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WESTERN UNION

TELEGRAM

SYMBOLS
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NL=Night Letter
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SF-1201 (4-60)

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

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KLA 126 LA256

L BHA 15 1 CGN PD BEVERLY HILLS CALIF 4 948A PST

DR WILLIAM SEITZ

DLR MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 23 WEST 53 ST NYK

KNOW THAT THE SHOW WILL REFLECT ALL THE LOVE CARE AND INSIGHT WITH WHICH YOU ASSEMBLED IT. CONGRATULATIONS

BETTY FREEMAN.

1961 OCT 4 PM 2 10

Handwritten signature: Betty Freeman

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KLA306 CDV355

(K LLH27 1) PD KANSAS CITY MO 4 3 15P CST

WILLIAM G SEITZ MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

DELIVER 11 WEST 53 ST NYK

UNDERSTAND YOUR NEW SHOW IS TERRIFIC CONORATULATIONS HOPE TO

SEE YOU SOON

SUE AND CHARLES BUCKWALTER.

1961
4 PM 7 32

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Oct. 31, '61

Dear Bill -

I have heard with great surprise that you are being criticized for the forward-looking character of your current show. I hope that this isn't true and that gossip has gotten everything mixed up as it usually does.

But if it is so, please know that the artists would be happy to stand by you with a written endorsement (or whatever is necessary). Nobody can possibly quarrel with the quality of the exhibit and the historical contribution it makes.

Best regards
Allan Kaprow

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Allan Kaprow
791 Glen Cove Ave
Glen Head, N.Y.



Mr. Wm. Seitz
Curator
Museum of Modern Art
53rd Street off 5th Ave.
New York City
N.Y.

criticism there has been of the Assemblage sh
quarters from which praise would have been a disaster. As
the people whose opinion I value and everyone in the Museum,
our togetherness could not be more complete.

What is the story on "Happenings;" etc. this year? Don't
forget to keep me informed about anything that takes place,
and also about the appearance of your book.

May I thank you also for the stimulus which your ideas
and activities gave me when I was preparing the show.

Yours,

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

WCS:sjk

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November 6, 1961

Mr. Allan Kaprow
791 Glen Cove Avenue
Glan Head
New York

Dear Allan,

Thanks for your nice note and offer of support. Whatever criticism there has been of the Assemblage show has been from quarters from which praise would have been a disaster. As for the people whose opinion I value and everyone in the Museum, our togetherness could not be more complete.

What is the story on "Happenings;" etc. this year? Don't forget to keep me informed about anything that takes place, and also about the appearance of your book.

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Associate Curator

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October 7, 1961

VIA
FRENCH

FRENCH CABLE COMPANY

25 BROADWAY NEW YORK, TEL. NA 3-7734

VIA
FRENCH

FRENCH

25 BROADWAY

Congratulations!

For The Art of Assemblage show.
It is one of the most interesting and
timely shows that I have seen at the
Museum of Modern Art.

October 3, 1961

/George E. Crane M.D./

171 Ash Street

Brockton, Mass.

Dear Bill:

Many congratulations
to all of you! The exhibition
is a tremendous and
terrifying and wonderful
achievement.

Grace

APART

VIA
FRENCH

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MEMO FROM
GRACE M. MAYER

NY VIA FRENCH
25 BROAD

October 3, 1961

Dear Bill:

Many congratulations
to all of you! The exhibition
is a tremendous and
terrifying and wonderful
achievement.

Grace

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FRENCH CABLE COMPANY 25 BROAD STREET, NEW YORK, TEL. HA 2-7934
FRENCH CABLE COMPANY 25 BROAD STREET, NEW YORK, TEL. HA 2-7934
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10 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
TEL. PLAZA 7-8157

OCT 2 1961

DS113/T300

PARIS 13 2 1737

SEITZ MODERNART NEWYORK

BEST WISHES FROM PARISIAN NOUVEAUX REALISTES

PARIS MAMMA AND GANG



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FRENCH
25 BROAD



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Telefax **WESTERN UNION** *Telefax* ↑

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CDW040 NE003
FD NEW YORK NY 4 938A EDT
WILLIAM SEITZ, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53 ST NYK
DEAR BILL, THE ASSEMBLAGE SHOW IS THE BEST I'VE EVER SEEN AT
THE MUSEUM
ALLAN STONE. 1049a

1961 OCT 4 AM 10 3
DLS ✓

1270 (1-51)

Sincerely,
kyuastor

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134 Lexington Avenue
New York
October 3, 1961

My dear Bill,

Congratulations! It is such a splendid and beautiful exhibition. I feel very privileged and thrilled to have been able to share a little in the preparation of such a unique and elegant show. I am equally delighted to be part of your extremely handsome and comprehensive book.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Sincerely,
Kyuastou

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To Seitz

Date _____ Time 2:30

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

Mr. Cornell

of _____

Phone _____

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL HIM
<input type="checkbox"/> CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
<input type="checkbox"/> WANTS TO SEE YOU	IMPORTANT

Message too overwhelmed
to stay today -
a strange impact
he will get me tough in a
few days - UH
 Operator

Alpha Office Supply Co., Inc.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Friday

ay article. We thought

cheer you up. Ursula the

he was ecstatic.

om your MOMA fans

9.

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Date Friday

To: Bill
From: Alicia

Re: _____

Liz got ~~xxxxxx~~ an advance copy of Canday's Sunday article. We thought you'd want to see it before others. He's mad!

~~Exchanged~~ This message from Cornell should cheer you up. Ursula the fifth floor receptionist talked to him and said he was exstatic.

Love from your MOMA fans

a.

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1961 OCT 8 10

KLA305 BC657
 B STA530 PD STAMFORD CONN 2 705P EDT
 WILLIAM SEITZ (DLR DONT FONE)
 MUSEUM OF MODERN ART 11 WEST 53 ST NYK
 TERRIBLY SORRY NOT TO BE THERE TONIGHT TO SEE YOUR SHOW WHICH I KNOW IS SUPPERB STOP WILL COME IN AS SOON AS I CAN TO LOOK WITH APPRECIATION AT EVERYTHING INCLUDED ALICIA'S NEW DRESS REGARDS AND CONGRATULATIONS
 JIM AND MELLISA.

Handwritten initials: JMS

Handwritten in red: Channing H. 347 E. 62nd St. N.Y.C. 21

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7 E. 62nd St. N.Y.C. 21

Dear Bill:

Cherry Hill. 347 E. 62nd St. N.Y.C. 21

Wm Sutz AL

Comments

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Cherry Hill. 347 E. 62nd St. N.Y.C. 21

Dear Bill:

I think this was the one
you liked best. Mrs. Wam.

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Newsweek

ART

Oct 8-61

Dear Sirs
 Your presence
 expected is an insult
 to New York and
 New York over. and

Arman's 'Little Hands':
 Doll hands glued in a drawer



Oppenheim's 'Object'→
 Fur-covered tea things



Museum of Modern Art

OUT of the junk and debris of our urban civilization, contemporary artists are making a new kind of art. They have picked up the ticket stubs and discarded bedsprings, the old carburetors and crankcases, the broken toys and smashed crockery and transformed them (sometimes) into works of esthetic value—which for want of any better term can be called “The Art of Assemblage.” Under this title, a remarkable collection of these objects goes on view this week at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. There are pieces by 130 artists, ranging from some of Picasso’s exquisitely simple early collages to a recent composition by the Swiss, Daniel Spoerri, who glued the dirty dishes and remains of his wife’s breakfast to the tray on which she had eaten it.

“I hate using words in new ways,” said curator William Seitz, who assembled the show and named it, “but no other term I could find served as well to describe works of art put together with glue or nails or twine or staples or welding torches, or whatever.” On hand are the surrealist works of Max Ernst, Man Ray, and André Breton. A room is devoted to the famous “readymades” of Marcel Duchamp, including a reproduction of the “Mona Lisa” on which he has penciled a mustache and beard, and a bicycle wheel attached to a kitchen stool. The German artist Kurt Schwitters, who died in 1948, also has a room to himself for 35 collages composed

of bits of newspaper, theater-ticket stubs, and stamps.

Among the younger artists, Britain’s John Latham has some secondhand nineteenth-century English novels (burned around the edges) affixed to a monk’s-cloth-covered door. The Californian George Herms, who uses only what he fishes from the Pacific Ocean or picks up from the beach near his shack, has wired a rusted metal klaxon and a packet of crumbling newspapers onto an old Victorian table base. (He calls it “Poet.”) The French sculptor César has hydraulically compressed a deviscerated jonquilly-yellow Buick convertible (1956) into a column 6 feet high and 2 feet wide. (The car belonged to the collector and art historian John Rewald, who voluntarily sacrificed it to the cause of art.)

Butterfly Wings: Joseph Cornell, an American famous for his esoteric wooden boxes filled with glass ice cubes, jewelry, dried flowers, and feathers, has a whole hall to himself, dominated by his fanciful “Medici Slot Machine.” Robert Mallery has a precariously balanced sculpture made of wood, steel, rags, sand, and fiber glass (photo above). Du-buffet has a wall to himself for his composition of tobacco leaves pasted onto cardboard, his sponge sculptures, and a collage made of butterfly wings.

To help explain to museum-goers what the assemblers are up to, 47-year-old curator Seitz, who left a post as professor

of art at Princeton last year to join the museum staff, has published an entertaining and scholarly work* released in conjunction with the exhibition. “The history of assemblage, from Picasso and Man Ray on,” he writes, “is punctured with the sharp points of nails. Used expressively, how can they fail to elicit at least a tremor of the meaning they have in a thousand crucifixions painted between the sixth and twentieth centuries? Forks, knives, dishes, and other eating utensils, playing cards, ropes, flags, clocks, shoes, wheels . . . [provide] an unending reverberation of object-meanings that, because of their associations, reach back to the origins of human consciousness and to the depths of human personality . . . [The manifestations] once more demonstrate the recurrent need felt by artists to flee the current circle of approval while seeking recognition on another level. To return again from abstraction to nature, to work with the materials of life rather than art.”

Seitz commented on his show last week: “We are involved in an international phenomenon. In the spirit of the show, I have tried to present all its edges. They should not be softened. At least the spectator should know what he is annoyed about. Here he will be able to recognize it. It will raise the question of taste and anti-taste very sharply.”

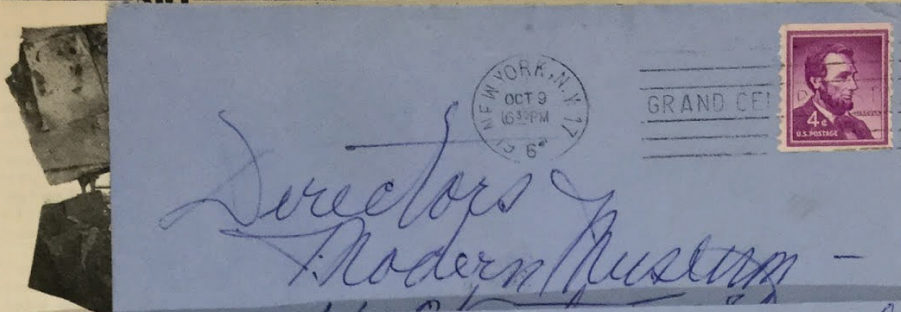
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Newsweek

ART



gullibility of Museum an insult to true
Boards? I fear art — to allow
for America's future these morons to
when we have such exhibit their warped
a decadent show minds. Or are
Sincerely M. Rogers they showing the

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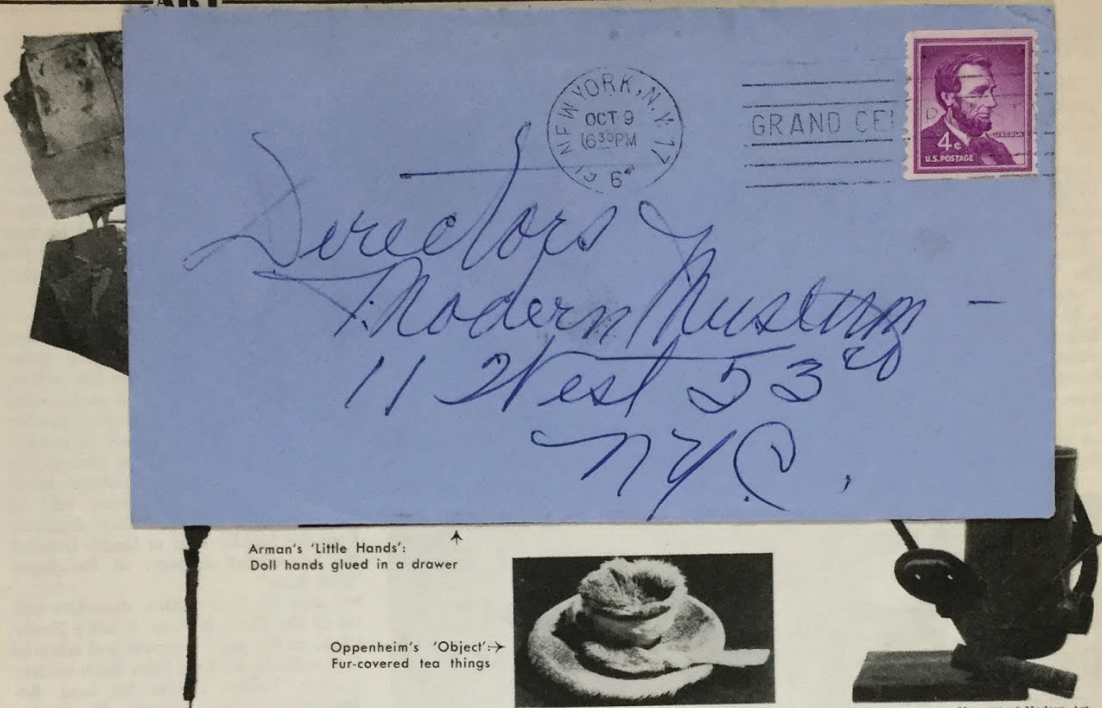
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Newsweek

ART



Arman's 'Little Hands':
Doll hands glued in a drawer

Oppenheim's 'Object':
Fur-covered tea things

Museum of Modern Art

OUT of the junk and debris of our urban civilization, contemporary artists are making a new kind of art. They have picked up the ticket stubs and discarded bedsprings, the old carburetors and crankcases, the broken toys and smashed crockery and transformed them (sometimes) into works of esthetic value—which for want of any better term can be called “The Art of Assemblage.” Under this title, a remarkable collection of these objects goes on view this week at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. There are pieces by 130 artists, ranging from some of Picasso’s exquisitely simple early collages to a recent composition by the Swiss, Daniel Spoerri, who glued the dirty dishes and remains of his wife’s breakfast to the tray on which she had eaten it.

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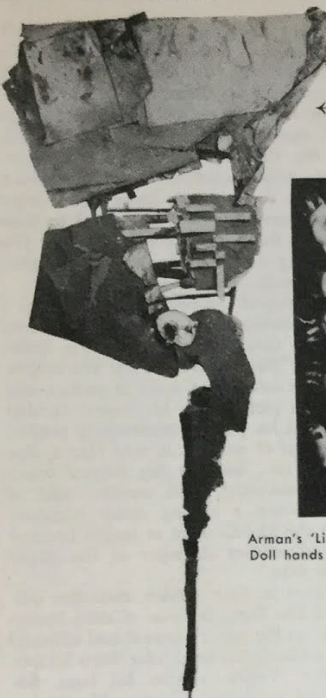
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Newsweek

ART

Scavenger Hunt



← Mallary's 'Jouster': Assembled debris

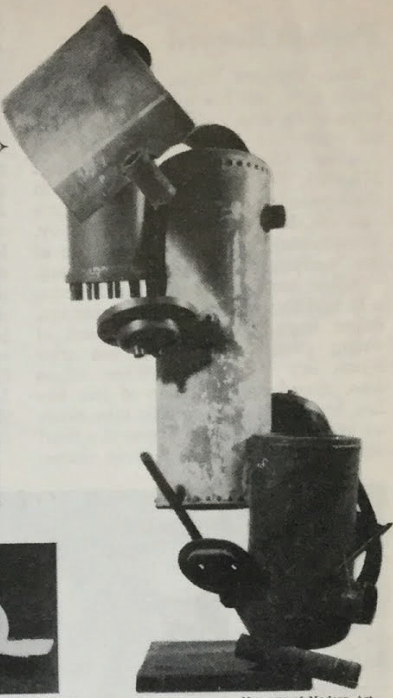
By Stankiewicz: Untitled boiler →



Arman's 'Little Hands':
Doll hands glued in a drawer



Oppenheim's 'Object' →
Fur-covered tea things



Museum of Modern Art

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ALL UNQUIET ON THE WIDE ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST FRONT

NYT 10/15/61

By STUART PRESTON

THE Guggenheim Museum's large new loan exhibition, "American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists, 1961," would have done well to concentrate exclusively on one or the other rather than try, more cunningly than successfully, to maintain that a single unbroken tradition connects the fauves of 1945 with those of 1961.

For the new abstract front is still in a fluid condition, launching sorties in a number of directions. It is not one but many things while abstract expressionism proper already has its niche in history. The latter came into being at the end of the last war, negatively as a break with exhausted traditions, and positively as a determination to express in painting the new awareness of psychological elements in the making of a work of art, and

of the direct intervention of the unconscious on the artist's manner of working. With neither of these was tradition able to cope with any success relevant to modern times.

Although, as Meyer Schapiro points out, abstract expressionism derived stylistically in part from the abstract wing of European expressionism and owed much, as well, to surrealism in its cultivation of instinct and free association, it actually represented an unparalleled plunge into the depths of the creative, not necessarily artistic, personality.

Inwardness

Hence the cult of accidental effects; the fondness for exploiting the gratuitous act, for the sensuousness of pigment itself, and for the feelings of liberation in self-expressive marks and gestures.

Since these arbitrary manipulations sprang fully armed from the artist's pre-visual inner being abstract expressionism was ipso facto at a furthest remove from any kind of realism. However the fact remains that exclusion from sharing the action painter's interests and emotions does not seem to have impaired genuine appreciation of his work on the part of the observer. Undoubtedly snobbery and the desire to be in the swim affected some conversions to the new style. They cannot pretend to account for the decisive influence it has had on contemporary painting the world over. Furthermore it enlarged the basis of appreciation to include elements unknown or disregarded in painting before then. To quote Meyer Schapiro once more, it "made people more conscious of painting as a living art."

Such was the significance of

the abstract expressionist revolution. Like all extreme positions it involved losses as well as gains, in many ways impoverishing painting by cutting off large areas of meaningful experience which had previously been art's province. There was something absurd in reducing the act of painting to private notations to which access for the outsider was difficult if not impossible. And by canonizing

of wild exasperation at art for art's sake.

On the whole the choice of paintings at the Guggenheim is "loaded" in the direction of assuming that the new imagists and the abstract expressionists are almost indivisible in their rarefied non-objective gambits. This affects the selection from both groups. The new explorations of form and idea is severely played down, and we

dated 1961. Is that force spent?

Thus the impression finally made is an oddly tame one, even, on occasion, slick and academic. Presenting both groups as dexterous manual performers, excelling in the making of eye-catching, harmless pictures is an ungrateful claw-pulling operation.

New Directions

Three aspects of abstract painting's adventurousness today are handsomely represented at the Guggenheim, geometrical lucidity with Ellsworth Kelly; symbolism with Jasper Johns, and highly charged technical expressiveness in Robert Richtenburg's fiery knots of color. The same tendencies make their appearance in a number of gallery shows this week.

Geometrics are practiced by two, austere by Bolotowsky at the Borgenicht Gallery, more relaxed by Helen Gerardia at the Bodley. Scrupulously planned, measured and balanced in both shape and color, the former's lack, somehow, the weighty authoritative of Mondrian with whom Bolotowsky must be compared. He executes a pirouette rather than a graver measure, whereas Miss Gerardia's weavings of planes, though engaging, lack this genre's necessary tension.

Muffled, semi-precise organic or flower forms float with effortless elegance in Paul Jenkins' new abstract oils at Martha Jackson's. For color and exotic character they might be gigantically enlarged depictions of anemones. One can only admire the skill with which paint stains the canvas apparently without the intervention of the human hand. Jenkins strikes an exquisite rather than a powerful note.

MAX WEBER, 1881-1961

MAX WEBER, born the same year as Picasso, was one of a great generation. On the fourth of this month he died at the age of eighty, after a lifetime of struggle crowned by recognition and respect. For many years he had been an historic figure, and though ill-health had made him an unseen presence, it gave one warmth to know that he was still there.

He was in at the start in Paris, the first American painter to practice the new ideas with understanding and skill. Later in America, in all the slow battles of the emerging new vision, he was at the forefront with Alfred Stieglitz at "291"—the little gallery on Fifth Avenue that Stieglitz made famous. His work passed through many stages, derived from Fauvist, Cubist, and Futurist ideas, and for a time he shared profitably in the illusion that such ideas could capture the violent dynamism of his country.

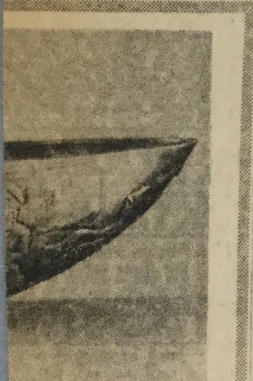
Perhaps it was these exercises that allowed him, as with many good artists in old age, to reclaim a whole tract of feeling and experience within himself. The later paintings in which figures, shadowed and ceremonial, walk through membranes of light, have the authority and warmth of a style of old age. It is these pictures that will assure him of remembrance.

—BRIAN O'DOHERTY.

the gesture and the accident the way was laid open, as anyone can see in the present show, for camp followers to revel in the decorative and the chichi.

Taking more notice of art than of life it actually narrowed the former's compass. Inevitably a reaction has come, and with a vengeance. One way of interpreting the torrent of romantic fantasy and literary symbolism flooding the Museum of Modern Art's "Assemblage" show is to see in it the expres-

have Motherwell as an esthetic non-objectivist rather than as the creator of the powerful Spanish War abstractions; Hans Hofmann in a mild and chastened mood; and de Kooning as a formalist rather than as a shattering figure painter. Both the James Brooks and the Philip Guston are curiously tentative and indecisive. Pulling punches does no service to either school. But a darker thought occurs. The abstract expressionist pictures are all



exhibition of Iranian Iran opens in Paris ions. Above, a silver Gallery, Baltimore.

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340 West 56th Street
New York 19
October 14, 1961

Mr. William Seitz
Associate Curator
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19

Dear Mr. Seitz:

I think you did an exceptional job with the Assemblages exhibition. The Duchamp section is particularly brilliantly presented. The Cornell section slowed me down in the right place, and the Schwitters section also. The exhibition as a whole is one of the most interesting and best of all the many first-rate exhibitions put on by the Museum.

Sincerely

Lawrence Campbell

Lawrence Campbell
staff of Art News magazine and instructor, Art Dept.
Brooklyn College; director of Publications for Art
Students League of N.Y.

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October 17, 1961

Mr. Lawrence Campbell
340 West 56th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I was extremely nice of you to let me know that you liked the assemblage exhibition. I read your reviews for many years. Didn't you even review a show of my own once? It also seems that we have met, but I cannot remember precisely where.

With best regards,

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

WCS:sjk

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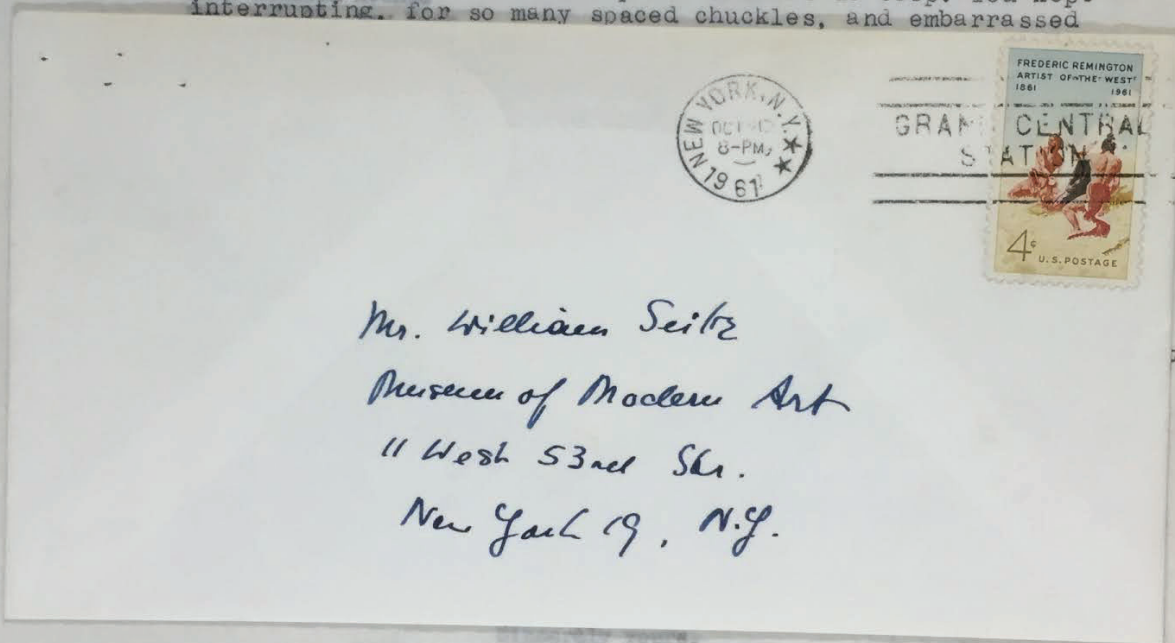
A Comment

1181 Madison Avenue
New York 28, N.Y.
Oct. 20, 1961

November 22, 1961

Dear William Seitz:

Apropos of yesterday, it missed being a stimulating evening. Why? There seemed to be two panel members de trop. You kept interrupting for so many spaced chuckles, and embarrassed



*Mr. William Seitz
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
New York 19, N.Y.*

Sincerely,

Christl Ritter

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
Christl Ritter

Mr. William C. Seitz
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19, N.Y.

P.S. Rauschenberg, at least, would not want to curb the critic either...

