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#10
WORLD HOUSE

Nº 1063

Galleries

987 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK • PHONE: LEHIGH 5-4700

MR. David Hayes

DATE January 12, 1962

8 East 75th Street

New York, N. Y.

DELIVER taken by hand

#3738

#10

"Road Builder's Horse" 1920-1953
by Saul Baizerman
(from the series "The City and the People")
hammered bronze
8½" long

\$500

00

Pd. 7-6-62

#310

Resale No. M-602034-1

TITLE SHALL REMAIN IN THE SELLER UNTIL
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Nº 1182

WORLD HOUSE

Galleries

987 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK • PHONE: LEHIGH 5-4700

~~NEW~~ Hayes Galleries, Inc.

DATE September 15, 1962

1009 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York

DELIVER^{ed}

#6509

"Fallen Virgin" 1920-1953
by Saul Baizerman
bronze, not hammered
5 3/4" high

Returned

~~\$700 00~~

#3723

"Dancing Girl" 1920-1953
by Saul Baizerman
hand-hammered bronze
3 1/2" high

OR

~~\$500 00~~

see
letter
6/25/63

#12

both pieces from the series
"The City and the People"

July 7/

Resale No. M-602034-1

Pd. 9-21-62

B.S. 267

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WORLD HOUSE

Galleries Corp.

987 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK • PHONE: LEHIGH 5-4700

Nº

986

MR. [REDACTED]

DATE September 15, 1961

[REDACTED] Inc.

39 Broadway

DELIVER taken

New York City [REDACTED]

#3742

#9

"Two Men Lifting" (1920-1953

From the series "The City and the People"
by Saul Baizerman
hammered bronze
5 5/8" long

\$500

00

Pd. 10-6-61
H 123

Resale No. M-602034-1

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HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
Smithsonian Institution

ARTIST: BAIZERMAN, Saul

TITLE, DATE: Road Builders Horse ("The City and
The People")

MEDIA, DIMENSIONS: Plaster,
3 3/4 x 8 3/4 x 3 1/4"

CREDIT LINE: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of
Mrs. Saul Baizerman

MUSEUM NO.: H2EG 1979.76

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ART NEWS, January, 1954, vol 52, Number 9

"Reviews and Previews" pg 64.

Saul Baizerman [New Gallery; Jan 4-16], known for his sculptures, and large hammered copper reliefs, has since 1920 worked intermittently on a series of small figures in bronze and plaster. Ranging from 3 to 8 inches in height, these ~~that~~ treat one theme, The City and Its People. The series of sixty figures involved in various activities are carried to varied degrees of abstraction and show a simplicity and unhurried consideration. Knife Grider, Man and Machine, Two Men Lifting are a few of the best ones of the series. \$350-\$700.

R.L.G.

(Godtough)

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Bazerman ARTS 576

Make sure to get Rubins articles on ARP!Bazerman Creative Art 12:300-2

11 'Two Men Lifting' April 1933

ArpReview of Trier book ARTS 93:17 Summer 69.ARTJ 28 no 3: 344 Spr 69ART INT 13:17-21 May 69HBXc Je '74 (125) (Lada assumption)ALBERSH to M Kunstwerk 23:54+ Apr 69Met Museum Bull — Jan 1970Review of Gomringer: ARB 5'70.AS Fall 70Finkelstein marpas 14:97-8 68-69* ART INT 14:76 5'70— ART IV N'71 — (Shapiro — 'Home to A')CHARCONEConnaisseur ARTS no 229: 19 March 71GBA (repro) F 192 Sep. 79Kunstwerk JL 71 — N'71 (review of expo)* Albers ArtJ 31 Fall '71* — (Rosen) Albers color AF 10:26-37 Ja 1972Ort (Geldzuder AN May 76Carlier — 'C. entre ciel + terre' P. Descargues. Xc D'71* Albers Geldzuder Met Museum Bull O'71.Carlier Dolls Art 65-70 3 Mr 77.AN (Dec 76) on Whitney circus.* Albers Leonardo 74 no 2: 99-105 Spr '81
crit. account of color concepts)Albers reconstructions of values AS Spr 82Carlier Martha R. 1930s — ARTS Je '82

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Bausman - (Hess) AN Feb 49 40-41, 51
 McBride AN May 50 21-22 -
 Porter AN Nov 57 p. 13.

Pulse

Zadkine, Homage to B
 Lettres Francaises
 MAR 28 1957

Bevan Daves is p1

Biz: Creative Art 12-300-2 Apr. 1933

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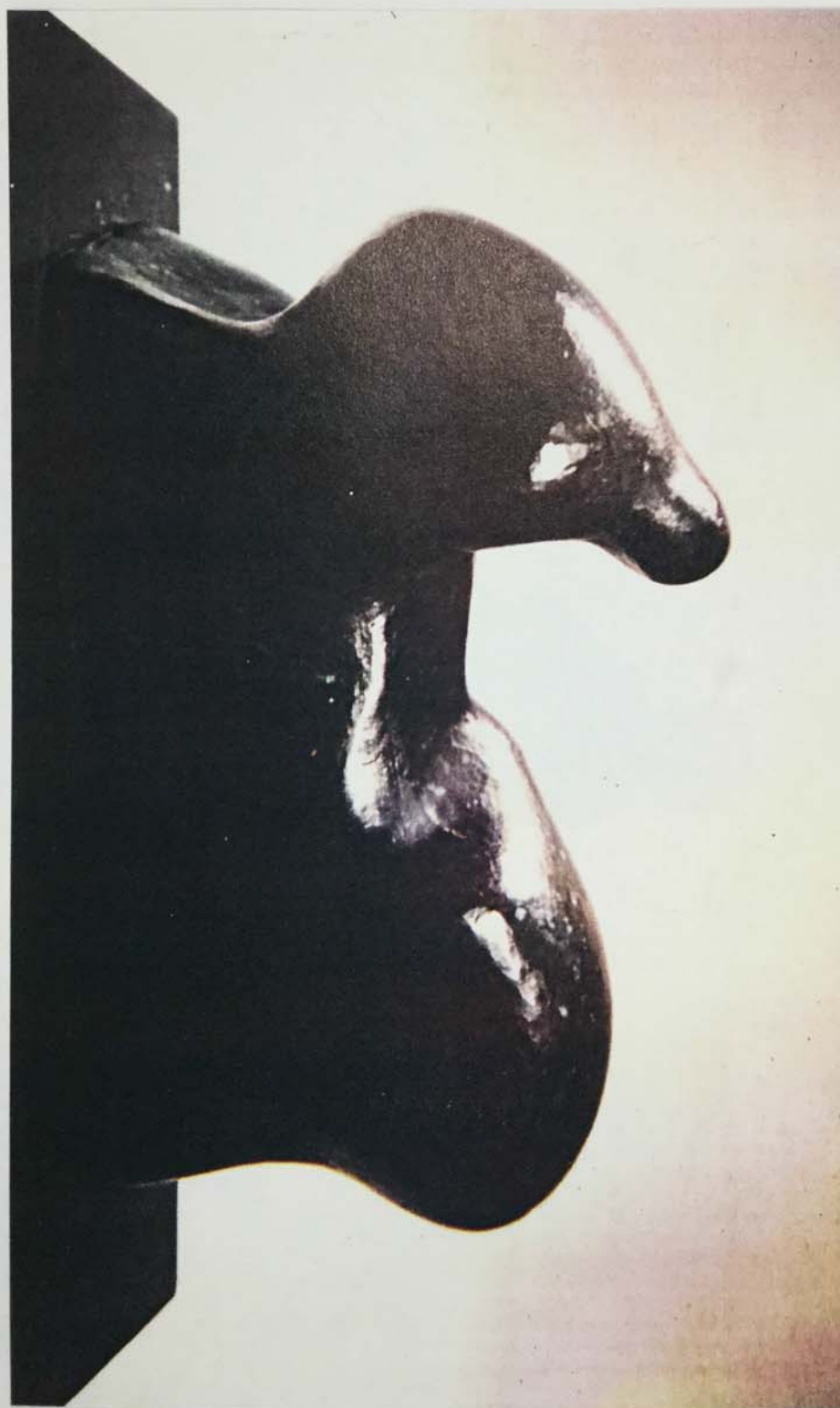
Baizerman

All sculptures purchased through the World House Galleries. see the Baizerman catalogue file, the World House Galleries catalogue dated, Sept -Oct, 1958. All four sculptures are listed under the City and the People Series.

also see Julius Held's essay on Baizerman in the Walker Art Center catalogue (also in the catalogue folder).

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MoMA File

Re: City - the People Series

PRE-NOTICE OF THE SAUL BAIZERMAN EXHIBITION

The Artists' Gallery takes pleasure in announcing an exhibition of sculpture by Saul Baizerman. The work of this strong modern sculptor, richly individual and expressive is little known to the general public due to unusual conditions surrounding its creation.

The exhibition includes large pieces hammered in copper and the collection of small hammered bronzes entitled "The City and the People". Preliminary studies for the large works date back as far as 1922, but only after a visit to France in 1925 was the sculptor conscious of the tremendous possibilities of copper as his medium. Continuous toil in seclusion from the art world resulted in the creation of these many pieces. Unfortunately, due to limited space in the gallery the present exhibition does not include all of the artist's work. The method developed was that of producing sculpture from flat sheets of copper. No outside craftsman is involved in the creation of the finished piece, but only the sculptor himself, forming, twisting and pushing masses out of copper sheets in direct accordance with his thoughts and sensations. That the problems of art, form and material can be inseparably fused into one, is made possible only by this direct approach of the artists to his material.

