris February 1, 1956
EVENING STANDARD	independent, conservative tendencies	788,000	1. ---- December 22, 1955 2. L. S. Le Roux January 8, 1956 3. (story on Kane) January 13, 1956
FINANCIAL TIMES	independent conservative	60,000	Denys Sutton January 10, 1956
NEWS CHRONICLE	liberal	1,355,000	Wilma Moy-Thomas January 13, 1956
STAR	liberal	1,118,000	---- January 5, 1956
TIMES	independent conservative; leading representative English newspaper	over 225,000	(Basil Taylor) January 5, 1956
II. <u>LONDON: SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS</u>			
OBSERVER	independent; influential	475,600	Neville Wallis January 8, 1956
REYNOLDS NEWS AND SUNDAY CITIZEN	labor and cooperative	690,000	Tom Driberg January 8, 1956
SUNDAY TIMES	independent conservative; influential	531,000	1. John Russell January 8, 1956 2. Douglas Glass February 5, 1956 (picture story and caption on Ben Shahn)

\* In addition, 3 British correspondents summarized critical reaction to the exhibition, adding their own comments, in American publications: Eric Newton in the New York Times, January 15, 1956; Horace Shipp in Pictures on Exhibit, February 1956; and Patrick Heron in Arts, March 1956.

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III. ENGLAND OTHER THAN LONDON: DAILIES

<u>CITY</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CIRCULATION</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
Birmingham	BIRMINGHAM POST	independent	38,600	---- January 5, 1956
Derby	DERBY EVENING TELEGRAPH & EXPRESS	independent	over 83,000	Mrs. A.E.J. Rawlinson January 25, 1956
Leeds	YORKSHIRE POST	conservative	118,000	---- January 5, 1956
Liverpool	LIVERPOOL DAILY EXPRESS	independent liberal	75,000	---- January 5, 1956
Manchester	MANCHESTER GUARDIAN	leading provincial liberal daily; influential	137,000	1. Frederick Laws January 6, 1956 2. Stephen Bone January 13, 1956 3. (item on Schapiro lecture) January 28, 1956 4. (item on Shahn lecture) February 4, 1956
York	YORKSHIRE EVENING PRESS	independent	56,000	---- January 5, 1956

IV. SCOTLAND: DAILIES

Edinburgh	EVENING DISPATCH	independent	----	---- May 30, 1955
"	THE SCOTSMAN	independent conservative	55,000	---- January 6, 1956
Glasgow	GLASGOW EVENING CITIZEN	independent; conservative tendencies	over 200,000	(story on Kane) January 16, 1956
"	GLASGOW EVENING TIMES	independent	large circulation	---- January 6, 1956
"	GLASGOW HERALD	independent	76,000	---- January 5, 1956

\* Four syndicated articles appeared in the following papers: Birmingham Gazette, Birmingham; Bournemouth Daily Echo, Bournemouth; Dorset Daily Echo, Weymouth; Exeter Express and Echo, Exeter; Glasgow Evening Citizen, Glasgow; Glasgow Evening Times, Glasgow; Greenock Telegraph, Greenock; Midland Daily Tribune, Nuneaton; Northern Echo, Darlington; North Western Evening Mail, Barrow-in-Furness; Torbay Herald, Torquay; Yorkshire Observer, Bradford.

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V. PERIODICALS

All national unless otherwise indicated.

W: weekly

BM: bi-monthly

M: monthly

Q: quarterly

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN	M non-technical architectural review	Lawrence Alloway January, 1956
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW	M scholarly architectural review	Robert Melville March, 1956
ART	M conservative art periodical	1. ----- January 5, 1956 2. Georges Simenuc February 2, 1956
ART NEWS AND REVIEW	BM devoted to the arts	1. Lawrence Alloway January 21, 1956 2. "Portrait of the Artist 182: Ben Shahn" January 21, 1956 3. Lawrence Alloway February 4, 1956
BUILDER	W architectural and construction journal	----- January 20, 1956
BURLINGTON MAGAZINE	M conservative art magazine	Xavier De Salas February, 1956
CATHOLIC HERALD	W Catholic weekly	Iris Conlay January 20, 1956
COUNTRY LIFE	W country pursuits and cultural subjects	Denys Sutton January 19, 1956
ECONOMIST	W financial and statistical review	(Nancy Balfour) December 31, 1955
ENGINEERING	W technical review for engineers	1. ----- January 13, 1956 2. C.R.H. Simpson (Letter to the Editor) February 10, 1956
ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS	W conservative mass-circulation picture magazine	----- January 14, 1956
JEWISH CHRONICLE	W Jewish weekly	----- January 20, 1956

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V. PERIODICALS (continued)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
LISTENER	W radio and literary journal; official organ of the B.B.C.	Reprint of Meyer Schapiro broadcast January 26, 1956
LONDON CALLING	W radio review published by B.B.C.	Colin McInness (reprint of B.B.C. Overseas Broadcast) March 22, 1956
MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY	W independent liberal	Frederick Laws January 12, 1956
NEW STATESMAN AND NATION	W progressive journal, labor tendencies	---- January 21, 1956
PUNCH	W humorous journal, conservative	Adrian Daintrey January 18, 1956
REVEILLE	W entertainment journal	Marita Ross (article on Kane) February 7, 1956
SPECTATOR	W independent conservative, political and literary review	Basil Taylor January 20, 1956
STUDIO MAGAZINE	M arts	G. S. Whittet April, 1956
TABLET	W Catholic political and literary review	Winefride Wilson January 14, 1956
TIME AND TIDE	W independent liberal journal	1. Stephen Bone January 14, 1956 2. " " January 21, 1956
TIMES WEEKLY REVIEW	W independent conservative	---- January 12, 1956
TRUTH	W conservative political, literary, financial journal	Julian Hall January 20, 1956



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"50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS"

SHOWN AT THE MUSEE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE, PARIS, MARCH 31 - MAY 15, 1955

The exhibition 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS was a cross section of American works from the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, supplemented by a few loans from its trustees and other patrons. Comprising more than 550 works of painting, sculpture, prints, architectural photographic enlargements, stereo-realist slides and models, examples of industrial design, typographic design, photography and films, it was the largest exhibition of contemporary art from the United States ever sent abroad.

50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS inaugurated the "Salute to France," a series of cultural events presented in Paris in the Spring of 1955 at the request of the French Government and under the auspices of the American Embassy, with the personal endorsement of President Eisenhower. As chairman of the visual arts section of the "Salute to France," William A. M. Burden, the President of The Museum of Modern Art, was responsible for this exhibition and for DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, an exhibition of 19th-century French paintings and drawings from American collections shown at the Musée de l'Orangerie from April 20 to July 3.

The International Program of The Museum of Modern Art assumed all costs in the United States for 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS and also supervised the organizational arrangements, assembled material for the catalog and prepared the publicity. In addition, it coordinated the attendant functions and maintained liaison with the various organizations and institutions which sponsored the exhibition in France. Arrangements in that country were under the Association Française d'Action Artistique, an organization responsible for the exchange of art exhibitions between

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France and other nations, and were worked out in conjunction with the Cultural Relations Services of the United States Embassy in Paris. Guided tours, chiefly for school groups, were provided through the United States Information Service.

René d'Harnoncourt, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, assisted by members of the museum's staff, installed the exhibition, which opened with a press view on March 31 and an official vernissage for French and American officials on April 1. A party at the United States Embassy Residence given by American Minister Theodore Achilles and a reception for artists and cultural leaders by members of the Museum's International Council were among the social functions held in conjunction with the exhibition.

By the closing date of May 15, attendance figures totaled 14,530 paid admissions and several thousands by invitation -- a higher attendance than any other non-French show of contemporary art in Paris since the war. Following its presentation in Paris, the exhibition traveled to six other countries and was shown, in whole or in part, in Zurich, Barcelona, Frankfurt, London, The Hague and Vienna under the title MODERN ART IN THE UNITED STATES: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.

