

1960

Search and Research: An Approach

Fort Hays Kansas State College Department of Art Faculty

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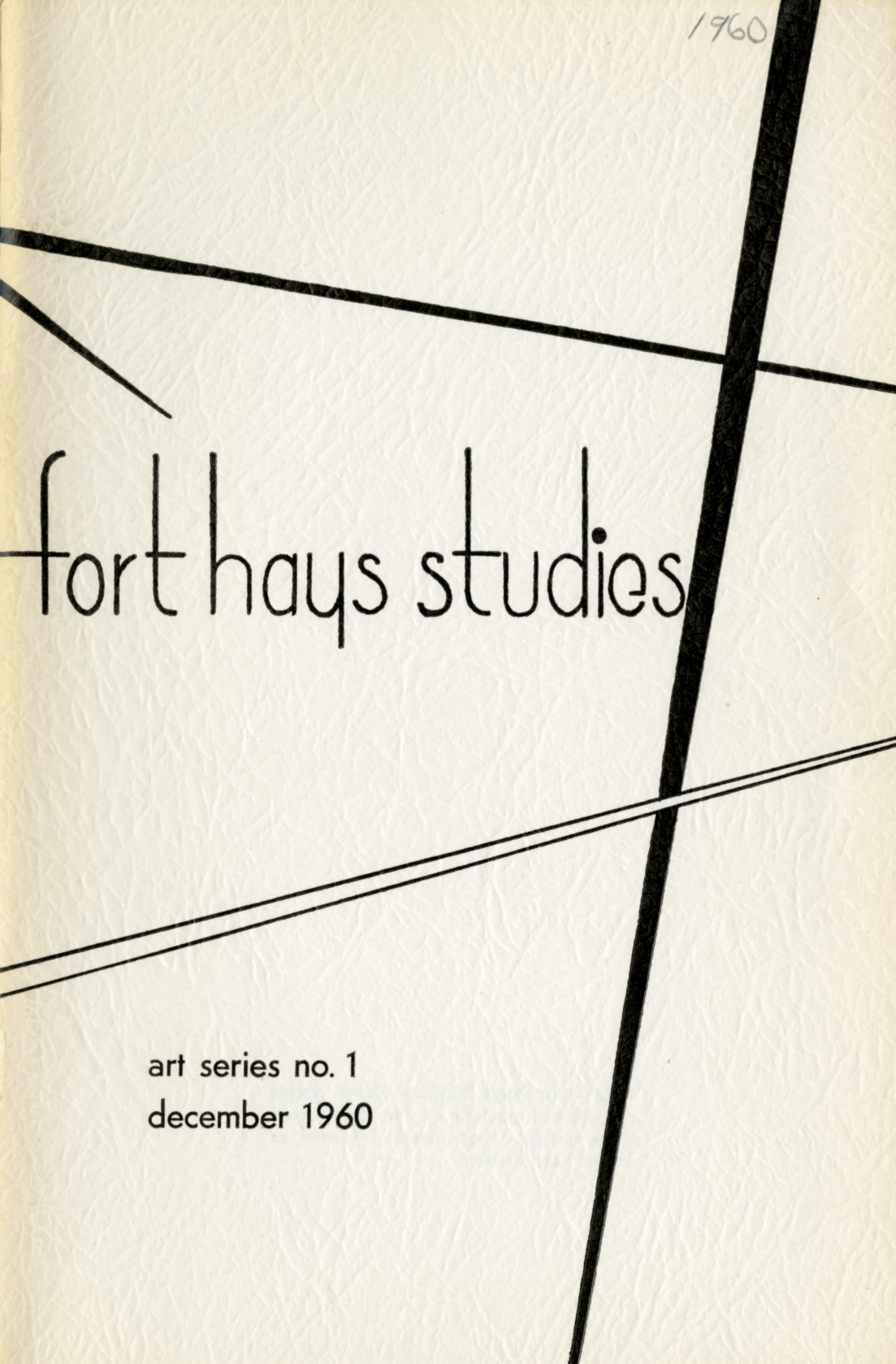
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1960

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art series no. 1
december 1960

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*faculty of the
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fort hays kansas state college*

Search and Research:
An Approach

*fort hays studies—new series
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december 1960*



Fort Hays Kansas State College
Hays, Kansas

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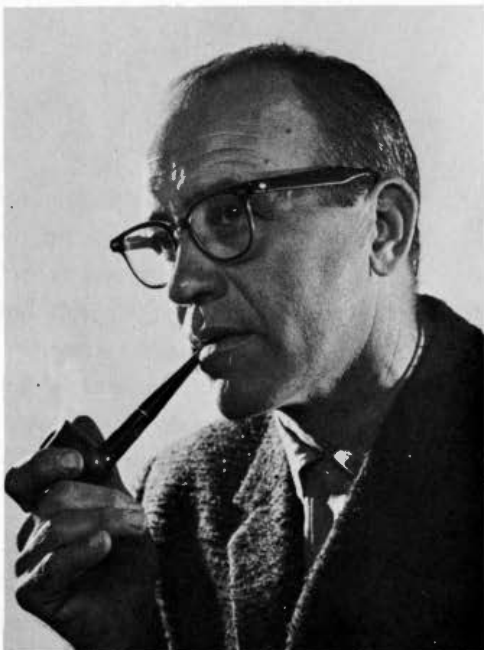
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Kansas State College

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Joe Moss

chairman

Dr. Moss graduated from Fort Hays Kansas State College in 1938 with a B. S. degree in Art. His Master of Arts degree is from George Peabody College in 1941 and he was appointed Chairman of the Department of Art in 1954 upon the completion of his Doctor of Education degree from Columbia University. Dr. Moss teaches in the area of ceramics and painting. He has exhibited widely and many examples of his work are found in museums and private collections across the country.



DELLINGER



JONES



BERLAND



Martha Ellen Dellinger: Born in 1926, she received the A. B. degree at the University of Arkansas in 1946. In 1948 she received the M. A. degree from the same institution in the field of Philosophy and Psychology. In 1955 she received the M. F. A. degree from the University of Arkansas with painting as her major field. She joined the Art Faculty at F. H. K. S. C. in 1955 and is teaching in painting and drawing with the rank of Assistant Professor at the present time.

Layman Jones: Born in 1935, he received both his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Tulsa. Experienced as a production artist in a silk screen printing firm and as an instructor in a museum school, he now teaches Graphics and Elementary Art Methods. Introduction to Art and Handcrafts complete his teaching load. Although his interests extend to all mediums and materials, his creative efforts are expended chiefly in painting, graphics and sculpture.

John Berland: The artist is 33 years of age and was born and reared on a farm near Zurich, Kansas. Received a B. S. degree in Art from Fort Hays Kansas State College in 1949. An M. Ed. degree from the University of Oklahoma was conferred in 1954. This year he received an M. A. in sculpture from the University of Tulsa. He is now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art.

JOHN C. THORNS, JR.



John C. Thorns, Jr.: Born in 1926. Educated and graduated with an A. B. degree from Fort Hays Kansas State College. Graduate work was done in two universities with an M. A. degree in Art History from Indiana University, 1952, and an M. F. A. degree in Architectural Design from the State University of Iowa in 1953. He became a member of the Department of Art in 1954 where he is now an Assistant Professor primarily teaching in the fields of Art History and Design.

Search and Research
by Martha Dellinger

An Approach

THE Fort Hays Studies are dedicated to the publication of research taking place on the campus of Fort Hays Kansas State College. The five members of the faculty of the Art department are presenting this issue as a somewhat unique form of research in which we are intimately involved. Unlike the usual conception of scholarly research, we present no sources or references, but rather the creative products of this research into the phenomenon of the artist-teacher on the college campus and his role in relation to the college, and primarily the students with whom he works.

It is our feeling that the best teaching done in the field of the Fine Arts is done by those individuals who are practising creative artists and are sensitive members of the society in which they live. These are courageous people who establish a new set of circumstances in their work repeatedly and attempt to arrive at fresh solutions to visual problems as well as more abstract ideas.

The role of the artist-teacher in society appears to have taken a new and quite significant direction. In the past, the emphasis was upon training an individual to be an artist or a teacher with little possibility of the two mingling. It is this mingling, or interweaving of the two, with which we are concerned. Unlike the concept of man as directed toward a single objective, present-day life seems to focus upon an integrated personality which must have many vital functions. In the case of the artist-teacher these vital functions seem to be necessary to each other, with each increasing the ability of the other to function upon a significant

level. Part of this is undoubtedly the result of the type of training which many artists receive today. In the past the artist was usually highly trained in the skills of his profession only, with little emphasis being placed on related areas. At the present time many artists are the product of liberal education backgrounds in which they tend to become more conversant with and involved in other art forms, as the dance and music, as well as philosophy and literature—man's attempt to answer his major questions in many different expressive mediums. This background is characteristic of most trained artists today. Because of this heightened awareness to significant relationships, the artist places more emphasis on the relationship between his creativity and that of the young people with whom he works in a teaching situation. The interchange between the artist-teacher and the student becomes not only the exchange of ideas, but perhaps more important, the cross-currents of enthusiasm which seem to move in both directions. Since the artist-teacher is involved in expressing his own ideas, communicating them to others in the process of giving form to them, as well as in the final state, the student's awareness and sensitivity are more thoroughly developed at an early stage. Because of this developing awareness, and the emphasis placed on the student's growing ability to think for himself, there is not a set "pattern" imposed on him in his creative efforts. Actually the demand is made of him that he do his own thinking and work in his own way from the very beginning. This point may perhaps be clearer to the reader on viewing the different directions in expression taken by the five faculty members, not only as they differ from each other, but as they represent a variety of ideas within their own work. This variety is due, only in part, to the variety of media with which the individual works, since he usually selects the material on the basis of its appropriateness to the idea with which he is concerned.