These large pieces, though purely sculptural in form lend themselves harmoniously to decorative schemes of modern architecture as well as to the interiors of public buildings and homes. It is the artist's belief that metal is the material most expressive of our present age.

The collection of small hammered bronzes, "The City and the People", was made by carving the original models from plaster and then casting these models in bronze. The work does not end here as is often the case, but after the figure is roughly cast in bronze, the sculptor hammers out all the details and the planes directly upon the bronze. Through this method the peculiar quality of metal's solidity and not the softness of clay is produced. In the words of an English critic "the most striking effect of Baizerman's work is a sense of metal comparatively rare since the Chinese". (London Times, 1924.)

Baizerman's work is represented in many private collections in Europe and in the United States, as well as in the Whitney Museum, New York, and the museums of Soviet Russia.

The exhibition opens on Wednesday, February 16th.

Weekdays 10-10
Sunday 3-10

The Artists' Gallery
33 West 8th Street,
New York City.

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SCOTT BURTON. CONCEPTUAL PERFORMANCE AS SCULPTURE

ROBERT PINCUS-WITTEN

"A perfect cube looks stable in comparison with the flux of appearance, but one might be pardoned if one felt no particular interest in the eternity of a cube."

—T. E. Hulme

With the relaxation of Minimalist principles in the late sixties, the practice of sculpture was able to enter a highly pictorial and coloristic phase in which many tangible embodiments were incarnated through an expressionist painterliness. This was succeeded by a focus on conceptual activity marked by a theoretical and absolutist intention, a systemic rigor of thought still embodied, however, in objects conventionally conceived of as paintings or sculptures—the squares and cubes of Minimalism.

Another strain of conceptual activity rejected the external embodiments of painting and sculpture for an internalizing, self-referential urge that sought sculptural incarnation through the artist's use of the body itself. This led to a resurgence of "theatrical performance" and a concomitant reliance on documentation: photographs, videotapes, films, etc.

Of all the figures in this by-now classic vanguard activity—e.g., Acconci, Benglis, Morris, Oppenheim—Scott Burton, by his modesty, poverty, and ambient association with the more unstructured and unpowerful elements of this tendency, managed to get lost. Yet if one thinks of his valuable *Pair Behavior Tableaux* revealed at the Guggenheim Museum early this year, or his freakishly personal and exquisite furniture pieces shown at the Whitney Museum Annual (1975) and at Artists Space (1975), or his sociologically manipulative erotics at the "Lives" show at the Fine Arts Building in September 1975, one realizes with what a sharp aesthetic and critical intelligence one is dealing. This keenness is underscored by the curious matter-of-factness with which Scott Burton has long been taken. Burton is copy editor of *Art in America* and was, in the later 1960s, on the reviewing staff of *Art News*, though he has never identified with institutions; rather, they have merely served to keep him afloat while he pursued finer intellectual ambitions rather anti-institutional at their core.

Some background is necessary. Burton, born in June 1939 in Alabama—"that's not important; I don't feel like a Southerner"—was raised within a genteel Presbyterian ethos, a boyhood salvaged by a mother who made him feel extraordinary. When his parents divorced, he was relocated to Washington D.C. where he lived with his grandmother and mother, a government civil servant. Power came from reading, through aesthetic commitments, through scrutiny of the National Gallery and the Phillips Collection, and through adolescent bohemianism. At public schools during the fifties he was sharply aware of distinctions of all kinds, not the least of them his dissembling vicarious life at the fringe of economically privileged Georgetown kids.

At fourteen Burton decided to become a *New Yorker* cartoonist: "Steinberg led me to Picasso." He began to attend the Saturday art classes at the Corcoran—went to one but never returned. Instead he chanced on the Washington Workshop for the Arts. The painting instructor was Morris Louis. Burton stayed only for a session because everybody around him was staining bed sheets: "I was only up to Picasso." At Western High his art teacher was Leon Berkowitz, through whom he met de Kooning. Across such happenstance he at length grew aware of the importance of the emerging Washington Color School, of Greenberg, and the mythology of who was introduced to whom by whom. Through these interchanges, he learned the pecking or-



Scott Burton, Furniture Landscape (detail), 1970.



Scott Burton, Furniture Landscape (detail), 1970.

der of the heroic generation of New York painters and its suite into second and third schools. In 1957-59, Burton summered at Provincetown to study painting and drawing with Hans Hofmann; in 1959 he came to New York to study literature at Columbia University.

The Washington Workshop side of things made up his emergent public adolescent identity as artist. Its covert aspects are more compelling. Burton came to take an obsessive fascination in architecture and decoration, fixated by, among other things, the classic furniture advertisements of Wormley Dunbar in the 1920s which repeatedly locate pieces of furniture

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Bergman, ARTS SEPT 76

Maria Korn - Artist
of the

Buys - NINE 78

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b)

Bergman

Tracy vol. 1 # 1975

Bergman (H.C. 1)

Walker Art CRT.

Schone

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ART NEWS, v. 51, March, 1952, pp. 40-43, 66, 67.

Robert Goodnough, "Baizerman Makes a Sculpture"

TRACKS (a journey
vol 1, #2 carries writings)

Saul Baizerman

~~Vol. 1, #1~~ Spring 75

1208-23

THE JOURNAL, MAY 10, 1952

Edited by Carl Goldstein

Soon I'll be released from the hospital and return to my studio. Perhaps I may be able to continue putting down my thoughts. Whatever they are worth, they helped me to pass the tedious hours lying in bed. From now on, if it will be possible for me, I will have to ease up on my strain.

Returning to my studio — how pleasant it was to see the sculpture still there — old friends, waiting. It'll take a bit of time to get used to this new, somewhat strange world. Being in day in and day out one never realizes the strangeness and fascination of one's studio. And mine is unique. For the work is made of copper sheets that are large in size, impossibly crowded together. But as Eugenie used to tell me, I mustn't worry for I will find still another corner. And surprisingly, another spot would be found and saturate the place yet more.

When I opened the door and entered, I touched the forms with my hands, embracing the figures like loved ones. Am I growing sentimental? My cheek touched the cool metal, a familiar feeling. Strength seemed to flow into my beaten body. How much time I have left I still don't know. It will be necessary to make certain adjustments, change plans, my way of behaving and living. And if it is too late, then I must make fuller use of what is left for my work. The work that took from me all that I could give and demanded still more. Am I resentful? Would I not have done so over again if need be? My only regret is that my gift wasn't great enough to reach the visions that I gathered. Some things were unobtainable because of my ability and strength. Perhaps I have misused the strength granted to me. Perhaps I wasted time on things better left alone. Perhaps I wasn't discriminating enough in undertaking certain pieces of lesser value. One sees his mistakes only after making them, after years have rolled by and the heart cooled off enough. But aren't mistakes part of our growing?

How often I wanted to put down my thoughts about art as they came to me. It is impossible to recall them now. Many of them are lost, some do not return because I haven't a specific need of them. During my teaching period,

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when there was an eager group of students, many thoughts filled my analysis of sculpture, touching the elements deeper, expressing myself better. As time passed, the emphasis shifted towards creative work. The problems awakened by my own attempts at making sculpture became dominant, demanding to be solved immediately, problems awakened because my road had not been traveled previously by any one. I still remain unshaken in my belief that my sculpture has touched new basic directions, untouched by other sculptors in the way I did. Perhaps someone else has sensed those new visions and tried to enter that world. But I have never come across anyone whose work would speak to me in such a manner. It isn't because of pride that I say this. I would have liked to know that someone is working along with me. The loneliness of a one-man road was never to my liking. I never felt self-sufficient, ever needed others for my creative spirit, elements of nature which I do not possess in sufficient quantity or perhaps just the need for opposing elements missing in me.

I doubt if my art, of whatever value it is, would have grown as it did if not for Eugenie, whose nature blended so well with mine. All my complexes, doubts, and inabilities disappeared when I met her. And through thirty years of mutual help, she sustained my power and cleared my road. What is strange is that she herself completely lacked sculptural feeling, had no knowledge of the craft and yet unerringly knew the real values, was never mistaken in judgement. A strange, intuitive sense guided her. I could never sway her when I was myself doubtful about my work. Even more strange was her opinion that whatever knowledge she acquired was through me only and through the study of the masters that we did together. Yet her judgement of my direction came in the very early stages, when even I was not fully clear about it.

Perhaps later I shall be able to analyze my thoughts about my sculpture clearly, and then tell more about Eugenie herself, her own art, which I love so much. Here I want to talk about someone who helped me to get through that very desperate period when my art seemed to have crashed together with my physical existence. But this new friend has far more meaning to my work than simply having helped me over those crumbling years. As in Eugenie, I found in her nature elements which awoke in me different visions, so very different from previous ones. It would seem that the elements of Eugenie's nature called out from my own depth sensations which made my sculpture what it was until her end. And with her, they ended in me too. All my attempts to continue with these sensations brought only failure. My friend Joan calls from me very different sensations. It is only a beginning. I see new and enchanting visions, elements of expression I never dared to speak of because they were not called forth. Perhaps this has come too late for a new grand period. But I wish to use those hours left to me for this very purpose, if she would only remain nearby.

Those visions are still not fully clear. The first completed piece is Hope, hammered out during the last and the beginning of this year. The head of Joan was also done during this period. Though many are touched by it, I myself do not feel in complete harmony with it. It could be that it is still imperfect — it seems so.