A SUMMARY OF THE FRENCH PRESS REACTION TO THIS EXHIBITION IS ATTACHED

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SUMMARY OF FRENCH PRESS REACTION TO THE EXHIBITION "50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS"  
HELD AT THE MUSEE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE, PARIS, MARCH 31-MAY 15, 1955

This analysis summarizes the reception accorded by the French press to the exhibition 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS, circulated by The Museum of Modern Art under its International Program and presented at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris in the spring of 1955 as part of the "Salute to France." The attached chart lists all the principal French papers and periodicals carrying reviews or critical articles on the exhibition, with the names of the critics and dates of the articles where known.

This summary does not include the publicity given to the exhibition in the United States, in such American-controlled papers as the Paris edition of the New York Herald-Tribune, nor in the official publication of the United States Information Service, Information et Documents, which in a special issue of April 15 devoted to the "Salute to France" ran several articles on modern American painting, with numerous illustrations in color and black and white of items in the exhibition. U. S. I. S. also distributed as a separate brochure an invited article on contemporary American painting and sculpture by John McAndrew, director of the Farnsworth Art Museum, Wellesley College, and commissioned a 20-minute color film on the entire "Salute to France" program, with substantial footage shot in the Musée National d'Art Moderne while the exhibition was on view.

Extended reviews not dealt with here also appeared in several British, Dutch, German, Scandinavian and Swiss papers.

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I. Volume and nature of the coverage

The large amount of publicity that the exhibition received makes it apparent that the French critics considered it a particularly significant event, meriting their careful attention. Though quite naturally they did not hail an exhibition of American art with the same warmth as the selection of 19th-century French masterpieces from American collections which was shown at the Musée d'Orangerie from April 20 to July 3, 1953, under the title DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC as the other visual-arts manifestation of the "Salute to France," they nevertheless paid it the compliment of a lively and sustained interest.

From the time of the first announcement in January, an impressive amount of advance publicity appeared on the "Salute to France" in general, and on 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS in particular. Emphasis was laid on the enormous size and comprehensive scope of the exhibition, which made it the most extensive representation of modern American art ever to be seen abroad. Following the opening, the majority of the press dealt with this exhibition separately from other events in the "Salute." In respect to number and length of articles, the coverage in the Paris dailies compares very favorably with that given to DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC. The provincial press also covered the exhibition extensively, sometimes with syndicated articles but occasionally with signed, analytical reviews of their own.\*

The weekly and monthly magazines also gave generous space to the exhibition. The most important of the mass-circulation weeklies, Paris-Match,

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\* In the analysis which follows, all reference are to Paris or national publications unless otherwise indicated.

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reproduced 2 paintings in color in a 2-page spread. The literary weeklies Nouvelles Littéraires and Figaro Littéraire reproduced items from the exhibition in one issue, followed in subsequent issues by reviews by the critics Maximilien Gauthier and Claude Roger-Marx, respectively. Illustrated reviews also appeared in Carrefour, Lettres Françaises and Rivarol, and reviews without illustrations in Aspects de la France, Bulletin de Paris and Dimanche-Matin. A special feature on photography in the Musée National d'Art Moderne exhibition and the concurrent Salon de la Photographie in Point de Vue - Images du Monde reproduced 2 examples from the former show.

The monthly magazines sometimes combined in one feature story 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS and other events in the "Salute to France." Thus the May issue of Plaisir de France ran a spread on the American exhibition and DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC illustrated with 3 items from each. The special Spring issue of France-Illustration contained a 3-page review of the entire American exhibition devoted to the sections of photography and the film. The Paris edition of Vogue for May featured Richard Lippold and John Marin in a 2-page spread. A 7-page "background" article by Frank Parker on contemporary American painting and sculpture appeared in La Revue Française, including among its numerous illustrations 5 examples from 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS. Other general magazines carrying announcements or reviews of the exhibition of varying length, but without reproductions, were Jeune Europe, Larousse Mensuel, Monde Nouveau, Nouveau Femina, La Revue des Deux Mondes and La Table Ronde. \*

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\* It should also be mentioned that the April issue of Réalités contained a very full article on The Museum of Modern Art, with a paragraph referring to the "Salute to France" and several illustrations of items in the exhibition.

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In addition to the general magazines, the periodicals specializing in art and architecture naturally showed great interest in the exhibition. The Paris weekly Arts-Spectacles devoted its entire front page and a run-over to a review by the French critic, Raymond Charmet, and an invited article on modern painting and sculpture in the United States by the American critic, George Heard Hamilton of Yale University; it illustrated these features with 5 cuts. In its May issue Jardin des Arts ran a 5-page article with 13 illustrations drawn from every section of the show. L'Oeil's editor, Rosamond Bernier, wrote an article with 5 illustrations on abstract American artists with special reference to those included in the exhibition. Architecture d'Aujourd'hui ran an announcement of the show in December, 1954, and picture spreads in its February and April issues; and similarly Aujourd'hui: Art et Architecture followed an announcement in its January-February issue with a picture-spread in its March-April number. Techniques et Architecture ran an announcement of 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS and DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC in its May issue, illustrating this with one cut from each exhibition.

Two organizations dedicated to Franco-American relations gave generous space to the exhibition in their publications. France-U.S.A., monthly organ of the Comité France-Etats-Unis, had a picture spread with 6 cuts and an interview with the director of The Museum of Modern Art, René d'Harnoncourt, in its April issue. The quarterly France-Amérique, published by the Institut des Etudes Américaines du Comité France-Amérique, in its Spring issue for April, May and June 1955, devoted a large part of its contents to the "Salute to France." Included was a 2-page article on major tendencies in American painting by Reynold Arnould, Conservateur du Musée du Havre, with 7 illustrations from the exhibition; a 3-page article

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by 4 French architects on American architecture, with 4 illustrations; and an essay on "The United States and the Film" with 6 illustrations.

With respect to illustrations, except for the article in L'Oeil there were few reproductions of abstract art; on the other hand there was a somewhat disproportionate predilection for the modern "primitives," particularly Kane and Pickett. Among the other painters most frequently illustrated were Feininger, Hopper, Levine, Weber and Wyeth. In sculpture, Nadelman's Man in the Open Air and Zorach's Head of Christ appeared most frequently, followed by Roszak's Spectre of Kitty-Hawk. In the architectural section Lever House, the Johnson Wax Company Tower and the Philip Johnson House were favored; among the photographs Smith's Death in a Spanish Village and Mili's Juggler. Otherwise the selection of illustrations was fairly widely dispersed among items in the exhibition.

## II. Summary of Comments on the Exhibition in General

The most noteworthy fact about the comments as a whole is that so many critics, irrespective of their political or esthetic biases, attempted detailed, independent analyses of the exhibition either in its entirety or in part. With the exception of a few blatantly chauvinist critics, or those of marked reactionary taste, the majority showed a real desire to understand American art, at least on their own terms, and to draw conclusions from it. Although the catalog, and particularly the introduction to the painting and sculpture section, was obviously studied with much care, the critics by no means merely parroted its information or formulations but used them as a point of departure for evaluations of their own.

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A. General approach of the critics to the exhibition

Many writers stated that they regarded the exhibition as a significant event because of the opportunity it afforded the French public not only to widen their knowledge of American art as such, but also to gain deeper insights into life in the United States, and to correct misconceptions or clarify observations made through previous acquaintance with our literature, films and technical achievements. There was a widespread tendency to go beyond strict esthetic criticism in order to apply social, philosophical or even moral criteria. Viewing 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS as a panorama of American life and creative activity, the critics continually posed and sought to answer such questions as: Is there an "American" art? If so, what are its special features? To what extent is it original, or is it entirely derivative? In so far as it has special, distinguishing characteristics, what do these reveal of the American ethos? Is America a ramification of the European world, or is its civilization a new one, quite different from our own?