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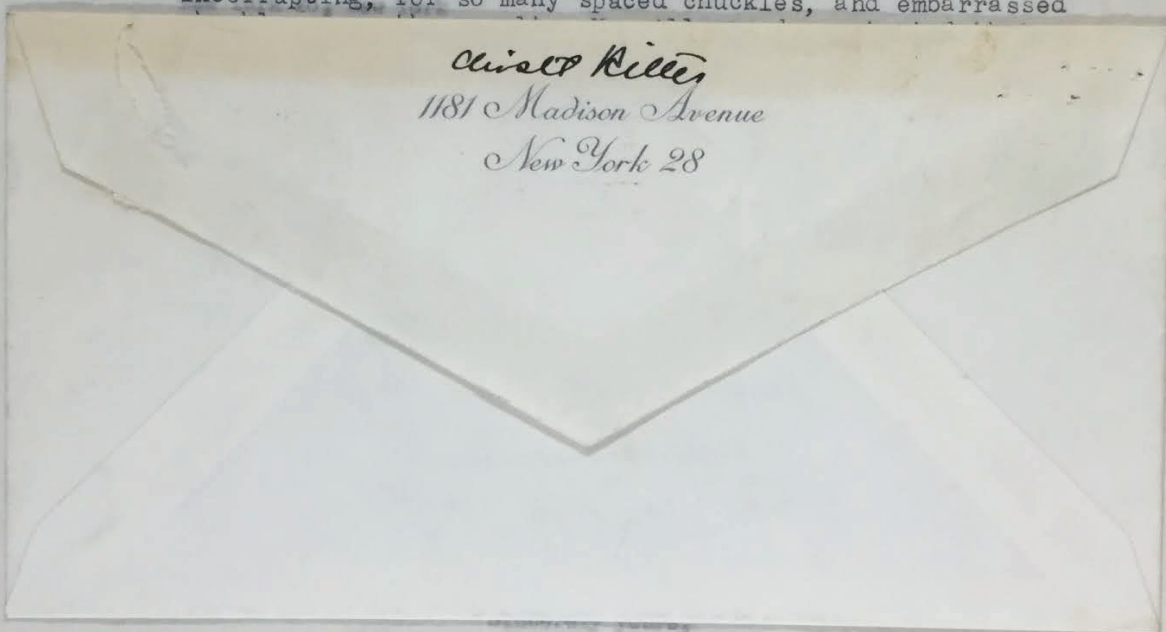
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Associate Curator
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A Comment

1181 Madison Avenue
New York 28, N.Y.
Oct. 20, 1961

November 22, 1961

Dear William Seitz:

Apropos of yesterday, it missed being a stimulating evening. Why? There seemed to be two panel members de trop. You kept interrupting, for so many spaced chuckles, and embarrassed chuckles were the result. Mr. Alloway demonstrated that as a critic of assemblages, composed of commonplaces, he'd little else up his sleeve himself. Professor Shattuck, guided by insight and armed with a wide range of reference, had far more to give, one felt, than you'd let him. Dr. Huelsenbeck (God forbid that you yourself had asked him to touch on metaphysical implications of Dada) valiantly undertook to elucidate the Dada rationale in its historical context. Marcel Duchamp is Marcel Duchamp. We've all heard it before, but the consistency of his spanking his own dead children for his pleasure is an intriguing spectacle to behold. And finally, Rauschenberg was indispensable for being an example of a widespread phenomenon: permissiveness, ultra, instilled by progressive education, has erased the concept of being a law unto oneself (the mark of the nihilistic artist, particularly, as was mentioned as an aside). As for the installation of assemblages done a la Rauschenberg - the indulging of an impulse that evaporates in the doing but leaves its discards behind (as he explained it himself) - the proper back-drop would have been an attic. A fascinating, honest-to-goodness attic in preference to museum walls intended (our prejudice) to frame objects with a persistent vitality of their own that we call art. Your show is itself an assemblage of rampant juxtapositions.

Sincerely yours,

Sincerely,

Christl Ritter

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

Christl Ritter

Mr. William C. Seitz
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19, N.Y.

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~~New York Sunday Herald Tribune~~
~~October 13, 1961~~
November 22, 1961

Mr. Christl Ritter
1181 Madison Avenue
New York 28, New York

Dear Mr. Ritter:

Forgive me for not answering your provocative letter about the Assemblage exhibition and symposium earlier. Although my understanding and your understanding of the whole phenomenon obviously differ greatly, I am nevertheless delighted that you were interested enough, for whatever reasons, to express yourself in such detail.

If you have a copy of your letter and read it over you will find that certain facts are not quite correct. What leads you to feel that I or anyone else on the panel would wish to curb a critic I do not understand. I do feel, and may have suggested, that I do not regard the critic as an advisor to the artist of what he should do, but rather ~~an observer~~, commentator and, sometimes, judge.

The future of art is created, in my opinion, by artists rather than critics or museum curators. If you will read one of the last paragraphs in the Assemblage book you will discover that I do not wish to see criticism stifled.

~~Museum of Modern Art is meant to~~
~~illustrate) ...~~
~~than this sorry and clownish exhibition.~~
Sincerely yours,

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
~~New York City~~

WCS:sjk

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New York Sunday Herald Tribune

October 15, 1961

Hearts Belong to Dada

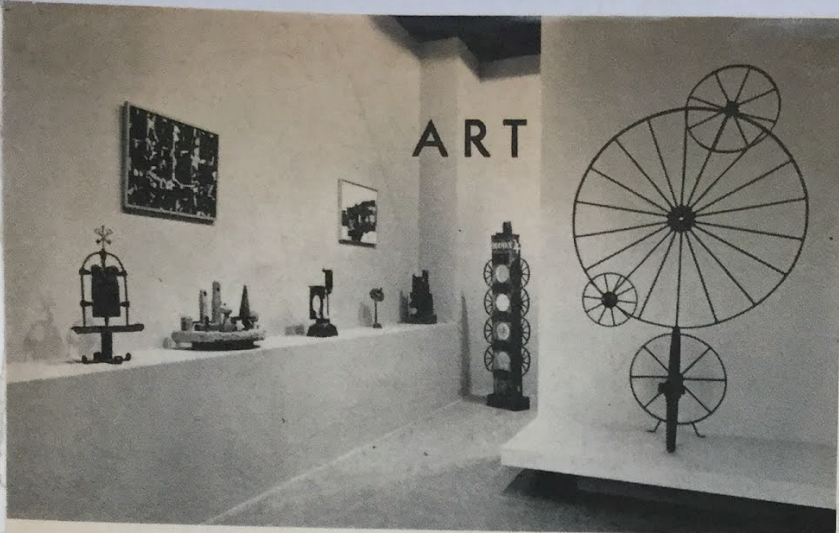
Hurrah for Emily Genauer's
"An Assemblage: Art or Plumbing?"

It is indeed rather late in
the day for artists to continue
an allegiance to dada, which
should long since have gone the
way of the dodo.

Certainly despair (if this is
what the "Assemblage" at the
Museum of Modern Art is meant to
illustrate) deserves more dignity
than this sorry and clownish exhibition.

FRANKLIN G. EDGE.
New York City

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ASSEMBLAGES include two collages, constructions of bits of iron with keys,

wood, spires, brush and rod plus a graceful fivesome of wheels by Ettore Colla.

Flight from Approval

The official title of the show opening this week at Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art is "The Art of Assemblage." But the show's creator, William C. Seitz, explains that the fuller title would be "The Art, Non-Art and Anti-Art of Assemblage." For an assemblage is neither a painting nor a sculpture, but something beyond, a combining of all sorts of objects—knives and forks, torn bits of burlap, weathered wood, old boxes, smashed pieces of cars, dismembered dolls, an abandoned breakfast—to achieve all sorts of effects. The Modern Museum's exhibition is the first major show of assemblages ever held, and even at its most non and its most anti, it casts a certain spell.

In its role as reporter, if not as upholder of taste, the museum could hardly have ignored the movement. For the last few years, the assemblers have been taking a bigger and bigger share of the limelight from the abstractionists. Their purpose is to free art from its own limitations by rejecting any dependence on traditional materials—the painter's oils, the sculptor's bronze. Assemblers believe that art can be found in any facet or aspect of everyday life. They scour attics, dumps, and shops to find objects that catch their fancy. They arrange these objects without any regard for what they were in their ordinary existence. The theory is that, placed in new and startling contexts, the objects will take on a new life, assume new meanings, reveal some unsuspected truth.

The assemblers at times seem out just for kicks, occasionally seem to be making a point of being noisome, often deliberately choose materials so fragile that their assemblages are doomed to perish. But for all their adventuresomeness and intransigence, they have in their way brought back the image that the abstractionists suppressed. In that sense, they are an avant-garde attacking from the rear.

Kookie Pedigree. As the museum and Seitz's excellent commentary show, the assemblers have a distinguished, somewhat

kookie, pedigree. One ancestor is Picasso, who in 1912 painted a cubist picture of ordinary objects, threw in the letters J O U (to indicate *journal*, and hence day-to-day experience), pasted on some oilcloth with a chair-cane pattern, and finally framed the whole thing with a piece of rope. Picasso was creating no ordinary still life: he arranged his painted objects just as the later assemblers were to arrange their actual objects—not as nature would have them, but in accordance with a wholly subjective association. At the same time, he used rope and oilcloth as genuine art materials almost on a par with paint.

In their cubist paintings, Picasso, Braque and Gris were proclaiming that the commonplace, placed smack before the eye, was something to be enjoyed on its own. But the cubists were not the only contributors. The futurists had focused attention on objects that caught the spirit of the age of speed and steel. The Dadaists fractured tradition by denying all standards—at least in theory—of beauty; the surrealists took it as their privilege "to put everything completely out of place," and the collagists pasted paper, cloth, and other materials into pictures.

That's Grandmother. The exhibition does well by these "old masters"—so well, in fact, that when the viewer leaves the historical galleries and moves on to those devoted to the present, he has a sense of having been there before. The descendants of Marcel Duchamp's "readymades"—a bicycle wheel, a bottle rack, a urinal, all shown just as they are, but out of context—are everywhere. Arthur Dove used needlepoint, some old shingles, and a page from the Concordance to evoke the essence of *Grandmother*, just as Edith Schloss uses worn and faded materials for her nostalgic *Dow Road* and Stephan Durkee for his affecting *Sale*. The futurists' obsession with the automobile finds its echo in the car constructions of John Chamberlain. A painted *Breakfast* by Juan Gris plays parent to an assembled breakfast by Daniel Spoerri.

To a large extent, today's assemblers seem really to be using yesterday's revolution to stage a counterrevolution of their own. As Seitz puts it: "They once more demonstrate the necessity for artists to flee the current circle of approval while seeking recognition on another level, to return again from abstraction to nature, to work with the materials of life rather than art."

Ten-Cent Tiepolos

On June 29, 1885, a London art dealer named Parsons sold to the Victoria and Albert Museum a couple of albums he obviously was delighted to get rid of. The volumes contained 326 original drawings and sketches by an 18th century Venetian painter whose work had fallen out of favor. Parsons disposed of the lot for £11, about 10¢ a drawing.

Last week, on loan from the Victoria and Albert, which now regards them as among its finest possessions, 135 of those drawings were on display at the National Gallery in Washington. Their creator was Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, whose own native Venice did not begin to rediscover him until more than a century after his death. The drawings are not the finished kind that Tiepolo did for sale, but they are perhaps more interesting. They are notes for paintings and frescoes, ideas jotted down as quickly as they welled up in Tiepolo's prodigiously restless mind.

The artist to whom Tiepolo was apprenticed gave him little more than a routine training, but the boy taught himself enough to get a major commission in 1715 at the age of 19. He married a sister of his contemporaries, Giovanni Antonio and Francesco Guardi, and life became one success after another.

His paintings and frescoes covered the walls of some of Europe's noblest palaces, from the Archbishop's Palace in Udine to the Prince-Bishop's Residenz in Würzburg to the throne room of King Charles III in Madrid. No man of his time was a greater master of drama and color, or knew so well how to unlock the secrets of light or to harmonize painting and architecture. Though he was sometimes guilty of slickness, his best paintings still stun the eye. He was the last of the great baroque artists, and it was not until just before his death at the age of 74 that he began to see the work of the new neoclassic artists threaten his own.

When the neoclassics took over, Tiepolo's work sank into obscurity, but there is a particular touch of pathos about the Victoria and Albert drawings. The story goes that one night while Tiepolo was working in Madrid, his wife lost a large sum of money gambling at cards in Venice. Her opponent suggested that she play again, this time putting up all the drawings by her husband that she had in her house. She played and lost—and then lost again, until not only the drawings but also the house were gone. The drawings, held cheap as gambler's loot, passed from hand to hand until Art Dealer Parsons, a little more than a century later, palmed them off to the Victoria and Albert.

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New York Oct 21, 1961

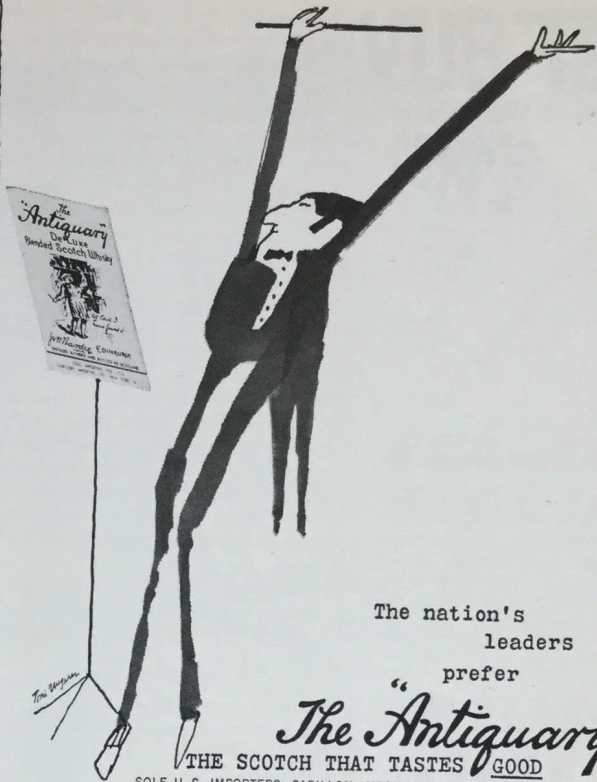
THE ART GALLERIES

Innovations



ALMOST the only new art form to appear since Defoe—or was it Samuel Richardson?—invented the novel away back in the early eighteenth century is collage, currently the background, if not technically the subject, of an extremely ambitious international loan exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. It is true that the affair is called “The Art of Assemblage”—but then the Museum has always had a penchant for thinking up new names for established styles. (Remember its “Magic Realism”—for what everyone else called Surrealism—a few years ago?) To be fair, in this instance a special term is justified, since the collection has been expanded to include a good many other forms, from constructivism, through straight welded sculpture, to Dadaist “ready-mades”—and beyond that, occasionally, into even more diverse fields. This all-embracingness introduces its complications, for there is very little relation in mood, in manner, or in almost any other way between these separate styles.

In collage, at any rate, the line of development is clear and the philosophic attitude fairly consistent. According to the generally accepted story, Picasso started the ball rolling when, in May, 1912, he finished a small oval painting and labelled it “Still-Life with Chair Caning.” The subject was the familiar café-table scene then popular with the Cubists—a tag end of *Le Journal*, some fragmented suggestions of a pipe, a glass, a sketching pad, and so on, together with, for contrast, a meticulously rendered, neatly reticulated section of a caned chair seat. But the caning wasn’t painted in, nor was it real caning. It was a piece of cane-patterned linoleum, cut to fit and glued on the canvas, and the whole device, it appears to me, was another expression—an especially impish one—of that impatience with all the fiddling painstakingness of conventional representational painting which formed the basis of the Cubist revolution. “Why bother to *paint* all these little crisscrossings of wickerwork, or whatever it is, if a piece of linoleum, printed in the same



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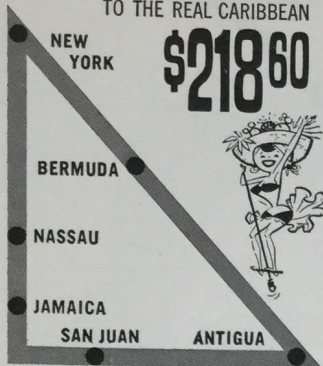
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pattern, will do just as well?" Picasso seemed to be saying, and the idea looked reasonable enough to a number of his Cubist contemporaries—Braque with "The Program" and "Clarinet" (where simulated wood graining is introduced along with the pasted-on papers), Juan Gris with "Breakfast," and so forth—to start them experimenting enthusiastically with the new technique. All these are in the current show, and all—including, for the circle widened, a pinwheel aggregation of snippets of newsprint called "Patriotic Celebration," by the Italian Futurist Carlo Carrà, and "Lady at the Advertising Pillar," by the Russian Suprematist Kasimir Malevich—were done within a couple of years after Picasso's initial effort, which argues that if Picasso was the first to employ collage, he was barely anticipating a technique that was on the point of emergence everywhere.

The method has passed through a number of transformations. The feeling of insurgency has gone out of it; the battle against the dry-as-dust type of representationalism was won long ago, apparently permanently, or as permanently as any victory ever is in art. The Dadaists used it for a while in the nineteen-twenties, in much the same spirit as the Cubists, but more humorously, as a mocking commentary on the pretentiousness of traditional art, and some of the best examples of the style in the show date from that era. Most particularly to be noted is the collection of thirty specimens of the compilations of odds and ends (string, torn theatre tickets, cigarette wrappers, just about everything) called "Merz," by Kurt Schwitters—all small, intricate, and cheerfully fanciful in their sidelong evocation, and set apart, as they should be, at the Museum, in what amounts to a little separate exhibition. ("Merz," in typical Dada fashion, was a code word—the last syllable of *Kommerz*, which Schwitters found on a scrap of paper and concluded to be meaningful. He certainly loved every tiny fragment he handled.) What remains today in pure collage is principally what might be called its "make-do" spirit, and its expression now is fundamentally benign. There is a tendency nowadays to use the materials of collage only for textural effect, otherwise submerging them in the body of the composition. Among the examples in this manner are Anne Ryan's small, rectangular "Number 48" and William Getman's scintillating "Maria," both mainly of paper, along with Conrad Marca-Relli's "The Snare," this composed of can-

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The development of stereo recording, with its increased richness and depth, was a mixed blessing. It made one wish that the acknowledged great recordings of the past, the fabled monophonic albums made before the introduction of stereo, could be remade in the exciting new medium. And this Angel decided to do with "Norma."

It took five years to accomplish. To assemble the cast, the conductor, the orchestra, the chorus, the engineers, the studio (the stage of La Scala itself) was a staggering undertaking. Musical artists of the highest rank are booked for years in advance. Angel was not willing to accept less. Conflicting schedules had to be coordinated, transportation arranged, acoustics plotted, microphones carefully placed, egos smoothed, throats sprayed, tempers quieted, contracts signed, and genius treated with proper respect.

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vas cuttings on canvas, overpainted. Assemblage (I boggle at that word. How does one pronounce it: Assemblage, in the French fashion, or just plain Assemblage?)—Assemblage, in the Museum's view, would seem to consist, in sculpture, of anything not fashioned by casting or by the chisel, and, in painting, of anything not exclusively in oil on canvas or some other traditional support; and so inclusive a definition leads inevitably not only to confusion but to questionable inclusions and exclusions. I shan't go into that at great length, though I must say I wonder at one item, a painting called "The Changes of Time," by the nineteenth-century artist John Haberle. This, done in the trompe-l'oeil style so popular then, portrays a cupboard door to which have been fastened fragmented memorabilia—scraps of newsprint, a torn envelope, a photograph, and such. But they are *painted* in, and so, obviously, represent the precise reverse of either "assemblage" or collage, whose whole point is to use real objects instead of portraying them.

Otherwise, the tone of the assemblage section (my own subdivision) is as exuberant as that of the collage section is decorous. The range is from a sculpture by Jason Seley, "Masculine Presence," made up mainly of chromium-plated bumper parts, and a (literally) smashed-in and baled-up automobile, "The Yellow Buick," by César (a good many of the moderns seem to be bent on disassemblage, particularly as regards the automobile), through such really weird items as George Cohen's "Anybody's Self-Portrait," involving distorting mirrors and dangling dolls' arms, and Fernandez Arman's "Arteriosclerosis," which consists of a glass-lidded box filled with forks and spoons, to such decidedly less gaudy presentations as Louise Nevelson's gilded, imposing "Royal Tide I" and a charming series of pieces, mostly small and all inventive, by that early master Arthur Dove—and I'm afraid I'm going to have trouble sorting things out much further. In so uninhibited an assortment, bad taste is bound to be apparent, as in Bruce Conner's gruesome "Last Supper" and Edward Kienholz's even grislier, and sillier, "John Doe" and "Jane Doe." But there's wit, too, as in Laurence Vail's bizarrely encrusted small bottles and in Sydney Simon's "Kiosk," built entirely of wooden type faces, and if many exhibits seem labored in the extreme, particularly the work of the contemporaries, there are others—some new, some older—by such artists as Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Lee Bontecou,

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THE NEW YORKER

Joseph Cornell (a whole array of his endlessly delightful shadow-boxlike contrivances), and Dove, to show how deftly and succinctly the style can be used. On leaving here, the show will travel to Dallas and San Francisco. I found it fun.

ANOTHER contemporary innovation, now that I think of it, is mobile sculpture. To be sure, this claim rests on less firm foundations than the claim for collage does, since wind- or water-operated ritualistic constructions have been in use in the Orient for ages. As an art form, however, the free-moving, three-dimensional device we now call the mobile dates from only three or four decades ago, and Alexander Calder originated it. Indeed, for a time he dominated the field, perhaps because the very simplicity of his forms made them seem like summations. In recent years, other artists have moved in, most notably George Rickey, now showing a new group of pieces (he calls them "kinetic sculpture") at the Kraushaar. It is a pleasing affair. Rickey is as "classic" in his approach as Calder is "romantic." His work is precisely engineered and infinitely delicate in design; also, it has grown more realistic in its thematic range. The references are now almost entirely to naturalistic subjects—climbing vines, sedge grass quivering in the breeze, rippling water—and the ingenuity with which he captures these wayward movements in hinged, balanced, and counterbalanced constructions of shaped metal is remarkable. I must confess that I found myself wondering if at times—as in the large, complicated "Water Plant"—the ingenuity doesn't overreach itself, so that one marvels more at the technique than at the fulfillment. But this is a small quibble indeed. By and large—with such pieces as the thistlelike "Long Stem," the lazily moving "Summer," and the truly ecstatic "Nuages" as the high-lights—the exhibition is as refreshing as a breezy day in the country.

—ROBERT M. COATES

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Johnson

A *Comments*

375 Park Avenue New York 22 N Y PLaza 1 7440 **Philip Johnson Associates**

October 17, 1961

Mr. William Seitz
 The Museum of Modern Art
 11 West 53rd Street
 New York 19, New York

Dear Bill:

I don't know why I waited so long before writing you, but I imagine I thought I would run into you. This is just a note to tell you that your exhibition is the most exciting one since the Alfred Barr days. Two things especially strike me. One is the thorough scholarship of the historical section and the brilliant catalog resulting therefrom, and, second, the vast amount of material unfamiliar to me. These two qualities are very rare and your ability in both regards arouses my intense admiration.

Yours,

Philip
 Philip Johnson

PJ:mam

Very truly yours,
Philip Johnson

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Dear Bill Seitz.

Oct 27 '61.

Many many thanks to you & to the Museum for the gift of the catalogue. It is a fine job of scholarship and it is, itself, beautifully "assembled." Thank again—

Very Sincerely —

Bill Kirubusch

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed the Assemblage Show. Not only do I feel that it is a lively and important show, but I think it was handsomely and thoughtfully presented.

The only unfortunate aspect is, I think, Mr. John Canaday's criticism in the Sunday Times. While I hardly expected Mr. Canaday to applaud the show, I never anticipated his descending to personal attack and vilification.

It certainly is the privilege of the Times to employ whomever they wish as an art critic. And while I do not think that Mr. Canaday is the person best equipped to comment on the contemporary scene, I have a high regard for the integrity of the Times. I realize that they would never respond to outside pressure (such as the letter criticising Mr. Canaday sent by a group of artists) and either discharge or attempt to control Mr. Canaday. To do so would be to sacrifice their principles.

At the same time, I have deep respect for the museum and the work it is doing. As a member of the museum and as a person interested in art, I think that the museum must defend itself — and its people — from what seem to be the vicious prejudices of a man who unfortunately has the backing of the most respected newspaper in the country.

I propose the museum bar Mr. Canaday from admission.

The museum can get along without Mr. Canaday, but Mr. Canaday cannot get along without the museum.

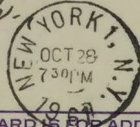
Very truly yours,

Ira F. Sturtevant II

IFS/bc

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Kleinbusch
44 Greenwich Ave.
New York City 11.



Avenue
17, New York

THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Mr. William Seitz,
The Museum of Modern Art,
11 West 53rd Street,
New York City 19, N.Y.

Comms
File

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Very truly yours,

Ira F. Sturtevant II
Ira F. Sturtevant II

IFS/be

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series Folder:
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277 Park Avenue
New York 17, New York

October 10, 1961

Mr. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Barr:

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed the Assemblage Show. Not only do I feel that it is a lively and important show, but I think it was handsomely and thoughtfully presented.

The only unfortunate aspect is, I think, Mr. John Canaday's criticism in the Sunday Times. While I hardly expected Mr. Canaday to applaud the show, I never anticipated his descending to personal attack and vilification.

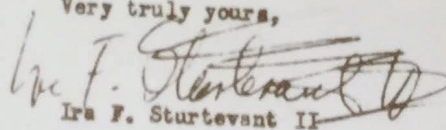
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Very truly yours,


Ira F. Sturtevant II

IFS/be

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galerie d'art moderne
 cc: Mr. Seitz
 S.A.R.L. au capital de 50.000 F.F.

Monsieur SEITZ
 November 8, 1961
 11 West 57th Street
 NEW YORK 19

PARIS, le 4 Novembre 1961

Dear Mr. Sturtevant:

Thank you very much for your letter of October 10 about the Assemblage show. I have shown it to Mr. Seitz who is most appreciative of your attitude--and so am I.

Sincerely,

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
 Director of the Museum Collections

Handwritten initials

Comments

Mr. Ira F. Sturtevant II
 277 Park Avenue
 New York 17, N.Y.

AHB:ld

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... ces lignes, l'expression

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liier 8 rue de Miromesnil \ tél. Anjou 20—39 \ Paris 8 \ Francfort \ Taunusanlage 21

Monsieur SEITZ
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 rd Street
NEW YORK 19

PARIS, le 4 Novembre 1961

Comments

ur,

J'étais navré d'apprendre que vous étiez souffrant, lors
à New-York; j'espère que cette lettre vous trouvera
rétablie.

J'ai d'autant plus regretté de ne pas vous voir que
excellente, à tous points de vue, l'exposition que
préparée.

J'ai plutôt entendu des critiques à son sujet, ce qui
ne évident de son originalité et de son importance.
remière exposition qui mette en lumière, d'une manière
historique, l'évolution et l'importance des assemblages.

Le catalogue est aussi remarquable que cette exposition,
tant par le choix des images que par les textes.

Je ne reviendrai maintenant à New-York que pour l'expo-
sition Dubuffet, au mois de Février; j'espère que vous y serez à
ce moment-là et que nous aurons l'occasion de nous rencontrer.

Je vous prie de trouver, dans ces lignes, l'expression
de mon souvenir le plus amical.

deuisl ruyd's

Daniel Cordier

P.S. Je viens de recevoir votre magnifique catalogue,
dont je vous remercie infiniment.

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MEMORANDUM

To:

Bill Seitz

From: ELIZABETH SHAW

Date:

10/20/61

Subject:

7 ye

rdier

8 rue de Miromesnil \ tél. Anjou 20—39 \ Paris 8 \ Francfort \ Tounusanlage 21

Monsieur SEITZ
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 rd Street
NEW YORK 19

PARIS, le 4 Novembre 1961

ieur,

J'étais navré d'apprendre que vous étiez souffrant, lors
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J'ai d'autant plus regretté de ne pas vous voir que
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préparée.

J'ai plutôt entendu des critiques à son sujet, ce qui
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ce moment-là et que nous aurons l'occasion de nous rencontrer.

Je vous prie de trouver, dans ces lignes, l'expression
de mon souvenir le plus amical.

deuisl 1961/6

Daniel Cordier

P.S. Je viens de recevoir votre magnifique catalogue,
dont je vous remercie infiniment.

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galerie daniel cordier

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S.A.R.L. au capital de 30.000 N.F.

Monsieur SEITZ
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 rd Street
NEW YORK 19

PARIS, le 4 Novembre 1961

Handwritten signature
connu

Cher Monsieur,

J'étais navré d'apprendre que vous étiez souffrant, lors de mon voyage à New-York; j'espère que cette lettre vous trouvera tout à fait rétablie.