It would clarify our direction in teaching to cite an example. This part of the Midwest has long been under the aesthetic influence and stamp placed upon it by the Regional painters of the 1930's, particularly Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry and Grant Wood. Because of their influence, the use of many regionally characteristic subjects has become trite to the viewer. The young artist, who, due to this background, may feel strongly about deserted farms with windmills, typical Kansas sunsets or tornados, is faced with the necessity to make his statement about these things sufficiently meaningful and in good taste to avoid being trite. We, as teachers, feel that it is our responsibility to encourage him to treat of these things, precisely because they are meaningful to him personally, rather than to encourage him to deal with things which might, by their very nature, be more visually pleasing, but unknown to him. The city, tropical

vegetation or ocean scenes might be good examples of this type of subject matter about which most of our students have little personal feeling or involvement, and in many cases, of which they have little visual experience. This would render these things as second-hand visual experiences without any possibility of content for the student.

Our responsibility is to promote the growth of an aesthetic awareness and sense of good taste in these young people, largely by talking with them about their work, and through the example of our own work. These must be used in conjunction with the teaching of the History of Art, reading and looking at works of art. In this connection, we feel that our exhibition program is extremely valuable. Eleven major exhibitions are held each year, students being encouraged to study each of them carefully as they represent significant art being produced not only in the area but nationally, and not infrequently, internationally.

It is our feeling that many of the important contributions being made in contemporary art are taking place in the Midwest which had remained culturally isolated until quite recently. Possibly the freshness of the work produced in this area now is in part due to this isolation, a situation which largely prohibited young artists from forming preconceived ideas as to the nature of a work of art based on popular movements and fads, and forced him to form his own ideas out of the depths of his own well-examined experiences. This is not to imply that a lack of background is advantageous, but that some isolation from short-lived directions may prove helpful.

Recently much emphasis has been placed on the importance of uniqueness in the field of art. We feel that uniqueness, for its own sake, is not a valid criterion by which a work of art may be judged. This uniqueness seems to be carried out of proportion in much of contemporary art. Uniqueness should stem from a source deep within the individual's own thinking about the idea with which he is dealing.

These brief comments about the approach which we have to the teaching of art and the role of the artist-teacher constitute an attempt to put into words our approach to what might be called research in the field of art. Since the prefix *re* before that word seems to suggest an attempt to go back to many sources and compile significant data from these sources, perhaps it would be more appropriate to use the word *search* to define these attempts. Though each of us is unquestionably affected by historical solutions to similar problems, our approach is not the act of compiling these. In this sense, we feel that it does constitute a *search* for new solutions, therefore the word *search* takes precedence over that of *research* in the title.

Joel/loss

THE creative search for form is required of everyone capable of becoming educated. Everyone who seeks to avoid the deadly performance of routine may escape and even add something to life through a creative experience. This pursuit requires much more sense involvement than is used in the assembling of known quantities or participating in formulized processes of following dictums, doctrines, fads or the fashionable. The act of forming requires in the deepest sense a healthful rejection of the "shape of things." Even one's own thoughts, understandings and feelings about things or subject.

The creative act, valued by some as dominant among the many acts of man, involves one in a most complex and mysterious experience. It is personal, exclusive and even lonely at times unless one becomes "known" and ceases to search. One rewarded with the responsibilities of teaching has a course which, if pursued, can lead away from the position of becoming the final authority; possessor of all knowledge; the one to be emulated. He may even enlarge his own little world and become capable of leading others if he will continue to create; to search for a deeper meaning in his field.