As might be expected, the answers to these questions varied greatly with each critic, and frequently reveal as much about the attitude of the French toward America as about their opinion of American art. While some laid stress on the fact that the New World, as manifested in this exhibition, is entirely different from the Old, others as vehemently stated that our art cannot truly be regarded as "American" at all, since so many of the artists are either foreign born or the sons of immigrants:

"Entering through the architectural display, the spectator is thus plunged immediately into the very heart of American life and should visit the rest of the exhibition striving to substitute concepts from across the sea for his own European ones....What the exhibition brings to us is not only the echo of fifty years of art in the United States but an introduction to what is most real and significant in American civilization."

--Jean-Albert Cartier in Combat.

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"In spite of analogies with certain aspects of the School of Paris, the French visitor will be surprised to find here a world and a vision that differ not only from his own, but also from what he ordinarily imagines of the United States."

--Raymond Charmet in Arts-Spectacles.

"The French visitor will leave this vast panorama...somewhat dis-oriented....The European spectator will tend to judge these works by his own conception of art...without remembering that America has had to create her own esthetic as rapidly as she manufactured automobiles....Apparently the trans-Atlantic concept of what constitutes a work of art differs from our own, in being considered an intimate part of social life. Hence the buildings and the interior design.... This exhibition is profoundly interesting even though disconcerting, for it teaches us something not only of the esthetic preferences of America, but also reveals through works of art the mentality and vital forces of a civilization which is not for a second to be mistaken for our own."

--Jean-Albert Cartier in Le Méridional (Marseille).

"In order to welcome this exhibition and have its inner harmony immediately perceptible to us, we must shed our European manner of thinking or the mode of seeing which centuries have built up in us. ... A new civilization has been created, and doubtless the art arising from it corresponds closely to it. But it smacks of a certain de-humanizing that cannot attract one's spirit."

--La Table Ronde.

"The exhibition will do more to reveal America to us than all its literature or films; all the essential elements are there of a civilization which will evoke in us either enthusiasm or horror. But if one should beware of judging by the usual norms of past centuries, or of seeking to find the Good, the True and the Beautiful, nevertheless how can one overcome an indefinable uneasiness provoked by these deliberate assaults on our esthetic sensibilities? The fragility of our dying civilization is reaffirmed in the face of the monstrous visage of America, protagonist of a barbarous revolution. While waiting for its force to overwhelm us, this force cannot seem to us other than strange."

--Maurice Armand in Rivarol.

"The exhibition serves to help us penetrate directly to the center of American life. It shows us how American art sought to liberate itself from academic lifelessness in order to express the collective aspirations of a civilization which, in spite of its individualistic effort, is still a mass civilization; in it are intermingled the diverse temperaments of people of very different origins, all absorbed and shaped by an urban environment of exceptional power."

--Aurore.

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"The general impression is that of a tremendous and very vigorous effort on the part of American art to become American....America is, of course, a hash of different peoples....Many of the American artists were not born in the United States or are the children of immigrants only recently come there. Accordingly there is a turmoil of European or even Asiatic influences....In the painting all our 'isms' abound ...and the Americans practice still others of their own....One really should go to see this exhibition -- it is a social document even more expressive than any which our galleries or private exhibitions show us."

--René Brécy in Aspects de la France.

B. Comments on the size, scope and presentation of the exhibition

Many critics welcomed the large size and comprehensive scope of the exhibition, which they believed would do much to fill in the fragmentary impressions formed from the few, more limited exhibitions of American art or artists previously seen in French museums or galleries. Others, however, considered it was almost impossible to absorb such a wealth of material, from which only general conclusions could be drawn. The inclusion of architecture, advertising and "useful objects" was particularly welcomed by some as providing clues to the American environment, leading to a better understanding of our "fine arts" in the narrower sense. Some also detected a certain unity of esthetic throughout; they found that the simultaneous presentation allowed them to observe links between the various sections of the exhibition, and revealing analogies between one medium and another.

This was perhaps most explicitly stated by André Chastel:

"The whole vast assemblage would seem a little empty for its size if one were to select...only the masterpieces....One must, however, regard it as the living projection of a world in its birth-pangs. What confirms its over-all authenticity are the unexpected links one perceives between what would apparently seem quite widely separated manifestations. Exterior and interior correspond. Stuart Davis' Lucky Strike could pass as a...parody on the advertising of which it in turn makes use. Paintings are often enlivened by architectural forms ...or traversed by violent atmospheric disturbances...or translate the nocturnal vibrations of the city with its syncopated rhythm. It is therefore interesting to find again in the photographs the same

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rhythms, overlappings and taste for the incomplete, in short all the characteristics of much of the painting....These analogies...testify to the inexhaustible possibilities of the 'symphonic' presentation conceived by René d'Harnoncourt and The Museum of Modern Art. It was necessary to show everything simultaneously: the street and the world of painted images, the urban settings and the graphic expressions."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

Several writers drew attention to the fact that many American museums, and The Museum of Modern Art in particular, collect or exhibit as part of their educational function many kinds of art besides the traditional painting, sculpture, prints and decorative arts, whereas European institutions tend to be more specialized. Other critics, however, were strongly opposed to the inclusion in an "art" exhibition of mass-produced objects designed for utility. The leftist papers were particularly caustic in this regard:

"It is, as Winston Churchill might say, a very tasty biscuit that the United States offers us in the 'Salute to France'...Arranged with all the lavishness of which the most official organizations on both sides of the ocean are capable, it envelops everything in the world in every realm in which a nation's esthetic sense might reveal itself.... With equal care it spreads before us photographs and gigantic models of buildings, paintings and prints, chairs, pressure cookers, shrimp cleaners and aspirin boxes. There is something here for all the esthetes....Thus, thanks to almost 300 works--exclusive of the household utensils--we would be able to get a complete vision of the 'artistic' creativity of our powerful allies, to which the laws of hospitality have required us to devote a major portion of the Musée d'Art Moderne."

--Guy Dornand in Libération.

"The annual exhibition of American art in Paris this time is a considerable one. The paintings are given a large place, huge photographs show us the creations of modern architecture, enormous pieces of sculpture have been transported, and an extensive section has been given over to saucepans, lemon-squeezers, can-openers and plastic chairs--evidences of American civilization that might have found a more suitable public at the Salon of Household Arts rather than at the Musée d'Art Moderne. But there it is; they have wanted to show us everything, from toys for children to paintings for grownups. Only a Cadillac, a jet plane and an H-bomb are lacking but will undoubtedly be included another time."

--Pierre Descargues in Lettres Françaises.

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The installation in general was greatly admired. Many writers, including several most critical of the works themselves, commented favorably on the manner of display and declared that Europe might profitably learn much from the United States in this aspect of museography. The fact that the architectural section was placed near the entrance, thereby providing a keynote and orientation for the entire exhibition, was particularly praised:

"As if to show their taste for clarity and monumental arrangements, their respect for artists and their works, Mr. d'Harnoncourt, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, and his assistants have installed the exhibition in an altogether remarkable fashion. Thanks to their foresight and competence, our Musée d'Art Moderne has been cleaned, aired and refurbished. In museography also we have lessons to learn from the United States."

--Frank Elgar in Carrefour.

"Let us note first of all the excellence of the presentation. This is a carefully thought-out and well-articulated concept of museography, which demands careful selection of material and of space.... The galleries devoted to architecture serve as the entrance-way. Is this not logical? We should know first of all the setting in which life takes place."

--Bernard Champigneulle in France-Illustration.

"The organizers of the exhibition 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS and above all the admirable René d'Harnoncourt, whose taste and virtuosity are equally impeccable, have rightly transformed the entrance into an architectural gallery.... We have here a panorama of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Everything in the exhibition comes from its collections, as astonishing in their ramifications as they are tireless in their educational activities."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

"The catalog, rich in information and reproductions, is an invaluable document for critic and amateur. As for the installation, the clear labeling of each work greatly facilitates the visitor's understanding of the exhibition."

--A. H. Martinie in Le Parisien Libéré.