J'ai d'autant plus regretté de ne pas vous voir que j'ai trouvé excellente, à tous points de vue, l'exposition que vous avez préparée.

J'ai plutôt entendu des critiques à son sujet, ce qui est un signe évident de son originalité et de son importance. C'est la première exposition qui mette en lumière, d'une manière historique, l'évolution et l'importance des assemblages.

Le catalogue est aussi remarquable que cette exposition, tant par le choix des images que par les textes.

Je ne reviendrai maintenant à New-York que pour l'exposition Dubuffet, au mois de Février; j'espère que vous y serez à ce moment-là et que nous aurons l'occasion de nous rencontrer.

Je vous prie de trouver, dans ces lignes, l'expression de mon souvenir le plus amical.

deuisl sur/18

Daniel Cordier

P.S. Je viens de recevoir votre magnifique catalogue, dont je vous remercie infiniment.

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November 13, 1961

M. Daniel Cordier
Galerie Daniel Cordier
8 rue de Miromesnil
Paris 8e
France

Dear Daniel:

May I thank you for your warm comments on the Assemblage exhibition and book. It would have been the greatest pleasure for me to go through the exhibition with you and hear your thoughts on it, so I am doubly sorry that I was ill at the time you were in New York.

May I thank you once more for your extreme kindness in helping me arrange this exhibition, and look forward to seeing you again when you are in New York in February. I am planning a trip to Europe sometime that month, and hope that I shall not miss you.

With best regards,

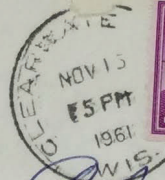
William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

WCS:sjk

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Box 246
Three Lakes,
Wis



Mr. William Skitz
The Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd St.,
New York 19,
N.Y.

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Mr. M. Feitz
New York 19
N.Y.

Nov. 15/61

Dear Mr. Feitz:
Thank you very much
for taking time out of your
busy days to answer my letter.
I truly appreciate your help.

Yours truly
Mrs. Charles Jewell

P. comment

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ART NEWS

CBS NEWS

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A Comment

November 13, 1961

Mr. William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19, New York

Dear Bill:

Thanks very much for your note; it reassured me. You might be interested to know that besides the lady from LaJolla there were several other complaints about my attitude toward your Assemblages-----including complaints from my wife, Andy Rooney's wife and Mary Fickett's mother.

I'm glad to know that you know that this wasn't my intention. What I wanted to do was strike a balance between politeness and legal skepticism.

Maybe we can get you back to help me rehabilitate my reputation with the art lovers.

Sincerely,

Harry Reasoner

Harry Reasoner

HR/fs

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15
DENNIS BURTON
15
WELLESLEY STREET E
REAR BUILDING • ST. JAMES
TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA

November 27, 1961

Dr. Alfred Frankfurter, Editor and President
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York, New York

Sir:

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art, described as "that collector-sanctifying bureaucracy," of forcing manufactured history on art, hanging major works beside trash, and favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made such charges before, but, unfounded as I believe them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute them, but to correct the intimation, interspersed between a few flattering comments on the book and exhibition, that I was the victim of an insidious policy that continues to "force younger staff members to keep allegiance to a past that looks more and more synthetic every year..." This is of course false. The original idea, the book, the choice of works, the "jazzy-maze installation," and whatever virtues and vices Mr. Hess finds, were entirely my own. I, and not some nameless influence, was responsible for them.

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 21 works (2 Rothkos!) that Art News reproduced, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 93 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never shown before in New York) from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the Middle or Far West, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacerée by de la Villeglé was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada chic." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major collagists as Motherwell (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to gain from a parochialism recalling that of Thomas Craven?

This misleading and distorting piece is in itself an assemblage, a collage of fragments as unrelated as any in the exhibition; but the characteristic swings, jabs, and feints of Hessian "action writing" are too overlaid and ambiguous to separate. He can always say, as did the poet: "That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all."

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

COPY: Mr. Thomas Hess

ART NEWS

DENNIS BURTON

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DADA
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MAMA

THOMAS HESS

SAVONNIERES

THINKING ONLY

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MEMORANDUM

To: ~~Bill~~

From: WILLIAM SEITZ

Date:

Subject:

Bill - almost
 you selected
 this guy's a) con-
 struction of iron work
 b) printing but
 moved by both - to
 help "dance movement"
 as we use to say -
 yes

DENNIS BURTON

WELLESLEY STREET E
 AR BUILDING • STUDIO
 TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
 ONE WALNUT 2-4391

- FAR FU

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PLEASE!
 BILL!

GO AND HEAR
 CHARLES MINGUS
 AT BIRDLAND -
 BLIND HORN PLAYER
 PLAYS ALTO AND
 TENOR SAXOPHONES
 BOTH SIMULTANEOUSLY

--- DADA ---
 DADA



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DENNIS BURTON

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PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

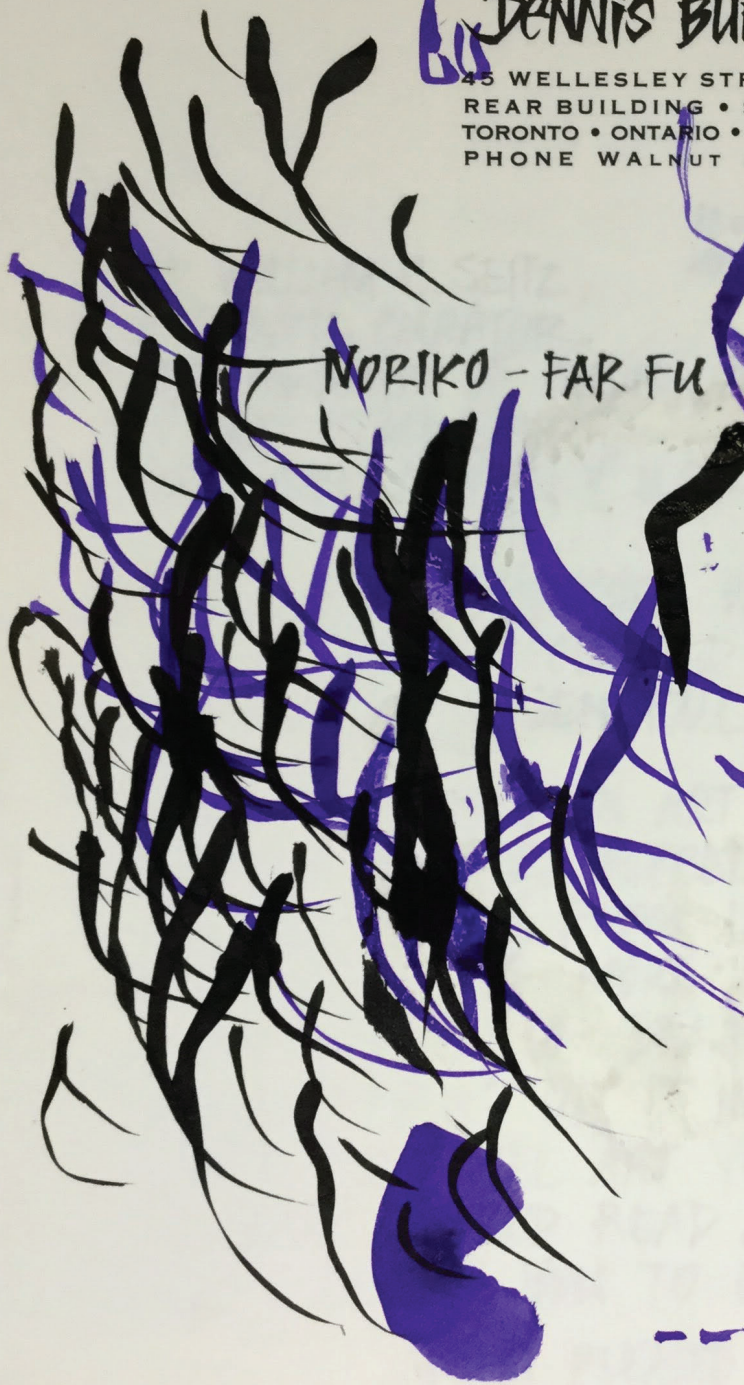
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GO AND HEAR
 CHARLES MINGUS
 AT BIRDLAND-
 BLIND HORN PLAYER
 PLAYS ALTO AND
 TENOR SAXOPHONES
 BOTH SIMULTANEOUSLY

-- DADA --



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MEMORANDUM

To: *AVB Sr.*
 From: **WILLIAM SEITZ**
 Date:
 Subject: *FYE*

JENNIS BURTON

L

WELLESLEY STREET E.
 AR BUILDING • STUDIO
 ONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
 ONE WALNUT 2-4391

10:15 A.M.
 NOV 28 1961

*He really
 can
 better
 fearfully!*

PRONUNCIATION:
 MR. WILLIAM SEE (SIGHTS)?
 OR SEE (SEATS)?
 AT SYMPOSIUMS

ITZ,
 OR,
 MODERN ART,
 SEITZ,
 N.Y. U.S.A.

please return
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR REPLY "TO MY LETTER ACCENTED WITH RESENTMENT I AM STILL RESENTFUL AND IT IS SNOWING."

CANADIAN ART HAS BEEN LOOKED AT, NOW, BY MR. ALFRED BARR AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW. FROM INDICATIONS YOU WILL BE SEEING MORE OF IT. SINCE I KNOW NOTHING OF DEATH, EXCEPT THE MANIFESTATIONS OF IT IN MYSELF MY QUOTE "WE WILL ART YOU TO DEATH" PERHAPS SHOULD READ AND MEAN: "WE WILL ART YOU TO ENLIGHTENMENT"

I AM PLEASED YOU ARE RETAINING THE SLIDES ... I HAVE MORE OF ASSEMBLAGES.

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DENNIS BURTON L

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
REAR BUILDING • STUDIO
TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

10:15 A.M.
NOV 28 1961

MR. WILLIAM C. SEITZ,
ASSOCIATE CURATOR,
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
11 WEST 53RD STREET,
NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. U.S.A.

PRONUNCIATION:

MR. WILLIAM SEE (SIGHTS)?
OR SEE (SEATS)?
AT SYMPOSIUMS

DEAR SIR: I THANK YOU FOR YOUR REPLY "TO MY LETTER "ACCENTED WITH RESENTMENT" I AM STILL RESENTFUL AND IT IS SNOWING.

CANADIAN ART HAS BEEN LOOKED AT, NOW, BY MR. ALFRED BARR, AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW. FROM INDICATIONS YOU WILL BE SEEING MORE OF IT. SINCE I KNOW NOTHING OF DEATH, EXCEPT THE MANIFESTATIONS OF IT IN MYSELF MY QUOTE "WE WILL ART YOU TO DEATH" PERHAPS SHOULD READ AND MEAN: "WE WILL ART YOU TO ENLIGHTENMENT"

I AM PLEASED YOU ARE RETAINING THE SLIDES ... I HAVE MORE OF ASSEMBLAGES.

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2
DENNIS BURTON

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
REAR BUILDING • STUDIO
TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

O CANADA - OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM:

OAK AND DADA
HOUR HOMO ANNEE DEVIL AND
DROOP, PAY, TREAT LOAVE
HIM KNAW' LITHE SUNS CALM AND
WITH THUG-LOWING CARTS WREATH
THEE THEORY EYES
THUS TROON ORTHOSTHRONG AND DURFEE
WHEEZE TANDEM GAR DOAKS
AMANDA WEISS TAN DAWN
GAR DUFF FORTY
OAK AND DADA
GLOW RYE US DAN FREE
OAK AND DADA
WHEEZE TANDEM GOURD PRITHEE

ETC ...

10:30 AM
NOV 28 1961

DB

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! ✓
THE PATAPHYSICIAN
WHO SENT HIS DUES -
A PIECE OF T-BONE
STEAK.
DENNIS BURTON

"AFTER
THE
FACT"
LETTER

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
REAR BUILDING • STUDIO
TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

A comment

MR WILLIAM C. SEITZ,
ASSOCIATE CURATOR
DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53 STREET
NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK

DEAR SIR:
IT IS INDEED UNFORTUNATE
THAT THE "ART WORLD" SO DEEPLY
NEGLECTS CANADA! WITH ONLY ONE
"SUCCESSFUL" AND AT LEAST "REPRESENTED"
CANADIAN ARTIST KNOWN IN NEW
YORK - MR. RONALD OF KOOTZ -
AND SINCE WHEN "ART SINCE 1945"
WAS PUBLISHED, IRATE, BITCHY, NEW
YORK NEVER-HAS-BEENS WRITE INTO
ART NEWS DESPICABLY AND CHILDISHLY
CRITICIZING BILLS REPRODUCED
WORK - AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR
NON-INCLUSION.

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DENNIS BURTON

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AND SINCE THE UNITED STATES AS
 A COUNTRY SO DESPERATELY RANKS ITSELF
 WITH THE WORLD AS A CENTRE OF
 CULTURE AND SINCE MOST OF "YOUR"
 ARTISTS ARE EXPATRIOTS OF UNDEMO-
 CRATIC SYSTEMS - AND YOUR CURATORS
 AND YOUR AUTHORITIES ARE SOMEWHAT
 BLIND TO OUR EXISTENCE AS A
 AUTONOMOUS NATION NOT THAT
 DEPENDENT ON THE POWERFUL U.S. -
 I WRITE TO REMIND YOU - IF NOT
 BEZ YOUR APOLOGY AND TO ASK
 YOUR APOLOGY FOR NOT EVEN LOOKING
 TO YOUR NORTHERN NEIGHBOR FOR
 ART OF ANY KIND ESPECIALLY IN
 THE AREA OF "ASSEMBLAGE."

I WAS AT YOUR EXHIBITION AND
 TWICE - AFTERNOONS - SPENT TIME
 PARTICIPATING - AND I WAS AT THE

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DENNIS BURTON

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
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 PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

Symposium - THURSDAY EVENING
 OCTOBER 19TH - AND WOULD MARCEL
 MULHAMP DURING THE RECESS THAT
 "YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL MAN" - AND
 PRESSED HIS RIGHT HAND IN MINE -
 AND WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SHOW
 MY LADY FRIEND HIS (MARCEL'S)
 R. MUTT URINAL EVEN THOUGH DR.
 RICHARD HEULSENBEUC WAS IN THE
 ELEVATOR TO PERHAPS AID ME IN
 MY CAUSE - THE OPERATOR UTTERED
 ONLY "NO - NO - IT'S CLOSED". THE
 GALLERY WAS CLOSED ON THE THIRD
 FLOOR! CLOSED.

AND WHEN I RETURNED AT 6:28 PM
 FRIDAY EVENING TO RETURN MY COPY
 OF ASSEMBLAGE BY YOU BECAUSE
 THE REPRODUCTIONS ARE BAD AND
 BECAUSE I WAS BROKE SAVE PERHAPS
 RETURNING THE BOOK FOR MY REFUND
 OF \$6.50 SO I COULD EAT AND SLEEP

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DENNIS BURTON

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
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BECAUSE I WAS AN "ALIEN"
 "STRANGER", "FOREIGNER" IN THE
 "INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL OF THE
 WORLD" AND BECAUSE I AM A
 PAINTER AND "ASSEMBLAGER" OR
 "NEO-DADAIST CONSTRUCTIVE-DESTRUCTIVIST
 POSITIVIST OUT OF ABSTRACT-EXPRESSIONIST
 AMERICAN MALE-INFANTILISM BECAUSE
 OF THE BITCH WHORES WHO ARE
 THE WOMEN OF AMERICA WHO
 BILL DE KoonING HATES AND LOVES
 AS MUCH AS I DO (AND WE,
 BILL AND I BOTH HAVE BLOND HAIR
 AND ARE TEMPERAMENTAL BASTARDS)
 AND ENCLOSED ARE COLOR SLIDES
 OF THE "OBJECTS" (AS I CALLED THEM
 IN MY FANTASTIC MANIFESTO) FOR MY
 ONE MAN SHOW IN JANUARY 1961
 ROOM JANUARY 6TH TO 27TH AT THE
 ISAACS GALLERY — THEN LOCATED AT 736

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DENNIS BURTON

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 PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

BAY STREET TORONTO ONTARIO NOW
 LOCATED AT 832 YONGE STREET
 TORONTO ONTARIO REPRESENTING
 GRAHAM GULCHTRY (VENICE BIENNALE)
 WILLIAM RONALD - PAINTER
 ROBERT HEDRIK - PAINTER
 ROBERT VAICVARANDE - PAINTER
 JOYCE WELAND - PAINTER, PAINTER
 JOHN MEREDITH (BILL RONALD'S BROTHER)
 GORDON RAYNER (ASSEMBLAGER)
 RICHARD GORMAN (EXTRAORDINARY)
 ANNE KAHANE (SCULPTOR)
 TONY URQUHART (PAINTER)

AND WHY DON'T YOU SMUG AMERICANS
 LOOK TO THE NORTH - BECAUSE IF
 KHRUSHCHEV SAYS "HELL BURY YOU"
 WE'LL "ART YOU TO DEATH" —

AWARENESS IS ONE THING
 OBVIOUSNESS IS ANOTHER
 STUPIDITY OF OVERSIGHT IS A FUCK-UP!

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DENNIS BURTON

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
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TORONTO • ONTARIO • CANADA
PHONE WALNUT 2-4391

1
SEND

THE SLIDES WITH MY COMPLIMENTS, AND
WHY DON'T YOU COME AND SEE THE
REAL THING— AND WHO ARE THE
MISSES NIKI?

I'm WRITING:

(1) FOR INCLUSION IN "THE ROAD SHOW"
OF THE SHOW. ^{"THE ART OF}
_{ASSEMBLAGE"}

(2) YOUR REPLY AND APOLOGY

(3) TO MEET YOU
AND BRING

RAUSCHENBERG TOO.

IT COSTS \$50.00 RETURN
BY TRANS-CANADA AIRLINES

(1) (WE) REALLY LOVE YOU AMERICANS
AND LOVE IS GIVE AND TAKE! —

TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE AND
GIVE!

DENNIS BURTON

SATURDAY
6:02 PM
OCT 21
1961

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DENNIS BURTON

45 WELLESLEY STREET E.
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SLIDES:

DAEDALUS + ICARUS 16" x 22½"

CHICKEN WING
 PLASTIC
 * POLYVINYL ACETATE
 (GLUE + CEMENT)

THE DAUGHTERS OF EDWARD - 48" x 50" COLLAGE,
 D. BOIT - 1961 OIL ON MASONITE

POOLE'S ROYAL DUPLICATOR - 16½" x 22½"

FOLDS CLOSED AS A
 "BOOK" FORNICATING
 ITSELF.

DOLL LIMBS + EYES
 NURSE, BRUSH,
 DOMINOES, CLARET
 MOUTHPIECE, OIL,
 CLOTHESPIN, PHOTOS,
 RIBBON, SEA URCHIN, *
 CBAB CLAW, ETC. P.V.A.

THE SPHINX'S SECOND JOURNEY
 UP THE FROZEN NILE - 4" HIGH 12" LONG

ROCKS + POLYVINYL
 ACETATE

BIRDS

5½" HIGH

WELDED
 "FOUND"
 STEEL

over

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RHYTHMS OF WATKINS GLEN 16" X 22"

GOUACHE, INK + WIRE. P.V.A.

THE MARRIAGE VOWS OF
MR. AND MRS. OPENER

22" HIGH

CANNAS PLIERS
BOTTLE OPENER
CAN OPENER
MIRROR
ALUMINUM SANDING DISC
PLIERS
RACK
(POLYVINYL ACETATE)
GLAZE +
CEMENT.

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Friday.

Dear Bill,

Reading Hess was a displeasure.
I sent them this letter. Much
more could be said - much
more.

All the best

Billy Klüver

William Sertz
Museum of Modern Art
New York City

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 3-8700
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

78 Southgate Road
Murray Hill, New Jersey
November 24, 1961

Dr. Alfred Frankfurter, Editor and President
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York, New York
The Editor
Art News
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, New York

Comment

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art, described as "that collector-sanctifying Sirisocracy," of forcing manufactured history on art, hanging major works beside trash, and favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made a History, for Thomas B. Hess, is not a nightmare from which he longs to awake. Rather, this artist-sanctifying critic latches on a particular past with relish, pretties it up, keeps it in a package and covers it with one neat gummed label. Indeed, Mr. Hess forever seems to be dreaming of his own monument, as Caesar training the Wolf of Rome, labeled Abstract Expressionism while from his mouth issues a ticker tape with the latest market notations for Pure Art. responsible for them.

Mr. Hess, American post-war art is great. Nobody but nobody disagrees with you. extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 21 works (2 Rothko's) that Art News reproduced, only five were in the. But does Kaprow, Dine, Oldenburg, Brecht, Grooms, Whitman and the others really owe more to DeKooning and Pollock than to Duchamp, Cage, Johns and Rauschenberg? How do you dispose of these bothersome people? Duchamp is a neo-classicist, Cage is a composer of music, Johns is a foreigner and Rauschenberg is an Action-Painter-Among-Objects. (With Cornell there is no problem, of course.) Did you visit Rauschenberg's show at the Stable Gallery in 1953 and exclaim "Action Painting"? And the others? The sculptors and the film makers, do they really nourish on the Wolf too?

This misleading and distorting piece is in itself an assemblage, a collage of fragments. The Americans are allowed to receive impulses from the New York School, but Tinguely is not, because he is a European. Could it be that he is another of those necessary-to-dispose-of-artists?

In Summit, New Jersey, there are large painting classes full of middle aged ladies who do Abstract Expressionism. This does not seem to bother the artists in this field very much.

Associate Curator
Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

Billy Kluver

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

November 27, 1961

Dr. Alfred Frankfurter, Editor and President
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York, New York

Sir:

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art, described as "that collector-sanctifying bureaucracy," of forcing manufactured history on art, hanging major works beside trash, and favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made such charges before, but, unfounded as I believe them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute them, but to correct the intimation, interspersed between a few flattering comments on the book and exhibition, that I was the victim of an insidious policy that continues to "force younger staff members to keep allegiance to a past that looks more and more synthetic every year... ." This is of course false. The original idea, the book, the choice of works, the "jazzy-maze installation," and whatever virtues and vices Mr. Hess finds, were entirely my own. I, and not some nameless influence, was responsible for them.

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 21 works (2 Rothkos!) that Art News reproduced, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 93 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never shown before in New York) from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the Middle or Far West, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacerée by de la Villeglé was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada chic." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major collagists as Motherwell (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to gain from a parochialism recalling that of Thomas Craven?

This misleading and distorting piece is in itself an assemblage, a collage of fragments as unrelated as any in the exhibition; but the characteristic swings, jabs, and feints of Hessian "action writing" are too overlaid and ambiguous to separate. He can always say, as did the poet: "That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all."

William C. Seitz
William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

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William C. Seitz
William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

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NEW YORK 19

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CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

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William C. Seitz

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

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November 27, 1961

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William C. Seitz
William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

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Dr. Albert Frankfurter, Editor
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N.Y.

Sir:

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art of forcing a "collector-sanctifying bureaucracy" ^{described as "that"} ~~of~~ ^{of} manufacturing history of art, ~~of~~ ^{of} hanging major works beside trash, and ~~of~~ ^{of} favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made such charges before, but, unfounded as I believe them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute ^{them}, but to correct the intimation, interspersed between a few flattering comments on the book and ~~the~~ exhibition, that I was the victim of an insidious policy that continues to force younger staff members to keep allegiance to a past that looks more and more synthetic every year... ." ^{This} ~~Hess~~ ^{insinuation} is of course false. The original idea, the book, the choice of works, the "jazzy-maze installation," and whatever virtues and vices Mr. Hess finds, were entirely my own. I, and not some nameless influence, was responsible for them.

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the ~~28~~ ²¹ works (2 Rothkos!) that Art News reproduced, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 93 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never shown before in New York) from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the Middle or Far West, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacérée by de la Villeglé was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada chic." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major collagists as Motherwell (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to gain from a parochialism recalling that of Thomas Craven?

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(2)

This misleading and distorting piece is itself an assemblage,
^{IN}
~~a collage of fragments~~ [^] composed of elements as unrelated as any in the exhibition; but the
[^]
characteristic swings, jabs, and feints of Hessian "action writing"
are too overlaid and ambiguous to ~~pin down~~ ^{separate}. He can always say, as
did the poet; "That is not what I meant at all; ~~That~~ that is not it, at all."

"That is not what I meant at all," William C. Seitz

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A Squashed, Baled Auto Shocks Viewers of Assemblage Show

By DONALD KEY, Journal Art Editor

NEW YORK, N. Y. — "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition revives with jarring reality the question of what is and what is not art.

It is intended to do so. It admittedly contains works that break through the line separating artistic expression from non-art.

Many of the 250 pieces by 130 artists in the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art are intended to shock viewers in to discarding preconceptions and finding new correlations and associations.

But the show also contains work that is irrelevant and of doubtful purpose.

One is a yellow automobile which has been squashed and baled by compressing equipment into a solid rectangle of metal.

Let us admit that the French artist Cesar might have had a hand in manipulating the compressor and that the result is transformation of an object that retains some of its previous elements.

But does that make it a work of art? Not if art involves creative thought presented by the skilled hands of an individual.

Junk Metal Is

In Private Collection

One wonders if it was put in the show for its sensational value. Yet it is in a private New York collection. Also, its presence underlines the "what is art" question, and may help viewers arrive at their own conclusions.

Equally questionable is Marcel Duchamp's ready-made "Bottle Dryer" (a replica of a lost original of 1914), and his "Fountain," a ready-made urinal. The artistry involved in this seems negligible.

Yet Duchamp's "Bicycle Wheel" at least spins a creative thought by combining two dissimilar objects—a bicycle wheel and a kitchen stool—into a surprisingly unified composition that might evoke some childhood associations. The field of collage and as-

semblage is relatively new. It began with the compositions of the cubists in 1912. Paper collages by Braque, Gris and Picasso were primarily plastic, involving the elements of line, form, space, texture and color. But in experimenting with the combining of non-art materials—calling cards, old theater tickets, parts of newspapers, bits of cloth and cardboard—the material took on a new life.

The non-art materials became important parts of compositions that were symbolic as well as beautifully tailored studies of line and form.

Within a few years the Dada group, including Hans Arp, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters and others, extended the technique to include the assemblage of common place, dissimilar and often incongruous things.

The irony of Dada, of course, is that while the artists were an anarchist and allied against art, literature, politics,



"Bicycle Wheel" by Marcel Duchamp, a replica of a lost original of 1913, is in the New York assemblage show.

and morality, their work was knitted together with a simple, perhaps subconscious artistry. Their works played an important part in attaining greater freedom for the elements they opposed.

Collages and panels by Schwitters are examples. There is a remarkable balance of textures and forms in such pieces as the "Merz Construction" of 1921, reproduced at right. Even its areas of worn or marred paint and the contrasts between the cardboard and wire mesh textures contribute to a union of forms that seem familiar and yet are like nothing ever seen before.

There is a strange, almost unexplainable beauty in these compositions. They tease the imagination.

An edge of humor and empathy is added in such now famous Dada pieces as Oppenheim's fur covered cup, Man Ray's flat iron with metal tacks and Max Ernst's "Lop-lop Introduces," a collage of nudes.

The cubist collages and the Dada works are well represented in the show. Also illustrated is the fact that assemblage has been pursued within many of the directions of modern art and by a surprising number of famous artists not particularly known for this kind of composition.