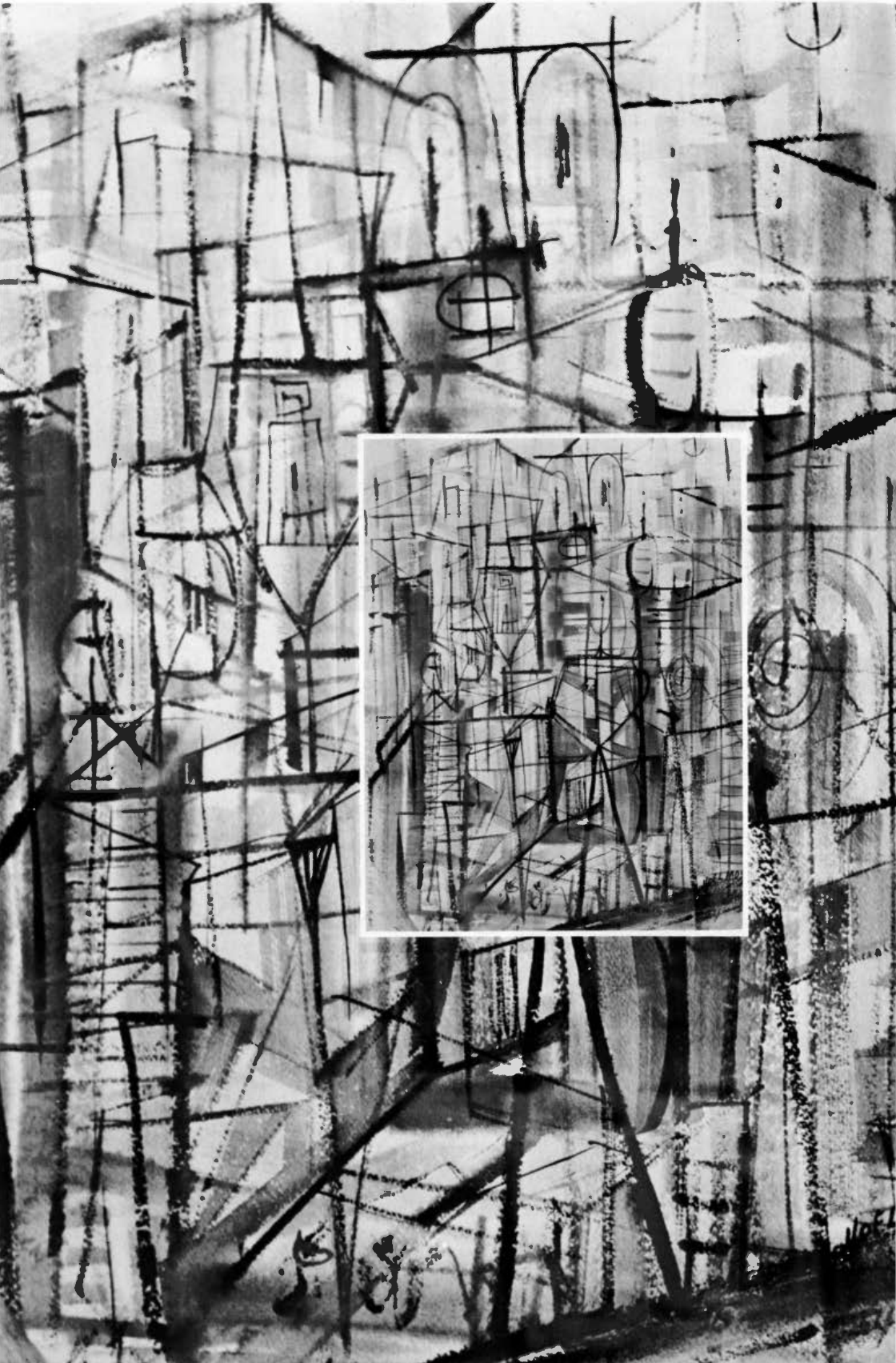
Above Deckers
WATERCOLOR
1960

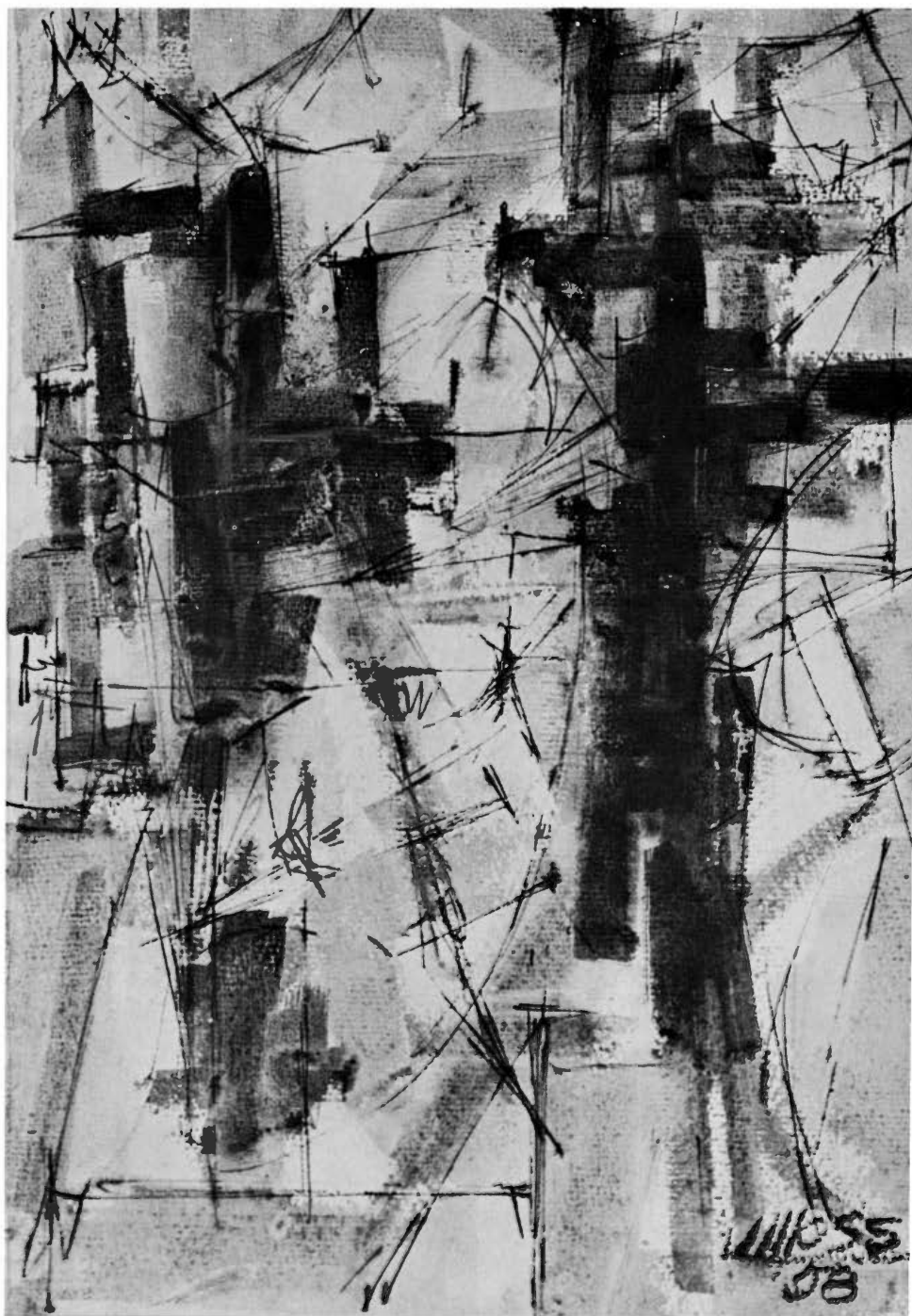


Two Butts
WATERCOLOR
1959



Existence
WATERCOLOR
1960





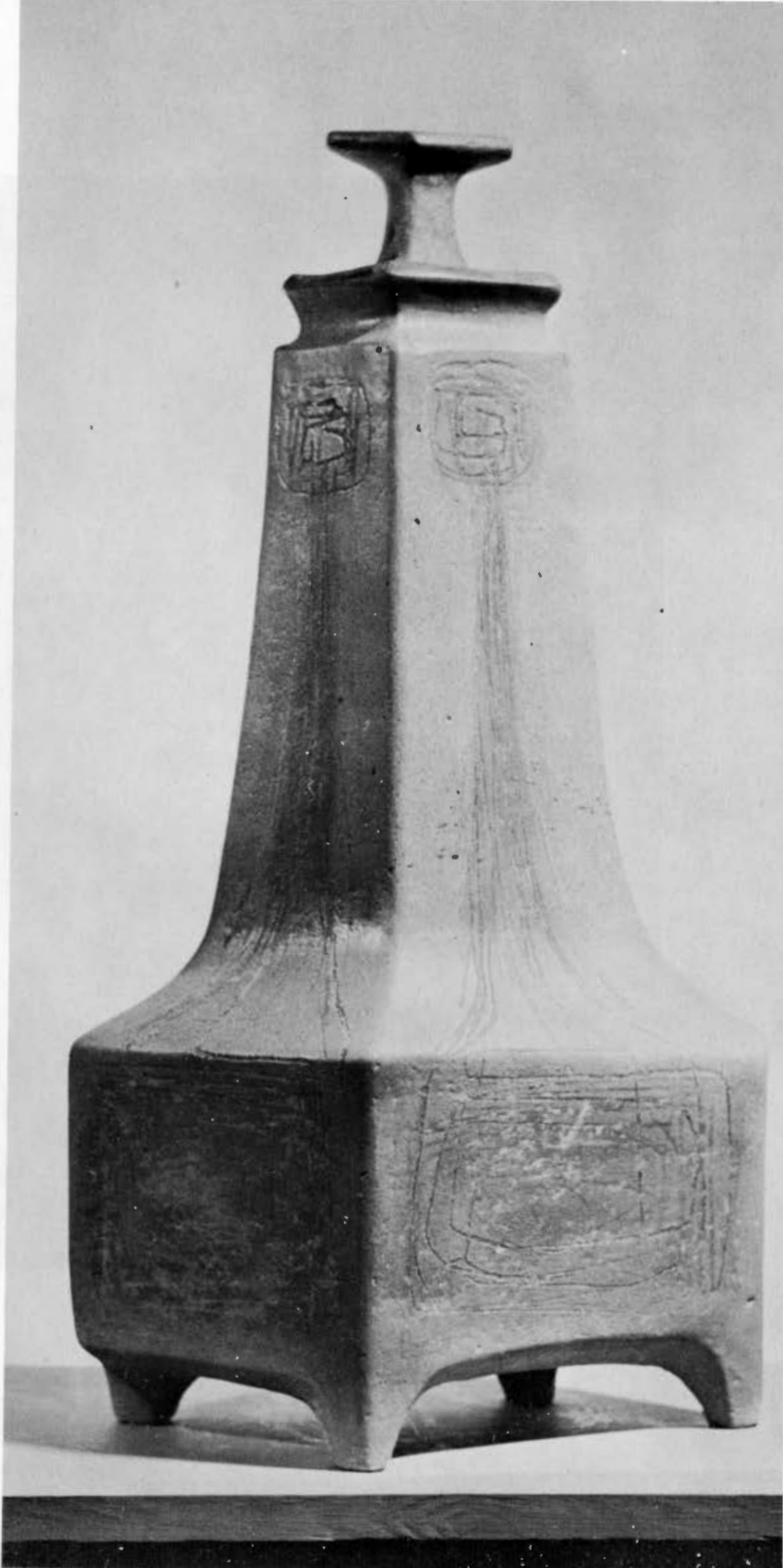
Neurogenesis
WATERCOLOR
1955

Near Collision
WATERCOLOR
1958

Stoneware Bottle
1960



**Sculptured
Jar
1960**



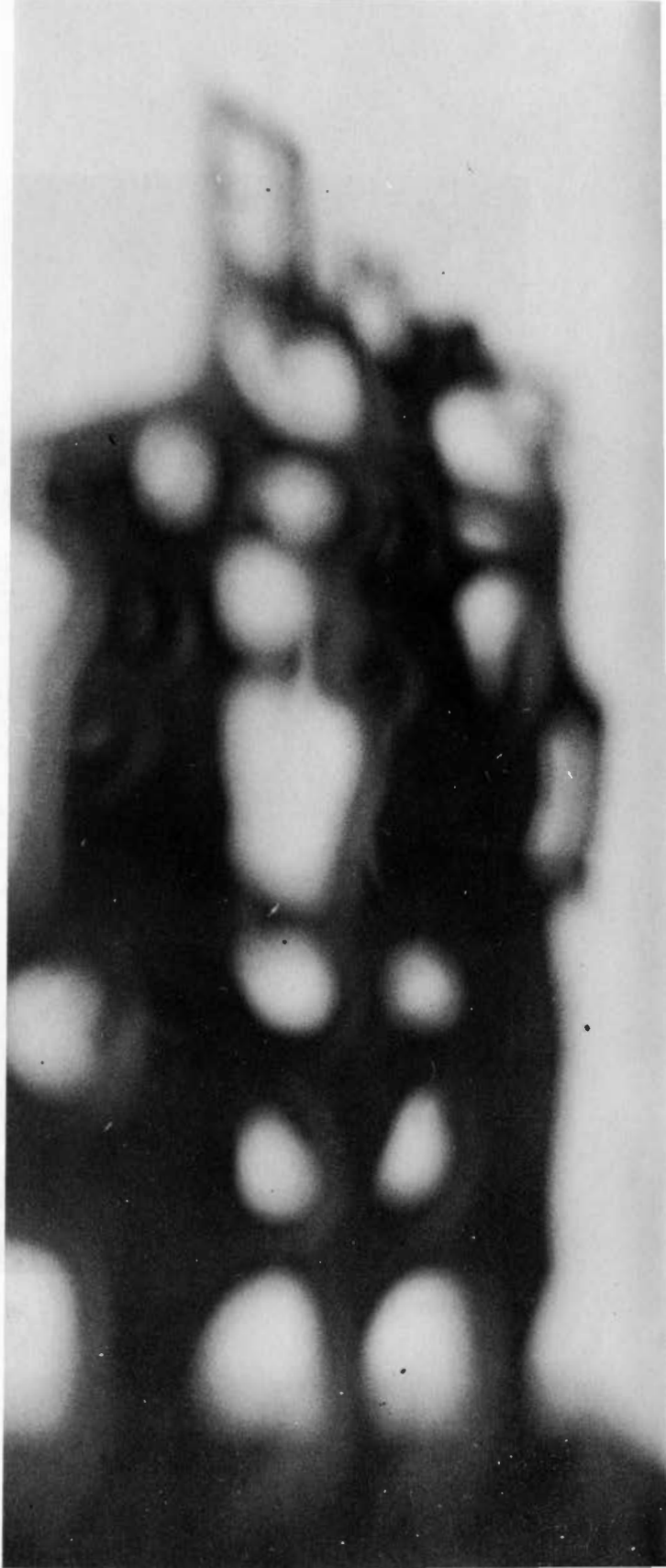


Crater Glaze Bottle
1957



Stoneware Jar
1959

Shadow of The Klansmen

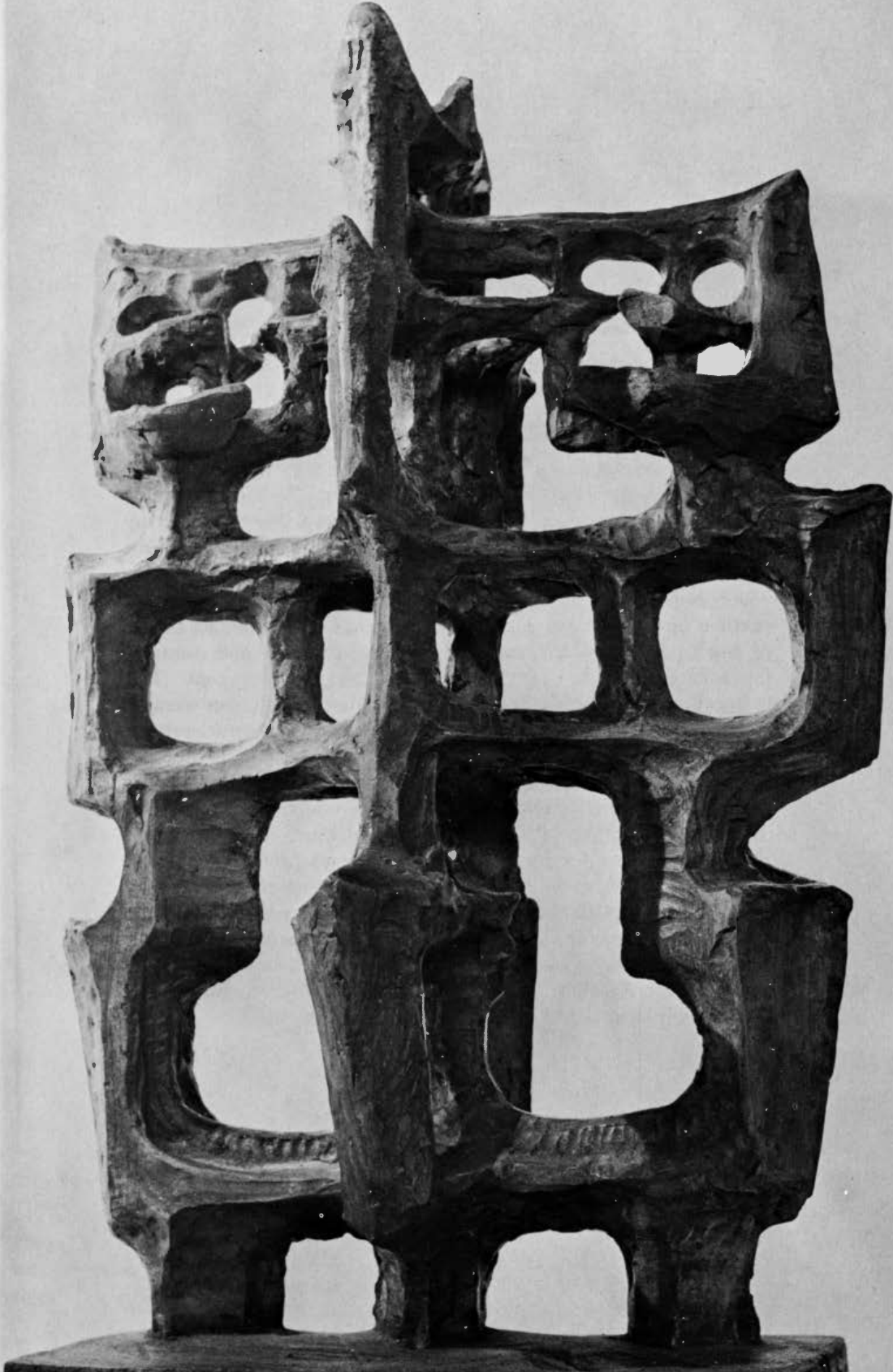




The Klansmen
CERAMIC SCULPTURE
1958



Attention
CERAMIC SCULPTURE
1960



Martha Dellinger

THE approach of each creative individual is most strongly reflected in the things which he creates and, in the case of the artist-teacher, the manner in which he teaches. Perhaps the words examine and experiment would be most appropriate to define my approach. The artist, whether painter, poet or composer, seems to define himself through questioning each experience and idea which impinge on his consciousness, and subsequently stating his position or thinking in relation to these things. The abstract nature of much painting might suggest that formal structure and composition take precedence over the human element as the content. This is true in some respects, however the emotional or human element cannot effectively be separated from more formal considerations. In some instances one aspect seems to dominate the other but this is more the result of considerations which arise in the act of creating than an intellectual or emotional preference which is preconceived. To begin a painting with certain ideas and limits in mind and let the visual images develop in the process seems preferable. These prior images have no verbal form and can only be given significant meaning and organization in relation to each other when they take visual form. A work of art is a thing with its own existence, separate from other objects which it might suggest or represent. This does not mean the rejection of visual objects known by experience, but rather the placement of them in a new context.