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C. Evaluation by the critics of the exhibition as a whole

In their appraisal of the exhibition the majority of the critics stated that architecture was the outstanding manifestation of American creativity, the most original and esthetically satisfying form of art produced by the United States, and the one which dominated the other mediums. This was thought to be quite natural, since architecture was regarded as an outgrowth of that technical virtuosity in which Americans admittedly excel, and also as a collective rather than individual mode of expression. Similarly, photography and the film, which also depend largely on mastery over mechanical means, were judged to have attained high levels in the United States. In so far as it was accepted as an art form at all, the industrial art in the exhibition was regarded as highly proficient; it was considered to be indicative of the Americans' fondness for "gadgets" and emphasis on material things. Typography and advertising art, though likewise thought to be typical expressions of American culture, were considered not to have advanced beyond European developments in those fields. Prints on the whole were more highly regarded than the painting and sculpture.

It was, in fact, the latter arts which bore the brunt of the criticism. With few exceptions, only the primitives were regarded as "pure" American products. Many critics dismissed the remainder of the painting and sculpture either as eclectic or over-derivative from European and often--deplorably!--non-French sources; or else they found it mired in an overstraining for originality, leading to tormented modes of expression, violence and a disregard for technical competence:

"The American is our master when it comes to looking directly in front of his eyes and adopting solutions dictated by his temperament, his environment and practical requirements: for example, in architecture, advertising, photography and the film--everywhere that

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active life forces him to operate in the direction of technical progress. On the other hand, he remains our pupil in those realms in which our artists of the past have excelled, such as painting, print-making and sculpture."

--René Domergue in L'Information.

"It becomes apparent that the two arts in which the United States reveals itself most forcefully are architecture and photography, and after that, of course, the film--heir to the figurative arts. Checked or driven on step by step by technical requirements, it is here above all that the Americans have set on their creations the mark of a new style, which could easily be raised to the dignity of a great one."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

"It is not the painting nor the sculpture that constitutes the attraction of this exhibition...No, the important thing is the architecture. This is the major art of the United States, the realm in which she has shown the greatest creative originality and the most consistent skilled practitioners...Before these colossal structures of glass and steel with their vigorously marked rhythms, as before the mass-produced useful objects which derive from logically studied models, one can no longer deny the existence of a form of expression specifically characteristic of that society ruled by science in which America has revealed to us our future--a future not without peril, but also not without grandeur."

--I. Guichard-Meili in Témoignage Chrétien.

"The architectural section is by far the most impressive...Functionalism, in the strict sense, is here outmoded, as it is also in the numerous 'useful objects' which The Museum of Modern Art collects in order to encourage designers and merchants to have enough respect for their customers not to attribute to them a devastating appetite for ugliness. The collection as a whole is alive and magnificently free, and gives an impression of exuberant youth."

--Maximilien Gauthier in Les Nouvelles Littéraires.

"How can we be astonished to find that the geometric lines of the architecture have overwhelmed the forms of furniture and even covered the walls of the living-rooms under the abusive name of easel-painting?...On the other hand prints, and above all photography...seem to be the repositories of man's sense of values; in them the choice of subject, medium, play of light and shade still seek to preserve the vibration of life."

--Jean-Albert Cartier in Le Méridional (Marseille).

"Abstract art is found in two forms: the chaotic expression of the unexplored subconscious, and the quest through technical and material experimentation for a new kind of 'art for art's sake.' Many of the works are artistically valid without being specifically 'American'.

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Expressionism has found a happy outlet in the remarkable photographs and in the printmakers, who have produced work of striking intensity. Typically American is the architecture...pure form, originality in handling of structure. Here, in contrast to the pictorial arts, the United States can serve as a model for Europe. One might say the same of the applied arts, with their emphasis on useful objects for daily life."

--Jeune Europe.

"Can one really speak of an American art? That is the question we must answer...I must declare that nowhere in American art have I perceived an American style....It is strange that in these forty years one and all, rather than seeking the beneficent influence of French art -- the only living art, the least disputed, and the one that predominates in the museums and collections of the New World -- rather listened willingly to the voices of Germany and Israel. The section of prints, however, is richer: it shows welcome innovations, technical procedures well carried out and expanded in the United States, and a great skill in execution. If there is an American art, we find it rather in the models, photographic enlargements and stereoscopic views...which present us with a survey of America's architectural creation. Our own artists might well profit by their advice...In the applied arts...as well as in typography, advertising and photography, America does not seem in any respect inferior to France. It is as builders, industrialists and advertisers that our friends show their creative vitality and originality. In this respect one can truly speak of an American art, to the extent that it is well adapted to the American style of life."

--Frank Elgar in Carrefour.

It is interesting to note that the most extreme expressions of purely chauvinist or outspokenly anti-American criticism generally came from the extreme right or the extreme left:

"That which seems to me the most strange is at the same time the most provocative, the architecture with its 'unbridled experiments.' These gigantic buildings are devoid of all beauty; they are the very symbol of man conquered by his own creation, which is no longer under his control nor to his own scale, and is quite outside of nature. The objects and furniture for everyday use...are well suited to such architecture. It seems that daily life no longer seeks to adorn itself with pleasing colors and form. Do their comfort and convenience really compensate for their ugliness? In typography and advertising it hardly seems that the United States has brought us any acceptable innovations. Some European countries--for instance Switzerland and Italy--are so far superior that comparison is impossible. Yet advertising plays an important role in American life where everything seems to say to the man in the street: don't bother to think--let us do it for you. Photography brings the only touch of human warmth to this exhibition. This

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art (if indeed it is one) reveals many facets of life...What is to be said of the plastic arts? There is nothing here which one hasn't already seen a hundred times before. All these ugly things do not even have the virtue of novelty...The painting(?) decks itself out with various titles but is really no more than a mélange of daubs, over-exaggeration, ignorance and insanity. One can only ask if decadence has come upon us."

--Maurice Armand in Rivarol.

"America prides herself on her painting but nevertheless it is her architects, photographers and film-makers who carry off the palm... All three fashion an American environment where one can live functionally. The photographers...are the artists who can make these honeycombs human--human only for the foreigner, because he doesn't live there and trusts in the poetry that appears in the reproduction. The cold beauty of all this, the beauty symbolized by the film star--will it always seem attractive to our eyes? It requires no more than the wrinkle at the corner of the eye of a Magnani to bring us back to our own universe, where tenderness and perhaps fatalism make us more happy, more tender, more human, more linked to the world--this centuries-old world which we prefer without having chosen it or without having wished to change it."

--Jean Bouret in Franc-Tireur.

"A half century of painting: several exhibitions held in 1950 or 1951 have allowed us to realize how French painting flourished at that time: Cézanne, Renoir, Rodin, Monet, Bourdelle, Signac and his friends, the fauves, Bonnard, the cubists, Picasso, Braque, Léger and many others of every tendency from Toulouse-Lautrec to Lorjou. By contrast? come, let's have the frankness to say it: whatever their school, these are only followers who for the most part seem to have refused to look at nature...An amusing thing is that after having read the introduction which explains the fundamental difference between our abstract art and that of America, one observes that the greater part of the artists are either more or less recent immigrants or apparently the sons of immigrants. But then--where is American art? One would be tempted to see it essentially represented by architecture...if in all this one were not so strongly reminded of a certain Mallet-Stevens and one called Corbusier--two little Frenchmen and nothing more. Well, what about photography? There are some that are very interesting from the double standpoint of technique and artistry, as for example Man Ray, an inhabitant of Montparnasse and a well-known dadaist. Sculpture?...Calder, the inventor of mobiles, was also during the creative period of his youth an inhabitant of Montparnasse. And as far as the film goes, we recall Lherbier, Delluc, G. Dulac, Fernand Léger, and even Lumière and Méliès. Certainly this exhibition is not going to transform us into Christopher Columbuses discovering American art."

--Guy Dornand in Libération.