Surrealism is represented by the work of Joan Miro, Andre Breton, Jean Dubuffet and Yves Tanguy; futurism by the collages of Severini and Carrà; abstract expressionism by the collage paintings of Willem de Kooning and Robert Motherwell.

Most recent are the actual object compositions, known as the pop bottle school, which began a few years ago in New York and since has spread to Europe.

One of the most beautifully conceived pieces in the show is the shadowy gold wall of found wooden objects by Lou-

ise Nevelson, titled "Royal Tide I."

Jasper Johns has produced much better art than his encaustic on an open "Book" but it is appropriately tongue in cheek. Robert Rauschenberg's "Canyon" incongruously combines an oil painting, wooden boards, posters, newsprint, photographs, a stuffed eagle and a pillow into a composition of mental associations.

An untitled construction of steel, canvas and wire by Lee Bontecou has a reversed billows type of foreboding appearance that seems to try to pull viewers through big vacuum cleaner openings into a black interior.

Assemblage has been a potent satirical medium for artists who are reflecting a society littered with cardboard and rusty metal.

Ugly Materials

Attain Beauty

Robert Mallary's "Joustier" of dark gray plastics and dirty pieces of wood and cardboard, points downward with grim satirical thrust. John Chamberlain's "Essex" is made of the bent and crumbled body parts of an automobile and reminds one of highway deaths. Yet it is composed with a sensitivity to forms, colors and rigid textures that give it an imposing beauty.

William Seitz, curator of painting and sculpture at the museum, who organized the show and wrote a book about it, judged the Strelsin exhibition at the Milwaukee Jewish Community Center, recently. Thinking in retrospect about the assemblage event, he said, "It seems too pretty."

Only a small percentage of the works, primarily the sensational ones, are unpretty. In addition to those already mentioned, they include a dirty set breakfast table nailed to a wall and a blob wax and rag sculpture titled "Last Supper." It should be "Lost Supper."

Works of this kind, how-

ever, are far outnumbered by collages and assemblages fitted together by artists who, consciously or subconsciously, combined forms, spaces and colors with artful design.

Despite its flings into non-art, the exhibition presents an assemblage of work in a medium that is growing in popularity and importance.

most every large and small city has a center of some sort —will thrive, too. The love of art is certainly not restricted to New York.

The way to increase the American artist's income is, indeed, in the public's hands. Quite obviously galleries cannot buy the many pictures painted even in one year, and even if they got them for nothing they lack wall space to show them.

Thelin Attains Moods With Ink

IN HIS exhibition at the Fredrick gallery, 16420 W. Burleigh pl., Brookfield, Valfred Thelin shows a style of painting with colored inks that provides a wide range of tones between the translucent and opaque. He blends these with subtle lines and strokes that enrich the moods and tempers of his subject matter.

There are 16 ink paintings in this exhibition. "Picador," reproduced below, is exemplary in its economic yet fluid use of color and lines. Over-

Artists, Exhibitions

THE 27th annual Wisconsin Salon of Art will open with a reception at 4 p.m. next Sunday in the Wisconsin Union, Madison. Winners of cash prizes and purchase awards totaling more than \$2,000 will be announced at 5 p.m. More than half of the artists submitting work for the event are Milwaukeeans.

The Milwaukee Jewish Community Center will hold its annual holiday crafts sale Wednesday through Dec. 15 in the Kesselman lounge at the center. Works by 10 members of the Wisconsin Designer Craftsmen, including pottery, ceramics, jewelry, enamels, hand knitting and painted cards, will be displayed.

Paintings by two Green Bay artists, Mary Gosin Witteberg and Elaine Tyson Brunette are

displayed this month at Charles Allis art library, 1630 E. Royall pl.

Ron Stokes, former Milwaukeean now teaching in Manitowoc, will show oils, water colors, graphics and some drawings through Nov. 30 at the Rahr public museum, Manitowoc. An oil painting by Stokes recently won first prize in the annual Manitowoc county exhibition.

An exhibition of five centuries of religious prints is on display through Nov. 26 in the Marquette university library, 1415 W. Wisconsin av.

Water color paintings on skiing and sailing themes by Frederick Gerlach will be exhibited through November at Milwaukee-Downer seminary.

Thelin's pen and ink drawings are realistic and often beautifully detailed. On the other hand, the six oil paintings are abstract. They are transitions and condensations of scenes. Unlike the ink paintings, they are built in heavy passages with various degrees of impasto and with textural contrasts between glazes and palette knife work. Earlier paintings by Thelin have been somewhat poised. The work in this show has

more sheen and animation. "Horses," an abstract oil, has the happy racing air of a steep-leash, with red forms jumping against yellow and brown. This is Thelin's sixth one man show in Milwaukee. It continues through Nov. 26. He also has exhibited in group shows throughout the United States and has won regional awards in Wisconsin and Arizona, where he lived for a year before returning here last spring.

Artists' Income Depends on Public Acceptance

This is the fourth in a series of articles on the economic facts of life in the art world.

By John Ferris

THE ECONOMIC POSITION of the artist in the United States, says John Rood of Minneapolis, president of the Artists Equity association, will be improved only when the whole country is educated to accept art as one of life's necessities.

Rood, whose organization is a national association for professional artists, explains: "We will never get anywhere depending on the collector who is a status seeker—or, as it used to be called, a social climber. And yet it is to this type of collecting that the entire art world, as exemplified by art publications, museums devoted to contemporary art and most galleries, seems to be geared."

In the meantime, the artist who keeps alive by working at an outside job and paints whenever he has time and is in the mood, goes on dreaming of the rich collector or the favor of a museum or a big gallery sale. He may also dream of a foundation grant, though

\$10,000 each to enable them to concentrate on creative work for from one year to three years. The ages of the recipients ranged from 42 to 70. (The layman who thinks 70 is "old" for a painter should remember Picasso, Matisse and Braque, and in the Renaissance, Titian.)

The next year six painters and four sculptors were awarded \$10,000 grants, while 14 painters, three sculptors and four printmakers were awarded purchase prizes totaling \$16,525. Finally, five painters, a sculptor, and a printmaker were selected to participate in a series of traveling retrospective exhibitions under the sponsorship of the American Federation of Arts.

W. McNeil Lowry, the Ford Foundation's director of the humanities and arts program, noted that in making the 1959 selections the foundation first asked for recommendations from as many as 900 artists, critics and museum directors in the United States. Exactly 612 artists were nominated.

Regional juries, composed mostly of artists, viewed the works in a dozen locations.

The final selection of 153 artists' work was made in New York. The foundation paid all shipping costs.

The importance of the Ford and other foundations cannot be overestimated. In the Ford program, for example, \$200,000 in grants was paid out to 20 artists and hundreds of persons visited the traveling exhibitions.

Rood is sure education for art will come in time.

"Consider the thousands of schools teaching art as compared with the handful of 30 or 40 years ago," he told an interviewer recently. "They teach not only how to do it but also the value and the necessity for it—if only by inference. And the young people are catching on, even those whose parents may be apathetic."

Rood thinks too much emphasis on the New York scene gives a lopsided view of the situation. His own experience, he said, is that artists outside

New York—the artists who keep producing though they may never attain the fame of a few who perhaps can do better in New York—fare better than second rate artists in the metropolis.

"My guess is that the artist has a better chance of making his way in the smaller art centers than in New York, where the competition is not only keen but is further multiplied by the activities of certain 'advanced' pressure groups—museums, avant garde galleries and the wealthy people they influence."

There is an increasing tendency among artists, Rood thinks, to settle for life in a smaller city, and there is a tendency among persons interested in art to make their purchases in these places rather than in New York. He thinks it is a hopeful sign that more people of small means are buying paintings. "Equity," he said, "is encouraging projects at the grass roots level—state fairs, county fairs, small local galleries, sales and rental programs, and co-operation with exhibiting groups and museums."

The move away from New

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and disordered chords, but it is clear that even when he tried, Mozart simply couldn't turn out bad music.

and color," he said. The slides he will show were taken in Milwaukee and New York City. Several including

Berman said the first color photograph work of this kind which he did in the summer of 1958 was relatively pictorial but that he since has moved closer to the subjects. "I am interested in only a portion of the texture, pattern and color," he said. The slides he will show were taken in Milwaukee and New York City. Several including

and type of abstract paintings. Photographs of abstract paintings will be correlated in a Milwaukee Art Center lecture by Fred Berman at 8:15 p.m. Thursday in the Memorial Center auditorium.

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three sculptors who received selected seven painters and awarded in a newly established project in a newly established Foundation, making its first In February, 1959, the Ford mature artists.

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THE ECONOMIC POSITION

By John Ferris

This is the fourth in a series of articles on the economic facts of life in the art world.

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A HALL OF ISSUES OPENS IN 'VILLAGE'

Variety of Opinions Shown
in Art at Judson Church

By NAN ROBERTSON

The Hall of Issues—a spontaneous forum of unspoken opinions — drew hundreds of sight-seers to its opening yesterday at 241 Thompson Street.

This Greenwich Village forum, sponsored by the Judson Memorial Church and Phyllis Yampolsky, a 29-year-old painter, aired statements in the form of paintings, sculpture, collages, photographs, essays, cartoons and newspaper clippings affixed to walls.

The subjects ranged from bomb shelters and birth control to painless eyebrow tweezers, the Twist and the House of Krupp.

Materials used in the exhibits included a 100-pound surplus bomb, a rotten apple core, a baby's shoe, a rubber bathroom plunger, a harmonica, a wooden door and the front page of The New York Mirror.

Although the points of view were not spoken aloud, the hall was by no means silent. It shook to the din of Twist records blaring from a portable phonograph, the yipping of puppies and the shrieks of children joyfully exploding balloons. The forum culminated with a Twist party.

Wanted Ideas Made Known

The idea came from Miss Yampolsky, who is married to another painter, Peter Forakis. There were many social, political and esthetic issues about which she wanted to express an opinion, but "without joining a committee."

"I'm not a joiner," she said yesterday.

She suggested a forum called the Hall of Issues in letters to President Kennedy, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Dr. Albert Burke, an educator with a televised "news essay" program, and the Rev. Howard R. Moody, minister of the Judson Church. Mr. Moody, the only one to reply, offered a hall on church property.

Miss Yampolsky then sent 2,000 fliers to art galleries, "committees of social consciousness," coffeehouses, art stores and publications.

The fliers said anybody who would bring a statement "in the form of paintings or poems or posters or essays or a sentence or a sculpture or a newspaper clipping or photos or an assemblage" would be welcome.

Nothing was to be for sale.

The bomb at the exhibition yesterday was lugged there by Jean-Jacques Lebel, a 25-year-old Parisian sculptor, and friends. It was painted in vivid colors, plastered with photos of young men in muscle magazines and perched upon a coffinlike box, open at the front and fitted with a flashing red light.

M. Lebel said he had chosen photographs from physical-culture magazines because they symbolized growing "rotteness, decadence and homosexuality" in a world haunted by the specter of nuclear war.

The rotten apple core, little

WJT
2/4/61

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SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE 800 CHESTNUT STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94109

Dear Bill -

December 6, 1961

at long last. *A comment*

Mr. William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
The Museum of Modern Art
New York 19, New York

See this?
~~Mr. William C. Seitz:~~

Due to the lateness of my correspondence and the inability of many of the individuals whom we hoped would be available for next summer, we have found it necessary to cancel our seminar for a for that time.

Since this was the principal reason for my visit to New York I have cancelled the trip as well. However, we still think it is a good idea and think that something very important could come from it and so hope to be more successful for the summer of 1963. If this seems to be a possibility I will write again at the end of the summer and see whether or not that might be a better time for you.

File

In the meantime, the best of success for your assemblage exhibition, the catalogue for which has been one of the most valuable items of this sort we have received recently. The value of it for the students has been great and the community is looking forward to seeing the traveling section of the show at the San Francisco Museum later in the winter.

Sincerely yours,

Gurdon Woods
Gurdon Woods, Director

GW/mw

pas send 1/10

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SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE 800 CHESTNUT STREET
SAN FRANCISCO 11, CALIFORNIA ORDWAY 3-2640

December 6, 1961

A comment

Mr. William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
The Museum of Modern Art
New York 19, New York

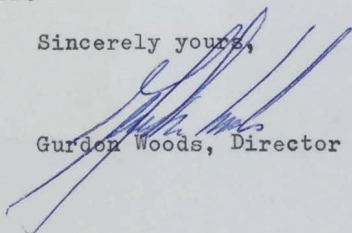
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Sincerely yours,


Gordon Woods, Director

GW/mw

formerly california school of fine arts and san francisco art association founded 1871

*pas
sent 1/6/62*

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Hirsch

New York, December 3rd, 1961

December 11, 1961

File

Mr. Paul F. Hirsch, News Editor
Museum of Modern Art
135th St.
New York

Thank you for the article on the Assemblage show.
I and I am happy to add it to my file.

Yours sincerely,

December 6
William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
(dictated by Mr. Seitz and
signed in his absence) sjk

... overlooked this article. It appeared in the November
WCS:sjk our school paper, Overtone.
You might be interested in the
fact that there is more than one
mainstream in modern art among students.

Respectfully,
Paul F. Hirsch
News Editor

I received your
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sent 1/10*

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Hirsch

New York, December 3rd, 1961

December 11, 1961

Mr. Paul F. Hirsch, News Editor
 High School of Music and Art
 Convent Avenue at 135th St.
 New York 31, New York

Dear Mr. Hirsch:

May I thank you for ~~the~~ article on the Assemblage show.

We did not have it and I am happy to add it to my file.

Yours sincerely,

December 6

William C. Seitz
 Associate Curator

(dictated by Mr. Seitz and
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BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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HIGH SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ART
CONVENT AVENUE AT 135th STREET, NEW YORK CITY 31
LOUIS K. WECHSLER, Principal • WADSWORTH 6-0870

3rd, 1961

December 6

Dear Sirs:

It may be that your press clipping service has overlooked this article. It appeared in the November issue of our school paper, Overtone.

You might be interested in the fact that there is more than one mainstream in modern art among students.

Respectfully,

Paul F. Disca
News Editor



LOUIS PRESSEL
393 WEST END AVE
NEW YORK N Y

Comment
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New York, December 3rd, 1961

To the Director of the
Department of Publications
Museum of Modern Art
New York City, New York

A comment

Dear Sir,

Under the heading of "Educational Material" I received your book entitled "The Art of Assemblage" whose text and illustrations, luxuriously and tastefully presented, do not hide the paucity of its spiritual content.

The title contains a fundamental error in using the word "art" where art is absent, but where the word "craft" or in some rare instances "humor" might have been the correct appellation.

What a wealth of futile scholarship, bibliographic research, references to Andre' Gide or Bergson etc... laced into a text full of assumed profundity have been squandered like real "collages" simply to prove that "assemblage" is at least a form of art.

Why try to discover under the camouflage of Apollinaire and his "calligrammes" or in the doubtful poetic sayings of Eliot, the sentimental source of the new feeling for simple objects or media as Dubuffet professes, out of which a new, a cultural experimentation should be born.

In emphasizing the names of the priests of modern painting of this century, Pissarro, Picasso, Braque, Dali, Gris, Duchamps, Mariné ~~ti~~, etc... even in classifying them as Dadaists, Cubists, Surrealists, etc... you will not be able to give the justification of "art" to an experiment composed by a collection of pranks, caricatures and many unsuccessful attempts "pour épater le bourgeois."

I have visited the "Assemblages and Collages" exhibition several times. It did not give me any pleasure of an aesthetic essence, nor did I feel any emotion which the revelation of art produces.

I don't think I should underline the spiritual vacuum which pervaded the exhibition. In looking at the perplexed and pained, often chagrined, even insulted expression on the faces of the viewing public--many laughed heartily at the insanity of the "Assemblages and Collages", I felt sorry to see that there had been an attempt of debasing the cultural meaning and content, the pleasurable emotion which the human heart and intellect discover in art.

I would appreciate your eventual response to these few lines at your convenience and remain, dear Sir,

Yours very truly

Louis Pressel

LOUIS PRESSEL
393 WEST END AVE
NEW YORK N Y

*Pres
sent 1961*

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E. Bayer
Frankfurt/Main
Balthasarstr. 25
24. 11. 61

Museum
of Modern Art
New York

Dear Dr. Bill Seitz,

I read with much pleasure the report of Richard Huelshbeck in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung about your exhibition 'Assemblage'.

May I enclose this report for your information. As I am highly interested in and occasionally practising the exciting work of composing pictures by assembling and pasting stuffs and as I cannot see your exhibition I should be very grateful if you could send me free of charge a copy of the catalogue. It may be a specimen already used and you may send it by common mail as printed matter.

I wonder whether the cases of Louise Nevelson also form part of your show.

Hoping that my request will not cause you too much trouble I thank you already now for your kindness. Please let me know if I can do anything for you

Yours very truly
E. Bayer

Have
pubs. send
send information

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Die Ausstellung der „Assemblage“ in New York

In dem berühmten und glänzenden Museum der Modernen Kunst, das vor Jahren von Dr. Alfred Barr mit Hilfe der Gelder vieler wohlmeinender Millionäre, unter ihnen die Rockefeller und die Whitneys, gegründet wurde, hat Dr. Bill Seitz, ein erstaunlich intelligenter und wendiger junger Mann, die Kunst der Assemblage zur Schau gestellt. Die Ausstellung hat die Neugier, die Begeisterung, den Zorn und den gutgemeinten Widerstand der Kritiker und des amerikanischen Publikums hervorgerufen. Der Kritiker der „New York Times“, bekannt als gemäßiger Freund der modernen Kunst, hat die Ausstellung abgelehnt, er weist in seinem Artikel auf die Tatsache hin, daß praktisch jeder in die Straße, auf die Felder und Wiesen gehen und Dinge sammeln könne, die dann, unter irgendwelchen oder ohne Gesichtspunkte zusammengestellt, als Kunstwerke oder, wie Canaday meint, als Pseudokunstwerke gezeigt werden könnten. Everybody is doing it, jeder kann es tun — und jeder wird es tun, denkt Canaday, der Kritiker der „Times“. Der schon viel gehörte Schrei wird nun von Trompeten geblasen: Die Kunst ist tot.

Aber, soweit ich sehen kann, geht es der Kunst, wie es den französischen Königen ging, le roi est mort, vive le roi. Die Kunst mag in irgendeiner Form tot sein, aber sie ist auch in irgendeiner Form lebendiger denn je. In einer allgemeinen Diskussion im Museum, vor einem speziell geladenen Publikum, wurde die Frage des Absterbens der Kunst und somit die Frage der Assemblagekunst erörtert.

In allen Diskussionen um die Kunst der Assemblage spielt Dada eine große Rolle, die romantische Idee der Selbstaufhebung führt, wie ich glaube, zu einer veränderten Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung. Der Dadaismus war die einzige Kunstrichtung, in der durch die Tatsache der Selbstverspottung das tiefe Inferio-

ritätsgefühl des modernen Menschen in den so diversen psychologischen und ästhetischen Aktionsfeldern aufgezeigt wurde. Und hier scheint mir einer der wichtigsten Punkte zu sein, die man im Auge behalten muß, wenn man versuchen will, die Kunst der Assemblage zu verstehen. Es handelt sich bei diesen Werken nicht mehr um etwas, das ästhetisch erklärt werden könnte, man kann nicht mehr sagen, daß die Assemblagen des Dadaisten Schwitters besser sind als die Assemblagen irgendeines anderen, weil sie schöner sind oder weil sie eine „innere Dynamik“ haben oder weil sie gewisse Materialien benutzen, aus denen und mit denen man an frühere Schönheit erinnert wird — alles das führt in Sackgassen. Man kann die Kunst der Assemblage nur verstehen oder sich dem Verständnis nähern, wenn man diese hier im Museum für Moderne Kunst zur Schau gestellten Werke auf die allgemeine menschliche Situation in unserer Zeit bezieht.

Die allgemeine menschliche Situation mit ihrer vollen Wucht als eine von der Viktorianischen Epoche völlig verschiedene Situation beeinflusste die Manifeste und Bilder der Futuristen, die im Jahre 1909 unter der Führung Marinettis Rom auf den Kopf stellten. Marinetti, Boccioni, Severini, Russolo, Carrà und die anderen fühlten, daß sie auf einem Vulkan lebten, sie sahen die ersten wesentlichen Wirkungen, welche die Maschine und die zunehmende Mechanisierung auf die Kultur hatten, sie fühlten die Uebergänge von einer geschlossenen kulturellen Periode, so wie es die Viktorianische war, zu einer offenen, die weder Ende noch Anfang hatte, wo alle Fragen gelöst werden mußten und wo die Frage als solche ein Teil der menschlichen Existenz bildete. Marinetti wollte nicht nur die Kunst revolutionieren, er wollte die Menschheit revolutionieren, in dem Sinn, als er ihr das Bewußtsein einer neuen Zeit brachte.

Die Kunst der Assemblage wurde in dem Gefühl der schnellen Veränderung der Welt von Arp und Schwitters entdeckt. Sie fanden den Ausdruck ihrer Entdeckung auf ästhetischem Gebiet, sie waren Künstler wie die meisten Dadaisten. Es war ein direkter und wesentlicher Ausdruck der veränderten Lage, als Arp seine zerrissenen Papiere auf die Erde gleiten ließ und sie nach dem Gesetz des Zufalls zusammenklebte. Es war ebenso eine Sache der erwähnten Zeitänderung, als Schwitters am See in Zürich und in den Straßen Hannovers später „Dinge“ auffas, Korke, Kleidungs Fetzen, Papier von Plakaten, verlorene Zeitungstücke, Haarnadeln, Streichholzkästchen, und als er alles dies zusammenbrachte, zusammenklebte, zusammennagelte und -nähte — dies waren seine Kollagen, sie unterschieden sich von den früheren Kollagen Picassos und Braques dadurch, daß sie nicht mehr ein Ausdruck des Künstlers oder nicht allein ein Ausdruck des Künstlers waren, sie kamen zu ihm durch das verschiedene Material, durch das neue Material, es war die Welt, die auf den Künstler zukam, er ging nicht mehr hinter ihr her. Im Augenblick des Schaffens als echter Dadaist eliminierte er den Einfluß seines Egos, er suchte und fand eine neue Objektivität. Das ist die Kunst der Assemblage oder der Juxtaposition. Der Künstler handelt anders als derjenige, der in einer geschlossenen Welt, mit sich und seinem Glauben (an Gott und die Gesellschaft) einen ästhetischen Ausdruck schafft. Der Künstler dieser Zeit, seit Arp und Schwitters, ist nur ein Mitläufer seiner eigenen Schöpfung. Er hat die neue Haltung angenommen, die wir alle in einer Welt, die von der Technologie beherrscht wird, annehmen müssen, ob wir es wollen oder nicht. Wenn ein Mann ein Auto fährt, so bringt ihn das Auto irgendwohin in sehr kurzer Zeit, wohin er mit seinen Füßen nur nach Tagen oder Wochen gelangen könnte. Der Fahrer ist nur ein Teilnehmer in einer Operation, deren Hauptleistung der Maschine zufällt.

Man könnte die Kunst der Assemblage auch die Kunst der Aufsichtung nennen, die Objekte werden zusammengehäuft, akkumu-

liert, sie werden nicht mehr nach einer Idee geordnet, sie erzählen keine Geschichte mehr, und sie sind deshalb keine Projektion des Menschen. Der Mensch und sein Schicksal ist in der Kunst der Aufsichtung (und der Assemblage) einer Ordnung untergeordnet, die imposanter ist als er selbst. Während die mittelalterliche Kunst der Ausdruck einer geschlossenen, von ethischen und kulturellen Pfeilern wohl getragenen Welt war, ist die Kunst der Aufsichtung eine neue Form der Dehumanisierung, der Ent- oder Uebermenschlichung.

Im Museum der Modernen Kunst zieht die Ausstellung der Assemblagekunst täglich viele hundert Menschen an, sie stehen lächelnd vor den mit alten Weinpfeifen, Kleiderfetzen, zerbrochenen Löffeln gefüllten Ausschnitten, die der Katalog immer noch als Bilder bezeichnet. Die Besucher lächeln, sie sind erstaunt und überrascht, sie glauben ernsthaft, daß man ihnen hier etwas ganz Neues zeigt, während in Wirklichkeit ganz New York voll von Assemblagen ist, und ich scheue mich deshalb nicht, New York, die Riesenstadt selbst, als Ganzmontage oder Riesenassemblage zu zitieren. Seit vielen Monaten ist die Stadt in einem hysterischen Umbildungsprozeß begriffen, es ist der Versuch der kommerziellen, funktionellen Welt, ein für allemal mit der Tradition, der Atmosphäre, der „Gemütlichkeit“ Schluß zu machen. Die Glas- und Beton-Riesen, die an jeder Ecke entstehen, sind Produkte einer veränderten Haltung des Menschen, der durch Aufhäufung, Zusammen- und Nebeneinanderstellung etwas Ueber- und Unmenschliches schaffen will, was seiner neuen Unendlichkeitsvorstellung entspricht. Die Wolkenkratzer, in der Tat, sind weniger Wohnungen als Raumschiffe, sie deuten mit ihren Spitzen auf die Sterne und den Mond, die nun, ihrer poetischen Bedeutung entkleidet, auf die Installierung von Raumhotels warten.

Dr. Seitz hat uns mit seiner Assemblageausstellung einen großen Gefallen getan, indem er damit auf die Grenzen aller möglichen Kunst in unserer Zeit hingewiesen hat. Hier, in den Werken solch begabter Anhänger der Abfallkultur, wie es zum Beispiel der junge Rauschenberg ist, wird wieder und wieder die Frage gestellt: Kann man das, was nicht mehr ein Ausdruck des Menschen und seiner inneren Welt ist, noch als Kunst bezeichnen? Man wird beim Durchgehen der Ausstellung gefragt: Ist dies Kunst oder was...? Ich habe mir meine Antwort selbst gegeben: Es handelt sich hier um eine Kunst, die keine Kunst mehr sein will, so wie der Mensch in unserer Zeit sich ständig die Frage stellen muß, ob das, was er unter dem Druck der Kriegsdrohung noch als Leben bezeichnet, wirklich so etwas wie Leben ist.

RICHARD HUELSENBECK

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John Maass 1809 Pine Street, Philadelphia 3, Pa.

*Comment day
with answer*

Dear Mr. Seitz:

Your handsome book on Assemblage is so carefully researched and annotated that I feel free to add a lintpicking footnote.

Merz is alleged to be derived from the fragment of the word Kommerz. This is also the account given in the French book by Marcel Jean. But to a German there is a subtle pun involved. Ausmerzen is a German verb meaning to eliminate or discard. The coined word Merz therefore suggests stuff which was thrown away.

Dec 13

Yours truly

John Maass

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

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A - comments Maass

Mr. Albert Frankfurter, Esq.
 125 West 57th Street
 New York 19, N.Y.
 Sir:

A comment

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art December 19, 1961 a "collector-sanctifying bureaucracy"--manufactured history of art, of hanging major works beside

Mr. John Maass
 1809 Pine Street
 Philadelphia 3, Penn.

Dear Mr. Maass:
 them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute, but to correct the

Thank you for your comment on the Assemblage book.

As you can imagine I am familiar with the origin of the word Merz. This is not simply an allegation, for Kurt Schwitters himself asserted that this was the source. I am also cognizant of the possible connection with the verb Ausmerzen. It would make me happy to think that this connection, which would suggest the kind of materials that Schwitters used, was in his mind, but I have never found evidence that such was the case.

Yours sincerely,

William C. Seitz
 Associate Curator

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 32 works (2 Rotaks!) that Art News reproduces, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 98 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never seen in New York), from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the middle or far west, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacerée by de la Ville was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada shreds." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major colleagues as Mothershead (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to learn from a parochialism resulting from the lack of Thomas Craven?