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The beginnings: Saul Baizerman unrolls a huge sheet of copper, 5½ by 7½ feet, in his Greenwich Village studio (above); then he stretches it over a standing wood frame (right) so he can start hammering on



BAIZERMAN

early
journal
entry
(1952)

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ART NEWS, v. 51, March, 1952, pp. 40-43, 66, 67.

Robert Goodnough, "Baizerman Makes a Sculpture"

New pictures of large new works crowd my thoughts. I wish to do them yet must restrain myself. But I have returned to my Third Sculptural Symphony in a new attempt to complete it, as I desired it to be, as it was previously. The Third Symphony was done in hammered copper. Through the vandalism of the wreckers after a fire in the building it was broken up and stolen. Since 1931, I have tried to bring back those early qualities, in another attempt, in plaster. And never again succeeded. The feeling of that early piece, on which I worked four years, somehow could not be recovered. Yet now hope is with me again. When I began to work the feeling of the joy of the sun's rays moving over bodies was returning. The feeling of rightness touched the composition once again.

In judging my work, it is necessary to remember my aim. The direction of my conception of forms opens up many opportunities for various expressions. In each work I direct my efforts at producing new variations in form harmonies based on different rhythms within the main directions. My conception is based on the analysis of forms from different conceptions.

One must bear in mind that sculpture is an art. No one disputes this idea, yet few understand it. If sculpture is an art, then it cannot present a factual reality. For art is an invention of the mind with which the human being attempts to express, make conscious to others, those fleeting, ever appearing sensations of his own nature responding to impressions from other beings and from nature herself, and the thoughts thereof. If we think of a body form as the perfect instrument with which to speak of our thoughts and sensations, of the visions of harmonies unknown to humans before, of means to speak of joy and happiness and sorrow and pain of life, or of our reverence for a perfection beyond reality, of those great musical harmonies that we seem to hear at our best moments, of our love for one who we elevate and place among the gods — these are the illusions of art. And such illusions we may try to bring forth for all to see so that they may try to reach that same height that the artist aspired to. Without such artists opening such doorways for us, our existence would indeed be mighty dull. The very purpose of life would dwindle to the simple physical elements of living — that of food and propagation. What, then, would be the difference between us and insects.

Those very neglected and insulted artists, those few rare souls that are often left to suffer even in basic needs, left to be hungry, lonely and helpless — they, the very men we so often look upon over the side of our crooked nose, they are the very ones who touch the highest level of human expression. Only through them is there hope that humans may someday evolve a finer life and a society where humans will be humans.

So art must possess the quality of dreams, which first lift a human being as a child to finer aspirations. And when a sculpture piece doesn't possess such dreams it is never in a class of art. It must possess the suggestiveness of living — for the dead material, the dead forms, must breathe and move and change — yet never seem to leave the place they are in. That is where the static element is necessary in sculpture. But where, too, the dead state of immobility lingers to trap the artist. It would seem that the pendulum swings between the dynamic

and static elements, with which artists of various expressions, at different periods, found their personal visions.

The sculpture of Greece inclines towards action, moving away from static expression, nearer in expression to action than either the Egyptian or Chinese. We find that as artists have learned more about human body forms, losing some of their fear of nature's manifestations, they have lessened the static immobility familiar to us from earlier sculpture. But as we approach the sculpture of our time, the sculpture of Greece seems quite static by comparison.

The Greek forms, though clearly defined, show many variations in the stress of the definition. Many sculptors who followed the conception of Greek sculpture did not understand this variation in stress in the definition of form — the result was usually a cold formularization. It really is impossible to achieve an effect without living in the time and without possessing those national characteristics that caused the conception to develop.

The wonder of Greek sculpture, then, consists in wonderful harmonies, such well-balanced proportions. It possesses a sense of illusion of life's movement that is never unbalanced, strained, or disordered by emotional upheavals. It possesses an elevating spirit, a dream of perfection to which many men strive but never completely reach. It awakens in the onlooker a sense of serenity beyond everyday tribulations.

As masters they discovered such perfection in the modulation of forms — surfaces that were not equaled by any sculptor living before or after them. Their planes are arranged in a number of tonalities that support a cool architectural perfection. Yet never losing the sense of living elements. In Greek sculpture, the human has lifted himself above himself. He is then not merely a man but has the touch of a God-like creation.

But the art of sculpture never stops changing. Time went on. Society acquired other elements, developed other combinations. What was a force for growth in one period degenerated into a disease. Greek sculptors began to copy the human body. They lost the sense of illusion of reality, a vision becoming the actual representation of facts. In formularization, in design, in the copying of the facts, there ever lurks the death of sculpture. When such signs appear they are an indication that the nation itself is losing its creative vitality in general and that the society is degenerating. Those are signs which speak of the loss of a dream.

When is an art old and when is it new? Saying that art is old doesn't mean that it has lost its value, but rather that it is an expression of another philosophical conception of life already discovered, that the harmonies of the language of that expression had been fully perfected. On the other hand, calling it new means that it has a new conception and that the form harmonies coincide with the new thoughts.

It might be that new forms without any real substance are invented. Usually such forms are simply new in appearance, are empty and meaningless and lifeless. They have then simply a novel appearance and lose their freshness soon — when something more novel appears. It is like a newly fixed store front



The beginnings: Saul Baizerman unrolls a huge sheet of copper, 5½ by 7½ feet, in his Greenwich Village studio (above); then he stretches it over a standing wood frame (right) so he can start hammering on



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ART NEWS, v. 51, March, 1952, pp. 40-43, 64, 67.

Robert Goodenough, "Baizerman Makes a Sculpture"

which in no time becomes dull and unattractively dilapidated. For from the very first it lacked the essence of a personality and when the novelty wore off, nothing else remained.

So to create a new sculpture, one must have a new vision, expressive of its time or that soon to come. The germ of the elements, the rhythm of that mode of life it speaks of, must exist in the period. It cannot be invented completely, for that would make it the creation of the conscious mind. Such an art of preconceived feeling lacks the strength of a living source and, again, will be only novel. Such an expression is usually sentimental, stupid and disgusting to any human who is sensitive and natural in his emotional responses.

A new expression cannot be poured into old forms. Having a new tempo, it demands different form relationships which, when perfectly organized, show a new movement of line, speaking of new sensations. One must well understand the older movements of line before he can dream of conceiving a new one. He must continue to check and recheck throughout his whole art-life, doubting, questioning his own work, comparing and judging. One should not feel badly because he cannot reach the full grandeur of the past for that is his fate, that was given to him. No one can foretell when the full bloom will appear and the quantitative and qualitative heights it may reach — till one dies physically.

Eugenie was going away physically when her creative power sensed a new field for her color-harmonies. She was returning to the landscape sensations which she had touched on in the very early period of her true art. While very sick, staying in Tucson, Arizona, she made a few color sketches for new paintings. That was her way of working. First she painted numerous small paintings, and then would do a large canvas. She hadn't completely given up including women and babies, but there already were signs that she was abandoning the human figure, for a time at least, so that she could search for new color tones in the movement of the air over the landscape.

How terrible an artist feels when still in his creative bloom, his body dies off, when it no longer has the strength to live. It would have been so much easier had her art power been dying away from her with her body. If she only had some more time to leave even a few canvases in that field, that would have made her struggle easier. And we would, all of us, have visions never yet touched to enjoy. For I know of no other artist who discovered such abundance, such harmonies of color-tone movements. She has founded a vision of art which, when understood, will open a direction of such richness. For young artists it will be unending in its possibilities for varieties.

At first we judge a new art by the rules of the past. But it is clear that when new elements appear, and they are new because they are different, elements perfected before cannot be retained, not in the same strength anyway. There lies the trouble for the artist. The onlooker has first to learn from him before he can judge him. And when the new elements differ radically from the old, opposition develops.

To speak in detail of the new sensations discovered by Eugenie would demand an analysis of the philosophical conceptions developed in painting

of different periods. That would swing us away from the main purpose of this sketch. Perhaps I will be able to do so later or someone else will have to do it. Sculpture has been badly enough treated. To help to clear up some of the misunderstandings, to help to clarify the possible directions that young sculptors take or, at least, present basic principles with which to judge sculpture — this is the aim I set for myself.

It is my belief that there was only one truly great sculptor of the Renaissance. To comprehend fully his originality one should compare his forms with those of Greek statues. And though he was undeniably influenced by them, that is he returned to the human body and its movements, unhampered by any preconceived notion of right and wrong, his vision of the form-harmonies was new and so was the conception directing it. As in Greek sculpture, his also express not the usual quality of the human body but that which contains a vision of grandeur, force, vitality, and even a strong pain. In his sculpture or drawings, the human is elevated to a higher plane, where the sensations are more intense, more expressive, have greater depth. In fact it is a plane where illusions of reality may dwell but not reality itself.

As the general direction of sculpture in all periods of history appears to move from the static to the dynamic, we find the latter emphasized in the work of Michelangelo. Every form is moving intensely, rising and rising to a greater force, as though the forms of the whole desire to free themselves from the chains of human ideas or, perhaps, from the helplessness of human life under the power and control of nature. No matter how civilized we are, how well our minds reason, we can never escape the fear of death.

