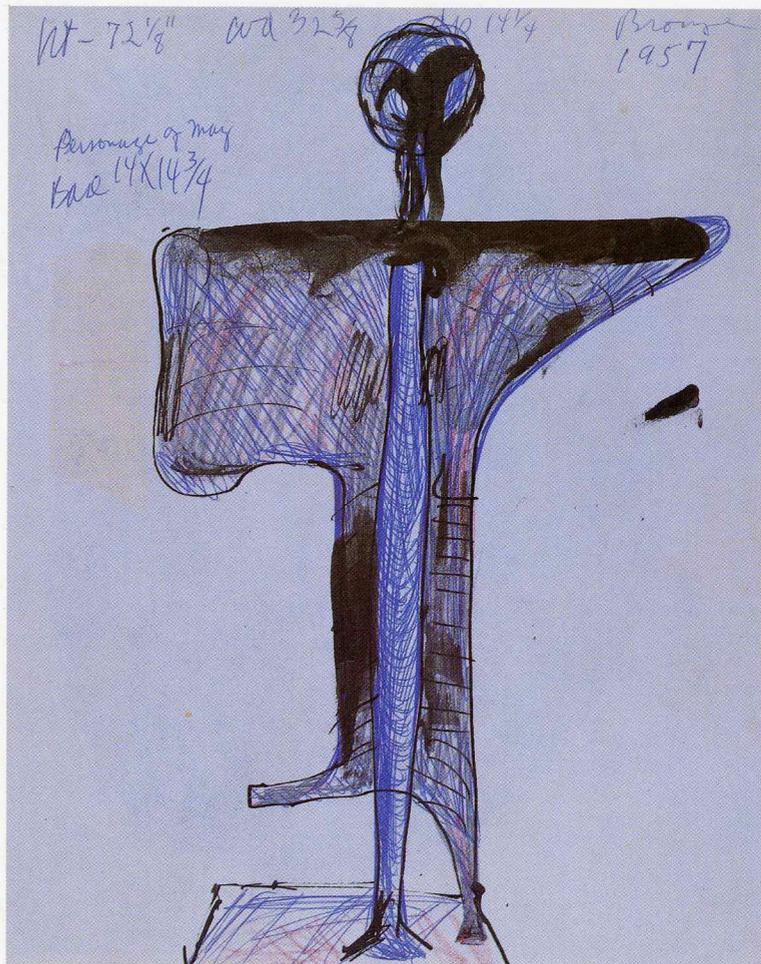


DAVID SMITH

Drawings for Sculpture: 1954-1964

**STORM
KING** 
ART CENTER
MOUNTAINVILLE, NEW YORK 10953



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the collectors who have generously permitted the Storm King Art Center to borrow their works. The following have also contributed to the success of this exhibition: Gordon Hazlitt and the Storm King Art Center staff. I acknowledge, with special thanks, the assistance and cooperation of Adam Mekler.

David R. Collens

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DAVID SMITH

Drawings for Sculpture: 1954-1964

STORM KING ART CENTER

May 19-October 31, 1982

A FAST MOVING SEARCH — *The Drawings of David Smith*

These drawings by David Smith were done by the sculptor in the middle and late 1950's, a felicitous period in his life and in the history of American art.

In 1954 David Smith was 48 years old and he had been sculpting in welded steel and bronze since the early 1930's when he had first seen illustrations of the welded works of Picasso and Julio Gonzalez in the French magazine *Cahiers d'Art*. In a later letter Smith wrote that once he had started working in steel he quickly realized that he had found his media. Smith was very American in his love of powerful industrial forms and processes; as a student he had worked for a summer in the Studebaker plant in South Bend, Indiana and in the war years he welded tanks at the American Locomotive Company. In the 1930's he shared space in a commercial welding shop in Brooklyn called The Terminal Iron Works and in later years he fondly recalled his associations with steel workers.

By 1957 Smith's sculpture was widely recognized critically and that year he received a validating retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Prior to this he had received two Guggenheim Fellowships and

had six pieces included in a survey show of American art that the Museum of Modern Art sent to Europe. The drawings for this exhibition are taken from one of notebooks that Smith compiled, most of the others are in the archives of American Art. These drawings are the work of an artist who had every reason to be confident of his reputation and he put the notebooks together, no doubt, with half an eye on the future.

Smith drew prolifically, writing in one letter that he regularly produced 200 drawings a year. In a 1955 lecture Smith describes the importance of drawing to him:

Drawings are usually not pompous enough to be called works of art. They are often too truthful. Their appreciation neglected, drawings remain the life force of the artist.