Cavernous Image

OIL

1955



Summer
OIL
1955



Orbit of the Intellect

OIL

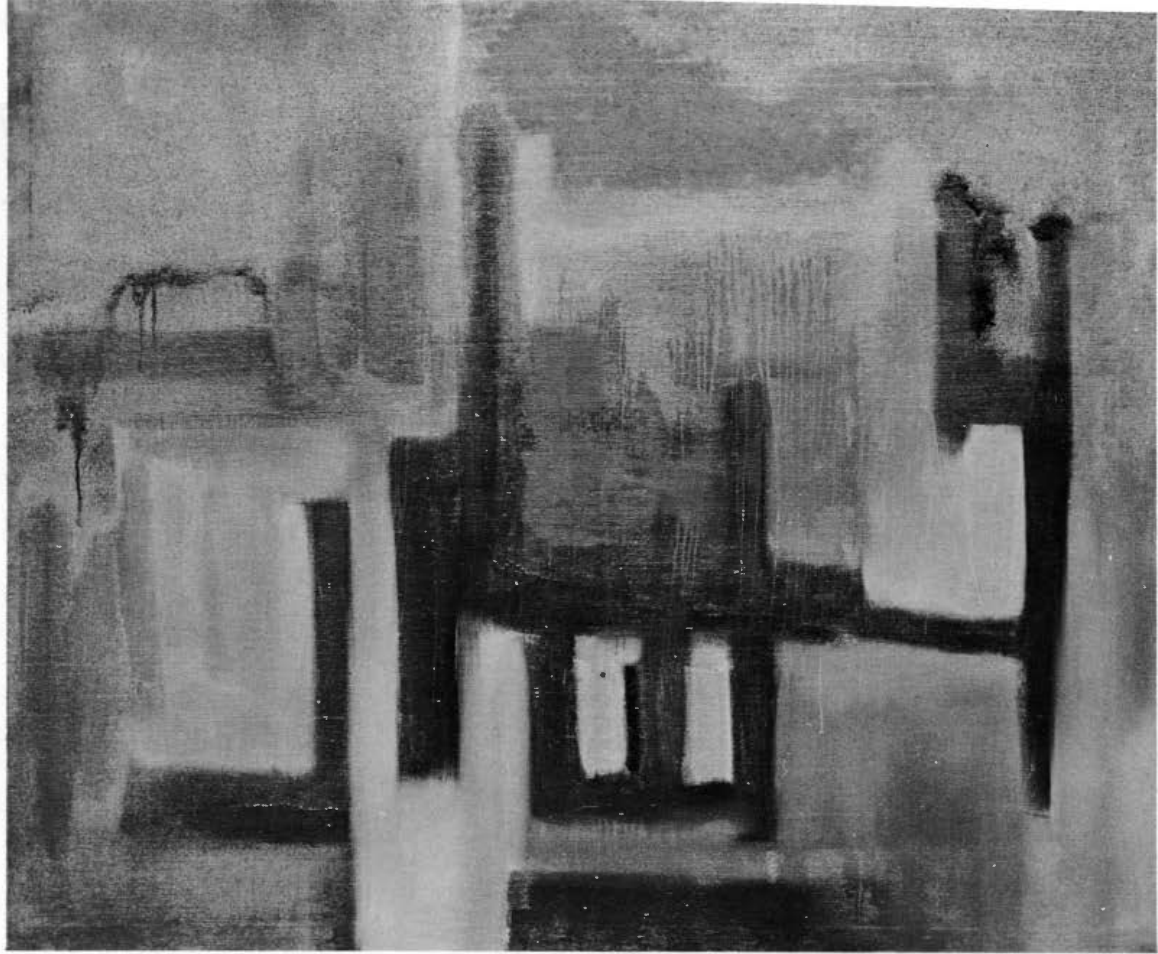
1960



The Tension of Things to Be

OIL

1955



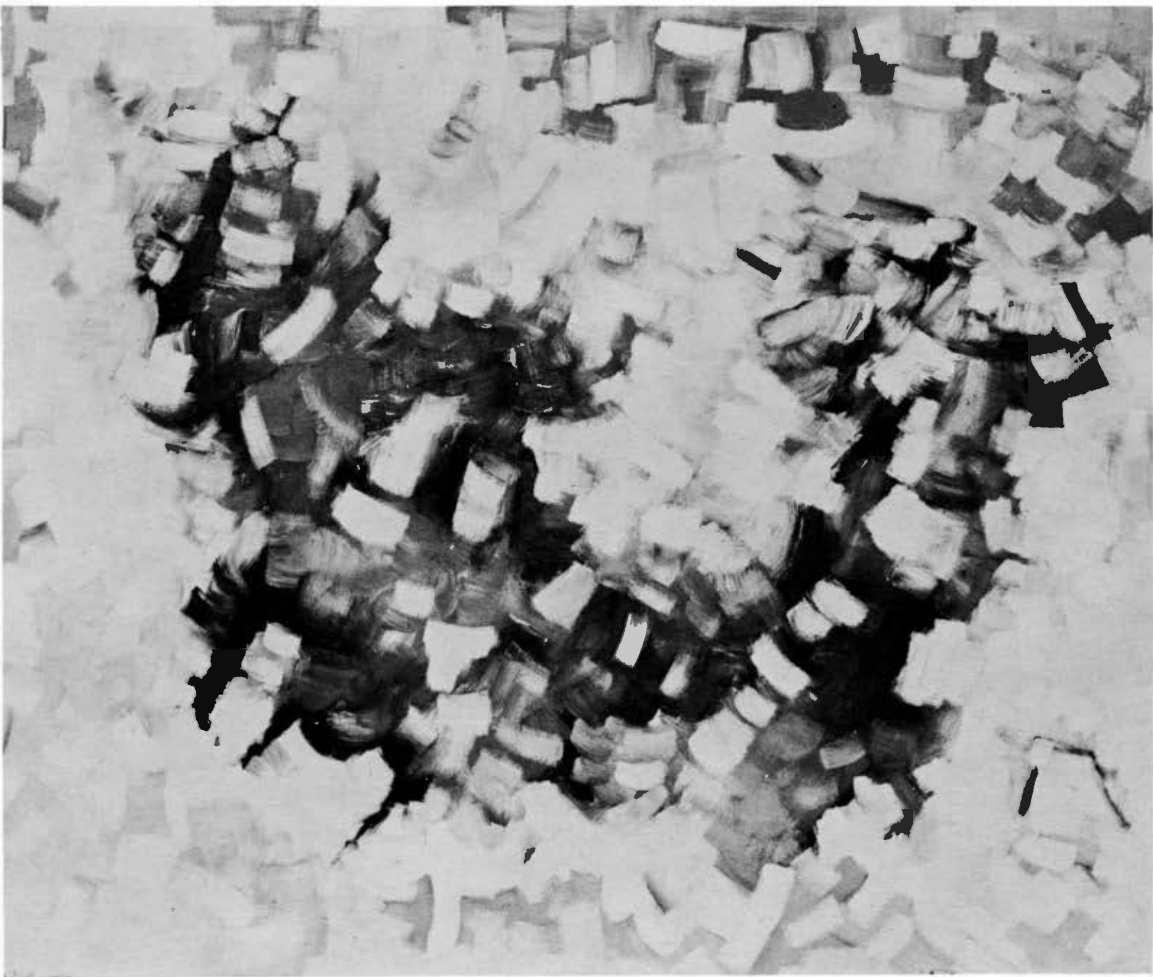
Eternal City II

OIL

1958



Ellen's Autumn World
OIL
1959

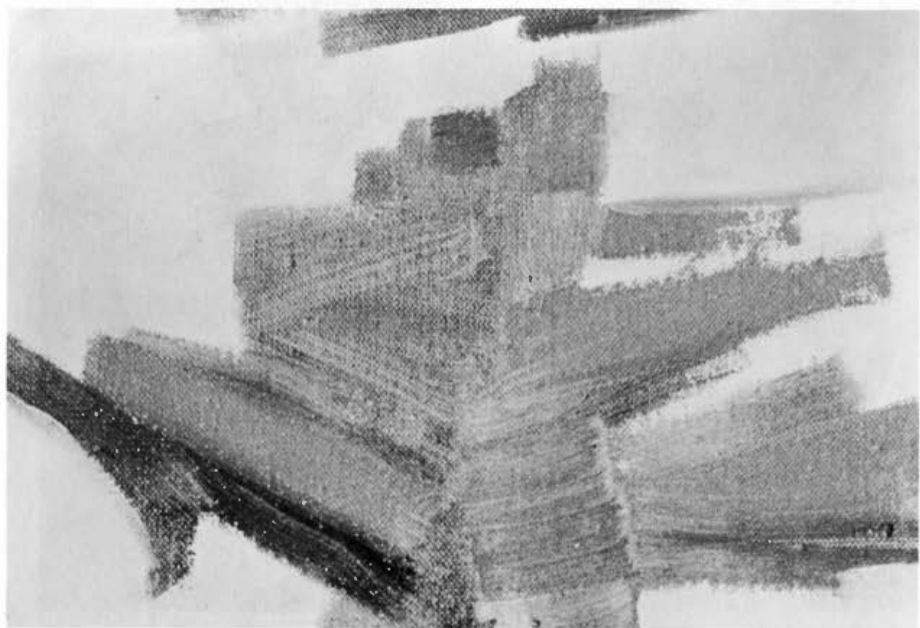


*As the Hemlocks
Were in March*
OIL
1960

DETAIL



DETAIL



Snow Epic
OIL
1960

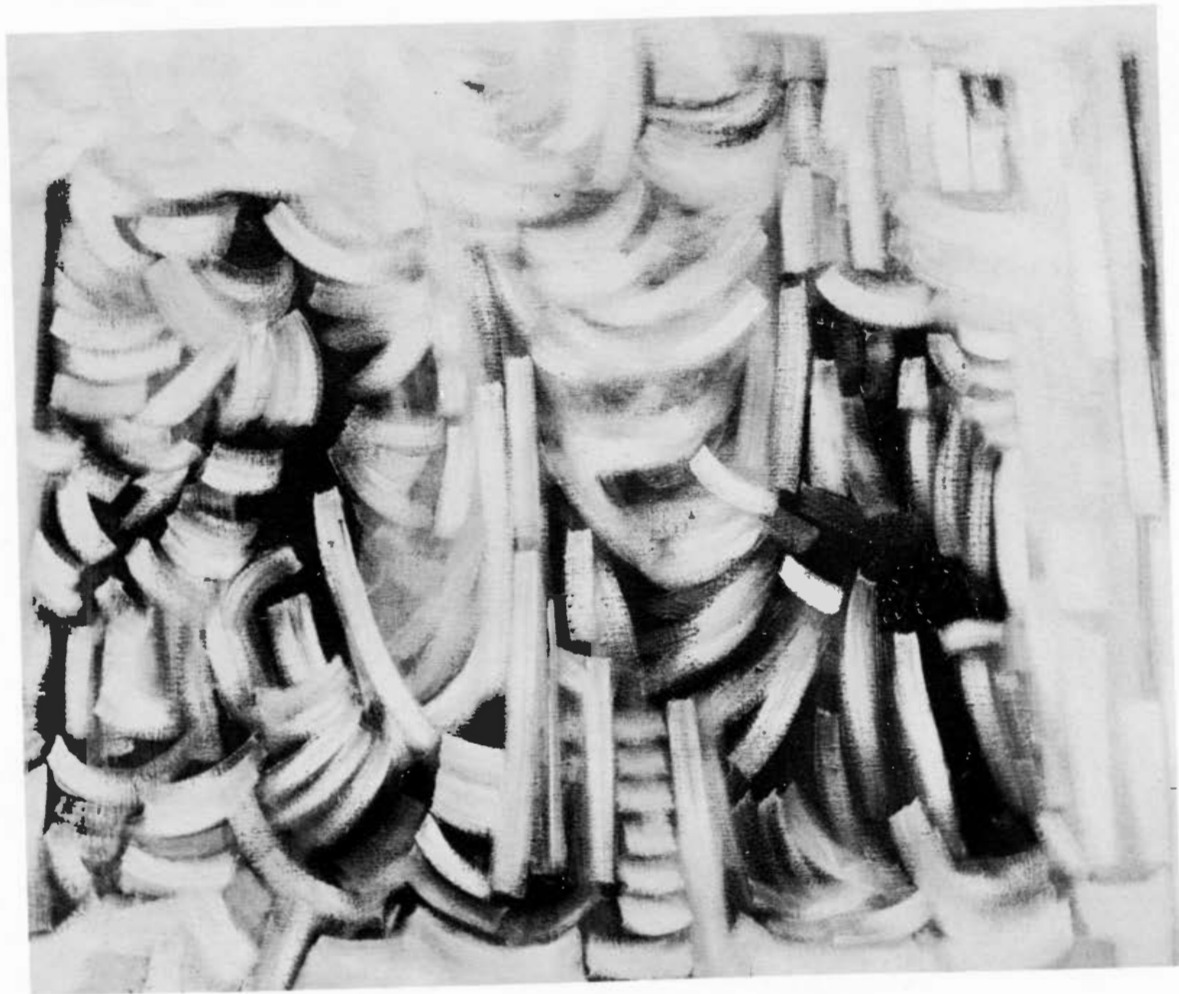


Snow Flower

OIL

1960





*And in the Spring
All Things Growing*
OIL
1960

Wayman Jones

MAN is not compartmentalized—nor should his art be. A transfer of theory between the visual arts is not only possible; it proves more logical than acceptance on the basis of historic precedent.

Should figures sculptured today don bandages of paint and suffer amputation simply because the Greeks once painted their sculpture and we now behold it in fragments. It seems far more logical to accept paint as a surface for sculpture because the artist desires the color and tactical qualities normally associated with two dimensional art. And, may not sculpture be left incomplete much as part of a drawing may be left to the imagination, thereby directing your attention or suggesting movement.