Look at the forms of the back of figure Day. Let their movement speak to you as you receive impressions. You will soon sense the terrifying struggle they suggest. Actually a cry for freedom. Watch the curves, how they strive to expand into still greater force, as though to free themselves from all entanglements. And yet in those curves, in spite of the great effort and exuberance, one begins to sense a weakness in the line. The line doesn't speak of severity, nor of serenity nor of pleasure. There is an inner softness, some puffiness — though carved in marble. The large masses are divided into many small bulges. Every piece shouts its force and revolt. There is no sense in the sculpture of one who is conscious of his power. There isn't any real hope to ever free itself. It is not content with itself. The joy of self-appreciation, of beauty in spite of nature's power over it, does not live in Michelangelo's sculpture. There still lingers the religious asceticism of Gothic feeling.

But this very struggle is the quality and strength of his art, his conception and discovery of its form-harmonies. The line is new, original (though suggested by some of the forms of the Laocoön) and personal — an expression of his own nature and of the period in which he lived. The forms have lost the qualities of the Greek but have found a beauty of their own, as well as their own weaknesses. Without Michelangelo, we would not have known such an expression, nor such rhythms of forms, nor this line, unknown before him. Analyzing his nature, through his work, we find certain weaknesses, of a kind unrelated to his strength,

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The beginnings: Saul Baizerman unrolls a huge sheet of copper, 5½ by 7½ feet, in his Greenwich Village studio (above); then he stretches it over a standing wood frame (right) so he can start hammering on

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a failure to purify his thoughts, eliminating what was unnecessary. But can one ever clarify the complexities of inheritance? Can one ever become what he is not? Even when at times our weaknesses are controlled, they sneak out when we are not aware.

Have I too not tried and tried to clarify my own nature, attempted to eliminate habitual weaknesses and failings, and tried again? It is an exasperating situation. But perhaps the inner struggle has its benefits as well, for in the struggle some intensity appears in the work that otherwise might have been calm. A strange element can be sensed in Michelangelo's art. There is a femininity to his male figures together with the muscular qualities and a masculine sensation in his female figures. There is in some Greek male pieces a certain feminine feeling also, especially in the male heads. It is a strange element. And I wondered what caused that, whether there might not exist in some beings a craving to possess the opposing elements of the sexes. But such a desire does not exist in all artists. Is this reason to blame those who possess it? That very fact adds new kinds of sensations to our experiences. And yet there is that desire to find a complete oneness of nature.

A sculptor must understand which particular impulses can be expressed with sculptural forms. He must understand the period he lives in — that is, the rhythm of his time. He must understand the language he will use to express it. And he must remember that he speaks through himself. This alone tells us that an artist cannot copy reality. And also, no two persons see reality alike.

Rodin was blamed by his contemporaries for copying the model — for actually making a cast of the body. Such was the case with his *Age of Bronze*. Even other sculptors do not always know what they are talking about. For to claim that Rodin did this is not to understand his forms, nor his philosophical conception, nor the time he lived in. Rodin came the closest in the presentation of the body forms because he was expressing the sensations of the human being, one individual, his pain, his suffering through the breaking up of his individuality by industrial forces. His sculpture presented the destruction of the human, his single voice in the mass. He did not create ideals of beauty, or the joy of a body awakening to the senses, but the suffering. Yet ever it remained an illusion of reality, the forms only suggested reality, but no reality was ever like this. No skin ever moved in this way. Yes, one can feel in his sculpture the shifting of the skin. Whatever weaknesses this direction in sculpture has, whatever harm there is in it to sculpture itself, one cannot miss the feeling of greatness in his work. A true giant of art.

He discovered a new philosophical conception. He created a new line, new form-harmonies, a rhythm that expressed his time, and he perfected his language, thus becoming a master and a great master.

With the death of Rodin, all those sculptors who followed and repeated his ideals soon discovered that they had reached a dead-end, in that direction of expression, that philosophical conception. They discovered that their sculpture missed the mass sensation inherent in true sculpture, no matter through which forms it speaks. The breaking up of the large mass into numerous incomplete,

not clearly defined forms, the surface modulations, left one with a sense of weakness in the sculpture. Stressing an expression of action even in the surface of the skin, the work lost that permanence derived from the static element that was so strong in antiquity.

In this disturbed period of Rodin, another sculptor appeared, in a country not far away, in a nation whose people participated in the building of the industrial period. They have felt pain from the intensity of the movement but, not stressing the individual, they blended in the song of labor, the song of mass movement, the joy and assurance of men who labor together, feel similar (in one state at least), and act as one. It gave them dignity, a certain peace and strength, for they thought of themselves not each as one but as a mass and that gave them the force of the mass. This sculptor Meunier, whose work meant little until he began to express this feeling of the labor group, blossomed into a grand sculptor whose single pieces stand well in relation to single pieces by Rodin. They possess a simplicity that resulted from an assurance of strength and singleness of purpose. They do not speak of a disturbed soul. They do not fight themselves and the space around them. They stand with the quietness of men who know their own worth.

But there are only a few elements that can be expressed about the feeling of labor itself. Then the laborer becomes a human being, an individual with all the complexities of the time. Meunier spoke of labor itself and so his sculpture has the strength of a oneness of purpose — and the weaknesses that result from it. This conception of the forms was based on reality simplified, that is, only those form-lines were developed which gave emphasis to the expression. The influence of painting is felt on the sculptural forms. The cloth folds are few in number but are pronounced through lights and shadows. The body is distinguished under the cloth. The cloth is not transformed into sculptural masses but rather put on the figure — as we see in some of the lighter folds of Greek sculpture. This conception is not new but the simplification, the elimination of many folds, speaks of a new form. There is an attempt to make the sculpture symbolic. But the fact that it holds onto factual reality prevents it from becoming pure sculpture for the reality is not sufficiently transposed into new forms.

The elimination and simplification were a large step from the purely representational forms with which labor had been treated by other sculptors. There is a feeling of grandeur and an elevating spirit and sense of nobility in these labor sculptures. The weakness is inherent in the subject, also because there is not a sufficient transformation of reality into a sculptural language.

Once again I want to speak against that exaggerated appreciation of youth's art attempts. We can understand and remember better the road we traveled than that of others. Now that it has been grudgingly accepted that my work has an original direction, we can look back and see the process of development. And though I began doing some sort of art at the age when one possesses still uncertain legs, and my first sculpture was made at the age of 13, and though going through twelve years of art training in school — I found myself and



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my own road only at the age of 30.

Perhaps I was unusually stupid, slow in understanding, and thus am a poor example. I was called by one artist, a plugger. Other artists, as I already said, believed that I could not become an artist or a sculptor. With this in mind, it may be interesting to trace my development and discover, perhaps, the reasons for such opinions. Now that there is no longer any doubt as to the value of my sculpture (it is believed by other sculptors, one sculptor even said the other day that I will be the American sculptor, which is difficult to understand when remembering that for perhaps 15 years my work has been rejected by artist-juries. What can one think!) I can speak of the tribulations and struggles and sufferings I went through during the years of preparation.

As I picture the road passed, I find that all through that period, with its ups and downs, I wanted to say something that was undefined, something that I did not find in other sculpture, a certain feeling, a thought, a rhythm, a form-harmony, a group of sensations that did not fit into the old forms, which made me endlessly discontent, a seeming inability, a handicap, an uncertainty, doubts, unsteadiness in growth of knowledge and experience. We can only judge by results and when that result is so irregular that even those who have spent less time show a better result, what could the teacher think but that here is a hopeless case. No one asked why such an irregularity of development should exist. During my years at the Beaux-Arts of New York, I must have had no less than 50 teachers and yet out of all of them two men stand out who, each in turn, gave me one thought which remained guiding for some problems in my work. Why so few? Is it because the other teachers knew less? No, of course not. For one of these teachers whose one thought meant so much to my development was rather a very young sculptor. The responsibility seems to be in my nature. It could accept only certain thoughts and rejected everything else, which subconsciously it felt would harm the growth of those individual elements that make up my personality.

Art is the result of an individual and an environment and a period in history. Without the history of art, sculpture would have reached a much lower level of development and expression. Without the art of the past, I would not have understood my own expression nor would I have developed my form-harmonies. But as we can accept and learn only as much as we already have grown, many years must be spent in this search for self-understanding. For to understand yourself you must also understand the creations of others. Again, in the work of past masters we accept only the elements that are in harmony with our nature or rather, through the elements that are in disharmony with our nature, we discover the opposed elements in ourselves.

My road of expression opposes the past. Is it then a wonder that it took these many years to reach such a comprehension? Could we then expect an undeveloped youth to know more than that he feels differently, but doesn't know what it is, nor knows the language suitable to it, nor the experience of conversation?

And thus my blundering in the search to understand myself was the reason for unflattering opinions about my future as an artist and a sculptor. I don't blame them, except to say that it does seem they were not very observant or sensitive to my unsettled nature. Peace comes to one of a limited nature or to one who has clarified and balanced harmoniously the various elements within him. Then and only then may one's art grow healthily and steadily. That is when certain main elements establish their predominance over others.

Recalling my school years, I remember how unhappy I was upon seeing the results of my efforts and those of my co-students. None of the pieces we produced seemed to me to possess any life-sensations. They appeared to me petrified, immobile, and artificial and commonplace. We usually had four weeks with the same model and the same pose. The first few days everybody was enthusiastic. The action of the figure was exaggerated, lively, and suggestive. But as the days went by, all the life oozed out of the work. And to see a row of similar, equally deadened figures encircling the live model was a painful sight. In the second week, they looked worse, and still more hopeless in the third. The fourth and last week saw a change. Some showed some suggestion of returning to life while others were hopelessly dead.