Especially is this true for the sculptor, who, of necessity, works in media slow to take realization. And where the original creative impetus must be maintained during labor, drawing is the fast moving search which keeps physical labor in balance.¹

Seeing these drawings, particularly in proximity with fine examples of Smith's sculpture, allows the viewer to participate vicariously in the artist's "fast moving search."

Some of these drawings were done after the sculpture was completed. Examples such as "The Sitting Printer," "The Iron Woman" or "Personage of May" allow us to play our own view of the actual piece against the artist's two-dimensional rendering of his view of it. Shifting attention from the drawings to the same or similar pieces of sculpture promotes a kind of stereoscopic viewing that adds insight.

Smith also included notes and jottings in this same notebook and he included some notes for a lecture on the role of the contemporary artist:

All of what you do is related to your own inner expectation and challenge...art comes from the dreams and visions and not the verbal philosophies... what it amounts to is the declaration within yourself of who you aim to be and for what purpose your expectancy is

pledged...beneath the whole art concept every stroke should be your *own* identity. (Smith's emphasis)

Smith directly equated his work and his identity more than once publicly so the point was important to him. It links him philosophically with painters such as Pollack, Rothko and Kline, but considering Smith's art as personally expressive is a problem for there is a formidable structural difference between painting which shows the gesture of the brush stroke or dribble and metal sculpture which has to be laboriously fabricated. The drawings offer us a bridge across this gulf and allow us to see his hand and eye at play as they elaborated the forms which ultimately become the sculpture.

Smith displays a wit and a bit of the devil in some of his drawings. One can visualize the flutter of the bird's wings in the quick sketch for Raven III and the 1954 drawing "Portrait of a Painter" has a playful air of parody. Perceiving the lightness in the drawings helps us pierce through Smith's formidable reputation and see the life and spirit in such diverse pieces as "Study

in Arcs" (which suddenly looks like a sculpture of drawn steel lines), "Iron Woman" or "Portrait of a Lady Painter" (His first wife was a painter.) In my view seeing the whimsy in such works does not diminish their monumentality, it broadens the synthesis that Smith was able to bring about.

Viewing these drawings near the finished sculpture also allows one to sense the ruddy, raw energy of the man. Look at the lines of the drawings as marks, as Smith himself did and notice how strong they are. There is not a tentative line in the bunch. Even his handwriting, which he also acknowledged as a form of drawing, expressed a strong clear voice. Friends of David Smith described him as a demon worker who could sustain the most intensive creative effort over long periods. That driving energy, which made him such a prolific sculptor, shows on an intimate scale in the calligraphic strokes of many of these drawings.

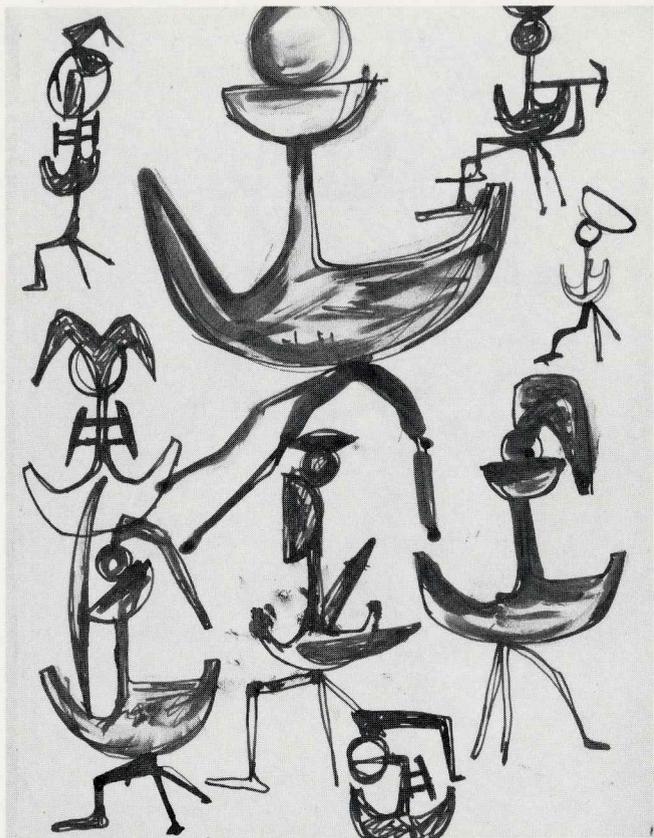
One supposes that David Smith as some level recognized that the fury of his own great energy required the challenge and the resistance of working in steel, iron and bronze. Out of that struggle came the drama of

many of his major pieces, and, as an appreciation of his drawings now suggests, there is also a dimension of wit and charm to these physical embodiments of his identity.