The so-called flat arts may also benefit from the lending of concepts. For example, collages are poorly explained through the precedent of the Da da movement, and to say that a nonobjective painter is enlarging *water lilies* leaves something to be desired. The painter, in the precedent of the sculptor, should be allowed to take advantage of the aesthetic properties of different materials—the painter may even model with paint.

True, history may provide us with clues. But it is rationalism rather than reason to like something because it resembles the old and familiar. And an artist striving for effects he has observed in other work, old or new, is practicing eclecticism, *not creativity*.

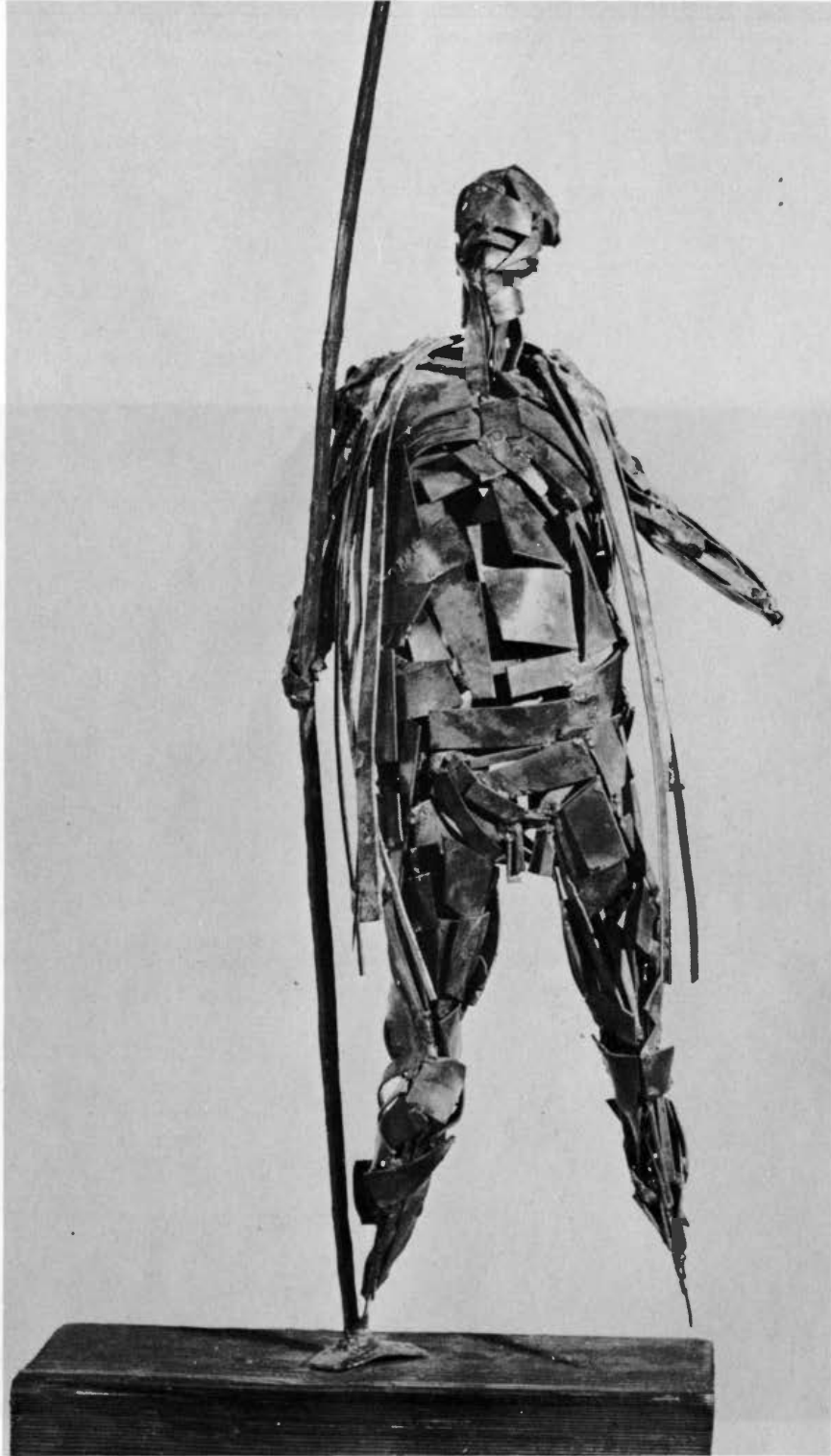
The difference is in clarity of thought, and certainly the transfer of theories is not the whole answer. But a student or teacher liberated from cumbersome thinking is free to create.