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Apparently the author of this did not find it illogical to deride us for claiming art produced by "immigrants" or the sons of immigrants as American, while he blandly listed among French masters the Spaniard Picasso and the Swiss Le Corbusier. At the same time, he evidently regarded Man Ray and Calder as having compromised, if not actually forfeited, their right to be considered Americans by their temporary residence on Montparnasse!

In one of the most interesting reviews, the writer took his fellow-countrymen to task for the insularity of their prejudices, stating that their complacency was blinding them to the lessons to be learned from the exhibition:

"It is easy to show that American painting and sculpture are no more than a reflection of European production, just as a majority of American painters and sculptors are European emigrés who have left for the United States with a certain nostalgia for the Old World as part of their baggage...Nevertheless, there is one type of American painting which should prove disquieting, and that is the most recent ....It is almost entirely oriented toward the abstract, but it would be difficult to assert that it still reflects European inspiration. In actuality, American abstract art...turns its back upon European abstraction...One might say that it is the transition from individual nihilism, that is to say of European carry-overs, to something which has a sense of solidarity and might be called collectivism....

"What is really the major, the leading art in America, is architecture. The very important role that architecture occupies today in American life is owing to the country's prosperity...That prosperity, being of mass production, should in fact favor the most collective of all the arts, which is architecture. Thus mechanization has given birth to a new Middle Ages, an anonymous art, for the use of the greatest number. The phenomenon may be noted particularly in applied arts: furniture ...designed at once for mass production and for integration with the architecture; utensils, machines and tools which derive their esthetic from their functional requirements and the requirements of mass production; typography and advertising, conditioned by the need to communicate an idea, a thought, a message to the greatest number...not to mention photography and the film (intelligently and abundantly represented in this exhibition) which are par excellence arts of widespread diffusion--at once the most 'industrial' and the most popular of the arts....

"The evidence of this exhibition should arouse in us a grave and fruitful disquietude. The more collective a work is, the more American it

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is; the more individual it is, the more European. At the extreme of individualism lie silence and annihilation. At the end of the evolution lie two Western worlds. Immured in the false security of our self-sufficiency, we fail to perceive that a gulf is widening more each day between the European West and the trans-Atlantic West, which in spite of itself will one day renounce Mother Europe, leaving it committed to the destiny of all 'master races' when they no longer reign over anything except their own solitude."

--Georges Menant in La Dernière Heure Lyonnaise (Grenoble).

### III. Summary of Comments on the Various Sections of the Exhibition

#### A. Painting and sculpture

As regards the choice and arrangement of the works, some of the critics commented that so large an exhibition, representing so many tendencies, showed American art to less advantage than the more selective, limited TWELVE MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS, the first major exhibition of The Museum of Modern Art's International Program, which had been shown at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in the Spring of 1953. Others felt that the categories into which the works had been divided by the catalog and the installation were somewhat arbitrary or over-scientific. Several critics stated that the choice appeared overweighted in favor of abstraction, while conceding that this was the dominant form of expression in the United States today.

It was frequently said that the wide variety of influences and desire for novelty had resulted in an art of bewildering diversity and striking contrasts, rather than in a unified expression which could be regarded as distinctively American. The "primitives" were praised for their fresher and supposedly more indigenous qualities. Many critics found that American painting and sculpture offered nothing but a watered-down or misunderstood version of analogous tendencies in European art of the same period. On the other hand, American artists were accused of a too-conscious

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striving for originality that had led them to extremism, technical carelessness and absence of formal discipline. Some critics noted a taste for violence and tormented expressionism, which they regarded as more akin to German or "Jewish" art than to the characteristically balanced, rational and finished style of French artists. The most adverse criticism was evoked by the contemporary abstract painters, who were castigated as inhuman, confused, hysterical, tormented; their art was accused of being over-intellectual, lacking in poetry and devoid of human qualities. (It should be noted, however, that two of the French critics most sympathetic to abstract art, Michel Seuphor and Michel Tapié de Celeyran, apparently did not review the exhibition.) One of the few critics to deal at all sympathetically with the abstractionists was Raymond Charmet in Arts-Spectacles, who wrote:

"One can let oneself be gripped by the atmosphere of these enormous canvases which tend to suspend one's consciousness, to envelop one or make it seem as if one stood before a creation still in the process of evolving. We should note among these artists the huge, black, catapulting strokes of Kline, the snowy-white canvas with lively red touches of Guston, the exuberance of the precise, finely pierced strokes of Gorky, the convulsions of Pollock's baroque style, and the enormous canvas of Clyfford Still whose completely black surface is like a door opening on the night."

Curiously, few critics made comparisons between recent American painting and the works of such avant-garde French artists as Dubuffet, Fautrier, Mathieu or Soulages. They tended instead to weigh contemporary American art against their composite ideal of a "classic" French art. The names of 19th-century masters such as Cézanne, Renoir and even Corot were invoked; several critics, in fact, used the concurrent presentation

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of DE DAVID À TOULOUSE-LAUTREC at the Orangerie as a pretext for wondering how, with such examples before their eyes, painters in the United States could have gone so far astray!

In contrast to the general violence which French critics disliked in much American painting, they praised the work of Graves and Tobey, who as exponents of the "Pacific Coast School," were regarded as being freer of international influences and more indigenous than artists of the "New York School." (A one-man show of Tobey was simultaneously on view at one of the Paris galleries.) Graves was praised for his calm, poetic atmosphere, Tobey for his highly refined, personal style, "pregnant with mystery and a beautiful plastic equilibrium" (Bernard Champigneulle in France-Illustration).

By and large, sculpture was preferred to painting. In addition to the familiar and generally popular Calder, some critics especially admired the elegance and balance of Lippold. On the other hand, some raised the question of whether these works could be regarded as sculpture at all: "If the mobiles of Calder or the ravishing geometric caprice of Lippold...had been displayed with the applied arts, one could have taken nothing but frank pleasure in them; they are trifles in the best of taste, suitable for decoration. But as long as the word 'sculpture' retains its meaning, how can we apply it to such works?" (Pierre du Colombier in Bulletin de Paris). Lassaw, Roszak, Ferber and Hare were accused of exhibiting the same tendency to sadistic violence and straining after effect which was disliked in many of the painters.

Excerpts from some of the criticisms on the painting and sculpture follow:

"Few of the artists seem to consider their technical means with great care....The urge to express oneself always seems to lead to the

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inexpressible. We have a somewhat different idea of painting, since we tend to wait for a consummation of accomplishments, a clarification of the visible...and not merely the traces of formidable occult battles...That which we for reasons of simplification call the taste of Paris is repelled by the Germanic expressionism of America and the absence of cubist influence, for painters in the United States neither knew nor understood cubism...They tend to fall quickly into grimacing caricatures or an excited disorder of forms which seem now to be the hallmark of artistic creation on the other side of the Atlantic. The state of sculpture is not very different...The evocative, eroded and brutal forms of Roszak and Ferber seem like plastic echoes of the cruel inspiration which called them forth. The soldered bronzes of Lassaw arranged in constructions of filaments and empty spaces, the delicate nickel and copper invention of Lippold with its contrasting purity and almost contemplative mood, give promise of developments to come."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

"Paintings of extremely diversified kinds are all more or less tinged with expressionism, ranging from the frenzied realism of De Kooning to the abstract caricatures of Baziotes...If much is sacrificed to sensation, movement and disordered agitation, we nevertheless find calm restored in the graphic symbols of Mark Tobey...In their desire not to follow the lessons of the masters of the past, too many painters in America...think they can renounce with impunity even that knowledge of their craft without which no work of art can exist. It is in composition, the organization of a painting, and its construction that they leave much to be desired. Often very acute and full of exciting suggestions, too many of the artists seem content to remain on the level of the research laboratory...The small, spiny and scaly monsters of Roszak, the cruel abstractions of Ferber, also reveal a fiery expressionism, to which should be contrasted the finespun, geometric, threadlike composition of Lippold, pure and balanced -- a glittering music in space."