What caused these changes that repeated themselves every four weeks — as though they followed a well-greased rail? This was the pattern: lively movement, distorted forms, disproportion. This was followed the next week by filling in the hollows, stressing equally every part, more reality in the proportions of the parts to the whole, in general a better copy of the appearance of the model. The third week was a continuation of the same equalizing of forms, evenness of tone, proportion, and emphasis, a greater accumulation of subdivided forms. With the development of reality in the figure, it became more difficult to give variation to the forms. They began to repeat themselves in size, in tone, and in stress. The balance in the action of the pose and the form's proportion would tend to deaden the expression. During the fourth week, the more advanced students developed numerous details to show their craftsmanship, prove their possession of knowledge, experience, but also with an anemic academic expression. Those students who as yet had not reached such a height of craftsmanship, worshipped those who had, placing them on a pedestal with the demigods. Such an attitude towards the developed students could be seen also in the behavior of the teachers. We can imagine what effect this had on the advanced student's nature and on the future quality of their art. Pride is the most harmful element in art. As soon as one feels he has reached the level of knowledge, the quality of his art slides downwards. The creative effort must be more intense than perhaps the physical effort he will put in the work. For his own spirit will not enter into the work. Excitement while one works does not necessarily mean that the art itself will have that exciting spirit. Watching an artist run to and from his easel may be stimulating to the observer but it is hardly a guarantee that the creation will live beyond the artist's span of life.

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Robert Goodnough, "Baizerman Makes a Sculpture"

Such a living quality in art is rare and difficult to achieve. One can only try and try hard and, failing, try again. The work may receive the spark at the most unexpected moment. But it will never enter it without pain. Never believe that the living quality in art can come while playing. The seeming ease of creation is achieved only by masters — and fools. But, of course, the pain during the period of creation must never show itself in the art, just as the birth pains of the mother are not stamped on the new born baby.

For fifteen years, I struggled to rebuild the destroyed Third Sculptural Symphony, to recover the lost expression, and failed. Discouraged, I let it stand untouched for many years, and it was always painful when my eyes glanced at it. Returning to it once again, suddenly the piece began to change from its painful and gloomy appearance to one of a completely opposite sensation. A joyous feeling appeared and the bodies moved with an ease long forgotten (and attained only in the lost copper piece). In a few short weeks, more work was accomplished than in the many past years. But if anyone should think that the ease of the later period could have come without the previous struggle, it would be like believing that a child may think and act like a grown man, skipping the growing period to jump directly into maturity.

School competitions, winning medals and prizes and cash awards, of which I received my share, have a destructive effect on the young artist. Recalling that competitive period, I believe it harmed me as well as the students who lost. In the Beaux-Arts, we had competitions for sculpture in relation to architecture every month. For years I competed and received many crosses (rejection marks). The most heart-breaking question for an artist — why is he not appreciated? Is it because he has no talent? Is he to believe his teachers, his fellow artists and later the critics, the public — or his intuition, his inner feeling? The facts speak against his belief in himself. How can he, with all this lack of appreciation, have hope for the future? And when an artist loses his hope, he can have no future.

The young artist can answer these questions in three ways. He may decide that he has no talent and stop studying and creating. He may desire success above all and follow the popular trend. He may believe his intuition and continue trying in spite of failures — until he develops proficiency in his own expression and so convinces others. The young artist as a rule selects the second alternative, the easiest one but also the most degrading. He will follow others, repeat the old or popular trend, in simple words give up his integrity and the individuality of his art.

I too have gone through such a struggle. When I could no longer stand years of repeated rejections, I left the school for several months and tried to find the answer for my failures. And the answer was clear — work in the same manner as others but a little better. Upon returning, I entered a competition and was eleventh out of eleven — and became acquainted with shame in my heart. For one cannot fool himself too long. We may ask — why cannot one be

original and successful at the same time? I believe I spoke about this earlier in these pages. But let me say again, briefly, that originality demands new rules for judging it. Rules derived from past art cannot completely fit the new thought. Time is needed to understand and define new rules for the new expression. Thus the original artist must wait. And the more original his visions, the longer he will have to wait.

When I dared to express my own self in a manner that was original, I lost an influential friend and his backing. When I showed him my new work (the small statuettes of 1920), he said openly and frankly that he did not know whether my new direction is good or not but that he knew the old and would help me to the full if And so I lost a friend and have lost many friends among young artists. All loved the sweetness of my former work. At that time there was not an abstract school to entice young artists. Classicism, with a French eighteenth century tint, was dominant then. The art galleries were following the trend as they follow the new fashion now. And if the young artist does not join the caravan, he is ostracized, finds it difficult to have an exhibition, is neglected by the critics. Even after my sculpture broke through the obstacles and became somewhat accepted, only a year ago, I was thrown out of an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum by a sculptor, after my work had been selected for international exhibitions.

I was not happy with my work during my student days. My failures were due to an inner disturbance which was the consequence of not feeling right with my work. Different sensations troubled me and I could not find the answers to them in the old forms. I felt tightened, stifled in the direction of sculpture as taken then. My ability to make the forms speak of my inner world seemed so inadequate. I was not even clear about what I wanted to say, and certainly did not know how to say it. New thoughts, originality in art, are desired by all in theory but not in practice. It calls for two pre-requisites. One must know what the new sensations are and then know how to express them.

The Beaux-Arts school was organized for the purpose of training a new crop of sculptors who could work for architects. Sculpture was called an independent art, but actually it was an appendage of architecture, which also was not an art but a profession for building useful buildings. After all, to call the buildings designed at the present time pure architecture would really be stretching a point. Sculpture of that period also was not an expression of the soul of the sculptor but a decoration for the wall, the niche, the facade. It had to be interesting, effective, obvious, and loud. To be seen well from down below, it had to have bold shadows, clear delineations, definition, designed forms — which would strike the eyes at once while not demanding much thought of the passer-by. My failures in the early competitions were due to my not understanding this and attempting to express myself, which certainly was not through bold designs. My later school success was based on my having learned these facts and rules and giving the jury what they expected to find, but just a little



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better than the next fellow. I am not proud of that period, but it was a very pleasant one. It brought me some money, some medals, and pats on the back. And had I continued in that direction, I was told, I would never have had to fear that I and my work would be thrown out in the street — as nearly happened this Spring after reaching my unprofitable fame. It has been a bit discouraging to reach such a situation after more than thirty years of independent creative work. I may say that in general my work has not been financially profitable. And if I had to depend on my sculpture to feed myself I would not have eaten.

What is wrong with my art? Why is it not bought? How am I to explain, what am I to tell those who enquire as to why I am poor when I have worked hard and steadily and have produced enough work, which is invited to exhibitions, money spent on transportation, insurance etc. Yet I who have created these pieces remain living with them in my over-crowded studio-apartment.

If the cause was bad art on my part then there would be nothing to say. But then why was I invited to send work to exhibitions? For this Winter, a traveling exhibition is being organized by a number of museums, with all expenses to be covered by them. Perhaps now they will decide to acquire some pieces — I hope, I hope. But does it not sound silly to any businessman that one works and never gets paid? If the business isn't right, he'd say, the sensible thing is to drop it and start another kind. But art is not a business — all seem to think. Does the artist not have fun doing his work? Why should he be paid? But no one hesitates to enjoy his art without repaying in kind.

Thus sculpture served a definite purpose — to decorate. And serving a purpose, and having a use that could be measured, it was well paid for. It was believed that decoration is the purpose of sculpture. But sculpture is a conversation with symbols, with which one can speak about those deep sensations of life which trouble, or bring joy to every human being. It awakens dreams of beauty, creates ideals, yet beyond our reach. It makes the movements of nature's forces comprehensible to us. Understanding such possibilities in sculpture, places decorative sculpture on a very insignificant level — on a par with wall paper. And yet this and not the greater sculpture is appreciated and generously remunerated.

Whether consciously or not, my inability to succeed in art school was the consequence of a struggle to reach that higher level of expression. Not clearly understanding my problem, and not as yet having found the new means to express those ideals — I often acted as a lost soul, did my studies as though I hadn't learned anything. No wonder that it was believed that I wouldn't be a sculptor! But by following the old road — and thus proving my ability to them — I also proved to myself that I could not do the old decorative sculpture and live in peace with myself.

The other day an artist asked me whether, if I could live my life over again, I would select sculpture as my ever present companion. This question implies that one has a choice in the matter. But the facts speak differently. Within us are inclinations for a direction. If the characteristic is strong,

predominating over every other inclination, we just naturally drift towards it. Even the kind of art we produce — its essence is inborn. The actual appearance may be the result of learning, but the expression, if it is not simply the adaptation of an idea, is predetermined by our personality. For when I look back at my school life, the struggle in me was the consequence of a fight between learning and the inner tendency — which in my case did not at all harmonize. As decorative sculpture is static in expression, it clashed with my dreams of endless movement. It would seem that my nature dislikes anything fixed, obvious, immobile. Such sensations tire me quickly. All around me I sense an endless movement which varies in intensity and in the character of its rhythm, but never arrives at a dead end. Even with my present experience, knowing how impossible it is to produce sculptural forms which will never become fixed in one state — I still judge sculpture from this point of view. I feel sad when I am not able to give an illusion of endless movement in my own forms, for, of course, the actual physical material does not move before our eyes of its own volition. What is the main difference between great sculpture and the banal? We say great sculpture feels alive. But we know that stone possesses no life of its own. This means that the great sculptor is able to produce before our eyes the magic of living in an inert mass — in other words, he puts before us an illusion, continues shuffling the facts.