DETAIL

Reflections
POLYMERE COLLAGE
1959







Joseph
**STEEL, BRAZED
AND RUSTED**
1957



In the Garden

SERICGRAPH

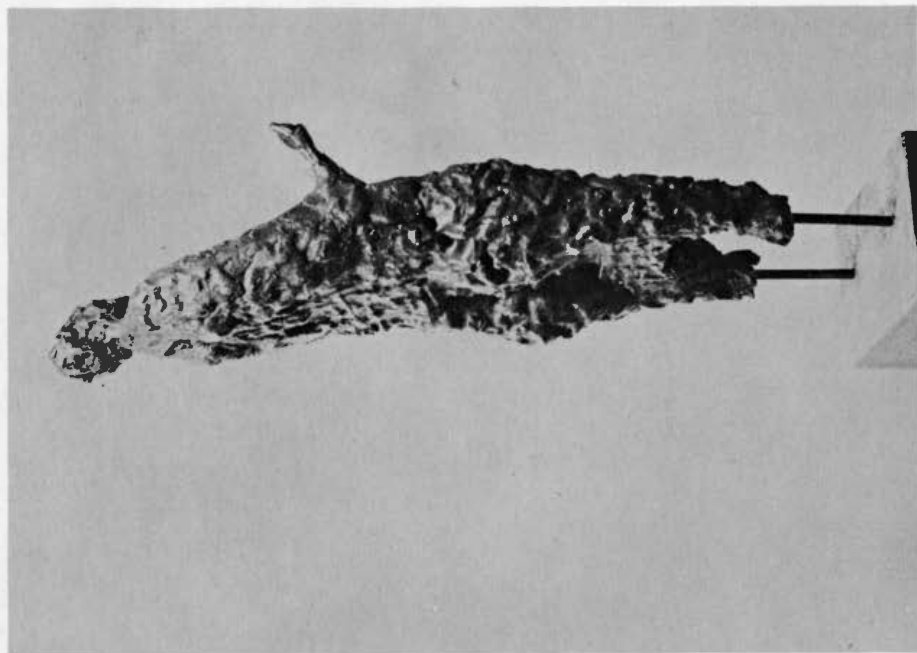
1958



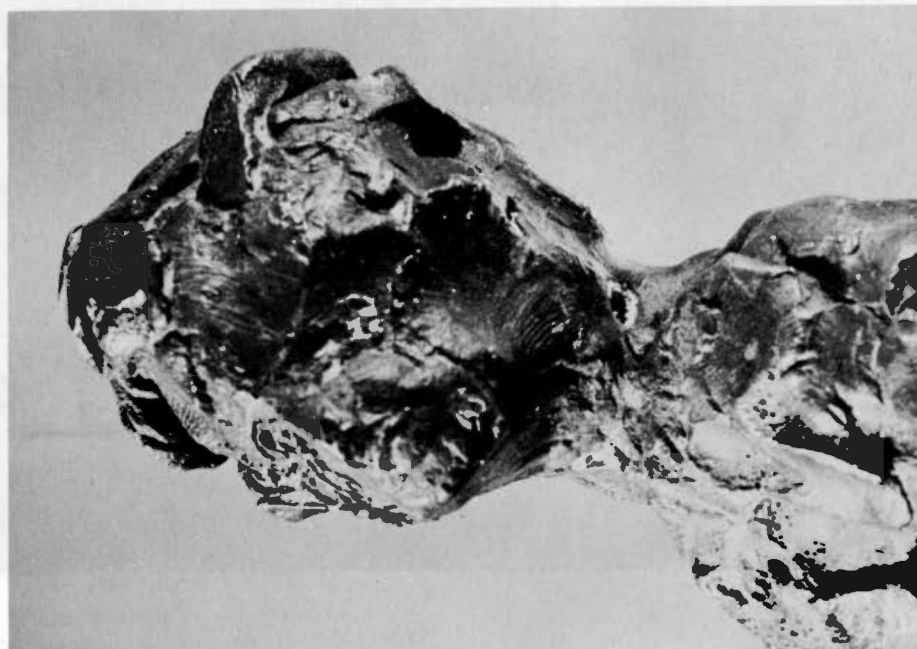
Two Caged

OIL

1959



A Woman
CAST BRONZE
1960



DETAIL
A Woman

Girl with Red Hair

PAINTED PLASTER CONSTRUCTION

1958





Landscape
WELDED STEEL AND BRASS
1959



On the Wind

POLYMERE COLLAGE

1959



Tabernacle
POLYMERE COLLAGE
1960

A New Land
POLYMERE COLLAGE
1960



John C. Berkeley

IT HAS been the concern with the significance of man's existence that has been a vital force in the nature of this sculpture, whereas the concern for inventiveness, individuality and perfection of form have varied from work to work. It has been a preoccupation with the personal meaningfulness of the subject that has been an essential factor in the nature of the form expressed. The work does not exist as a process in which the action of creating becomes the experience expressed but is a mediation and a reflection upon that which is meaningful.



DETAIL

Flight into Egypt
WELDED STEEL
1958





DETAIL

Couple
TERRA COTTA
1958







Torso
WELDED STEEL
1959



Jené
CAST CONCRETE
1959



Portrait of a Young Girl

CAST CONCRETE

1959



DETAIL

Girl with Pony Tail

CAST CONCRETE

1959





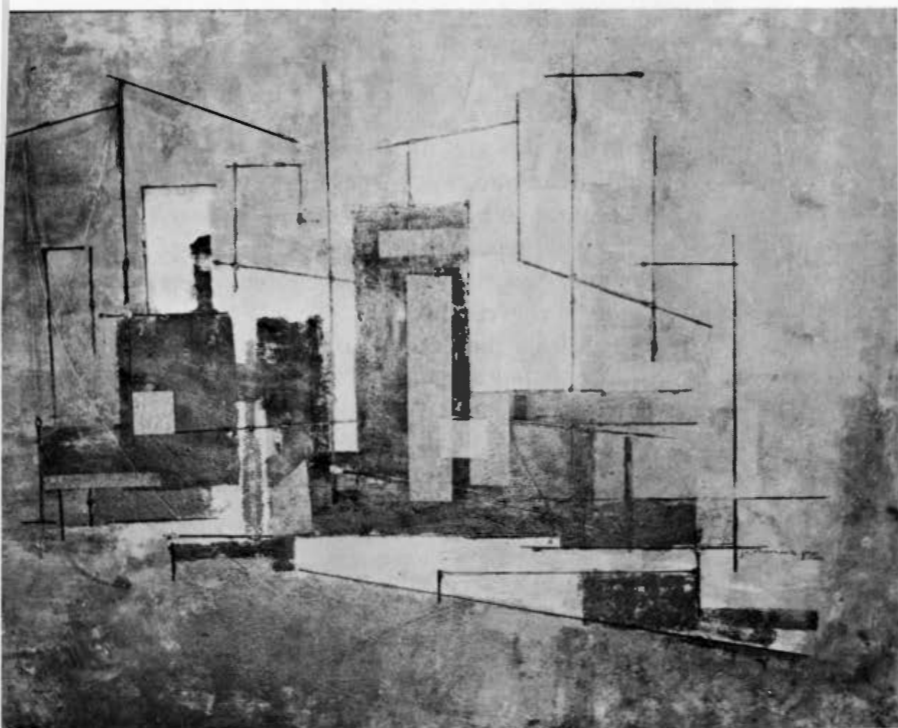


Boy with Coat
CAST CONCRETE
1960

John C. Thomas, Jr

CREATIVITY is a form of communication. The artist attempts to record concepts meaningful to him and to communicate to his fellow man. These may be experiences easily shared and recognized by others and at the same time they may be hidden, deep seated experiences known only to the creator.

To achieve this exchange of ideas, the artist must make use of materials. These materials are molded and shaped into significant forms which should be inventive, imaginative and expressive. Successful creative work is a balance between these experiences and ideas put into tangible form of materials. It is hoped that the observer is aware of this inter-relationship.