WCS:sjk

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Dr. Albert Frankfurter, Editor
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N.Y.

Sir:

A comment

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art of forcing a "collector-sanctifying bureaucracy"--manufactured history of art, of hanging major works beside trash, and of favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made such charges before, but, unfounded as I believe them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute, but to correct the intimation, interspersed between a few flattering comments on the book and the exhibition, that I was the victim of an insidious policy that continues to "force younger staff members to keep allegiance to a past that looks more and more synthetic every year. . ." Hess' insinuation is of course false. The original idea, the book, the choice of works, the "jazzy-maze installation," and whatever virtues and vices Mr. Hess finds, were entirely my own. I, and not some nameless influence, was responsible for them.

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 22 works (2 Rothkos!) that Art News reproduces, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 93 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never shown before in New York), from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the middle or far west, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacerée by de la Villeglé was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada chic." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major collagists as Motherwell (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to gain from a parochialism recalling that of Thomas Craven?

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(2)

This misleading and distorting piece is itself an assemblage, composed of elements as unrelated as any in the exhibition; but the characteristic swings, jabs, and feints of Hessian "action writing" are too overlaid and ambiguous to pin down. He can always say, as did the poet, "That is not what I meant at all; that is not it, at all."

William C. Seitz

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MAN RAY 2 bis rue Férou PARIS 6

Man Ray

November 18 1961

My dear Seitz,

Thanks for your letter of Nov. 9; on the contrary, it clears up things for me, regarding Mr. Knife and Miss Fork.

I've also received the Assemblage catalog, ~~am~~ am pleased with the presentation of my objects. Perhaps editors will now take more seriously the publication of my projected book: Objects of my Affection, which brings things up to date. One of my earliest paintings, LEGEND (1916) is prophetic-am I becoming a legend ?

Yes, I received a letter from Hamilton of Yale, proposing his candidate, about the same time as your letter. Let them come- they may be surprised to find me alive and still doing things. This, however, will be for the next generation. A Japanese student ~~is~~ is also doing a thesis on me- rummaging through my documents. And I am finishing my book, which I hope will appear in 1962. It's already sold. Not many dates in it, but a lot of information, and some inspiration !

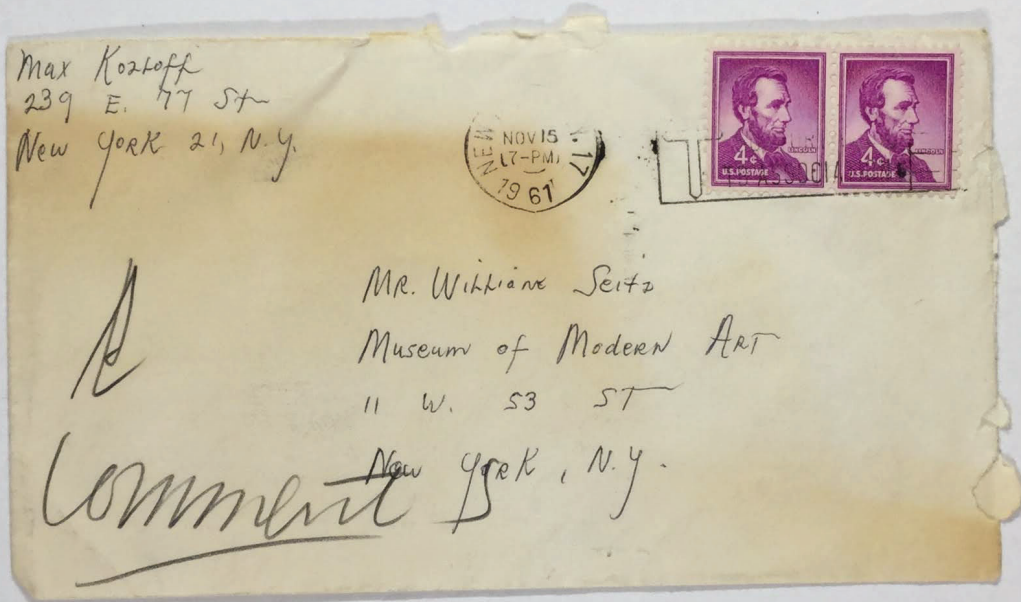
Thank you for your kind interest.

Sincerely

Man Ray

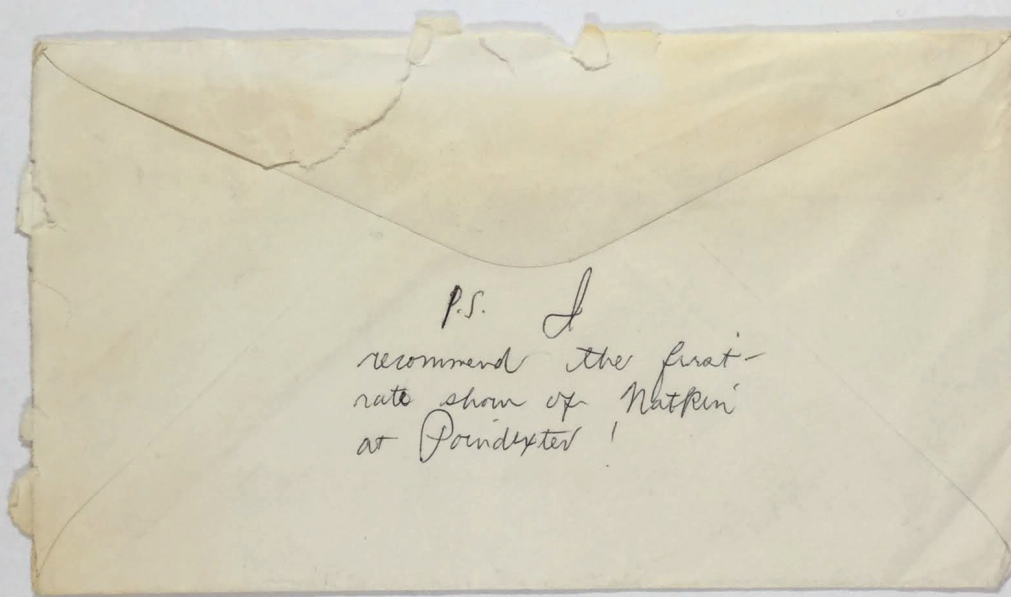
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P.S. I
recommend the first-
rate show of Natpeni
at Poundexter!

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Subey

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGARME



Miss Sally Kubn
c/o The Museum of Modern Art
110. 53rd St off Fifth Ave,
New York City 19
New York
USA

First fold here

Second fold here

Sender's name and address:
H. Grayson
3, Carlisle Sq.
London SW 3
England

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Dear Sally,

Every once in an all too infrequent interval in one's life's circumstances combine in a most extraordinarily felicitous manner. I hope you can gain some pleasure in the knowledge that you gave me one such moment.

You see, I was painting towards something, I knew that, but I didn't know exactly what I was aiming towards. Then that Godsend of a book came (on what sweet solicitous wings) and it was a handsome book, a visual treasure in the Welsh Sahara, and it struck a very close note pictorially. But

then I was prompted to read it even, and most unique of unique, I found it was almost written to me.

As a painter you usually get some measure of satisfaction from reading the text of an art book; the satisfaction that is of knowing that you see and the writer does it. ~~But~~ I found myself listening to what the man had to say. and while I as yet don't have any credentials to speak of, I must say you have a wise and seeing boss man.

Which in turn makes me happy in that you deserve as much. Thank you, in short, very much for sending the book.

Yrs. in gratitude
J.P. Sweeney &
By way my compliments to Mrs. Seitz

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Hi Sal,

We are having an "interesting" time. Now we're in London. I spend my time doing housework but Harvey has been getting lots done. Wales was beautiful but the dreary end as far as society went. I'm a city girl at heart. I miss the U.S.A. Believe me, being away you see the vitality in perspective and it seems wonderful. Will write more later.

Love
Sueey

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME



Miss Sally Kubin
c/o The Museum of Modern Art
11W. 53rd St off Fifth Ave,
New York City 19
New York
U.S.A.

Sender's name and address:

H. Quayton
31 Carlisle Sq,
London, S.W. 3
England

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OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

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New York Herald Tribune

Fur-Lined Cup Back, In Dada-ist Exhibit

By Emily Genauer

Twenty-five years ago the Museum of Modern Art exhibited a furlined cup-and-saucer as an example of dada-ist art. It's back at the museum now in an exhibition opening to the public today and called "The Art of Assemblage."

It was a shocker twenty-five years ago. Today it's a bore. So are most of the other 250 items in an exhibition the museum is presenting as one of the major events of its schedule this year. Among them are such "historic" items as Marcel Duchamp's "Why Not Sneeze," a bird cage full of marble blocks simulating lump sugar (this also was on view a quarter-century ago), and the same artist's "Fountain," which is nothing more than a porcelain urinal.

Cushions and Eagles

Alongside them, and filling the museum's third floor, are such recent creations as Robert Rauschenberg's abstract canvas with a stuffed eagle projecting from it and a cushion tied to it with a string, John Chamberlain's construction—destruction would perhaps be a better word—of battered automobile parts and Arnan's "Arteriosclerosis," which is a shadow box full of rusty tin spoons and forks.

Why artists do such things is relatively simple to answer. Some are giving us a message. "Life is as ugly and ludicrous as these absurd materials, and we are idiots if we try to make it less so."

A few make their message affirmative, rather than negative, like "Our culture is one of appalling waste. See how, out of abandoned wreckage, we can still fashion objects whose rude beauty invests them with new life."

Some are still protesting bourgeois aesthetic standards—and looking complete idiots because there's nothing for them to rebel at in a culture where anything goes.

Some of the artists are merely experimenting with tantalizing or cheaply available materials which have no special significance beyond their unexpected colors, shapes and textures.

Some are just playing at high-

But that makes them and the museum look foolish.

Shock and newness are the whole point of dada-ism, and the shock has long since worn off. Is it to show where the new nihilism of the theater, as we see it in Beckett, Albee and Ionesco, stems from? But art critics, hearing the delighted squeals of audiences at Beckett's plays, have been telling from the beginning how his devices were old stuff in the world of art.

Is It Art?

Is it art at all that the Museum is giving us in its new show of what it calls "works of art made by fastening together cut or torn pieces of paper, clippings from newspapers, photographs, bits of cloth, fragments of wood, metal or other such materials, shells or stones. . . ."

In some cases, yes. Here the objects have been put together by the artists (from Picasso and Gris down to Esteban Vicente and Louise Nevelson) with imagination and freshness, with a compositional skill and textural sensitivity that make them physically beautiful, entirely apart from any significance attaching to their mechanical origin and irrational juxtapositions.

Most, however, have no validity as art at all, and only modest interest because of their sociological content. They are childish, ludicrous, frightening, appalling, or, which is worse, completely tiresome.

The exhibition, which has been assembled by William S. Seitz, the museum's associate curator of painting and sculpture shows, will take to the road after it closes here Nov. 12, with displays scheduled for Dallas and San Francisco. Texas, take it away.

Engineers Strike Hits Laboratories in N. J.

Special to the Herald Tribune
NUTLEY, N. J.

A strike by 1,100 engineers and other technicians yesterday closed down research operations at the International Telephone and Telegraph laboratories here and at four field locations in New Jersey.

The laboratories are engaged in critical defense contracts including the Dew Line

tracking system. The strike Local 400

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Section 4

Art

Oct 8, 1961

New York Herald Tribune

Emily Genauer:

An 'Assemblage': Art or Plumbing?

IT is to laugh, or to shrug one's shoulders, or to turn away in embarrassment. Twenty-five years ago, when the Museum of Modern Art presented its exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism," which was in character very like its new "The Art of Assemblage," and included many of the same items, it was to weep.

I and some of the other critics reviewing it did. So did several members of the museum's own board. A fur-lined cup-and-saucer set on a pedestal like a piece of sculpture, a bird cage filled with chunks of marble simulating lump sugar and entitled "Why Not Sneeze," a white porcelain urinal (the three appear in the current exhibit, too), all presented as works of art, seemed a tragic betrayal by the new museum (it was then seven years old) of its founders' own expressed purpose and all our hopes for it at a time when the general public was still increasingly eager but uncertain about modern art and desperately wanted and needed clarification and reassurance. We felt very bitter that the museum should be expending its enormous resources and prestige on a project which was dilettante at best and decadent at worst.

Shockers Work

But in the quarter-century that has passed, much has happened. For one thing we've learned to live with (although not admire) what I called in an article I wrote for Harper's after the first show opened, the museum's sure-things-and-shockers policy. Now we see that it was a program as vulgar as anything the most arrantly commercial enterprise might adopt, which nevertheless has worked. The shockers, no matter how repugnant, have indeed served to drag the public into the museum, where visitors once there were also confronted with many of the most distinguished late-nineteenth and twentieth-century masterpieces. In supermarkets the items used to lure the public this way are called, I think, loss leaders.

After a time we learned to pay no attention to the museum's loss leaders, beyond deploring their inevitable and near-disastrous effect on public taste and artists' efforts and future. It wasn't that we underestimated the havoc. It was that we also kept watching the crowds pour in, and we felt that somehow the museum's sure things, the great Cezannes and Van Goghs and Picassos it accumulated, would serve as a touchstone of quality eventually clarifying for the public the emptiness and vulgarity of the shockers.

And they have. Therefore we can laugh today at the museum's latest show, "The Art of Assemblage." We can also laugh, perhaps, at some of the items in it, for all the fact that the "joke" of the irrational juxtaposition of ridiculous objects has been told ad nauseam.

Eagle and Pillow

If Robert Rauschenberg, who has on more than one occasion proved that he is an artist of notable talent and imagination, wants to spend his time at such shenanigans as attaching a stuffed eagle to an abstract picture and suspending from it a pillow tied in the middle with a string, and the result strikes visitors as funny, there's no harm done. If a Frenchman named Arman gets a charge out of sticking a lot of rusty spoons

and forks in a shadow box, it sounds like innocent enough amusement. If Tinguely wants to wreck a piano, he has as much right to do it as Jimmy Durante. If others fool around with old plumbing oddments, bicycle wheels, squirrel tails—put it down as fun-and-games.

For some visitors, however, it may not seem so funny. Regardless of the artists' intentions, their products are a grim sociological manifestation, an unconscious statement about or deliberate protest against our time's confused ethical and esthetic values. Cesar's and Chamberlain's exhibits, for example, both of them old wrecked automobiles crushed into newer wrecks, can be read, although there's no indication the artists meant them to be, as sardonic commentaries on our time's deification of shiny new cars.

Such purpose is, of course, both important and valid for an artist. His are the products of despair, the counterpart in art of the devices adopted by Beckett, Albee and Ionesco in the theater. In the theater, however, they came as a relatively new technique adopted, as some of us pointed out when first we saw the plays, from the dadaist program which Marcel Duchamp and others introduced to art forty years ago.

But Dada (its very name signified nonsense), conceived as a means, through a magnification of absurdity, of calling attention to the absurdity of prevailing mores, depended for its effectiveness on shock value. When the shock wore off, most of the serious painters who had been involved in the movement went back to painting, or, like Duchamp, quit entirely. None of us imagined that years later we'd be confronted with the greatest absurdity of all—young artists of varying talent, priding themselves on being avant-garde, dishing up the same old dada, and getting the Museum of Modern Art, once belligerent standard-bearer of the new, to serve it as a banquet.

Amused—If

One is amused (if the high jinks are new to one), embarrassed (that the artists don't seem to know that vaudeville is passe), and regretful (because the museum, eager once again to produce a shocker, has failed, even when presenting a show of this character, to give it some serious, constructive purpose).

Because it could have, and quite simply. There have been artists who, long before the invention of dadaism, turned to surprise materials, real objects, discards, or their facsimiles and incorporated them into their own efforts because they were provocative and challenging in either their physical aspects, like texture, shape, materials, or attention-getting power; or their associations or symbolic value. The nineteenth-century Harnett, with his deceive-the-eye rendering of paper currency painted into his compositions, was one. Braque, Picasso and Gris all fixed bits of newspaper, rope, wood to their early works. The important thing is that

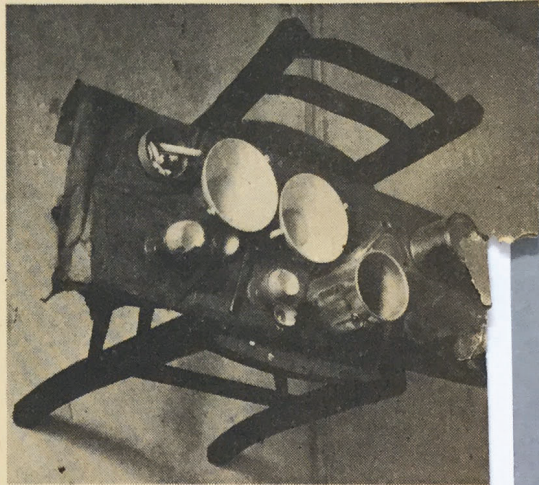
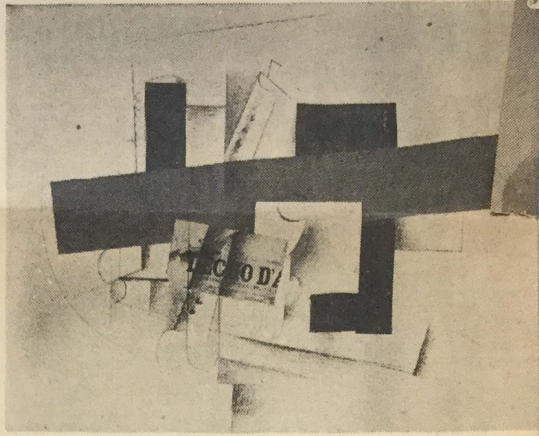
all of these, as well as many artists who today use the collage or even the assemblage technique (more inclusive than collage in that it takes in more materials and practically any way of employing them), for either physical or symbolic reasons, accepted as a postulate the need to fashion objects which have an esthetic form. They set out to create a work of art, rather than simply to play games, make a protest, shock the public. The results may do this, too—and many great works of art have. But they must first of all exist as "beautiful" objects, giving the word its broadest possible interpretation. They must also exist as objects an artist has put together with his own understanding of and concern for form, shape, color and the like, whatever his materials origin.

The Difference

This is what makes the difference between Duchamp's manufactured porcelain urinal, and Kurt Schwitter's paste-ups of waste-paper fragments; between Spoerri's opus called "Kliché's Breakfast" (a wooden chair attached by its four legs to the gallery wall, so it forms a right angle, with a board nailed to the seat and spread with glued-down real utensils

and the remains of two breakfasts) and Louise Nevelson's "Royal Tide," a fitted-together collection of square boxes filled with wood debris painted gold. Of course Schwitter and Nevelson were making ironic commentaries on our culture. Their statements are not less but far more powerful for being, at the same time, objects of singular beauty of form. The difference is between excrement (and one dadaist actually used excrement for his composition, although the Museum of Modern Art, while citing the artist in its scholarly catalogue, apparently felt the Duchamp urinal was as far as it could go in the show), and a work of art which says in terms moving and memorable that life is itself nothing but a waste. It isn't the negativeness of the message to which one takes exception. It's the non-esthetic form in which it is expressed.

In any case, the museum should have made the distinction, included some of the trash, in a separate sociological section, perhaps, and then devoted the rest of the exhibit—and there is more than enough on hand to make the point—to showing how an artist can invest even trash with beauty and meaning.



Two works from "The Art of Assemblage," the Museum of Modern Art's new show. Shown on top is a Braque composition of paper, newspaper, facsimile woodgrain, touched with pale color and assembled into some picture called "Clarinet" (1913). Below is Daniel Spoerri's "Breakfast" (1960), in which a wood chair carrying glued-on kitchen and breakfast remains has been nailed to the wall at each of the four

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NY POST, OCT 15, 1961

In the Art Galleries

IRVING SANDLER

Perhaps the most momentous event in the development of modern art occurred almost 50 years ago when Picasso and Braque pasted scraps of paper to their canvases, creating the first collages.

Developing the implications of this move, the Cubists soon substituted bulkier elements, building them out from the surface until the resulting reliefs could stand freely. An entirely new art form—construction in space—came into being. Artists in every subsequent vanguard movement have utilized unorthodox substances and a constructionist esthetic.

The Constructivists, Neo-Plasticists and Bauhaus associates incorporated industrial material into their impersonal, rigidly disciplined fabrications which glorified the rationality of modern technology.

The Dadaists used found and commercial objects to debunk what they considered the sham values of Western culture. The Surrealists juxtaposed incongruous materials to create a "concrete irrationality," an art based on subliminal motivations and impulses.

Abstract Expressionists found

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Irving Sandler, The Post's new art critic, is on the staff of Art News and contributes monthly reviews to Art International. He has lectured on art over TV and radio and teaches modern art at NYU.

in the improvisational collage technique the freedom they needed in their search for the individual identity. Younger artists today, influenced by the urban motifs in the works of de Kooning, Kline and Pollock, are piecing together discarded chunks of environment to suggest city forms and images.

The "Assemblage" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art consists of 252 examples by 140 artists who compose their pieces from "preformed natural or manufactured materials, objects or fragments not intended as art materials." It attempts to place current assemblages in their historic setting, emphasizing the continuing vitality of this form of art.

The Cubist paste-ups have a solid, old-masterish look that almost makes one forget how revolutionary they once were. The Dada assemblages are now

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more amusing than shocking. With the exception of pieces by Arp and Schwitters, they have become historical data rather than significant works of art. The decision of William Seitz, the organizer of the show, to include 35 "Merz" collages by Schwitters was a singularly happy one. This muse of the city gutters was not only a masterful artist, but he also anticipated every later development in assemblage.

Most of the objects by Surrealists, of which there are too many, seem precious and contrived, but the 14 magical cabinets by Cornell provide a high point in the exhibition.

The most recent tendencies in assemblage are not seen to best advantage. Chamberlain's huge construction-relief of smashed automobile parts at the entrance of the show is a magnificent piece, at once savage, disciplined and elegant. One anticipates other equally strong objects in which urban refuse is transmuted into metaphors for the poverty and richness of city life, its particular terror, poignancy, tempo and spectacle.

But, aside from works by Stankiewicz, Mallary and Rauschenberg, these expectations are not fulfilled. The pallid scraped billboards of Rotella, Duffrene, Hains, Denny and Getman do not convey the im-

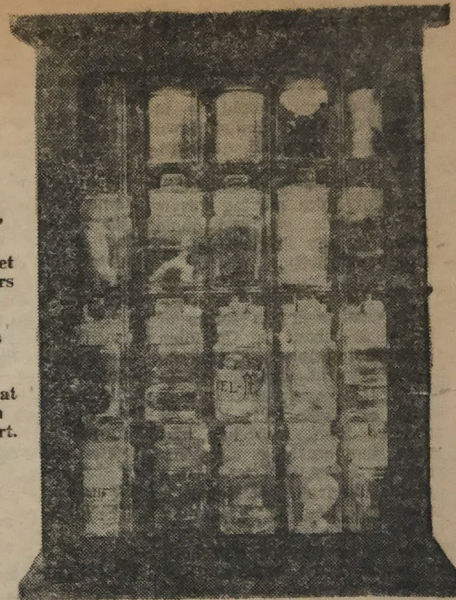
NORMAN POMERANTZ

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Joseph Cornell's "Apothecary" (1950), a wooden cabinet with glass jars containing various materials, is on view in "The Art of Assemblage" at the Museum of Modern Art.



part of the city. A construction by di Suvero and a relief by Oldenburg, who were not included, would have.

The overall impression created by the multitude of objects is sedate and chic. There are too few bold shouts of anguish or of exaltation. Where the Museum of Modern Art might have been daring, it played it safe, lapsing into good taste.

The "Assemblage" display, if it has any effect on current thinking about art, should do away with ideas that non-traditional substances are "vicious" because they undermine art, or, on the other hand, that they have any special "avant-garde"

value apart from the artistic vision which they serve. It is impossible today to create an anti-art art from shocking materials, as the Dadaists did, because all materials have become common to art. Many of the assemblages in the show express the artist's heightened sensitivity to his environment and condition with formal inventiveness and brilliance and, as such, are superb works of art.

Assemblage has by now become a bandwagon phenomenon. Most of the thousands of dreary objects being made today are a kind of urban driftwood, indistinguishable from coffee house decor. But these faddist works in no way reflect on the high artistic merit of pieces by Nevelson, Vicente, Follett, Motherwell, Dubuffet, Lewitin, Fine, Cohen, Burri, Goodnough, Marca-Relli, Johns, Bontecou and Latham, who are in the show, and di Suvero, Oldenburg, Kiesler, Kaprow and Dine, who are not.

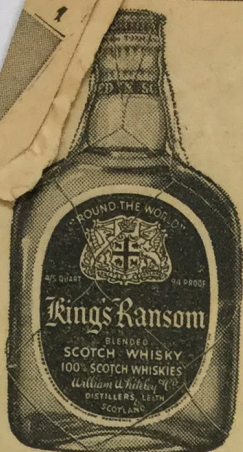
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Art: Spectacular Show

New 'Assemblage' Display at Modern Museum Is Called a 'Dazzler'

By JOHN CANADAY

"THE ART OF ASSEMBLAGE," opening today at the Museum of Modern Art, is that institution's first big spectacle of the year and just about as spectacular as any it has ever staged. Theatrical to the limit, it is a dazzler from start to finish, from the best things in it to the worst. And the range from good to bad touches the extremes in the field.

An "assemblage" is "a work of art made by fastening together cut or torn pieces of paper, clippings from newspapers, photographs, bits of cloth, fragments of wood, metal or other such materials, shells or stones, or even objects such as knives and forks, chairs and tables, parts of dolls and manikins, automobile fenders, steel boilers, and stuffed birds and animals." If the definition seems lengthy, it is far from all-inclusive; the museum's exhibition, however, very nearly is.

Its all-inclusiveness is its fault, and seems to me to be very nearly a moral as well as an esthetic shortcoming in a museum exerting so powerful an educational force. Assemblage, if we date from Picasso's first partial collage (a paste-up on a flat surface), is now fifty years old, offering an appropriate occasion for a historical survey of the origins and ramifications of the technique.

William Seitz, the museum's associate curator of painting and sculpture exhibitions, has done a thorough job of col-

lecting historically important and esthetically satisfying objects. But he has also included quantities of current assemblages of trash that, if transformed, are transformed only into trash of a different kind, vicious rather than bland.

The viciousness, in what might otherwise be acceptable as inconsequential play, comes from the unselective enthusiasm with which the trivial and the specious are presented in identification with the significant, as expounded in a catalogue that suffers from a bad mix-up of long hair and starry eyes. With a kind of exhibitionistic scholarship, yet with juvenile overtones, the text plays the tiresome game of forcing respectable antecedents upon a medium that in most of its aspects has made a fetish of disrespectability. Only in occasional muttered asides is there any indication that assemblage in all its aspects is anything less than the esthetic equivalent of the Second Coming.

A bit more objective consideration of a medium where abuses have at least equaled achievements would have done the museum more credit. But as a demonstration of sheer display as a technique for selling questionable merchandise mixed with good, "The Art of Assemblage" is without peer and could well hold ideas for people engaged in commercial enterprises presenting similar problems.

Contract Bridge

Most London Clubs Resemble Those of New York, With One Exception

By ALBERT H. MOREHEAD

Special to The New York Times.
LONDON, Oct. 3—London bridge clubs, with one exception, resemble those of New York City, except that there are more bridge clubs in London and the more elaborate of them are somewhat more elaborate than New York's best.