But even for a great artist, the creation of such an illusion of endless movement is difficult. How then could I, an inexperienced young student, hope to reach it! My comrades had the laugh on me, on my desire to put in my figures strength without bulging muscles, sculpture without designed and delineated forms. No one encouraged me to search for the answer, for no one believed there was anything wrong with his sculpture. Each man designed the forms according to his sense of harmony, and was pleased with the results. In truth, their figures did look more pleasant, more accomplished than mine, with troubled, distorted shapes, imperfect, without any unity or completeness. There was no respect for my ability and who can feel comfortable without the respect of his neighbors?

My early, independent creative work (I rented a store for a studio, where I worked and lived with the dampness of the wet clay) had an expression of pain. The forms were broken and distorted. Grotesque elements were there also. I sensed the wrongness of it, fought to eliminate it, but it persistently returned. For there was no peace in my soul. I spoke of elements which are passing, only incidental and unnecessary in life's movement. For hope and belief and joy and serenity are the dominant expressions in the world of each of us, for we are living things. Nature has imbued us with that optimism, that desire to live. Pain is a distortion of harmony — a disharmony in the order that is everlasting in humans as in nature's other manifestations. When the elements in us lose the ability for order, we die.

I do not know whether all artists have such disturbing periods in their



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youth before finding themselves, before finding the clear path to travel the rest of their lives. It was difficult for me to see my way, clearly see my ideals, evolve the principles to guide me in the development of my language in sculpture. It was only in 1920, only when I met Eugenie that I knew peace and assuredness of my own world. It would seem that I needed some elements outside of myself to round out my own individuality. For strange as it appears, meeting her, having her nature near me, clarified my thoughts so suddenly, steadied my inner turbulence — as though there always was peace in me. No longer was I troubled with doubts and questions. The horizon cleared, the sun shone brightly, the forms developed into a harmonious order. I knew suddenly how sculpture expressing my inner world must look. And Eugenie intuitively grasped the essence of this new direction and would not permit me to deviate from the road I discovered for myself. Her intuition was always true and steady, sensing the strengths as well as the weaknesses.

One must remember that in 1920 there was not any modern sculpture other than dying Cubist and Futurist sculpture. There were no signs of new visions in thought and form in this country. Nor was there any metal sculpture except for the usual casting in bronze. Sculpture moved in the old grooves with but slight variations. What was coming to an end in France seemed so very new over here. Meanwhile, the need for sculpture to decorate building facades diminished. Architects in competition with one another figured they could save money for their customers by eliminating sculpture, claiming that a bare building looks even more simple, as though being plain is a wonderful thing. The sculptor and muralist could not find work, found their training useless. There were no jobs for them except in the W.P.A., to become teachers, produce more unwanted sculpture. Sculpture to many became not a profession but a fill-in, a diversion during empty hours, a cure for tired nerves. As customers for sculpture disappeared, the responsibility to the customer fell off and the sculptor could do what his fancy dictated to him. He was not paid for his labor, for he was supposed to be having fun. What matter, then, how the sculpture looks so long as it amuses the creator and his friends. It became a question of not how good the sculpture is but how entertaining, exciting and amusing to the rich who still had some money to waste on something that could be placed on a table alongside the lamp and other bric-a-brac. Thus the power of inventiveness entered art. Invent, invent, make it different. The past matters not at all. For what do we care of tomorrow, of history, of beauty that lasts — when in the next moment we will want another amusement.

I was asked by someone who we may accept as an intelligent layman, to explain in a few sentences — how could he know when a work of sculpture is great. But it is impossible to can this answer, to package it, like the food for our stomachs has been. What are the elements that enchant us in sculpture? We may call them sensations. Some strange, unclear sensations resulting from impressions received from nature, from movements of life, from our own daily

lives and those of our loved ones, or even from neighbors, or even from passing strangers. We cannot explain what they are except when they are mixed with definite facts, which we consciously interpret because they are similar to ones experienced before. But the basic sensations remain unclear, undefined — subconscious.

We may be affected by a tree, a mountain, a cloud, a light, a part of the body, innumerable things. But this happens to every human being. But when the human being becomes an artist, when he adds something individual to that collection of sensations, when they pass through his personality, those sensations are not what they were for others. Now they are mixed, their former relationship changed, their intensity changed, organized into a homogeneous thing. Such combinations are personal. No two people, no two artists can feel them in the same way. And because of the possibility of countless combinations of sensations colored by individual personalities, art expression is endless as well.

Every art accepts only sensations that belong to its sphere of expression. There are specific sensations belonging to sculpture. A sculptor uses masses, forms, planes, lines, to speak of his sensations of life and nature. Rocks, trees, fields, water, are limited in their sensations and in their forms. The greatest number and variation of sensation, the greatest intensity is found in the human body, especially a woman's body. More form combinations are found in bodies as well. This is why a sculptor uses mostly human bodies to speak of his visions.

But unless the sensations of nature as well are introduced into the visions discovered in body forms, they too become limited, notwithstanding that a body is the finest instrument for a sculptor to create his harmony with. So far, no better one has been discovered. And thus it is my belief that sculptors, true sculptors, will always return to the human body. Again, in judging a piece of sculpture of today, one must have a complete understanding of past creations. Thus we come to the conclusion, that to be able to judge a work of sculpture, by a method different from intuition, saying I like it, or I don't like it — we must know a great deal, and have much deeper knowledge than is acquired in our schools, even our art schools. Some unusually sensitive natures have been able to feel the true value of an art work, but such natures are rare. And so a layman is almost never able to judge and discover and understand a great work of sculpture. For one with such a large knowledge is no longer a layman.

Note:

This is an early entry from the Journal that Saul Baizerman kept from 1952 to his death in 1957. Carl Goldstein is preparing the Journal for publication.



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By Robert Goodnough

Baizerman

makes a sculpture

The clang of metal is the familiar sound in Saul Baizerman's Greenwich Village studio. Here for seventeen years he has worked continuously, curving and twisting large sheets of metal into giant figures and reliefs by slow, painstaking beats of his hammers. Beside those pieces which have gone out to take their place in the world, his long, dreamlike apartment-studio is so crowded with finished works and works in progress that one literally has to weave one's way through a crowded labyrinth of huge and small dusty pieces. From each beat of a nubbed hammer issues a ring that resounds through the intricate spaces of the studio and causes the other works to quiver. Baizerman has lost a third of his hearing from this unending noise.

A kindly, grey-haired man in his sixties, Baizerman is intensely patient and earnestly set in one direction: that of giving life to cold sheets of copper through projection of his ideas and philosophy about life. At first one might wonder whether this soft-spoken, gentle man could be the creator of such massive works, but after talking with him one senses the source of the underlying strength and determination that emanates from his sculptures. His figures, usually nudes, done in reserved or bold relief, suggest rhythms and various tempos as part of the larger abstract themes he is essentially after. He hastens to say that figures mean nothing in themselves, but that they are merely used to express the rhythmic feelings and moods he seeks, and they are employed, often with great



The beginnings: Saul Baizerman unrolls a huge sheet of copper, 5½ by 7½ feet, in his Greenwich Village studio (above); then he stretches it over a standing wood frame (right) so he can start hammering on



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The end: *Exuberance* finished, standing 5 feet high. As in all this sculptor's work, the braided forms of the nudes have been literally beaten into the cold copper. The noise is so intense that over a period of years, Baizerman has lost one third of his hearing.

distortion, to that end. The body is simply used to tell his story—but he may be thinking of hills, streams and basic movements of nature. If he wants to express peace, for instance, he uses soft flows; to show agitation he will break out with staccato forms. He feels that his work is like music in many ways.

Baizerman starts directly in the metal without previous sketches and with only a theme and its rhythms in the back of his mind. These are to be felt out in the gradual molding of the metal. When he has exhausted his expression he waits, allowing new sensations to gather, and meantime turns to other works. Very often he will do two pieces at a time which are opposite in feeling so that a variety of emotions may be brought into play.

The desire to do a large relief, in which the rhythm and vitality that underflows life would be suggested by figure forms weaving and flowing into one another at various angles,

finally reached the point of clarification to him that one day he ordered a sheet of copper 5½ by 7½ feet and got ready to work. This large sheet must be held in a vertical position so that he might hammer both from the front and from the back and it was therefore fastened over a frame in the same manner that a painter stretches a canvas. At first he established spots about the copper surface with his hammers, gradually suggesting the big masses he desired. "At this time I am very excited," he says. "I run back to look at what I have done, then hurry back to the copper again." Back and forth he goes, and up and down a rickety stepladder, moving, too, from front to back of the metal, working it from both sides, concavely and convexly. Each stroke must be carefully aimed at the metal so the hammer will glance off leaving the required indentation. The blow may be light or heavy but must be expertly controlled, otherwise the surface will be pierced—the hammer is lightly held so that it slides in the palm of the hand. The resulting

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The tools: the hammer is designed to give a glancing blow off the metal, and the handle is heavily taped to keep it from shattering from vibrations.

Baizerman continued

vibration caused the sculptor some troubles at first, for his hammer handle would be worn to shreds in a few days, but he found that by heavy, crisscross taping of the handle this could be avoided. He still wears out a pair of gloves every week.