--Bernard Champigneulle in France-Illustration.

"Plastically the U.S.A. does not yet seem to have achieved unity. For neither ingenuity, theories nor a love of novelty can take the place of the essential thing: the knowledge of the shock sustained when one comes face to face with life. Yet who can doubt that the day will come when some Edgar Allan Poe or Walt Whitman of the brush or chisel will arise, bringing that which paradoxically is still lacking in the art of this young country -- true youthfulness."

--Claude Roger-Marx in Le Figaro Littéraire.

"Assuredly one may admire among these American abstractionists certain artists like Pollock; but to read into him everything that has been read is not justifiable, for these are purely esthetic amusements which have been taken a bit too seriously by influential collectors. The rest of the population must remain...responsive for the most part to paintings which concern them more and which, in the

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words of the Chinese, seem 'heaven inspired.' Notably the success of the self-taught painters and sculptors is a proof of this, Kane and Pickett for example, so closely resembling our own primitives yet nevertheless with a quality which, if it is not specifically American, is at least devoid of any cosmopolitan influences."

--Maximilien Gauthier in Les Nouvelles Littéraires.

"After the war of 1914-18 America felt the need of realism haunting her....She became a satirist with Levine, painter of the down-trodden with Shahn, surrealist with Peter Blume, romantic with Hyman Bloom....One finds an inclination to masochism in the bluish coloring, an atmosphere of boredom, an unbelievable moral constraint....All the prohibitions are reflected here and one understands how abstraction, imported by the Russians and the Dutch, with its all-powerful amoralism came as a liberation for America. To the extent that abstract art is born out of technique, that which is most acceptable in its technique is the most readily assimilated. To the extent that it poses no problems of existence and has no need of any spiritual philosophy, it accords perfectly with the American spirit....It has still another advantage, which is that on the international plane it can rival the abstract art produced in other countries....If a Frenchman breaks with tradition he finds it once again, but the American gives himself the illusion of novelty....The question goes beyond that of art alone; it is rather a matter of nationalism, political economy and intense pride."

--Jean Bouret in Franc-Tireur.

"What finally in this great assemblage at the Musée d'Art Moderne can we distinguish as being specifically American in these works? Two perhaps: Ben Shahn paints a small segment of the seashore with 30 or 40 thousand microscopic shells which seem to represent the nuclear and hopeless desolation of a Pacific coast. Andrew Wyeth represents a young woman in pink seated on the grass, her back turned, in the midst of an agonizing waste of minutely represented blades of grass; she is turned toward a horizon on which are grey wooden houses, no less painstakingly represented and mournful. Here without doubt is the plastic torment of America: infinity represented as a number and not as a concept. Such an art signifies the triumph of the part over the whole, of fact over content, of form over thought, of quantity over quality. It is the symbolism of the Tower of Babel and of the childhood of art."

--Georges Hilaire in Dimanche-Matin.

"It is not so much towards the works of various esthetic tendencies as they succeeded one another in America that the attention of the Parisian public will be drawn but rather toward those works in which our curiosity may find an image of the United States. Here it is not the banal paintings of Hopper which attract us, for however accurate they may be in their evocation of American atmosphere or however vivid may be the impression of loneliness which they produce, they are limited to a private emotion....On the other hand Peter Blume or

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Ben Shahn...or a John Marin satisfies us much more. It is clear that the greatest of these three artists...is John Marin. The intensity of these paintings, the manner in which the painter has concentrated in them a whole world vibrating with light and teeming with life, full of a dazzling force, painted in a semi-abstract technique, is altogether amazing. If one could choose only one American painter, it would without doubt be John Marin...Ben Shahn has an incisive style of drawing, a psychological way of portraying a public and sentimental theme. In Blume's *Parade*...which visibly symbolizes the tragic aspect of our metal and mechanical civilization, we also approach social satire...It seems however that America is today on the track of other esthetic movements. The most recent is abstract impressionism. It would be absurd to deny that there were abstract expressionist paintings even before the war; nevertheless, it is in America that this style has actually come to the fore. ... The movement has rapidly taken an almost hysterical turn...An exception, however, should be made for Gorky whose paintings in this exhibition show him to be a true painter. If one must summarize, we should conclude by saying two things: first, that representational art in America seems to tend naturally to social satire; secondly, that abstract art as it is practiced there, though it may remove the painter from the dreary exercises of compass and rule, subjects him to a spiritual tension very difficult to sustain. The danger of this movement is that it presupposes the existence of practitioners of exceptional creative power...Terrible isolation among the abstractionists, attempts to expand the soul through human contacts among the representational painters: here are approximately the two faces of American art. On the one hand, an abortive study of oneself; on the other, a philosophy somewhat disillusioned by the absurd. What will be born of all this in the future?"

--Pierre Descargues in Lettres Françaises.

#### B. Prints

In general the critics preferred the prints to the painting and sculpture, finding them less given to extremes, highly proficient technically and utilizing experiment in a productive fashion. Typical of the comments is that of André Chastel in Le Monde:

"The section devoted to prints in general seems more coherent and less limited in technique. The etchings of Marin, the lively monotypes of Prendergast and the woodcuts of Weber established a graphic tradition as early as forty years ago. Woodcut provides an excellent medium for the asperity of Baskin and Frascioni or the somewhat mad invention of Schanker. Under the predominant influence of Hayter, the young printmakers have sought out new, often complicated techniques to express real or fantastic textures, as for example in

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the work of Margo or Racz...Printmaking by its very nature is better able to absorb the troubled visions of the subconscious and the nightmarish dreams with which American artists seem so plentifully provided."

### C. Architecture

The architectural section received the greatest acclaim of the entire exhibition. Not only the buildings themselves, but also the installation and the manner of presentation through photographic enlargements, models and stereoscopic slides evoked most favorable comment. Though noting that several of the leading architects were European by birth and training, the critics still regarded architecture as the most characteristically "American" of the various art forms exhibited. The architects were praised for their originality and mastery of a distinctive style appropriate to, and expressive of, American civilization -- a style in which new materials and techniques have been used to create clearly stated, simple forms of impressive elegance. The effect of translucence was particularly mentioned. Urban structures, such as Lever House and Miss's 860 Lake Shore Drive, were especially commented on, though no single building was so generally admired as the Johnson Wax Company Laboratory Tower, and no single architect so universally praised as Wright. Several papers ran a syndicated illustrated feature on Philip Johnson's glass house.

"The great merit (of American architects) is to have known how to master the enormous technical and financial means at the disposal of their country, and to have brought out of all this a style completely in harmony with modern civilization...Thus were born those giant structures whose boldness sometimes achieves an unpredictable simplicity, such as the U.N. Secretariat or Lever House."

--I. Guichard-Meili in Témoignage Chrétien.

"In the architectural section...are the masterworks and the most significant constructions of a nation dedicated to industrial civilization, for which architecture has long represented an attempt to reconcile practical necessities with the conscious beauties of

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technical procedures. The greatest architects of the world, in projects which by their scope and richness surpass all others, work today in the United States, where each to a greater or lesser degree has been influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, that perennially youthful patriarch of modern architectural conceptions."

--Bernard Champigneulle in France-Illustration.

"This is not a panoramic survey of current construction but the presentation of several masterpieces. They indicate precisely the methods and goals of an architecture which tends simultaneously to transparency and to the detailed articulation of its elements, and which seems to have dissected the building into separate parts in order to reconstruct it freely and strongly in a space that is never thought of except as limiting and opaque. It is pleasant to think that a museum has had the initiative to catalog and present these entirely new creations of architecture."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

"All the examples bear witness to an extremely important fact: in contrast to Europe, where Le Corbusier is the well-known 'crackpot,' America has stopped building with modern materials in the styles developed in masonry construction. A concrete style has been born, and that is the American style."

--Georges Menant in La Dernière Heure Lyonnaise (Grenoble).