For example, the Hamilton Club and Crockford's Club, both of which are in the West End, have their private mansions and their own restaurants and Regency Club in the City, but also have available a large number of

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New York Times
Oct. 8, 1961

A MIXED-UP SHOW

'Art of Assemblage' Leaves a Little Something to Be Desired

By JOHN CANADAY

BEFORE getting onto the subject of the current exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, a highly perfumed affair not much to my liking, let us make one thing clear. During the last twelve-month I have purchased for my own delectation four works of art: a page of medieval manuscript, a Daumier lithograph, a drawing by the contemporary English sculptor Lynn Chadwick, and a collage by Marian Warzecha. The last named, purchased from the Museum of Modern Art's Polish exhibition, cost more than the other three combined, and should establish ipso facto that I am not opposed to collage per se.

Mr. Warzecha is, in fact, included in "The Art of Assemblage," the title of this exhibition that traces the fifty-year history of collage and other paste-up, weld-up, tie-up and mock-up forms of art created from scraps, junk, oddments and other non-art materials. Spotted throughout the show are indisputable works of art accounting for a quarter or even a half of the total display. But the remainder are works of non-art, anti-art and art substitutes that are the esthetic counterparts of the social deficiencies that land people in the clink on charges of vagrancy. These esthetic bankrupts, in spite of their luxurious temporary quarters, have no legitimate ideological roof over their heads and not the price of a square intellectual meal, much less a spiritual sandwich, in their pockets.

Points of View

Even so, they would be exhibitable as the phenomena they are. It is only the pretentious intellectualization of forms of neurotic play that creates such a bad odor where they hang on the third floor of 11 West Fifty-third Street. William Seitz, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, upon being given the job of organizing the show, apparently felt an obligation to prove that assemblage, a secondary art form at best and a viciously prostituted one at worst, is the biggest thing to have hit us since the Sistine ceiling. His catalogue deserves a special

word, but until that word is coined, or assembled, let us say only that not since the last Mr. America contest has there been seen on this continent such a display of muscle flexing. Having read the catalogue in galley proofs some weeks ago through the courtesy of the museum to which I now seem to be being so discourteous, I have had plenty of time to think things over, and the objections stand supported by an exhibition that might have qualified them.

Actually I do not think it is discourteous to point out that the present exhibition demonstrates much that has always been best and one thing that has lately been increasingly worse in the museum's program—bad enough to make you wonder whether its great days are over. The museum answers criticism of what it exhibits by contending that it is a cool, removed body devoted to the objective observation of contemporary phenomena, phenomena that it does nothing to produce, but which it simply exhibits as current record after the fact. This contention can be refuted four ways to Christmas, but let us accept it for now.

Sad Change

In that case, "The Art of Assemblage" is defensible only if presented in a way consistent with the museum's summaries during the great period when Alfred Barr educated a generation of Americans through exhibitions and publications that could support the objective contention. It is sad to see a member of that generation fail his mentor by exhibiting and writing not to enlarge the understanding of an intelligent public but to cultivate and impress a coterie that has increasingly given the museum the reputation of a clubhouse for intellectual dudes.

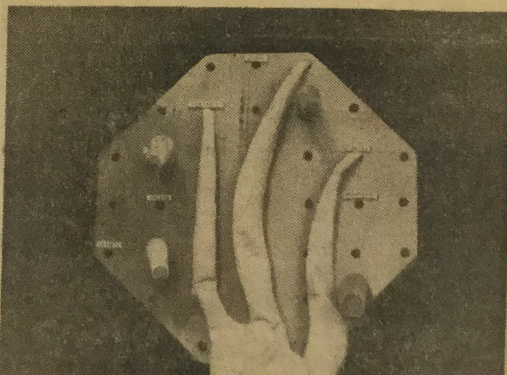
"The Art of Assemblage" is a dazzling show. The best of the objects in it look superb, and the worst are so receptive to theatrical lighting that one is almost fooled into accepting them at face value and into forgetting that face is the only value they have. If you can forget the show's pretension, it

is entertaining even in its weakest parts. Leaving it, after seeing so many trivialities inflated into such grandiosities, I felt a bit as if I had been watching Mike Nichols and Elaine May perform "Little Miss Muffet" in the style of the recognition scene between Orestes and Elektra. The difference is that Nichols and May are a very clearheaded couple of kids, and there is a terrible confusion of values somewhere in "The Art of Assemblage."

" * * * pseudo innovation," Mr. Seitz warns us, coming into the clear near the end of his sterner commentary, "should never be embraced because it seems to be *le dernier cri*." But pseudo innovation is precisely what the exhibition embraces without distinction from genuine innovation, since the bulk of its contemporary items are parasitic on the historical work of Duchamp, Man Ray, Braque, Schwitters and others who are validly represented. And "*le dernier cri*" is precisely what crowds of people will come to see, and which they will see, too, in a show afflicted by fashionable bloat.

Tardy Reservation

"Those who decry such developments as dishonest or deplorable, as evidence of commercialism, capitulation to jaded fashion, moral decay or worse—and such views are



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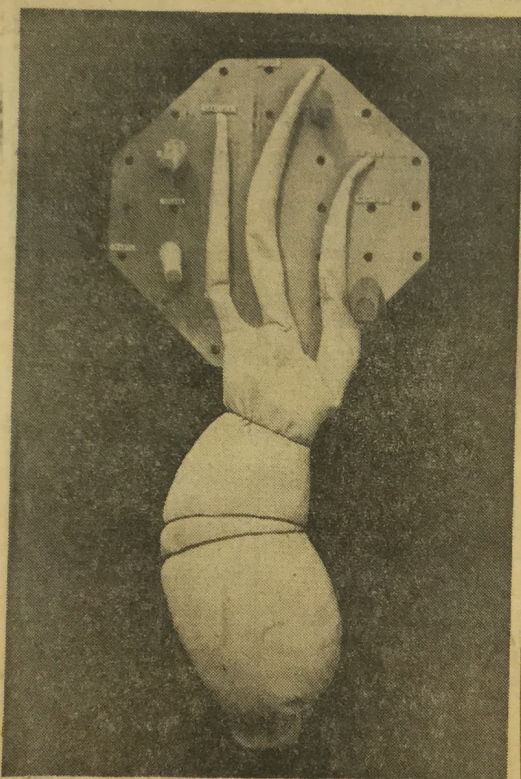
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Tardy Reservation

"Those who decry such developments as dishonest or deplorable, as evidence of commercialism, capitulation to jaded fashion, moral decay or worse—and such views are held by many who are neither stubborn conservatives nor who reject venturesome art—should surely be heard," the catalogue concedes by page 92, in the final paragraph of text. But the disclaimer is too weak and too late. Several critics are quoted at length in the remaining pages of the catalogue, and there was plenty of room to include some of "those who decry." But since only those who support a biased thesis are recognized from the floor, the effect remains one of propagandization for a clique.

Backed by the museum's prestige, "The Art of Assemblage" could exert a vicious influence. But its excesses will be apparent to all but the coterie for whom it is planned, and no busy layman will take time to decipher its precious, lopsided catalogue.



ASSEMBLED—"From the other side of the bridge," painted wood and stuffed cloth, by Yves Tanguy, from "The Art of Assemblage," at the Museum of Modern Art.

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There are Those of us who love you!
 Page Eight *Guio + Babi Hollander* the village VOICE, October 26, 1961



ASSEMBLAGE

by Suzanne Kiplinger

I had heard so many bad things about the "Art of Assemblage" at the Museum of Modern Art that I went to it with dread and loathing, expecting to be bored out of my senses. Then too, what I had seen of this genre so far hadn't led me to expect a great deal from it. Well, the show is breathtaking. There's always a tendency after leaving a really impressive exhibit (particularly something in a relatively new direction) to think: "It couldn't have been that good," and water down one's praise. It is that good, and I'm resisting the temptation to moderate what I felt at the time.

I went to the left when I entered, which luckily is the best way to start (the level falls slightly as one goes around toward the right, although individual pieces are still fine). There was such a profusion of excellence that I didn't attempt to take notes. If I gave a list of the artists whose work I especially liked, I'd have no room for anything else. At random, I'll mention Burri, Chamberlain, and Nevelson. To fill

in anyone who needs it, I'll say that the materials used include cloth, wood, paint, metal, and manufactured ("found") objects.

Long Time Span

The exhibit covers a long time span, including, for instance, several of Marcel Duchamp's "ready-mades" from the early part of the century, but the emphasis is clearly on the great strides this medium has made recently. And that is as it should be: I much prefer Mr. Duchamp's painting "La Vierge" downstairs in the Museum to his ready-mades, and generally would say that the recent work is much finer than its earlier manifestations.

What is happening here is a combination of painting, sculpture, bas-relief, and collage. In Assemblage, two or more of these ele-

ments are combined. The earlier efforts are comparable to a writer learning to use a new language, somewhat stiff and halting, but through them we arrive at works of enormous beauty and maturity.

For a change, the large pieces in the show need their size, and aren't simply inflated small pieces. The bad things in the show, and there are some, are the less abstract pieces. Whenever the artists get into little parables and jokes, the level falls. Every little symbol sent a shudder down my spine. Generally, the work that included doll figures failed. This is undoubtedly because dolls are almost invariably in the shape of infants, and infancy in all the arts has connotations of innocence, renaissance, and hope. Here it is used with a despairing sophistication to denote destruction and fragmentation—and, of course, a thumbing of the nose at popular culture. The more literal these evocations become, the worse the art. (There's one exception to this rule about dolls: a lovely small piece of a couple of dozen dolls' hands.) And the less abstract these arrangements are, the less the artist has wrought his own individuality upon them, the worse they are. The crucial issue in this art is to bend the "found object" to the artist's spirit. Where he has absorbed it into his own creativity, it works. Where it remains resentfully itself, the work fails.

Intended as Irritants
 The objects used are often irritating, and are sometimes intended as irritants. One arrangement of objects shrouded in old nylon hose pulled in different directions I enjoyed very much—it's cobwebby, gossamer, and quite beautiful. The irritating associations to a woman are apt to be overwhelming (sorting of bureau drawers, throwing away, a run in the last pair, and so forth). I'm sure the artist won't thank me for this, but if you relentlessly crush the literal associations, you'll see a fascinating work of art.

What seems incredible to me is that American-made objects can be used effectively at all. Until very recent years, the objects in daily use in our culture were so characterless and insipid that simply assembling a still-life made enormous demands on an artist's imagination. That these objects have now been used by creative talents to produce "assembled" works of art I find astounding—and a testimony to the vitality of the artists involved.

This medium seems to have incorporated all the best of Abstract Expressionism. Things which don't work in flat paint—an all-black canvas, for instance—do work when they enter the medium of sculpture and add another dimension. It may be that, among other things, we're about to recover the lost art of painted sculpture.

Panel Discussion

In connection with the exhibit, I attended a panel discussion last Thursday at the Museum. The participants were Roger Shattuck, Richard Huelsenbeck, Marcel Duchamp, Robert Rauschenberg, and Lawrence Alloway. William Seitz, the curator of the Art of Assemblage, moderated. I found the discussion in the basement much inferior to the art on the third floor. I have a tiny, easily satisfied taste for paradox, and I found an evening of paradox upon paradox rather wearing. Admittedly, the rest of the audience liked it better than I did. There was a little too much of this sort of thing (I paraphrase for clarity):

Panelist A: As you all know, bread is brown.

Panelist B: You're wrong! Bread is white. (Laughter from audience.)

Panelist C: Villains! Bread is neither brown nor white: it is both. (Ovation from audience.)

The evening was full of these little Zen moral lessons. Then again, the Museum auditorium is overwhelmingly soporific (it throbs and hums), and I had difficulty staying awake until Roger Shattuck made the memorable statement that at the first Dada exhibition, the ideal spectator was "the one who handled everything, broke what he liked most, and used the urinal on display." The connection with Dada is quite obvious, and was much discussed during the evening, but my feeling is that it is growing less and less obvious as this medium matures. Part of the discussion was quite good, but I found the anti-art elements in the exhibit tremendously overemphasized, and the desire on the artist's part to irritate and get the spectator off balance didn't seem to me to exist to nearly the extent the panelists thought it did.

Besides M. Duchamp, the other participating artist was Robert Rauschenberg, who had such difficulty reading his own statement that a course in remedial reading would seem to be in order, and who kept interrupting the other panelists with odious little Zen-type riddles. (It was a great evening for a sort of Low-Church Zen.)

In at the Birth
 Mr. Seitz introduced Dr. Huelsenbeck as a man who was an interne in every sense of the word at the birth of Dada and who is now a psychiatrist. Dr. Huelsenbeck responded that he didn't know that he cared to be introduced as a psychiatrist at this gathering, but that eventually all other professions would be eliminated. He suffered Rauschenberg's interruptions for a while, and finally drew a bead on him and managed to silence him temporarily with a sharp retort. Rauschenberg unconsciously drew his arms well up over his ears, as though expecting the doctor to box them. It might have been a good idea.

M. Duchamp, who went unchallenged, was witty, ironic, and very good indeed on his early creation of ready-mades. Mr. Seitz had the failing of almost every moderator I have ever observed: he moderated at the wrong moments, not when the talk got dull, but when it got interesting. He did this a number of times, with a humor that was more curate than curator. But if panel moderating and humor aren't his strong points, his work on the show upstairs is, and that's what

Continued on page 9

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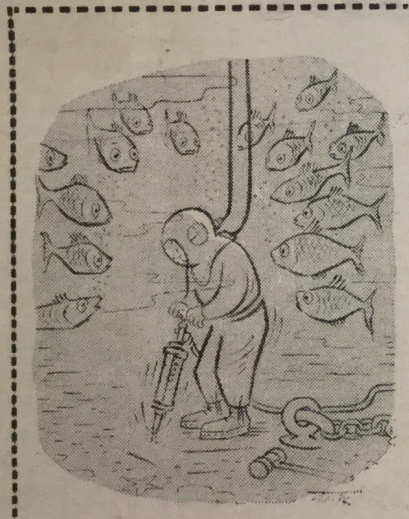
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art: ASSEMBLAGE

Continued from page 3
counts. I have been among those observing the Museum of Modern Art with increasing gloom the past few years, but at this time, with the Matisse show on the first floor and the "Art of Assemblage" on the third, things are looking up. Let us fervently hope that Mr. Seitz and others keep it going in that direction.

[The "Art of Assemblage" closes November 12.]

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The Nation — Nov 11, 1961

most all elegies in English and American are or ever were.

Ginsberg bears a terrible responsibility. The most talented of the poets who, in the 1950s, accused themselves of extravagant liberty, he stands alone in the curious dignity of his work. He possesses a reckless imagination sustained by that necessity which makes him a poet with the nearly incredible defects and almost unsurpassed excellences of largeness.

ART

Max Kozloff

OVER the past four years, a persistent gallery goer could not fail to notice such a restlessness with conventional media among young artists as to constitute a revolt against art. To object to this, as the New York newspaper critics have done, is all very well, although it amounts to nothing more than protesting against the anti-artistic in

anti-art. Unabashed, the young artists go right ahead and paste the New York newspapers into their work. It would be much more relevant to ask what function a disgust with paint and bronze, and the whole formality of museums, is trying to serve in the first place. What is the origin of this cancerous or exciting (as you will) international phenomenon, and why has it brought itself into being at this moment? Now the Museum of Modern Art poses these questions, and several more in one of the most unnerving and yet absolutely compelling exhibitions I have seen in years: "The Art of Assemblage."

TECHNICALLY an assemblage, as the excellent catalogue by William Seitz defines it, "is a work of art made by fastening together cut or torn pieces of paper . . . photographs, bits of cloth . . . wood, metal, shells or stones . . . parts of dolls and mannequins, animals, etc." More generally, an assemblage is any composite of things *not* primarily sculpted or painted. Hence, in contrast to the "thereness" of painting, which ritually places a frame between the spectator and itself, an assemblage presents us with the "hereness" of objects unframed and often only slightly altered from their condition in real life. Above all, an unwillingness, or rather fear, to deal at any physical remove from their motifs is what characterizes the new assemblers. In a show exhibiting dozens of methods of juxtaposing objects, the only unifying factor, and the single most revolutionary one, is the presence of the objects themselves, however differently they are manipulated. I am reminded that certain seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch *trompe l'oeil* artists, because they could not push their illusionism any further, cut images from their paintings, and arranged them on mantelpieces or tables among real objects, and in real space. One sees at the Modern a logical converse: between the work of art and nature, competition does not exist because the work is nature, or arises literally from it. If then, mirrors appear so frequently in the new assemblages, it is not just to celebrate the death of imitation, but to short circuit the necessity of image making itself. To use a witty quote from the catalogue, "The characteristic of this sort of industry [is] that it resells, but it does not produce." Since there is no longer a gap between creation and reality, whenever a spectator glimpses his own reflection and knows that it will be succeeded by the next man's, subject has become object, and art has won

a great existential victory over him. (Cohen, Baj.)

But only, I hurry to add, by an obvious denial of itself. We can walk out of the Modern and feel, as never before, the potential obsessiveness of any conceivable thing around us. Assemblage sanctions a kind of cosmic fetishism. Yet the price of forcing this secret charge into our whole environment is abandoning the discrimination between art and life, the museum and the streets. Exactly in proportion to the power he would gain over inanimate matter, the assembler has to drop visible execution, forfeit personal style, and ignore any kind of pictorial or three-dimensional structuring. It is an indication of just how far out on a limb many of the younger men feel themselves to be, that these are the latest, certainly the most radical, signs of self-assertion.

None of this, of course, would have any point, that is to say, give us a jolt, if assemblage did not paradoxically de-

At the Window

Full moon after midnight.
I stand at the window
Watching the snow masked garden.
How bright it is,
How still.
Behind me
In the black house
My mother sleeps,
The stupefied sleep
Of extreme
Old age.
Her dream shape
Held to her body by a cord of
phosphorus,
Moves through the garden
Among the frozen rose bushes.
It leaves foot prints
Like the marks of bird claws
On the snow,
And has a bird's head,
Big and crested,
But no wings.
It casts
No shadow.
The snow shines.
I hear my mother's breathing.
Sometimes the thing in the garden
Turns to glance at me
With fierce eyes.
The glass of the window
Is cold against my finger tips.
The snow shines.
I am alone with my mother
In the black house
Till morning.

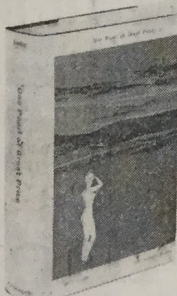
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pend, more intensely even than orthodox work, upon our prior experience of painting and sculpture. Would there be anything unusual, for instance, in Daniel Spoerri's breakfast remnants, if they were not affixed to a wall—like a painting? Even the museum context, which he supposedly despises, is essential to Spoerri's work, for in the studio his refuse runs too great a risk of being mistaken for what it really is. Throughout the exhibition there is a constant dialogue, by turns bashful or exasperated, between art and artifact. With the idea of the ready-made, which Marcel Duchamp claims he instigated under a self-induced anaesthesia, the artist could expand his knowledge only by rejecting it: an enormously daring act of the will. Greater in their means, but far less tongue in cheek than Duchamp, the new ready-mades have thus obliged themselves to discover, not what is meaningful, because that's what art does, but what isn't. In other words, a stupid choice, if conscious, is harder and hence more attractive, more insightful, than an intelligent one.

Doubtless an element of stupidity, or at least self-destruction, runs through the whole theory of assemblage. To prove, for example, that any material — a butterfly wing, a typeface, a clinker — is suitable, is only to demonstrate that the material ultimately doesn't count. This is a conclusion that would horrify many of the exhibitors, inasmuch as it reveals their hard-won sacrifices of form to be formalistic merely. But by plunging off the far side of formalism one can drown as well in the tyranny of subject matter. Since nothing is plainer here than that the medium can be absorbed into, and hence *become* the subject, to exalt medium above everything else is to perpetrate just that anecdotalism from which every self-respecting predecessor of assemblage had fled. Theoretically, assemblage is a cul-de-sac.

IN practice, however, the situation is much more baffling. If we experience some reaction to Arman's glass-covered box containing rusted forks and spoons (and I am not arguing that we don't), still that response can't be held. For it depends on an effect or illumination as unique and self-consuming as a fired-off flashbulb. Arman's debatable "Arteriosclerosis" is open to criticism not merely because a warmed-over scandal is invariably dull, but because it demands an effort of participation from the spectator deliberately out of scale to its inherent visual possibilities. For those practitioners who so blithely assume that if

idea he present, performance may be spared, we are justified in using the term, not assemblers, but dissemblers.

What makes the show at the Modern an extraordinary event, though, is the capacity of a number of its items to escape the impasse of their own logical conclusions and somehow to vibrate potently in an area between artifact and nature. Obviously, the pressure on invention is much greater now than in Dada (when it was enough to call a club a spade) — so that the newer works are often not just sleights of hand, but have to be sheer demonstrations of mind.

Inevitably those demonstrations were

bound to be perverse. But the point, I think, is missed if we dismiss the combine paintings of, say, Rauschenberg or Latham as mere artistically composed garbage. Partly, the reflection of a junk culture, partly a comment on the artists' own poverty (which, since, grime pays, is rapidly diminishing), the work is also a reaction against international abstract expressionism. Just as the latter now appears to us increasingly sweeter and more hedonistic, assemblage is compelled to sanctify, in the manner of a black mass, all the more abrasive and obnoxious materials. Only the great miniaturist Joseph Cornell has succeeded in working with objects neither kitschy nor

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precious. But he is much older than the latest *enfants terribles*, and never went through their formative commitment to the techniques, if not the sensations, of the new painting. Insofar as their relationship to "action" painting was pretty intimate, their latest work, then, is very ambiguous. Here again, is a full swing away from Dada into unexplored regions as the relation of the artist and his medium to an over-all statement on life becomes fractionalized and compromised. Among the best contributors, the format of social protest crumples in the face of their own aesthetic anxiety.

How, then, can one judge one of these assemblages? In the earlier sections of the show, among Picasso, Braque or Schwitters collages, there is no question. Pictorial order had no trouble sustaining itself against the invasion of an alien body. In fact, every new inclu-

sion from the outside world was meant to affirm the reality of that order, just as it negated the original function of a newspaper or string. Similarly, John Chamberlain's "action" sculpture, made from mangled automobiles, is already losing its shock value, and taking on an irritating bright beauty. I don't doubt that a number of other unlikely composites will follow suit, as our unwilling eye acclimates itself to those underlying energies, necessarily but temporarily obscured, which have always been the prerequisites of painting and sculpture. Decayed or fragmented forms, therefore, can very definitely be life enhancing. A list of those who prove just that in the present exhibition would include, perhaps, Bouras, Bontecou, Vicente, Marcarelli and César, in addition to those I have already mentioned. There, but for the grace of art, goes art.

story. This is to be found in the myriad nuances of feeling and psychological motivation which twine about it like vines and tendrils. Considered in plot outline the actions of Kate Croy and Miles Dunster (originally called Merton Densher) are shocking and brutal. When the nuances and complexities of motivation are added, the actions suggest something quite different. But nuances and complexities are the things which first tend to be lost in translating a literary work into a libretto. The amazing thing is that Moore and Ayer were able to keep so many.

As the opera stands, the character of Milly Theale, the American heiress who is destined to die, and whose involvement with Dunster and Kate Croy is a source of such happiness and of final torment, is the most distinctively realized. Kate, because of certain oversimplifications in the text, seems more "stuck" than she should, and harder. So do her father, Homer Croy, and her aunt, and the fact that these people have much fine music to sing does not quite compensate. I found the little "Masque of Janus," in the fourth scene, musically pale. The choral writing is not up to the level of the rest of the opera, and the Masque does not work up enough musical or dramatic urgency to make its interruption of the main action welcome.

Performances, on stage and in the orchestra pit, were splendid under Julius Rudel's direction. Regina Sarfaty, as Kate Croy, looked and sounded both luxuriant and forceful. John Reardon, as Miles, made a handsome and sonorous suitor. The singing of Paul Ukena, Martha Lipton and Norman Kelly was all first rate, and Dorothy Coulter, who made her debut with the New York City Opera Company on this occasion, looked sweetly fragile as Milly, and sang with exactly the right edge of poignance throughout the evening.

The production, however, was not good. Many of Donald Oenslager's sets were blowzy — to an extent that even the company's small budget cannot excuse — and some of the faults in characterization can be traced to Christopher West's direction. The only set which really succeeded was the courtyard and balcony of the Palazzo Leporelli, for scene four. This was lovely, but it hardly made one forget the backdrop representing the National Gallery which was so out of scale that it made the people in front of it look like giants wandering in a maze of pygmy columns.

Of Robert Ward's opera, *The Crucible*, based on the Arthur Miller play, I shall write next time.

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

IN ITS fall season of operas, the New York City Opera Company has included the world premières of two new Ford Foundation-sponsored works: Douglas Moore's *The Wings of the Dove* and Robert Ward's *The Crucible*. For different reasons, they are both exceedingly interesting works; and, in the context of the operas thus far produced at the City Center under the Ford Foundation grant, they have brought us almost to the point where some of the aesthetic premises underlying the opera company's part in the commissioning project are perceivable. Of this I shall say more in a subsequent column.

The libretto for *The Wings of the Dove*, which must have been an exceedingly difficult one to write, was provided by Ethan Ayer. It is for the most part splendid: dignified, respectful of James's ideas and stature, and dramatically effective. There are flaws, which could and should be removed, but these obviously derived from the librettist's respect for the prose with which he was working and his consequent attempt to compress some of the novelist's long sentences without losing their most colorful features (but with an unfortunate loss of intelligibility). I can only sympathize with his impulse.

Douglas Moore, among American operatic composers, is endowed with a dignity of musical impulse, and a lack of sham which gives his work a special appeal. His idiom is conservative, as is the idiom of almost every American com-

poser working in the operatic form. But, unlike many of his contemporaries, Moore writes as he does, not because he seeks to be "popular," or "à la mode," or the successor to any great Italian, but because this is his natural language — simple, honest and unsullied by pretension. It is so plain that some critics see no personality in it whatsoever. I do see a personality: one that is humanistic, dignified, cultivated and sincere.

I think it is accurate to say that, in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Moore created the first live, real, mature female character of the American lyric stage. This was no mean achievement, if one considers how few of our operas have any "real" character at all. In Augusta Tabor, he presented a woman of heroic proportions, unmistakably American, and thoroughly understood by her author. *The Wings of the Dove*, as now presented, does not contain any similarly pungent and unique character, but I strongly suspect that a little reworking of the text, and perhaps a bit of re-composing, could lift the characters of Kate Croy, Aunt Maud Lowder and Miles Dunster to almost the same level of strength.

One of the great difficulties in reducing a novel by Henry James to the relatively bare bones of a libretto is that so little of James's real meaning is in the plot line. In the case of *The Wings of the Dove*, the plot is strong, almost melodramatic, but considered by itself does not tell anything like the whole

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NYT Oct 4, 1961

Art: Spectacular Show

New 'Assemblage' Display at Modern Museum Is Called a 'Dazzler'

By JOHN CANADAY

"THE ART OF ASSEMBLAGE," opening today at the Museum of Modern Art, is that institution's first big spectacle of the year and just about as spectacular as any it has ever staged. Theatrical to the limit, it is a dazzler from start to finish, from the best things in it to the worst. And the range from good to bad touches the extremes in the field.