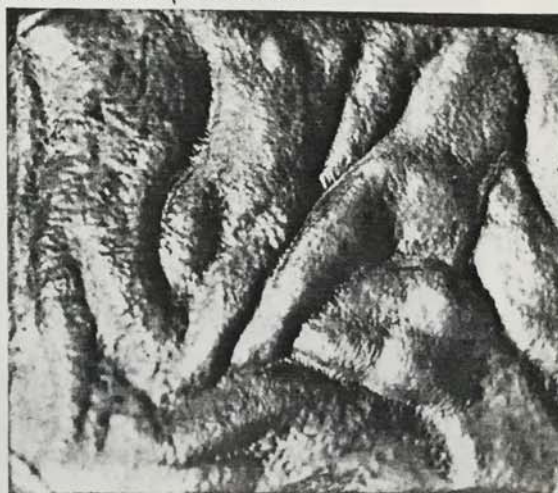
Even to suggest vaguely and begin to model the figures of his new large relief (which was to be titled *Exuberance*) was a matter of many days' work. With his initial excitement gradually cooling, the sculptor began to determine his forms more carefully. Since no sketches preceded and the experience was to be entirely contained in this one piece of copper, he now must weigh and consider what was to be done, for once

the shapes had been determined they could not be changed. How deep should this area be made or how much should this one be raised? The sensitivity Baizerman has developed to his material lets him know just how much he can force a particular sheet of copper, and the amount of flexibility in the copper also influences his work. During the process of pounding an area (he uses hard copper and never heats it during the work) the metal molecules begin to separate and the area becomes harder; at a certain point the cohesion is destroyed and the copper will split open. This Baizerman has learned from bitter experience. He now can sense when the metal will cease to respond, or "spring."

After several weeks, Baizerman had the big movements of *Exuberance* well under way and could see more clearly what the finished work would be like. He then put it aside for a while that the theme might further develop within himself. Meanwhile he worked on some smaller heads and torsos. He had started on a long journey, for the pounding out of one of these large themes takes anywhere from two to ten years.

Baizerman considers his manner of working to be unique in sculpture. "The Egyptians," he explains, "and the Chinese, had their particular kind of relief expression. But while most reliefs are projected from a wall, mine go backward as well as forward and rightly should be seen from both sides." In his method the relief is both convex and concave. He almost accidentally stumbled onto the discovery of metal as best suited to his purposes. In 1920 he was carving in plaster, doing a series of thirteen small figures, about 6 inches high. One day a friend who was a professional bronze caster looked at these and said, "Let me try casting them in bronze." Baizerman agreed, but when he later came to the workshop to see the result he found a workman carefully filing away the

Two stages in progress: Baizerman makes no preliminary sketches, but starts hammering out the main elements of the relief; then, he gradually deepens and subdivides shapes, working more slowly as it nears completion.



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planes that had been so carefully planned. "He said, 'I'll make it smooth for you,'" Baizerman reflected sorrowfully. The sculptor, very much distressed to see the destruction of his carefully worked planes went screaming to his friend. The friend, trying to calm him, said that this was part of the casting process, to smooth down and give a soft finish. To "save" his piece Baizerman began hammering it to emphasize again the disappearing planes. Finding the metal agreeable to the hammer, he allowed his imagination to go to work. He began to feel that by going directly to metal his secret aspirations

to do large reliefs could be realized. After experimenting with lead and various materials, he found copper the most suitable, and this became his chief means of sculptural output thereafter. But it took time to understand this material, to tame it. "The copper was opposing my desires, my forms," he says, "it took years to make copper agreeable. Copper to me is like a living thing, an animal that fights me. Now I know its tricks and can control it and make it comply with my needs."

Again back at work on *Exuberance*, Baizerman began to increase and reduce the large figure [Continued on page 66]

The sculptor at work: he holds the hammer loosely on his palm, and must exactly gauge the blow to keep the metal from bursting; this causes him to wear out a pair of gloves a week. Cotton in the ears is an absolute necessity.

Photographs by Walter Auerbach



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Until the very end he kept his keen interest for everything that was new, and his enthusiasm for art. But on the day on which he was carried out of his house, all clocks were practically stopped there. His daughter Marguerite, and his son, Paul, even more, began to live in a world of souvenirs in which only that which related to their father and his illustrious friends had any value. Careful inventories were made of all the objects in the house, of all the people Gachet had known, of all the events related to him. For over twenty years now, his son has been working on a book devoted to the doctor.

Dr. Gachet's son made it a rule—from which he deviated only under exceptional circumstances—never to lend his paintings to exhibitions, though he was always generous in admitting visitors to his house. Thus the pictures practically never left his walls, a fact to which he attributes, and certainly not without reason, their pristine condition and extraordinary freshness. It was always an unforgettable experience to spend a day in Paul Gachet's house, to be led through the rooms, one of which was hung exclusively with paintings by Van Gogh, many of which had never even been reproduced, to study the numerous drawings which adorned the hallway and staircase, to stroke the white cat, sole heir to the animal kingdom of the doctor, to walk through the little garden in which Van Gogh had worked, to admire the palettes which Cézanne and Van Gogh had left behind, to sit down for dinner in a gaslit room at the very place which so many famous painters had once occupied, and to be served wine in a glass which Cézanne had used for one of his still-lives. From the kitchen Gachet's daughter, a tiny old woman with a gentle face, and the wife of M. Gachet, brought in excellent dishes cooked on an open fire, while M. Gachet, tall, prim, with a well-groomed moustache, dressed in a peculiar jacket of his own design,


 Given by the Gachets to the Louvre:
 Cézanne Still-life, ca. 1873.

held forth on times past with a strangely precise pronunciation and inflection of his voice, not unlike an actor. It was hard, during those hours, to remember that outside, the twentieth century pulsed even through the little streets of Auvers, by now covered with asphalt, and that over the entire world hung the grim menace of a new war.

It had always been my impression that some day the entire house would be turned into a museum to perpetuate the memory of Dr. Gachet and his friends. But the chain of events apparently has rendered this impractical. A few years ago the doctor's two children presented the Louvre with three paintings: Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait*, his second version of Gachet's portrait and the early *Self-Portrait* by Guillaumin. To this gift Dr. Gachet's son, after the death of his wife and of his sister, has recently added a new group of paintings. The Louvre, where Vincent van Gogh had never been particularly well represented, can now, thanks to the Gachet donations, boast of an extremely fine group of his works. But the lovely house in Auvers is practically empty now, and if the ghosts of its famous visitors ever return there, they will only find the doctor's aged son, still tall and erect, still living in a world of memories, still talking about the strange and kind man who was his father.

Baizerman continued from page 43

masses, both two-dimensionally and three-dimensionally. The general idea was now fairly well established. The next step was to move these masses into smaller and smaller subdivisions; more carefully now, with slower beats of the hammer, day by day. Each day he became more quiet and more intense. The subdivisions, made by raising and lowering the surfaces became more complex. The aim now was to concentrate the details into one large over-all mass, not by elimination but by addition; to become so complex that the forms would flow into one another and achieve a totality. Irons were shaped now to support the relief at the sides. These were secured to a

heavy wood standard and the relief was transferred from its original stretcher to its mount.

Peace and happiness, slow-moving, undulating hills, in places "like a brook running." This the sculptor sought. "Not mountains or agitation, but the morning sun, as when you are waking up and still slow in movement." This was the hope of *Exuberance*. Figures intertwining to show the moving together of rhythms and the unity of nature—like the braided hair of a girl. In other works different moods would be expressed, for the theme was to develop into four other ideas: *March of the Innocents*, which was destroyed by fire and redone in plaster;

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Eroica, on which he is now working; and *Crescendo*, a matter of another ten years' work.

"How do I know when a piece is finished? When it has taken away from me everything I have to give. When it has become stronger than myself. I become the empty one and it becomes the full one. When I am weak and it is strong the work is finished." Thus, after three years, he came to the end of *Exuberance*. The final working, when the piece actually becomes alive in the way Baizerman intends it, is a matter of only a few days. Everything has been built up to this end—the complexity of subdivision, of projected areas, to give way to the totality. The metal has become increasingly hard from thousands and thousands of hammer blows. The myriad bumps and indentations are not merely the result of shaping the metal, but are carefully elaborated during the finishing process to achieve the texture surface that to him becomes so important. The surface almost quivers in the light.

Born in Vitebsk, Russia, Baizerman enjoyed drawing and painting until one day, after moving to Pskov at the age of thirteen, he was inspired by a friend to try modeling and did a portrait of his father in clay. From then on he knew that sculpture was to be his future. In 1910 he came to America and in 1911 enrolled at the National Academy, and the same year at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design, being the first student to register there. Remaining until 1920 under the school's process of preparing sculptors to do work for architects, he gradually broke away and developed a direction of his own. For years he posed as a model in art classes, accomplishing the dual pur-

pose of learning from the instructors and making money to live on. Most of his teachers were of the academic tradition, however. At times, too, he worked at various other jobs, for to become established as a sculptor was a slow process. With his wife (a painter of note, who died recently) he designed coats, furs, etc., for a time, and what money they made supported their work. In 1920 Baizerman had his first show. He then went to Europe to show in London in 1924 and in Paris in 1925. In 1926 he returned to America and started intense work on his large copper reliefs, and has been mainly occupied with this form of expression since then. The first show of copper work appeared in 1938, and in 1948 he held a joint exhibition with his wife, at the Artists' Gallery.