"There are two opposing styles in architecture: the rationalist current of Mies van der Rohe...whose castles in the air attain a sort of poetry through their immaterial grace and translucence; and at the opposite extreme, the romanticism of Wright, the architect of masses and lover of curved forms, a technician who allows no pretended logic of materials to thwart him, and who causes to blow through his buildings the great winds of the prairie -- without any doubt, a genius."

--Pierre du Colombier in Bulletin de Paris.

Interestingly enough, except for the patently chauvinist comments, already mentioned, the only adverse criticism from an esthetic point of view came from conservative or extremely rightist critics:

"From the moment when in America as in the rest of the world monumental art died, there has been no difference whatsoever between architecture and the activity of the beaver. The high, ravine-like cliffs, the huge beehives in concrete and glass erected by the American builders in Chicago, Pittsburgh or New York, evince the same utilitarian anonymity as those giant refrigerators one can see at Caracas, Melbourne, Rio and, alas, also at Marseille....Nevertheless one must recognize in the buildings erected in America by Frank Lloyd

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Wright or Skidmore, Owings and Merrill qualities of geometric boldness and elegance....The new American architecture at least has the merit of deriving inspiration from the classical and living proportions of the 'golden section'."

--Georges Hilaire in Dimanche-Matin.

"While waiting for America's force to overwhelm us, this force cannot seem to us other than strange; and that which seems to me the most strange is at the same time the most provocative -- the architecture with its 'unbridled experiments.' These gigantic buildings are devoid of all beauty: everywhere their lines and intersections cut grievously into horizon and sky. Whether set in the country or in the midst of cities, these brick, glass or steel constructions are the very symbol of man conquered by his own creation, which is no longer under his control nor on his own scale, and is quite outside the realm of nature."

--Maurice Armand in Rivarol.

#### D. Industrial Design

While as noted previously several critics expressed disdain at the mere idea of including mass-produced objects intended for daily use in an "art" exhibition, others looked at this section with more respectful attention. They conceded that many of the objects were not only technically skilful but showed an admirable striving for lucid form and pleasing use of materials:

"The most noteworthy feature is the effort...that has gone into giving satisfactory form to plastic materials, which are now in the course of transforming the world, and which by their very ductility are disconcerting to artists, for they are too readily pliable to whatever form one wishes."

--Pierre du Colombier in Bulletin de Paris.

"The gallery devoted to applied arts provides a welcome stopping place. All the objects in this section are mass-produced, and while many of them are only utensils, they appeal through the clarity of their forms and the grace of their proportions. One understands how housewives in New York, Boston or elsewhere would take pleasure in using these cooking utensils, oddly shaped vessels and various plastic objects with their brilliant reflections of colors."

--René Domergue in L'Information.

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"One should not be in the least surprised to find that in the United States a museum has a department of 'industrial design' devoted to household arts. Nor should one be surprised to see the name of a designer of shrimp cleaners or pillboxes appearing along with that of the manufacturer....This would appear to be a realm in which the Americans are past masters, and we have much to see and to learn from these examples of modest objects."

--Bernard Champigneulle in France-Illustration.

"America prides herself on giving to the present-day consumer of useful objects for mass circulation a certain quality in material and form, and this is generally the case, but it is hard to judge these in a showcase....Merely spreading before one's view these results obtained by American technique seems to aim too low, if it invites one to nothing more than superficial praise, or too high if it presupposes that these are manifestations of a problem familiar to all. The public runs the danger of not even suspecting the large part played in the life of the New World by these utilitarian creations, where even the least inventions -- the gadgets and the mechanical toys -- have taken their place in modern folklore."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

#### E. Typographic Design

Owing perhaps to the fact that there was simultaneously on view at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris a large exhibition of typographic design organized by the Alliance Graphique Internationale, which included almost all the American graphic designers represented in 50 ANS D'ART AUX ETATS-UNIS, this section was the least commented on in the exhibition. Such comments as there were, were generally favorable; as one critic put it: "In typography, advertising and photography, America does not seem in any respect inferior to France" (Frank Elgar in Carrefour).

#### F. Photography

Next to architecture, the photography received the greatest acclaim of the exhibition. It was generally agreed that the photographers, working in a wide variety of styles, displayed a sure mastery of their

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techniques and a perceptive eye for novel, interesting subjects. As noted in the section discussing evaluation of the exhibition as a whole, some critics believed that the photographs betrayed more warmth and "human" qualities than the painting or prints. Other opinions on this section follow:

"The final section is one of the magnetic poles of the exhibition: it is that given over to photography. Here, with a great diversity of styles and a real ingenuity in seeking out their chosen themes, the American artists prove that the art of the film, like that of drawing and of prints -- in other words, the realm of black and white -- is one in which they move with ease and grace."

--Jean Cartier in Combat.

"As one would expect of a young and dynamic people, their architecture and photography reveal works of great originality....There is nothing surprising in the fact that this modern medium of expression should be adopted by a nation which still has all its future before it."

--Jean Mohr in Point de Vue--Images du Monde.

"Photography and the film are intelligently and abundantly represented in this exhibition; these are the arts of mass communication par excellence -- at once the most 'industrial' and the most popular of the arts."

--Georges Menant in La Dernière Heure Lyonnaise (Grenoble).

"The photographers of America show an audacity which leads them to the borders of surrealism or the limits of fantasy or horror, but also sometimes full into the heart of humor. Gjon Mili's Juggler recalls those animated dreams which are more evocative and more striking than those the camera can witness. Smith's Death in a Spanish Village reminds one of Caravaggio, and Brancusi's Hand and Mallet has the eloquence of strong sculpture."

--René Domergue in L'Information.

Several critics noted analogies with other forms of art:

"It is interesting to find again in the photography the rhythms, overlappings, taste for the incomplete and in short all the characteristics of a great deal of the painting. Thus for example Weston's surrealism with its sensitivity to outer surfaces and textures; or the bizarre and effective montages of Callahan, above all Abstractions in the Street, and of Telberg, who composes just like Ben Shahn. Here also one finds the will to 'expression' carried as far as possible in the humor, the malaise, the horror, the

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true and the false -- as with Penn, Newman and Leiter. On the other hand, the delicate touch of Burden in his waterbirds reflected in the ice seems a discreet and distant reminder of the 'vision' of Graves and Tobey."

--André Chastel in Le Monde.

G. Films

Film, which was represented in the exhibition itself only by three panels symbolizing the development of the art in the United States, was rarely mentioned in the reviews. It was sometimes grouped with photography as one of America's leading arts, or referred to in passing with the assumption that this country's achievement in film was too well known to require comment. (It is possible that the actual screenings were reviewed in some French publication specially devoted to film but no such articles have reached the Museum.) One critic (Albert Mousson in Figaro) mentioned gratefully, "There is absolutely nothing of the modern film stars, which is very restful."

IV. Reactions from Sources Other than the Press

A. Reactions of French artists

In addition to comments expressed verbally at the time of the opening of the exhibition, two letters spontaneously offering the opinions of French artists are of particular interest. One, written to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., by André Masson, perhaps the foremost French painter among the generation born in the 1890's, reads in part as follows:

"The artists of the 'Pacific School' made a great impression on me, and everything in the new American painting which tends in the direction of spontaneous expression. In my opinion, this is an entirely new kind of lyricism...To cite one example: Tobey's Edge of August is an astonishing chef d'oeuvre. The harmony between the inward being and nature, with life in its original state; no resort

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either to actual appearance on the one hand, nor to geometric abstraction on the other -- and so much true conviction! I was bowled over by it....I have come to the conclusion that painters in the United States have ventured into realms which no one has penetrated before, and have done so with a fresh creativity that is truly admirable."