An "assemblage" is "a work of art made by fastening together cut or torn pieces of paper, clippings from newspapers, photographs, bits of cloth, fragments of wood, metal or other such materials, shells or stones, or even objects such as knives and forks, chairs and tables, parts of dolls and manikins, automobile fenders, steel boilers, and stuffed birds and animals." If the definition seems lengthy, it is far from all-inclusive; the museum's exhibition, however, very nearly is.

Its all-inclusiveness is its fault, and seems to me to be very nearly a moral as well as an esthetic shortcoming in a museum exerting so powerful an educational force. Assemblage, if we date from Picasso's first partial collage (a paste-up on a flat surface), is now fifty years old, offering an appropriate occasion for a historical survey of the origins and ramifications of the technique.

William Seitz, the museum's associate curator of painting and sculpture exhibitions, has done a thorough job of col-

lecting historically important and esthetically satisfying objects. But he has also included quantities of current assemblages of trash that, if transformed, are transformed only into trash of a different kind, vicious rather than bland.

The viciousness, in what might otherwise be acceptable as inconsequential play, comes from the unselective enthusiasm with which the trivial and the specious are presented in identification with the significant, as expounded in a catalogue that suffers from a bad mix-up of long hair and starry eyes. With a kind of exhibitionistic scholarship, yet with juvenile overtones, the text plays the tiresome game of forcing respectable antecedents upon a medium that in most of its aspects has made a fetish of disrespectability. Only in occasional muttered asides is there any indication that assemblage in all its aspects is anything less than the esthetic equivalent of the Second Coming.

A bit more objective consideration of a medium where abuses have at least equaled achievements would have done the museum more credit. But as a demonstration of sheer display as a technique for selling questionable merchandise mixed with good, "The Art of Assemblage" is without peer and could well hold ideas for people engaged in commercial enterprises presenting similar problems.

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Shocked by Art Show

Last Sunday, I went to an exhibition of alleged art at the Museum of Modern Art. I was shocked when I saw things like Buicks and ancient vintage Essex autos crushed into misshapen shapes, urinals, boxes of rusty nails and tacks posing under the name of art.

For heaven's sake, I run a respectable art gallery myself and I know a little about art. I say an exhibition like this is shameful and as far from true art as one can possibly get. I try to get to the Modern Art as often as I can in order to see the latest things, but this exhibit was literally disgusting.

I am simply astonished as a taxpaying citizen of this great city of ours that the Museum of Modern Art puts on things like these and thousands of people flock to them. It is beyond my comprehension.

HARRY G. KOLTNOW,
New York City.

NY Herald Tribune, Oct 29, 1961

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'Art of Assemblage'---the Power of Negative Thinking

BY HENRY J. SELDIS

"The need of certain artists to defy and obliterate accepted categories, to fabricate aggressive objects, to present subjects tabooed by accepted standards, to undermine the striving for permanency by using soiled, valueless, fragile materials, and even to present ordinary objects for examination unaltered—these manifestations are signs of vitality." William Seitz on "The Art of Assemblage."

• The very latest movement in contemporary art is focused on the art, non-art and anti-art of assemblage. This vogue is locally represented by exhibitions of objects by Jean Tinguely (at Ellin), Robert Rauschenberg (at Dwan) and Edward Kienholz (at Ferus). In San Francisco, a more comprehensive view of these manifestations can be had through April 15 by visiting the Museum of Modern Art exhibition organized by William Seitz, now at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

In all these exhibitions we are confronted with objects predominantly assembled entirely or in part from natural or manufactured materials not intended as art materials.

The Museum of Modern Art exhibition in itself is an assemblage as incongruous as any it contains, demonstrating the confusion and formlessness that can be wrought by the accidental or deliberate combination of paradoxical elements.

'Best' of Trend

Properly we are shown the best known works of this new trend's progenitors, the Cubists and the Dadaists. We are reminded that, "in May 1912, Picasso finished a small oval still life into which was pasted a fragment of oil cloth that simulated chair caning and around which, in lieu of a frame, he wrapped a length of hemp rope." But we are not told that although the Cubists invented collage as a means through which the artist incorporates reality

into the picture without imitating it, they never allowed the real to overshadow the invented in their compositions. While these Cubist efforts aimed to remind us of objective reality within the subjective inventions that constitute art, today's assemblers allow the real-life object to take over entirely, deliberately abandoning every and all aesthetic considerations, in the tradition of Duchamp

whose readymades, including a urinal first exhibited as "Fountain" in 1917, are part of the "Art of Assemblage" exhibition.

'Toy Smashers'

The main limitation of Neo-Dada — like that of Futurism or Dadaism or Surrealism — lies in its being basically a literary rather than a plastic

movement. In its brutal way, Rauschenberg's combine painting "Black Market" is as rank and inconsequential a piece of illustration as the many insipid examples of social realism in the 30s.

The cruel, the inhuman and the psychotic dominate the San Francisco exhibition, though the collages of Kurt Schwitters with their great aesthetic subtlety; the ironic wit of Duchamps, so different from the toy-smashing anger of his idolators; the sense of exuberant celebration that inspired Sam Rodia to create our own Watts Towers and the ex-



Juxtaposition of art and reality was basis of early collage, as shown in 1917 Hannah Höch composition at S. F. Museum.

quisite enchantment of Joseph Cornell's boxes, prove that not all the assemblers wish the destructive to take over in their deliberate juxtaposition of construction and destruction.

Nowhere is the power of negative thinking more clearly and revoltingly found than in the violent compositions of Rauschenberg and the sardonic decompositions of Kienholz, though the latter's tableau is made somewhat more palatable by touches of raucous humor in viewing a brothel.

It is Tinguely who plunges most memorably, and with a humor just this side of tears, into the absurdities of junk culture. His demented machines rouse spectators to laughter with their constant abortive movements and their frenzied plunge toward self-destruction. But the laughter has a macabre echo, and the creator of these mechanical enigmas — now busy constructing an "End of the World Machine" in the Nevada desert — is dead serious, indeed.

Bland, Sterile

Since the total self-destruction of humanity became a possibility on other Nevada testing grounds, the emphasis on the absurdity of life, the impermanence of philosophic and artistic values, the protest against the suicidal materialism of our time, offer some valid explanations for the aim of today's assemblers to substitute a non-rational metaphysic of oppositions

for a rational hierarchy of values. But in their impatience with the line that separates art from life most of the adherents to junk and accident have descended to vernacular realism as bland as it is sterile.

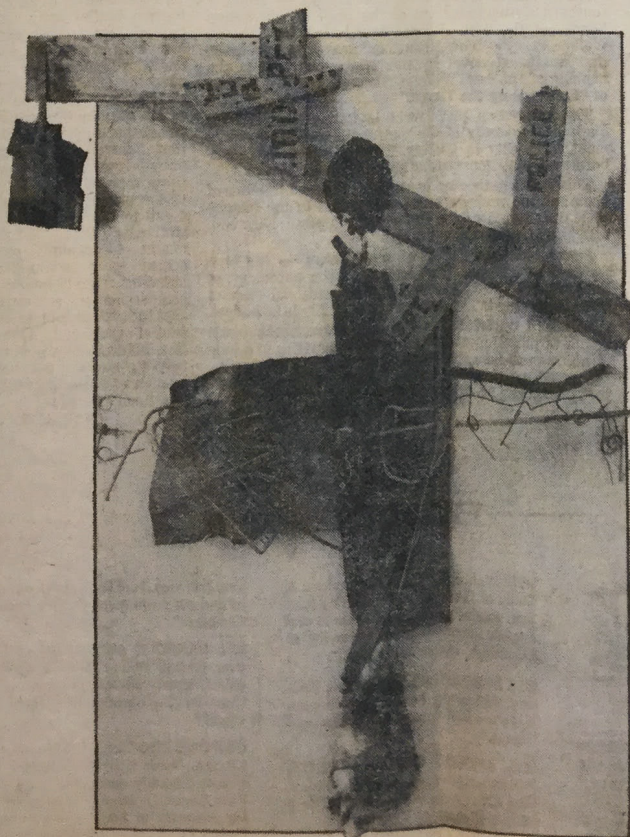
The dream that was art is gone and we are told, quite explicitly, by these "artists" to limit ourselves to the nightmare that is life as they see it. No wonder that such concepts as craftsmanship and permanence — always the keystones of great art — had to be abandoned by them.

Positive Note

In their chosen state of negativism, only a sense of social criticism offers a positive element in some of their expressions. Perhaps these assemblers will be remembered only as polemicists.

To Seitz, the "Art of Assemblage" is "a manifestation of vitality," while to others, including myself, it is largely a manifestation of morbidity.

It seems that the assemblers almost gleefully anticipate the end of the world while creative artists, through their spiritual contributions, continue to strengthen the chances of mankind's survival. As yet there is no evidence that man's potential creativeness has been or will be entirely extinguished by his innate destructiveness. It seems likely that the end of Neo-Dadaism will precede the end of the world by several millennia.



Anti-art tendency of assemblage is demonstrated by Robert Rauschenberg's "combine" entitled "Coexistence," on exhibit at the Dwan Gallery to April 15.

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Give a woman enough rope,
and she'll make a hat out of
it. Give an artist enough,
—with today's rage for off-
beat culture—the result may
hang in a gallery. Example:
sculptor Edward Renouf
of Washington, Conn. Using
old farm tools, he welds
unique works, like Seated
Giant (left), a childhood
image of his Chinese amah.

FOR WOMEN ONLY

*New art: rakes,
wrecks and a rage
for the "way-out"*



Rake's progress: Seated Giant.

Extra mileage out of smashed cars.

Careless drivers will be edified to learn that their smashed-up heaps may wind up in a museum. French sculptor César fuses parts of wrecked or second-hand automobiles, trucks and bicycles into neat bales of "tubistic" sculptures (above, right). His studio is no Montmartre garret, but an appliance factory near Paris. César himself supervises the mechanical compressing of the varied parts into concentrated form at a junkyard. One of these works, recently on exhibition in "The Art of Assemblage" show at Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art, would certainly prove more frustrating to art thieves than to art lovers. Its weight: a ton.

Espresso coffee is now being put to a use the Italians never thought of. Gretchen Beykirch of Hempstead, N. Y., paints with it instead of usual materials. Her brushes are "Q-Tips." For quick sketches: instant coffee.

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California industrial designer Henry Joe Police uses metal ash cans to create whimsical animals, including the cat, pig and now shown at the bottom of this page. Other figures are fashioned from soda and beer cans. A teetotaler himself, Police warns that this medium may drive some artistic souls to drink.

American-Indian warriors who shot their arrows into the air some 500 years ago had no idea their weapons would land in "paintings" in Lake County, Calif. Today, 70-year-old Ruth Tennyson collects arrowheads along shores and banks, and by sifting the gravel of lake and creek beds near her home in Lower Lake. After polishing her finds, Mrs. Tennyson mounts the arrowheads in human and animal shapes on plywood. Part artist, part placer miner and part "archeologist," she is one creator who really "digs" her work.

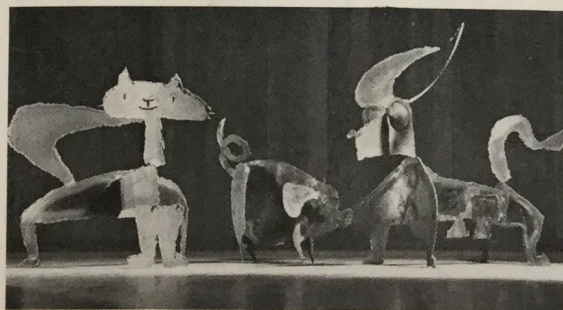


"Cool" art with air-conditioner filters.

Three New York artists make the most of art supplies many other creative minds might discard. Gilbert Lesser uses air-conditioner filters, coffee-can lids, colored counting sticks, film wrappers, map tacks and magazine photos for his colorful collages (left) Another, over whom critics may split hairs, is beauty-salon owner Alex Schloss. He paints portraits of his customers, then affixes their shorn locks to the canvas. . . . Clement Boehme, a representative of Bostitch, Inc., uses the company's metal staples to create three-dimensional abstract works.

From Seattle comes an unusual form of printmaking. By arranging and then gluing to a board such materials as coffee grounds, nutshells, sawdust, string and paper, University of Washington art professor Glen Alps makes a "master" paste-up. He coats this with protective lacquer and then runs off impressions of the work on an etching press. Results are also impressing U.S. and European art museums.

An American in Paris, Niki de Saint-Phalle, packs colored inks or paints into plastic bags, then imbeds them in a shallow box, which she fills with plaster. By shooting at the box, she ruptures the bags and achieves art that is worthy of a marksmanship award.



Ash-can art: From humble origins, a metal menagerie of whimsical creatures.

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TITLE SPIRITS OF WEST VIRGINIA



BEST HOLIDAY WISHES

*from
Our House to
Yours*



WAYNO'S
PARKING LOT

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Dear Director: - After seeing your new exhibit, I think you should investigate the artists here in our midst! He has done marvelous things - things only a sample.

To the Museum of Modern Art
Director
W. 53rd St.
New York City,
N.Y.

WINFIELD - W. VA.

Stamp: NATRO DEC 28 10 AM 1961 V.A.
Postage stamp: LIBERTY

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	MoMA Exhs.	695. 29

Tross

ERNEST L. TROSS, Ph. D. ART HISTORIAN
 825 SOUTH COLUMBINE STREET • DENVER 9, COLORADO • TELEPHONE PEARL 5-8771

January 7, 1962
 January 15, 1962

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
 DEPARTMENT OF ARTS
 APPRAISER
 RESTORER

Dr. Ernst L. Tross
 825 South Columbine Street
 Denver 9

Dear Dr. Colorado:

I Dear Dr. Tross: I read "Assemblage" and found it very good and informative. There was definitely a need for such a book. Thanks for your kind letter about the Assemblage just book. I hope you get a chance to see the exhibition. It is now in Dallas and will be in San Francisco in the spring. It has happened before when Frankfurter himself attacked Curt Valentin.

With best wishes for the New Year,

I was especially delighted to find in your book the broad scope you gave to Cordially yours, etc. He deserves to be better known.

With more power to you and the best for 1962,

William C. Seitz
 Associate Curator

Ernest L. Tross

WCS:sjk

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ERNEST L. TROSS, Ph. D. A R T H I S T O R I A N

825 SOUTH COLUMBINE STREET • DENVER 9, COLORADO • TELEPHONE PEARL 3-5278

FINE PAINTINGS

EXPERT

APPRAISER

RESTORER

January 7, 1962

Dear Dr. Seitz:

I read your book on "Assemblage" and found it very good and informative. There was definitely a need for such a book, and I can not understand why "Art News" just hacked it to pieces. Their criticism (if it can be called that way) was of such low quality, that it did not deserve the dignified answer you gave it.

If "Art News" is at war with the "Museum of Modern Art", then it is better to ignore anything they have to say about its activities. - I think your Museum can get along without "Art News" and the Frankfurter boys. The dictatorial attitude which "Art News" has assumed is not shared by many of its subscribers, and it will lose them the good will of many true art lovers. It has happened before when Frankfurter himself attacked Curt Valentin.

I was especially delighted to find in your book the broad scope you gave to Kurt Schwitters. He deserves to be better known.

With more power to you and the best for 1962,

Sincerely yours,

Ernest L. Tross. —

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MEMORANDUM

To: *Bill Lewis*
 From: ELIZABETH SHAW
 Date:
 Subject:

THE ORIGINAL
ROBEKKE

IPPINGS
 INS AVE.
 AND 4, N. Y.
 tel 7-4800

161
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 N.Y.
 Herald
 161

Comment

Behind the Pillar

Comment from followers of the lively arts.

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 course, brings to mind the Euro-
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 in proportion to the "bride" and
 he looks tired and staggered.
 The bride sits astride him in
 a commanding position.
 And in this light he seems to see
 womanhood and the eternal
 mother. All his women are preg-
 nant or shaped by well proven
 fertility and they are large-
 breasted. I suggest that Mr.
 Reder is saying that by virtue
 of women's ability to mature
 and bear life, she dominates
 man and the world. He bows
 without humility to the develop-
 ing matriarchy. He takes re-
 venge with his cows as though
 saying to women—this is all you
 really are. His angels are female
 and ear-splitting trumpeters as
 well as strumpets. Even a female
 child is only an incipient domi-
 nating woman. His female dwarf,
 holds the (cat's) cradle between
 powerful hands controlled by a
 mindless primitive. In their
 hour of need the women rally to
 help and sustain each other.
 Only in commune with nature

do the women seem somewhat
 subdued, as in the case of the
 astronomers.

In the mounted male figure,
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 eral faces looking in different
 directions—he is confused be-
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 where and with no woman at
 hand he cannot command the sit-
 uation in which he finds himself.

It seems to me that Mr.
 Reder's work makes an ex-
 tremely consistent, if not happy,
 statement.

BLANCHE MCNAMARA.
 Staten Island, N. Y.

Paging Iago

Herbert Kupferberg's article
 in the Herald Tribune Sunday
 was a complete statement of
 my own views on the re-
 corded "Otello." Why in these
 recordings they don't engage
 an Iago. I don't know. Of
 course, there were plans for
 Leonard Warren. If you only
 listened, he was very good.

But to me, the big mistake
 of the stereo sets is that they
 put the singers too far back
 and you lose all the drama,
 particularly in Verdi. Del
 Monaco is the perfect voice—
 if they ever get a conductor
 and an Iago.

CHARLES BROKAW.
 Branford, Conn.

Beginning to Dig

Three cheers for George
 Simon's defense of today's jazz
 and for his courteous manner
 toward Paul Henry Lang. Mr.
 Lang, a learned professor and
 renowned musicologist, ought to
 steer clear of discussing things
 he just doesn't dig. I use that
 last term advisedly because, pri-
 marily, I am interested in seri-
 ous music but have been getting

an education and an apprecia-
 tion of the jazz art form through
 Mr. Simon's lively and informa-
 tive columns.

WILLIAM ESTERLANCE
 Morristown, N. J.

Shocked by Art Show

Last Sunday, I went to an ex-
 hibition of alleged art at the
 Museum of Modern Art. I was
 shocked when I saw things like
 Buicks and ancient vintage
 Essex autos crushed into mis-
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 under the name of art.

For heaven's sake, I run a
 respectable art gallery myself
 and I know a little about art.
 I say an exhibition like this is
 shameful and as far from true
 art as one can possibly get. I
 try to get to the Modern Art
 as often as I can in order to
 see the latest things, but this
 exhibit was literally disgusting.

I am simply astonished as a
 taxpaying citizen of this great
 city of ours that the Museum
 of Modern Art puts on things
 like these and thousands of
 people flock to them. It is be-
 yond my comprehension.

HARRY G. KOLINOW.
 New York City.

Too Much Snap

If Jerome Robbins' versatili-
 ty is as "awesome" as Walter
 Terry says in his Sunday ar-
 ticle, "Robbins' Two Recurring
 Motifs," why must his dancers
 invariably snap their fingers in
 his jazz ballets?

In his new one, "Events," I'm
 afraid the two motifs recur
 once too often.

Strange are the uses of ver-
 satility.

BERNARD C. KAPLAN.
 New York City.

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THE ORIGINAL
ROMEIKE
PRESS CLIPPINGS
130 TOMPKINS AVE.
STATEN ISLAND 4, N. Y.
Tel. Gibraltar 7-6909

A
Comment

Car. 488, 161

This Clipping From

New York, N.Y.
Sunday Herald

OCT 29 '61

Seat Behind the Pillar

Comment from followers of the lively arts.

To the Editor:

Miss Genauer's review of the Bernard Reder exhibit at the Whitney Museum, interested me very much since I find myself in the most unusual position (for me) of feeling that I understand Mr. Reder's work very clearly, whereas she confesses to some bewilderment in defining his meanings. Her review is therefore full of questions, and I am moved to give my answers.

In a sense, yes, Mr. Reder's work is an "envisioning of the life force" but it doesn't seem to me to be in celebration of God's works. Consider the several pieces in which the bull is presented. One is called, I believe, "Bride and Bull," which, of course, serves to mind the Europa legend. But this bull is small in proportion to the "bride" and he looks tired and staggered. The bride sits astride him in amug command of the situation. And in this light he seems to see womanhood and the eternal mother. All his women are pregnant or shaped by well proven fertility and they are large-breasted. I suggest that Mr. Reder is saying that by virtue of women's ability to mature and bear life, she dominates man and the world. He bows without humility to the developing matriarchy. He takes revenge with his cows as though saying to women—this is all you really are. His angels are female and ear-splitting trumpeters as well as strumpets. Even a female child is only an incipient dominating woman. His female dwarf, holds the (cat's) cradle between powerful hands controlled by a mindless primitive. In their hour of need the women rally to help and sustain each other. Only in commune with nature

do the women seem somewhat subdued, as in the case of the astronomers.

In the mounted male figure, "The Victor," the man has several faces looking in different directions—he is confused beyond ability to proceed anywhere and with no woman at hand he cannot command the situation in which he finds himself.

It seems to me that Mr. Reder's work makes an extremely consistent, if not happy, statement.

BLANCHE McNAMARA.
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Herbert Kupferberg's article in the Herald Tribune Sunday was a complete statement of my own views anent the recorded "Otellos." Why in these recordings they don't engage an Iago. I don't know. Of course, there were plans for Leonard Warren. If you only listened, he was very good.

But to me, the big mistake of the stereo sets is that they put the singers too far back and you lose all the drama, particularly in Verdi. Del Monaco is the perfect voice—if they ever get a conductor and an Iago.

CHARLES BROKAW.
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Three cheers for George Simon's defense of today's jazz and for his courteous manner toward Paul Henry Lang. Mr. Lang, a learned professor and renowned musicologist, ought to steer clear of discussing things he just doesn't dig. I use that last term advisedly because, primarily, I am interested in serious music but have been getting

an education and an appreciation of the jazz art form through Mr. Simon's lively and informative columns.

WILLIAM ESTERLANCE
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Last Sunday, I went to an exhibition of alleged art at the Museum of Modern Art. I was shocked when I saw things like Buicks and ancient vintage Essex autos crushed into misshapen shapes, urinals, boxes of rusty nails and tacks posing under the name of art.

For heaven's sake, I run a respectable art gallery myself and I know a little about art. I say an exhibition like this is shameful and as far from true art as one can possibly get. I try to get to the Modern Art as often as I can in order to see the latest things, but this exhibit was literally disgusting.

I am simply astonished as a taxpaying citizen of this great city of ours that the Museum of Modern Art puts on things like these and thousands of people flock to them. It is beyond my comprehension.

HARRY G. KOLINOW.
New York City.

Too Much Snap

If Jerome Robbins' versatility is as "awesome" as Walter Terry says in his Sunday article, "Robbins' Two Recurring Motifs," why must his dancers invariably snap their fingers in his jazz ballets?

In his new one, "Evening," I'm afraid the two motifs recur once too often.

Strange are the uses of versatility.

BERNARD C. KAPLAN.
New York City.

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

November 27, 1961

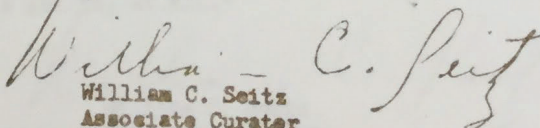
Dr. Alfred Frankfurter, Editor and President
ART NEWS
32 East 57th Street
New York, New York

Sir:

In reviewing "The Art of Assemblage" exhibition, which I directed, Mr. Hess accuses The Museum of Modern Art, described as "that collector-sanctifying bureaucracy," of forcing manufactured history on art, hanging major works beside trash, and favoring "Paris-approved chic" over innovating American painting. He has made such charges before, but, unfounded as I believe them to be, my intent in this letter is not to refute them, but to correct the intimation, interspersed between a few flattering comments on the book and exhibition, that I was the victim of an insidious policy that continues to "force younger staff members to keep allegiance to a past that looks more and more synthetic every year... ." This is of course false. The original idea, the book, the choice of works, the "jazzy-maze installation," and whatever virtues and vices Mr. Hess finds, were entirely my own. I, and not some nameless influence, was responsible for them.

It is difficult to discuss his extended review in a letter of restricted length. Of the 21 works (2 Rothkos!) that Art News reproduced, only five were in the exhibition, which included 251. Out of 93 works by 65 living foreign artists (many never shown before in New York) from 16 countries, and 20 by American artists living in the Middle or Far West, not one work was mentioned with approval. An untouched affiche lacérée by de la Villeglé was falsely asserted to have been "torn to Neo-Dada chic." By juggling illustrations and captions it was made to appear that such major collagists as Motherwell (represented by 2 works which the artist chose) were excluded. For some reason a half column was filled by a synopsis of New York school painting. As Mr. Hess knows, I admire the artists he supports, or most of them, as much as he does. What can he feel they have to gain from a parochialism recalling that of Thomas Craven?

This misleading and distorting piece is in itself an assemblage, a collage of fragments as unrelated as any in the exhibition; but the characteristic swings, jabs, and feints of Hessian "action writing" are too overlaid and ambiguous to separate. He can always say, as did the poet: "That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all."


William C. Seitz
Associate Curator
Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

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William C. Seitz

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions

„Ist das Kunst oder was . . . ?“

Die Ausstellung der „Assemblage“ in New York

A Comment

In dem berühmten und glänzenden Museum der Modernen Kunst, das vor Jahren von Dr. Alfred Barr mit Hilfe der Gelder vieler wohlhabender Millionäre, unter ihnen die Rockefellers und die Whitneys, gegründet wurde, hat Dr. Bill Seitz, ein erstaunlich intelligenter und wendiger junger Mann, die Kunst der Assemblage zur Schau gestellt. Die Ausstellung hat die Neugier, die Begeisterung, den Zorn und den gutgemeinten Widerstand der Kritiker und des amerikanischen Publikums hervorgerufen. Der Kritiker der „New York Times“, bekannt als gemäßigter Freund der modernen Kunst, hat die Ausstellung abgelehnt, er weist in seinem Artikel auf die Tatsache hin, daß praktisch jeder in die Straße, auf die Felder und Wiesen gehen und Dinge sammeln könne, die dann, unter irgendwelchen oder ohne Gesichtspunkte zusammengestellt, als Kunstwerke oder, wie Canaday meint, als Pseudokunstwerke gezeigt werden könnten. Everybody is doing it, jeder kann es tun — und jede wird es tun, denkt Canaday, der Kritiker der „Times“. Der schon viel gehörte Schrei wird nun von Trompeten geblasen: Die Kunst ist tot.

Aber, soweit ich sehen kann, geht es der Kunst, wie es den französischen Königen ging, le roi est mort, vive le roi. Die Kunst mag in irgendeiner Form tot sein, aber sie ist auch in irgendeiner Form lebendiger denn je. In einer allgemeinen Diskussion im Museum, vor einem speziell geladenen Publikum, wurde die Frage des Absterbens der Kunst und somit die Frage der Assemblagekunst erörtert.

In allen Diskussionen um die Kunst der Assemblage spielt Dada eine große Rolle, die romantische Idee der Selbstaufhebung führt, wie ich glaube, zu einer veränderten Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung. Der Dadaismus war die einzige Kunstrichtung in der durch die Tatsache der Selbstversetzung das tiefe Inferio-

ritätsgefühl des modernen Menschen in den so diversen psychologischen und ästhetischen Aktionsfeldern aufgezeigt wurde. Und hier scheint mir einer der wichtigsten Punkte zu sein, die man im Auge behalten muß, wenn man versuchen will, die Kunst der Assemblage zu verstehen. Es handelt sich bei diesen Werken nicht mehr um etwas, das ästhetisch erklart werden könnte, man kann nicht mehr sagen, daß die Assemblagen des Dadaisten Schwitters besser sind als die Assemblagen irgendeines anderen, weil sie schöner sind oder weil sie eine „innere Dynamik“ haben oder weil sie gewisse Materialien benutzen, aus denen und mit denen man an frühere Schönheit erinnert wird — alles das führt in Sackgassen. Man kann die Kunst der Assemblage nur verstehen oder sich dem Verständnis nähern, wenn man diese hier im Museum für Moderne Kunst zur Schau gestellten Werke auf die allgemeine menschliche Situation in unserer Zeit bezieht.