Kansas Storehouse

MIXED MEDIA

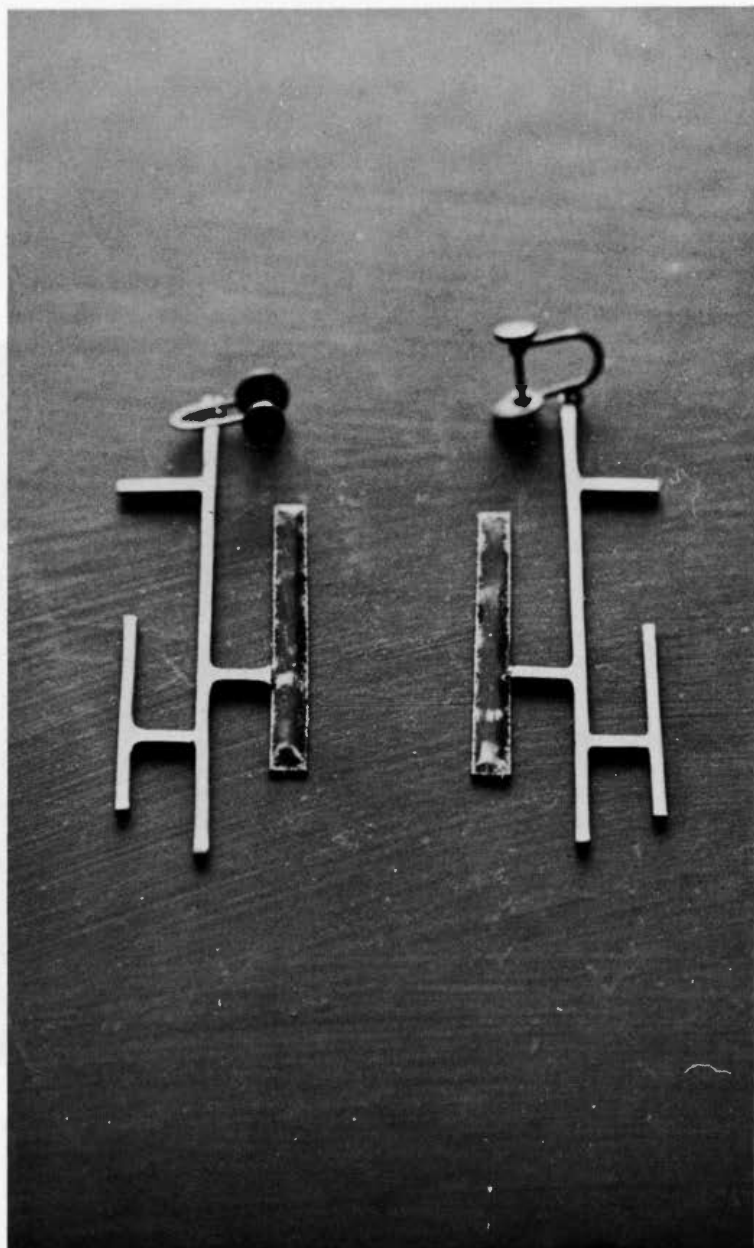
1958



Landscape—Saline River

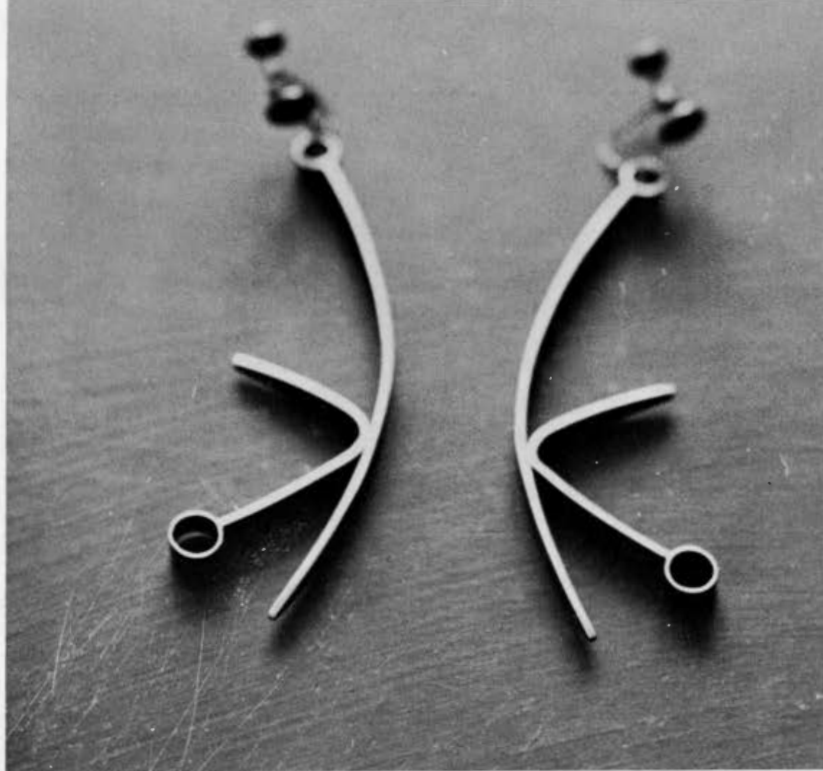
OIL

1960



Earrings
STERLING SILVER AND
RED ENAMEL

Earrings
STERLING SILVER



Cuff Links
STERLING SILVER





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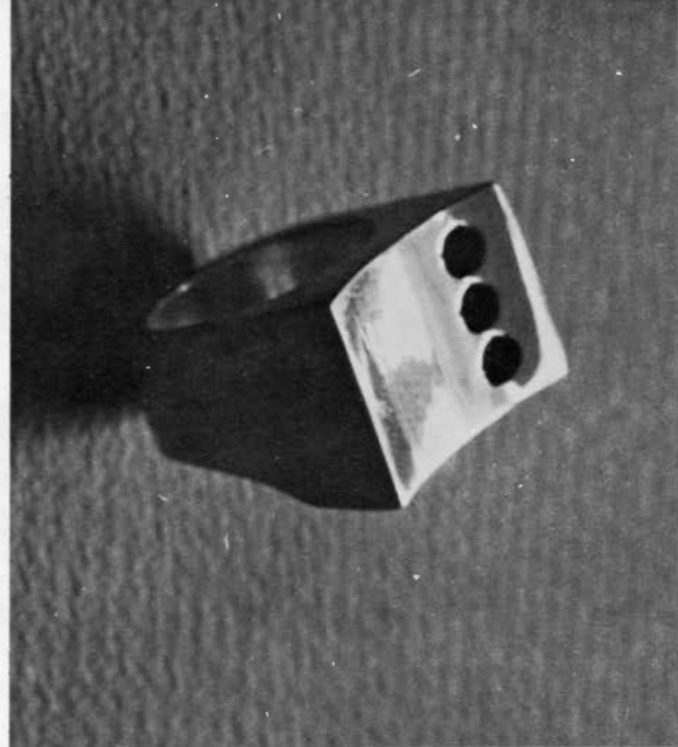
Pendant
CAST BRASS



Pendant
CAST STERLING SILVER

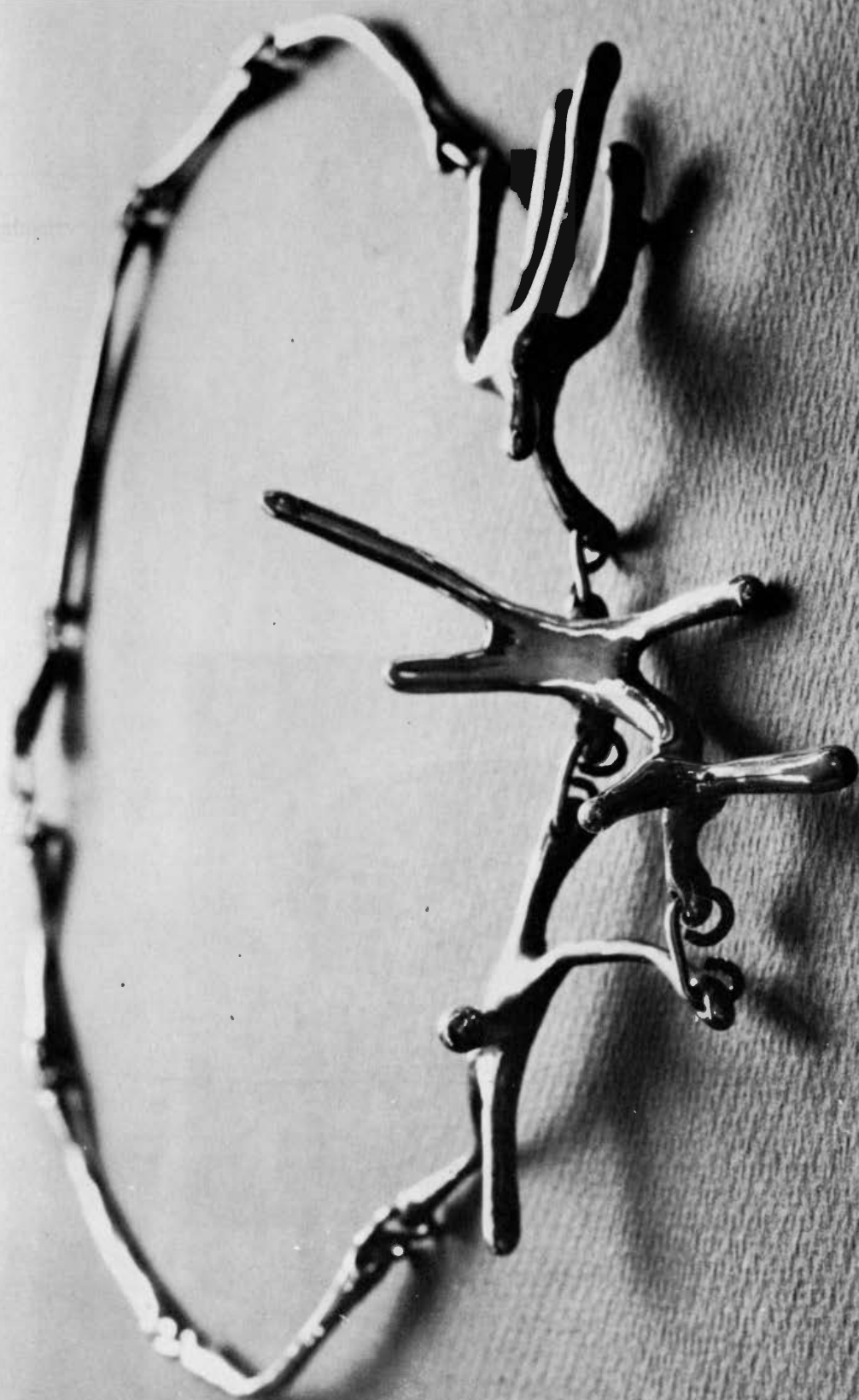


Ring
CAST STERLING SILVER

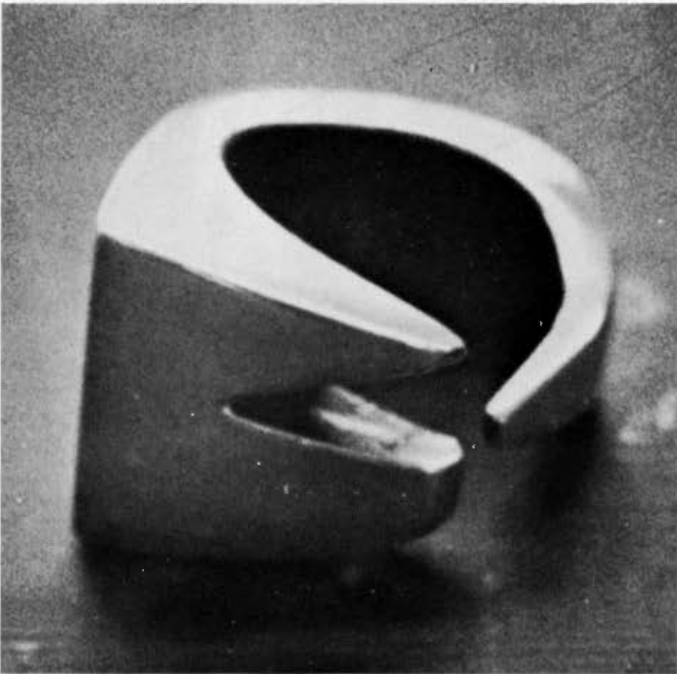


Ring
CAST STERLING SILVER

Necklace
CAST STERLING SILVER



Pendant
CAST STERLING SILVER



Ring
CAST STERLING SILVER



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