The other letter, kindly passed on to The Museum of Modern Art by the friend to whom it was addressed, is from Pierre Soulages, 25 years Masson's junior and one of the most esteemed among the younger French painters, both in his own country and in the United States:

"Much interest has been aroused here by the Museum of Modern Art which is showing a part of its collections; this exhibition can be said to be a great success. I myself was very much interested by the painting, the sculpture, and also by the architecture -- as to the latter, there is nothing in Europe which can be compared to it. I think I already knew Pollock, De Kooning, Gorky; but I was very happy to see -- and to like -- Motherwell, Rothko, Baziotes. The painting as a whole gave an impression of a most lively movement with very interesting personalities of strongly marked individuality. The sculpture as a whole was a revelation for many of us. I particularly like Lassaw, also Ferber and Lippold. This event has seemed of great importance to many of us and in several cases has assumed the character of a real revelation. Of course it all appears incomplete to me, and I am sure that other and better choices might have been made, more inclusive of the various avant-garde tendencies. Nevertheless it means a great deal to have had a chance to become acquainted with what was presented here."

B. Reaction of the public on guided tours

The Musée d'Art Moderne provided guided tours of the exhibition, in charge of docents made available through the United States Information Service, and principally for school groups. The verbatim report of one of these docents follows:

"The ones who had been guided found a similarity of methods in architecture, film-work, painting, sculpture, photography, applied arts. At the end of the visit they began to sense a secret unity which could give a meaning to our present civilization.

"Architecture impressed the young people. When they discovered the small houses built by Philip Johnson or planned by Charles Eames, they were surprised and delighted wondering at their glass walls, their bright colors, their Japanese delicacy! It was a revelation of a new aspect of the United States.

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"Adolescents were moved to a standstill by photographs like the Birth of a Boy by Wayne Miller, the Spanish Village by Eugene U. Smith, and many others, realistic or surrealist. The appreciation of the painting was different according to the groups. The 'Hautes Etudes du Cinéma' drank Abstract Expressionism like milk!

"Future builders of houses and churches (a school for masons) were enthusiastic about architecture. It was most comforting to see how they listened seriously to all the explanations, how attentively they looked at the pictures and sculptures.

"Nothing definite can be said about the 'Lycées' groups, boys and girls coming mostly from cultured families. Individual reactions of all kinds could be expected each time!

"There is something poignant and desolate about Christina's World by Andrew Wyeth which seemed to fascinate everybody. Suddenly the 'world' of the United States was more human and closer. They liked Loren MacIver and Hedda Sterne. Also Morris Graves, who was known already. They delighted in the Japanese delicate poetry of the Serpent and the Moon and the Joyous Young Pine.

"In front of Still and Rothko's pictures there was always a crucial moment. Everybody was stirred. Sometimes it was difficult to hold people in the room. After a time, one could see them unfold...as if they were reaching a new vision, an unknown universe. I heard them murmur words: 'generosity' - 'something straight, daring, courageous.' It was a 'marriage' of the Extreme West with the Extreme East. It was an 'evocation' of the Mississippi and fabulous mountains. Somebody said 'It should be like a fresco, without a frame of any sort.' For others it was the birth of light or a phase of our planet!

"Calder was no surprise being already well-known. The Centipede by Isamu Noguchi and the Full Moon by Lippold were ardently discussed. Of the latter, somebody said that it was an 'expérience de la pureté.' The most admired was Sanctuary by Seymour Lipton. The meaning of 'inner temple' was fully understood. In the same way they were conscious of the spiritual quality in Ibram Lassaw's Kwannon.

"The visits ended in private conversations. Ideas made their way: was really art considered as vital as food, in U.S.A.? So 'efficiency' was not the 'only preoccupation,' for all Americans? Might the United States be the first to liberate themselves and the others from it? Was there a new hope?

"There were a few complaints that there was not enough of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture shown in the first room. Some of them were disappointed in the film exhibition thinking it was going to be more important.

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"On the whole the guided visits were a great success. They were a first-hand necessity. I am convinced that thanks to them many boys and girls know now that the development of artistic life in U.S.A. is a new hope for the world."

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CITY	NAME	TYPE	DAILIES		CIRCULATION	CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW
			E: evening	M: morning		
Paris	L'AURORE	M independent rightist			425,000	(unsigned) April 5, 1955
"	COMBAT	M independent leftist			63,000	1. Jean-Albert Cartier April 2, 1955 2. "Ironsides" April 7, 1955
"	FIGARO	M independent rightist			460,000	Albert Mousson April 2, 1955
"	FRANC-TIREUR	M independent leftist			150,000	1. Jean Bouret March 31, 1955 2. (unsigned) April 20, 1955
"	L'INFORMATION	M political, financial, and economic			large circulation	Rene Domergue April 8, 1955
"	LIBERATION	M crypto-communist			130,000	Guy Dornand April 7, 1955
"	LE MONDE	E liberal independent			155,000	Andre Chastel April 2, 1955
"	LE PARISIEN LIBERE	M independent rightist			683,000	A. H. Martinie April 4, 1955
Grenoble	LA DAUPHINE LIBERE ET DERNIERE HEURE LYONNAISE	M socialist, serving South- Eastern France			270,000	Georges Menant May 20, 1955
Marseille	LE MERIDIONAL	M independent rightist			106,000	Jean-Albert Cartier April 9, 1955

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PERIODICALS

All national unless otherwise indicated

W: weekly

BM: bi-monthly

M: monthly

Q: quarterly

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CIRCULATION</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOURD'HUI	BM architecture	-----	announcement December 1954; picture spreads February and April 1955
ARTS-SPECTACLES	W arts	-----	Raymond Charmet March 30, 1955
ASPECTS DE LA FRANCE	W royalist	-----	René Brecy April 8, 1955
AUJOURD'HUI: ART ET ARCHITECTURE	BM art and architecture	-----	announcement January-February 1955 picture spread March-April 1955
BULETIN DE PARIS	W Paris; royalist	-----	Pierre du Colombier April 8, 1955
CARREFOUR	W literary and artistic, moderate	65,000	Frank Elgar April 6, 1955
DIMANCHE-MATIN	W Paris; general coverage	-----	Georges Hilaire April 17, 1955
LE FIGARO LITTERAIRE	W literary, conservative	97,000	Claude Roger-Marx April 9, 1955
FRANCE-AMERIQUE	Q Published by Institut des Etudes Américaines	-----	Special articles on "Salute to France," April-May-June issue, 1955
FRANCE-ILLUSTRATION	M general coverage, conservative	65,000	Bernard Champigneulle, May 1955
FRANCE-USA	M published by the Comité France-Etats-Unis, Franco-American relations	-----	picture spread and interview with René d'Harnoncourt April 1955
JARDIN DES ARTS	M arts	-----	article and picture spread May 1955
JEUNE EUROPE	BM political, for European unity	-----	(unsigned) May 21, 1955

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CIRCULATION</u>	<u>CRITIC AND DATE OF REVIEW</u>
LETTRES FRANCAISES	W cultural, pro-Communist	-----	Pierre Descargues April 9, 1955
LUNDI-MATIN	W Nancy; moderate	-----	(unsigned) April 25, 1955
MONDE-NOUVEAU	M international review, independent	-----	René de Solier May 1955
LES NOUVELLES LITTERAIRES	W literary, politically moderate	-----	Maximilien Gauthier April 7, 1955
PARIS-MATCH	M illustrated magazine of mass circulation, conservative	632,656	picture spread April 23, 1955
PLAISIR DE FRANCE	M luxury, cultural magazine	40,000	feature story and picture spread May 1955
POINT DE VUE - IMAGES DU MONDE	W current events, moderate	127,800	Jean Mohr April 14, 1955
LA REVUE DES DEUX MONDES	BM literary, conservative	-----	G. Charensol May 15, 1955
RIVAROL	W extreme rightist	55,000	Maurice Armand May 5, 1955
LA TABLE RONDE	M literary	-----	(unsigned) June 1955
TEMOIGNAGE CHRETIEN	W cultural, liberal Catholic	100,000	I. Guichard-Meili April 22, 1955
VOGUE (Paris edition)	M fashion	20,000	picture spread May 1955