Die allgemeine menschliche Situation mit ihrer vollen Wucht als eine von der viktorianischen Epoche völlig verschiedene Situation beeinflusste, die Manifeste und Bilder der Futuristen, die im Jahre 1909 unter der Führung Marinetti's Rom auf den Kopf stellten. Marinetti, Boccioni, Severini, Russolo, Carrà und die anderen fühlten, daß sie auf einem Vulkan lebten, sie sahen die ersten wesentlichen Wirkungen, welche die Maschine und die zunehmende Mechanisierung auf die Kultur hatten; sie fühlten die Übergänge von einer geschlossenen kulturellen Periode, so wie es die viktorianische war, zu einer offenen, die weder Ende noch Anfang hatte, wo alle Fragen gelöst werden mußten und wo die Frage als solche ein Teil der menschlichen Existenz bildete. Marinetti wollte nicht nur die Kunst revolutionieren, er wollte die Menschheit revolutionieren, in dem Sinn, als er ihr das Bewußtsein einer neuen Zeit brachte.

Die Kunst der Assemblage wurde in dem Gefühl der schnellen Veränderung der Welt von Arp und Schwitters entdeckt. Sie fanden den Ausdruck ihrer Entdeckung auf ästhetischem Gebiet, sie waren Künstler wie die meisten Dadaisten. Es war ein direkter und wesentlicher Ausdruck der veränderten Lage, als Arp seine zerrissenen Papiere auf die Erde

zerstreute und sie nach dem Gesetz des Zufalls zusammenklebte. Es war ebenso eine Sache der erwähnten Zeitänderung, als Schwitters am See in Zürich und in den Straßen Hannovers später „Dinge“ auffas, Korke, Kleidungsstücke, Papier von Plakaten, verlorene Zeitungstücke, Haarnadeln, Streichholzkläschen, und als er alles dies zusammenbrachte, zusammenklebte, zusammennähte und -nähte — dies waren seine Kollagen, sie unterschieden sich von den früheren Kollagen Picassos und Braques dadurch, daß sie nicht mehr ein Ausdruck des Künstlers oder nicht allein ein Ausdruck des Künstlers waren, sie kamen zu ihm durch das verschiedene Material, durch das neue Material, es war die Welt, die auf den Künstler zukam, er ging nicht mehr hinter ihr her. Im Augenblick des Schaffens als echter Dadaist eliminierte er den Einfluß seines Egos, er suchte und fand eine neue Objektivität. Das ist die Kunst der Assemblage oder der Juxtaposition. Der Künstler handelt anders als derjenige, der in einer geschlossenen Welt, mit sich und seinem Glauben (an Gott und die Gesellschaft) einen ästhetischen Ausdruck schafft. Der Künstler dieser Zeit, sei Arp und Schwitters, ist nur ein Mitläufer seiner eigenen Schöpfung. Er hat die neue Haltung angenommen, die wir alle in einer Welt, die von der Technologie beherrscht wird, annehmen müssen, ob wir es wollen oder nicht. Wenn ein Mann ein Auto fährt, so bringt ihn das Auto irgendwohin in sehr kurzer Zeit, wohin er mit seinen Füßen nur nach Tagen oder Wochen gelangen könnte. Der Fahrer ist nur ein Teilnehmer in einer Operation, deren Hauptleistung der Maschine zufällt.

Man könnte die Kunst der Assemblage auch die Kunst der Aufschichtung nennen, die Objekte werden zusammengehaßt, akkumu-

liert, sie werden nicht mehr nach einer Idee geordnet, sie erzählen keine Geschichte mehr, und sie sind deshalb keine Projektion des Menschen. Der Mensch und sein Schicksal ist in der Kunst der Aufschichtung (und des Assemblage) einer Ordnung untergeordnet, die imposanter ist als er selbst. Während die mittelalterliche Kunst der Ausdruck einer geschlossenen, von ethischen und kulturellen Pfeilern wohl getragenen Welt war, ist die Kunst der Aufschichtung eine neue Form der Dehumanisierung, der Ent- oder Uebermenschlichung.

Im Museum der Modernen Kunst zieht die Ausstellung der Assemblagekunst täglich viele hundert Menschen an, sie stehen lächelnd vor den mit alten Weinproppen, Kleiderfetzen, zerbrochenen Löffeln gefüllten Ausschnitten, die der Katalog immer noch als Bild bezeichnet. Die Besucher lächeln, sie sind erstaunt und überrascht, sie glauben ernsthaft, daß man ihnen hier etwas ganz Neues zeigt, während in Wirklichkeit ganz New York voll von Assemblagen ist, und ich scheue mich deshalb nicht, New York, die Riesenstadt selbst, als Ganzmontage oder Riesenassemblage zu zitieren. Seit vielen Monaten ist die Stadt in einem hysterischen Umbildungsprozeß begriffen, es ist der Versuch der kommerziellen, funktionellen Welt, ein für allemal mit der Tradition, der Atmosphäre, der „Gemütlichkeit“ Schluß zu machen. Die Glas- und Beton-Riesen, die an jeder Ecke entstehen, sind Produkte einer veränderten Haltung des Menschen, der durch Aufhäufung, Zusammen- und Nebeneinanderstellung etwas Ueber- und Unmenschliches schaffen will, was seiner neuen Unendlichkeitsvorstellung entspricht. Die Wolkenkratzer in der Tat, sind weniger Wohnungen als Raumschiffe, sie denken mit ihren Spitzen auf die Sterne und den Mond, die nun ihrer poetischen Bedeutung entkleidet, auf die Installation von Raumhotels warten.

Dr. Seitz hat uns mit seiner Assemblageausstellung einen großen Gefallen getan, indem er damit auf die Grenzen aller möglichen Kunst in unserer Zeit hingewiesen hat. Hier, in den Werken solch begabter Anhänger der Abfallkultur, wie es zum Beispiel der junge

Richard Huelsenbeck, ist es zum Beispiel der junge Frage gestellt: Kann man das, was nicht mehr ein Ausdruck des Menschen und seiner inneren Welt ist, noch als Kunst bezeichnen? Man wird beim Durchgehen der Ausstellung gefragt: Ist dies Kunst oder was . . . ? Ich habe mir meine Antwort selbst gegeben: Es handelt sich hier um eine Kunst, die keine Kunst mehr sein will, so wie der Mensch in unserer Zeit sich ständig die Frage stellen muß, ob das, was er unter dem Druck der Kriegsdrohung noch als Leben bezeichnet, wirklich so etwas wie Leben ist.

RICHARD HUELSENBECK

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Mill Road

Rhinebeck, N. Y.

January 19, 1962

Dear Miss Shaw,

The copy of The Art of Assemblage you sent me was lost for several weeks in the improvized labyrinth which Columbia calls its mailroom. The book has finally reached me and I have been reading it and looking at it with much pleasure.

Seitz is really terrific, equally on the collage paintings and on the poetry that corresponds to them. Hereafter I'll be able to cite Seitz and recommend his book to students who ask me whether Wallace Stevens is Cubist or Fauve, pointing ~~over~~ ^{out} the assemblage of flowers, newspapers and other objects one finds in, say, "The Emperor of Ice Cream".

Thanks - lots. I too remember our talk at Dwights and I hope we'll see each other again when I get back from my sabbatical stay in Europe - I'm about to take off.

Sincerely,

/s/ Fred Dupee

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MILTON G. WOLF

1284 EAST 22 STREET, BROOKLYN 10, N. Y.

Jan. 22, 1962.

Museum of Modern Art,
E. 53rd St., & Fifth Ave.,
New York City.

Gentlemen:-

Finally I am finding the time to acknowledge receipt of "Assemblage", my first dividend as a member of the Museum of Modern Art. It came only a few days after I forwarded my check so that M.M.A. might enlarge its quarters.

Who am I, a science instructor, to intelligently evaluate that which you have placed your imprint on? However, you might be interested in the views of one of your freshmen.

Without wishing to be inaccurate, I maintain that "Assemblage" is in the main a true Waste Land - the greatest collection of junk, literally and figuratively, that has ever passed through the portal of my home.

Many of my friends agree with this estimate - but, after all, who are we?

Very truly yours,

Milton G. Wolf
Milton G. Wolf.

Broadview Road
Woodstock, N.Y.

March 7, 1962

including the work of
media, others, with
across.

of your very
y issue of

received

artists and on
page are brilliant.

was the oppor-
tunity in this

you for seeing

my exhibition and hope that you liked what
you saw.

Most of the works are for sale and replacements will be made for sold
works.

Sincerely,

For further information please contact
Alice Ferry

Mr. Paul Cramer
Bessie Schaefer Gallery
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

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EXH. MAX BUCAILLE 8 RUE GRANDJEAN --- ROAD
à CRÉTEIL - Seine - --- N.Y.
France

Dear Mr. Seitz

Just a note

fine stimulating art January issue of

"Art International", which I just received.

Your ideas on critics, museums, artists, and on
the art and non-art of assemblage are brilliant-
ly stated. I am glad that you have the oppor-
tunity of defending your viewpoint in this
fine, widely-read periodical.

I also want to thank you for seeing
my exhibition, and hope that you liked what
you saw.

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works.

For further information please
Alice Tully.

Mr. Paul Cramer
Beatha Schaefer Gallery
32 West 57th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

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72 Broadview Road
WOODSTOCK, N.Y.
March 7, 1962

CONTEMPORARY WALL HANGINGS

Examples of contemporary trends in wall hangings, including the work of
Franklin Colvin, Dana Romalo, Bruno Romeda, others, with
a special group of the needleworks of the late Mariska Karasz.

Dear Mr. Seitz,

Just a note to compliment you on your very
fine stimulating article in the January issue of
"Art International", which I just received.

Your ideas on critics, museums, artists, and on
the art and non-art of assemblage are brilliant-
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For further information please
Sincerely,
Alice Ferry.

Mr. Paul Czamer
Beatha Scharfer Gallery
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

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CONTEMPORARY WALL HANGINGS:

Examples of contemporary trends in wall hangings, including the work of Alice Adams, Franklin Colvin, Dana Romalo, Bruno Romeda, others, with a special group of the needleworks of the late Mariska Karasz.

Running feet: 75

Shipping weight: 275#

Fee for three week period: \$ 75

5 DECADES OF MORRIS KANTOR:

20 to 25 paintings tracing the development of this important American artist and teacher through the years 1920-1960. Further information upon request.

Fee for three week period: \$150

25 YEARS OF ALFRED H. MAURER:

Oils and gouaches by one America's first "modern" painters (1868-1932), covering the years from 1908 to 1931. A comprehensive review including still life, figure, and landscape paintings. Further information upon request.

Fee: from \$200 to \$300, depending on number of paintings necessary, and length of exhibition.

CONDITIONS OF RENTAL:

Each exhibitor pays the cost of transportation one way, usually from the preceding point of exhibition. Running footage and shipping weights are approximate. Insurance coverage while in the hands of the exhibitor must be furnished by the exhibitor, unless specific arrangements otherwise are made with this gallery.

Most of the works are for sale, and replacements will be made for sold works.

For further information please direct inquiries to:

Mr. Paul Cramer
Bertha Schaefer Gallery
32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

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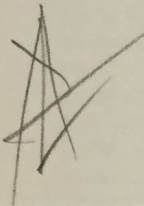
BERTHA SCHAEFER GALLERY

32 East 57th Street
New York 22, N.Y.
PLaza 5-3331

offers the following

TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS: 1962-63

THE ART OF ASSEMBLAGE



A group of 20 works by contemporary American and European artist, illustrating various means of "assembling" objects other than those normally associated with painting or sculpture into true works of art. Featuring works by Eric Beynon, Harry Dix, Sue Fuller, Mimmo Rotella, Irwin Rubin, Mariska Karasz, others.

Running feet: 75

Shipping weight: 450#

Fee for three week period: \$150

SMALL PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS BY BRITISH ARTISTS:

15 drawings and small paintings by well-known British painters and sculptors, illustrating the vitality and subtlety in English art today. Artists included: Kenneth Armitage, Trevor Bell, Elisabeth Frink, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Brian Wynter.

Running feet: 60

Shipping weight: 300#

Fee for three week period: \$100

CONTEMPORARY COLLAGE:

20 collages by contemporary American artist, reflecting the renewed interest in this medium as a means of creative expression. Included are works by Rosemarie Beck, Harry Dix, Sue Fuller, Julio Girona, Balcomb Greene, Angelo Ippolito, Walter Kamys, Mariska Karasz, Jason Kirby, Joseph Konzal, others.

Running feet: 60

Shipping weight: 350#

Fee for three week period: \$ 75

GALLERY GROUP SELECTIONS:

18 to 20 paintings containing one or more works by such important contemporary artists as Will Barnet, Terry Frost, Julio Girona, Balcomb Greene, Patrick Heron, Morris Kantor, John von Wicht, others.

Running feet: 85

Shipping weight: 450#

Fee for three week period: \$100

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my visit to the museum. After comments on the German Expressionist show the letter continued: "But what is really remarkable is their exhibition by a contemporary (California probably) artist. I can't tell you his or her (very unlikely) name, not that I've forgotten, I never noticed it in the first place--it's like looking at an earthquake or a volcano--it doesn't occur to one to ask "Who did it?". It's an utterly savage and curdling comment on our times. It is an expression of hatred and indignation, but more fundamentally, I think it is an expression of love, of love of something which has been/is abused. Perhaps if I were to see it again, I would find it trite, "easy", even corny maybe. It certainly isn't art in the sense of a fine object. There is nothing in the show that I can imagine anyone wanting to buy to have in their home as a work of art, and yet some of the most hideous and moving things in the show are straight out of an ordinary American home with only the merest modifications."

I've found out since, "Who did it". It was Edward Kienholz, artist-- and he lives here in Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Gerda Penfold

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March 19, 1962

COPY

Gerda Penfold
114 Rees Street
Venice, California

The Editors
Los Angeles Times
202 West First Street

Dear Sirs:

Having seen the "Art of Assemblage" exhibition in New York, and having found it quite an experience, I was interested in the reactions of the Times' Art Critic, Henry J. Seldis.

Mr. Seldis' position being what it is, as expressed in his March 18 article, we are left with the necessity of choosing sides between Seitz and Seldis, and I, for one, am on the side of William Seitz, organizer of the exhibition, which can now be seen at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

The exhibition was disturbing to me, yes, and moving and unforgettable, and thank God, it was even funny. It has nothing to do with art in the sense of a fine object or a collection of fine objects. In fact, it does say, vehemently, to hell with all that. Does that mean, as Seldis says, that "the dream of art is gone"?

There are those who believe artists are primarily creators and purveyors of objects of beauty. This is a limited view of what art is. Few of the artists we universally acknowledge as "great" would agree with this view. That this is so is abundantly attested to in their writing, and even more clearly in their work and their lives.

When Van Gogh painted his still lifes, his portraits, and his landscapes, they were considered crude and inept, and they were crude and inept by the academic standards of his time. Van Gogh's work was definitely not "proper Art". And it is still crude and inept in just the same way that it was crude and inept at the time he painted. What Van Gogh's paintings are saying, is not, "Look, what a fine painting this is, and look, what a fine painter I am." But that is what the academic paintings of his time were saying, and they were all, still, paying homage to the glory that was Greece, to the classical ideal, to the idea of perfection, static perfection, dead, yes, but perfect. Van Gogh's paintings said to hell with your Greco-Roman museum art, to hell with your lifeless, irrelevant ideals of perfectionism. What does all that matter, look, his paintings said, look how beautiful a tree is! And he painted a tree that was not just a bit of stage scenery, or incidental décor for an edifying presentation of nude Greek gods and goddesses. It was a daring thing in Van Gogh's time to paint a tree, just a tree and a little of the surrounding countryside, it was a daring thing, as though a tree was worth painting, and as though such a painting would be worth looking at, as though there is anything to see in a painting of nothing but a tree, and at that, a tree painted crudely and ineptly. Is it so difficult to see why, a little more than half a century ago, everyone, almost everyone without exception, was blind to what today we all appreciate?

Rembrandt did the same thing, his painting of an old woman cutting her nails is beautiful, but more than that we sense Rembrandt's feeling, how beautiful the light is,

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How beautiful this unbeautifully dressed, how beautiful this unbeautiful woman is! And she is cutting her nails! Not something, then as now, that is done in public or in company, but actually, one of those private necessities that we feel has something a little awkward and ugly about it. But Rembrandt paints this! In both Van Gogh and in Rembrandt we sense a profound respect, and yet their contemporaries were offended and embarrassed. Everyone knows the Van Gogh story, and Rembrandt, when he painted his greatest works was poverty-stricken, and it was considered he had become a demented hermit who kept company only with people who were not worth bothering about. He had once produced "proper art", portraits of "the right people" and he had been prosperous, applauded, he had lived in a brilliant house, he had dressed himself and his wife in most fashionable and expensive garments. But his real stature, as an artist, and as a man, as revealed by his painting, was reached after this period of acclaim and success. His great paintings on religious themes, his magnificent portraits of people without social position, these were produced in poverty, when he had become ill-housed and unsuccessful again.

So what about the dream of art? Is the great dream of art to produce beautiful objects which uplift our spirits and emotions? This is part of it, but this is incidental.

The great dream of art has to do not with objects, it has to do with life, not with a special part of life, not with what we know as "culture" and "good taste", but everyday life, and the fundamentals of everyday life--birth and death, human feelings and awareness.

Our eyes are never as open as we think they are, clouded by cataracts of custom, we see not what there is to see ~~but what~~ what we think we see, which is another matter, we see what we have been taught and trained to see, what we are in the dull habit of seeing. If a dinosaur, green-skinned and twelve feet tall were to walk down the street, we would see that. But if a ten year old girl, an "ordinary" ten year old girl, were to walk down the street would we "see" that? No, it would take a poet to make us see a ten year old ordinary girl walking down a street, it would take a poet to make us see that there is something remarkable about an ordinary ten year old girl, to make us see that perhaps an ordinary ten year old girl is more remarkable than a green dinosaur walking down the street.

The assemblages in the exhibition which Mr. Seldis reviewed are something quite different from framed oil paintings on canvas. In a very real way, they have no value. But they do have to do profoundly with something which has value.

In May of last spring I first saw the work of one of the artists represented in this exhibition. I saw this work at the Pasadena Art Museum. At the same time I saw there an impressive German Expressionist exhibition. At that time I wrote to a friend regarding

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April 18, 1962

Gerda Penfold
114 Rees Street
Playa del Rey, Venice
California

Mr. William Seitz
The Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Seitz-- On March 18 of this year there appeared in the Los Angeles Times an article by art critic Henry J. Seldis called "'Art of Assemblage'--the Power of Negative Thinking". You may perhaps have seen it. Whatever thinking on the part of Mr. Seldis the article revealed, I certainly did not agree with it. I tried to put together a few thoughts of my own on the subject and sent a letter to the Times which was not, nor any of it, printed, nor was it in any way acknowledged.

I thought and felt that it is a powerful exhibition, and I thought that perhaps you would have some interest in my letter to the Times on the subject of the exhibition, and so I have enclosed the carbon copy.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Gerda Penfold

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Assemblage comments

May 10, 1962

Miss Gerda Penfold
114 Rees Street
Playa del Rey
Venice
California

June 11, 1962

Dear Miss Penfold:

Forgive me for not answering your kind letter and comments, directed to the Editor of the Los Angeles Times, sooner.

I am happy to have it as an addition to our file of material on the Assemblage show. I am in sympathy with your thoughts about ugliness and beauty, which were very interesting to me, but I cannot agree that there were not things in the show which one would want in his home. I found some of them very beautiful.

Sincerely yours,

Yours sincerely,

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

WCS:sjk

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Assemblage
FANTASMAGIE

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
FANTASTIQUES ET MAGIQUES
(COMPTON)

SECRETARIAT GÉNÉRAL - 161, AVENUE
161, AVENUE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE, CRÉTEIL (S. & N.)

Correspondant à Paris

Max Bucaille

8 Rue Grandjean

5 CRÉTEIL (S. & N.)

Paris (Seine) le 2 mai 1962

June 11, 1962

From Mr. Max Bucaille
8 rue Grandjean
à Créteil -Seine-
France

Dear Mr. Bucaille:

Thank you very much for your kind letter concerning my book, *The Art of Assemblage*. In most cases, I am entirely in agreement with you concerning the omissions which you discovered. As you may know, the book was published in connection with an exhibition here at the Museum and the material that was included was limited by this fact, as well as by extreme pressures of time and space. The exhibition dealt with objects and collages made of pre-formed objects and materials, therefore the work of the constructivists lay on the periphery. As for Derain's collage, *Le Chevalier X*, I am happy to confess both interest and ignorance. Do you know where it has been reproduced?

With thanks for your interest,

Yours sincerely,

William C. Seitz
Associate Curator

WCS:tv

Je suis charmé par votre intérêt pour mon livre et par votre attention pour les omissions que vous avez découvertes. En la plupart des cas, je suis entièrement d'accord avec vous. Comme vous le savez, le livre a été publié en connexion avec une exposition ici au Musée et le matériel qui a été inclus était limité par ce fait, ainsi que par les pressions extrêmes de temps et d'espace. L'exposition traitait d'objets et de collages faits de formes pré-formées et de matériaux, donc le travail des constructivistes se trouvait à la périphérie. Quant au collage de Derain, Le Chevalier X, je suis heureux de reconnaître à la fois un intérêt et une ignorance. Saites-vous où il a été reproduit?

Je vous remercie de votre intérêt et de votre attention pour mon livre et de votre attention pour les omissions que vous avez découvertes. En la plupart des cas, je suis entièrement d'accord avec vous. Comme vous le savez, le livre a été publié en connexion avec une exposition ici au Musée et le matériel qui a été inclus était limité par ce fait, ainsi que par les pressions extrêmes de temps et d'espace. L'exposition traitait d'objets et de collages faits de formes pré-formées et de matériaux, donc le travail des constructivistes se trouvait à la périphérie. Quant au collage de Derain, Le Chevalier X, je suis heureux de reconnaître à la fois un intérêt et une ignorance. Saites-vous où il a été reproduit?

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FANTASMAGIE

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE L'ACTUALITE
FANTASTIQUE ET MAGIQUE
(C.I.A.F.M.A.)

SECRETARIAT-GÉNÉRAL: Mlle P. MÉVISSE
161, AVENUE JUPITER, BRUXELLES 19

Correspondant à Paris:

Max BUCAILLE
8 Rue Grandjean
à CRÉTEIL (Seine)
France

Créteil (Seine) le 2 mai 1962

Monsieur,

J'ai pu consulter votre
"THE ART of ASSEMBLAGE" grâce à la gentillesse
d'un ami et je ne puis résister au désir de vous
féliciter pour la réalisation d'une tâche aussi difficile.

Bravo pour les documents, concernant Schwitters,
Cornell et surtout Rodia

Mais grande a été ma surprise de constater
l'absence de Rodtchenko, Paul Joostens et aussi
El Lissitzki quoique cité dans le texte.

Raoul Hausmann, pauvrement représenté
par "Mechanical Head" (1918) n'a-t-il pas
conçu l'idée du photomontage en 1918 comme
il l'affirme dans son "Courrier Dada" ?

Je suis étonné aussi de l'absence de Derain
qui est considéré comme l'auteur du plus ancien
collage: Le Chevalier X. ✓

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Max Ernst méritant mieux aussi, de même
que les quelques collaguistes français avant 1939.

Depuis longtemps je m'intéresse au problème
du collage et de l'assemblage et récemment j'ai
collaboré au n°8 de la Revue "Fantasmagie"
consacrée au collage et que je vais vous faire parvenir.

Je m'excuse de ces réserves et je vous prie
monseigneur
de croire à mes sentiments distingués

Bucaille

8 Rue Grandjean
CRÉTÉIL
(Seine) - France

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Assemblage Restany

de la part de Pierre Restany

cc: Mr. Wheeler
Mrs. Shaw

Bibliographie

« The Art of Assemblage »,
par William C. Seitz

Editions du Musée d'Art Moderne de
New-York, Doubleday and Co., Inc.
176 pages, 146 reproductions dont 11
en couleurs, 6.50 U.S. doll.

Le livre de William C. Seitz, conservateur au Musée d'Art moderne de New-York, est un essai brillant, clair et fort bien documenté sur l'histoire de « l'assemblage ». Ce terme a été préféré par l'auteur à celui de « collage » pour la plus large extension du concept qu'il recouvre. Après en avoir donné une définition technique, Seitz en a retracé l'histoire et la théorie, depuis les premiers papiers collés cubistes jusqu'aux œuvres actuelles du nouveau réalisme. Les grands moments de cette technique nouvelle de l'expressivité sont dégagés avec netteté: cubisme, futurisme, surréalisme, dada, néo-dada, nouveau réalisme. Seitz s'est attaché à faire ressortir dans son analyse l'esprit qui a présidé à ce branchement et à cette orientation particulière de l'activité créatrice. Il a magistralement démonté le processus de libération des objets coïncidant avec celui des mots (Mallarmé, Apollinaire, Gide, Marinetti, Breton). Ses jugements sur Picasso, Braque, Gris, Boccioni, Marcel Duchamp, Schwitters, Man Ray entre autres, sont lumineux et précis. Il a posé avec acuité et passion les problèmes d'expressivité spécifiques de ce genre nouveau et a su esquisser les fondements d'une esthétique générale très proche, en fin de compte, de ma propre théorie du nouveau réalisme. Le rôle anticipateur d'un Cornell ou d'un Bryen n'a pas été oublié. On peut lui reprocher quelques lacunes de détail, de ne pas avoir suffisamment insisté par exemple sur la contribution des constructivistes russes, ou d'avoir passé sous silence l'important renouveau du collage européen dans les années 50 (on s'étonne de ne pas voir mentionnés les noms de Downing ou de J. F. Koenig, qui sont des maîtres du genre). Parmi les œuvres d'assemblage des nouveaux réalistes les reliefs-éponges d'Yves Klein méritaient également une mention. Mais ces réserves n'altèrent en rien la qualité de l'ouvrage qui constitue une documentation de premier plan, assortie de considérations très pertinentes sur ce domaine si controversé aujourd'hui de l'expression artistique.

La parution de cet excellent travail a coïncidé avec l'organisation d'une grande exposition d'Art d'Assemblage qui circule en ce moment dans divers musées des U.S.A. Inutile de dire que cette manifestation a soulevé et continue à soulever en Amérique de violentes controverses qui sont le garant de son extrême actualité. Thomas Hess (Art News) y voit la contrepartie esthétique de ces déficiences de la société qui mènent les gens en prison pour vagabondage. Dore Ashton (Arts and Architecture), en revanche, tempère son réticent verdict d'un « Bravo, Seitz! » de sympathie. Il serait souhaitable que des musées européens accueillent cet Art d'Assemblage qui provoque des réactions aussi affirmées. Ce serait l'occasion pour notre grand public de fructueuses confrontations et d'utiles découvertes, en particulier sur les recherches récemment entreprises par toute une génération de jeunes artistes américains, recherches et réalisations qui sont pratiquement inconnues de ce côté de l'Atlantique.

P.R.

cc MCM
LS