With a ceaseless determination, Saul Baizerman continues to work in his crowded studio as hour after hour his hammer beats its way into the reluctant copper, curving and twisting it into the forms the artist dreams of. Passers on Sixth Avenue below his window hear the resounding metal in the distance. And this is Baizerman's world. Many may not understand his sculpture. Those who see it may like it or not—this will probably have little effect on what the sculptor does. He is achieving that toward which he has striven, and whether these achievements be important or minor in the eyes of the world, they remain for the observer to form his own opinions. The hammering continues and that is what matters to Baizerman. As he says, if he loses strength, if the muscles which control his hammering give out, he will be helpless. Before that time he will probably wear out many hammers.

Our favorites continued from page 29

Harpies, Arnold Friedman's *Quarry*, Gatch's *Flame*, Hartley's *Portrait of Ryder*, Franz Kline's *Painting 1951*, Kuhn's *Dragoon*, Maurer's *Abstract Heads*, Pollock's *Number 25*, Stettin's *Sun*, Tobey's *1951*.

Life's editors (remaining unnamed) picked: Bellows' *Elinor*, Jean and Anna, Congdon's *White Naples*, Lyonel Feininger's *Glorious Victory of the Sloop "Maria"*, Graves' *Time of Change*, Hopper's *Early Sunday Morning*, MacIver's *Venice*, Marin's *Cerulean Sea* and *Isle*, Ryder's *Macbeth* and the *White House*, *Queen's*, *Domestic* of

Stella's *Brooklyn Bridge*, Watkins' *Angel Turning Pages of a Book*, Weber's *Guitarist*.

The *New York Times* (critics Howard Devree, Aline B. Louchheim and Stuart Preston) picked: Cowles' *Web of Night*, DeKooning's *Excavation*, Lyonel Feininger's *Viaduct*, Glackens' *Annisquam*, Hopper's *Night Hawks*, Leonid's *Normandy Cliffs*, Marin's *Seascape*, Pinder-gast's *The Swans*, Vythacil's *Woods Interior*, Weber's *Winter Twilight*. Time (critic Alexander Eliot) picked: Burroughs' *Coming of Spring*, *Fabius*, Mrs. Edith Mahan,

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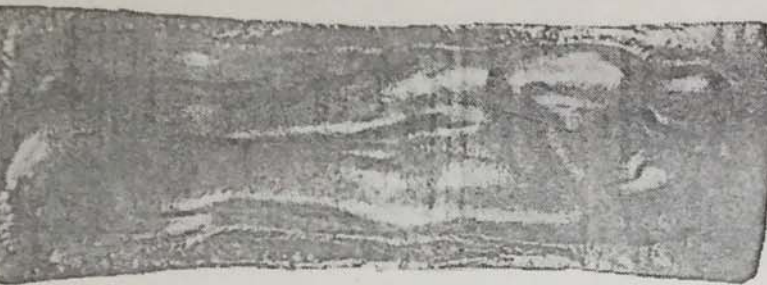
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IN the history of American sculpture in this century, three names are pre-eminent: Gaston Lachaise, Alexander Calder and David Smith. Following these, there are a few others—Elie Nadelman, John Flannagan, John Storrs, Turki Trajan and Reuben Nakian—who are serious rivals for the first rank but do not in every case attain it. Somewhere between these categories—and impossible to place with any certainty until we have seen his achievement in full—is the work of Saul Baizerman, who was born

in Russia in 1888, came to this country in 1910, and died in New York in 1957.

Baizerman was one of the most gifted and powerful artists who ever graced the American art scene, yet a decade after his death he is still virtually unknown. You will not find his work in the Museum of Modern Art, nor in the Metropolitan. A history of modern American art just out—Barbara Rose's "American Art Since 1900" (Praeger)—does not mention his name, and the older histories do no better. Surveys of modern sculpture pass him by, dwelling instead on large numbers of artists who haven't a fraction of his genius and would never dream of aspiring to the heights that were his natural universe of discourse. In the world where reputations are made and candidates are nominated for posterity, Baizerman has been all but forgotten.



Baizerman's "Enchanted," at the Zabriske Gallery
"An elegy in his own day"

The exhibition that has now come to the Zabriske Gallery, 699 Madison Avenue at 63d Street, will therefore be, for many people, their introduction to this extraordinary artist rather than what it should be—a re-acquaintance with an established classic. There are eight large works in this exhibition. All of them are executed in the exceptionally difficult and arduous medium Baizerman made his own—the hammered metal relief conceived on a monumental scale. His abiding theme was the heroic nude, and his achievement lay in elevating this theme to a high level of sculptural eloquence at a moment in the history of art when the rhetoric of heroic feeling had fallen into disrepute. The revolt against high style and exalted subjects, the preference for the ironic and the abstract, the whole historic shift against treading the path of the master—none of this touched Baizerman's sensibilities. He pursued his goals as if the spirit of the age were entirely on his side, and—miraculously—he attained them.

In art, of course, the miraculous is only another name for mastery. Baizerman achieved his goals by means of an extraordinary control

over his materials—a control that represented both a high order of technique and the exalted vision of experience that required such a technique for its full realization. Submitting the heroic nude to the rigors of the hammered metal relief, in which no process (such as casting) intervenes between the artist's touch and his completed image, Baizerman liberated this traditional theme from its academic associations, and gave it an unexpected immediacy. The physical medium—those marvelous unbroken surfaces of copper modeled with such delicacy and such love—was rendered with a vividness that answered to the modern emphasis on the expressive materiality of art, yet the medium remained the perfect instrument of the artist's poetic intuitions. Thus, though Baizerman's art derived from the ideals of Rodin and Bourdelle, it has nothing in common with the academic parodies committed in their name. It is an art freshly conceived, and totally sustained by the artist's own imaginative powers.

The exhibition at the Zabriske Gallery brings together a representative group of Baizerman's finest works. There are two hand-sculptural symphonies—large

ensembles of nudes rendered in a freeze-like pattern of evocative energy. There is an incredibly delicate depiction of lovers in "Enchanted" (1935-39), a recumbent, larger-than-life-size "Aphrodite" (1940-46), and—at an opposite pole of feeling—the immense fragment of a male nude entitled "The Miner" (1939-45). In all these works, whether evocations of legend, celebrations of feeling, or observations of life, there is the same abiding tenderness—a tenderness that can break your heart—and an unshamed masculine force. Rarely have a sense of power and a sense of delicacy been joined with such affecting harmony.

As the dates of these works indicate, Baizerman often labored over each piece for years, perfecting its every nuance. In one of the most moving statements any artist has ever made about his own work, he once said: "How do I know when a piece is finished? When it has taken away from me everything I have to give. When it has become stronger than myself. I become the empty one, and it becomes the full one. When I am weak and it is strong, the work is finished." Clearly, we are a long way from the era when

sculptors sketch out their ideas on a piece of graph paper and then order their work from some metal or plastics fabricator over the telephone.

The question is whether we are still equipped to respond to an art so distant from the esthetic emotions—or anti-emotions—that have come to dominate the art of our own day. The world of feeling that is celebrated in Baizerman's sculpture cannot help striking us, in contrast to what now prevails, as a lost world. The erotic glow that permeates this sculpture, like the heroic ideals that animate it, looks back to a model of experience that seems almost prehistoric in its remoteness from the actualities of the life we lead today. The sonorities that echo in Baizerman's work were already perhaps an elegy in his own day, and have become immeasurably more so in ours. His power is undeniable, yet it makes such unusual demands on our sensibilities, it elicits so many emotions we are unused to expanding on works of art, that one wonders if this power can still touch us with the depth the artist intended.

Baizerman is surely not the only figure out of the past whose accomplishment raises this question, but the question is always more acute where an artist does not yet have a fixed place in the canon of our appreciation. Many artists who have a settled position in our histories, in our museums and in our own minds no longer make any real claim on our emotions. In a sense, they don't have to, because they have become part of those emotions. It was Baizerman's tragedy in his own lifetime not to be admitted to this official historical company—his tragedy, and our loss—and it may be that his posthumous fate will be no less tragic. For no one can resist an artist to history by an act of will—not permanently, anyway. Only the springs of feeling, untiring past to present out of a sense of emotional necessity, can do that, and it remains to be seen whether Baizerman's art can inspire this sense of necessity at the present time.

For myself, he remains an important and moving figure, and it grieves me to think that his large and beautiful engravings remain sequestered in the limbo of which taste and the vagaries of the *artifort* have consigned. We have not had so many artists of his quality that we can afford to allow his work to slip permanently into oblivion.

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BAIZERMAN Creative Art, vol 12, #4, April, 1933. pp 300-303

"Recent Sculpture Exhibitions" by Louise Cross

"Saul Baizerman, Eighth Street Gallery. "

Baizerman has evolved through a stage of strong, clasically real modelling to a more and more abstract expression, gaining steadily an intense vitality and not losing subtlty in his extreme simplification. His method is to make a realistic clay sketch of his idea, studying its fundamental movement and char^acter, and later, when he feels he has grasped its full significance, to make a finished plaster, using the original clay sketch as a model. He hammers the final bronze castings in order to achieve the most complete definition of the planes--many of them so delicate that they scarcely seem to exist --and of their movement into each other. It is this delicacy within breadth whⁱch gives to his work its living and voluminous power and to even the smallest figures a certain monumental quality. His subjects are almost entirely laborers, seen directly in action. Labor, as he presents it, has a strong degnity and force. Two Men Lifting and Cement Man probably best fulfill his ideal. He has had one-man shows in Russia and England and has exhibited in Paris, but this was his first important showing in America.

P. 30

Two Men Lifting is illustrated on p 30. Not able to xerox this periodical at the NYPL.)

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