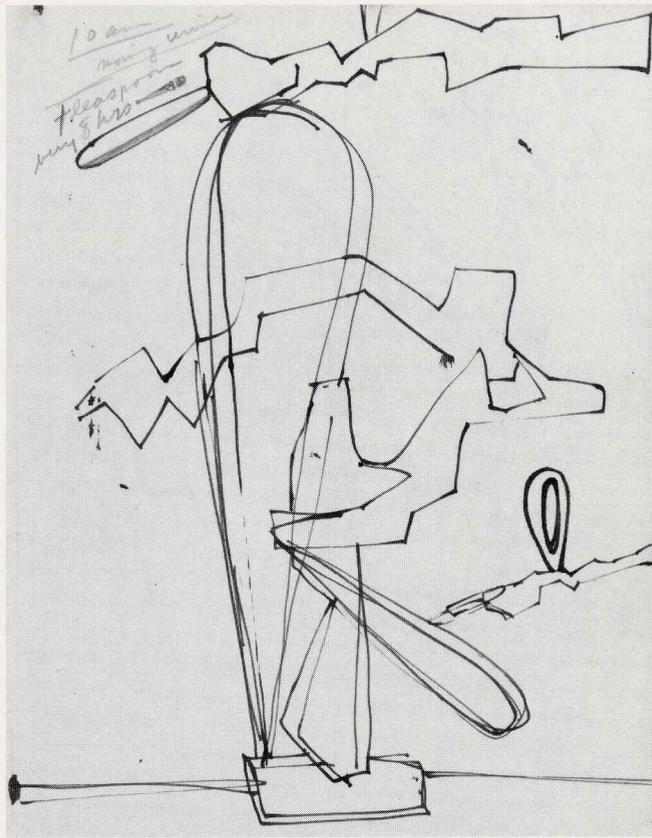
Seeing the drawings and sculpture together in one exhibition, one comes away with an enhanced appreciation for the broadness of view of Smith the man and the artist.

— Gordon J. Hazlitt
West Coast Correspondent
Art News

1. P. 137. *David Smith*. Documentary Monographs in Modern Art. Edited by Garnett McCoy. Prager Publishers. New York, 1962.



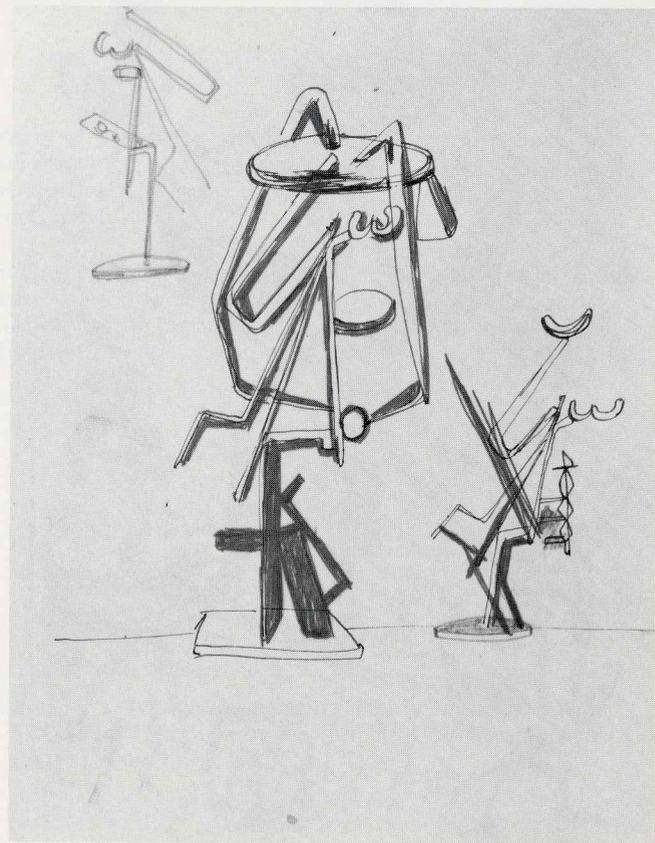
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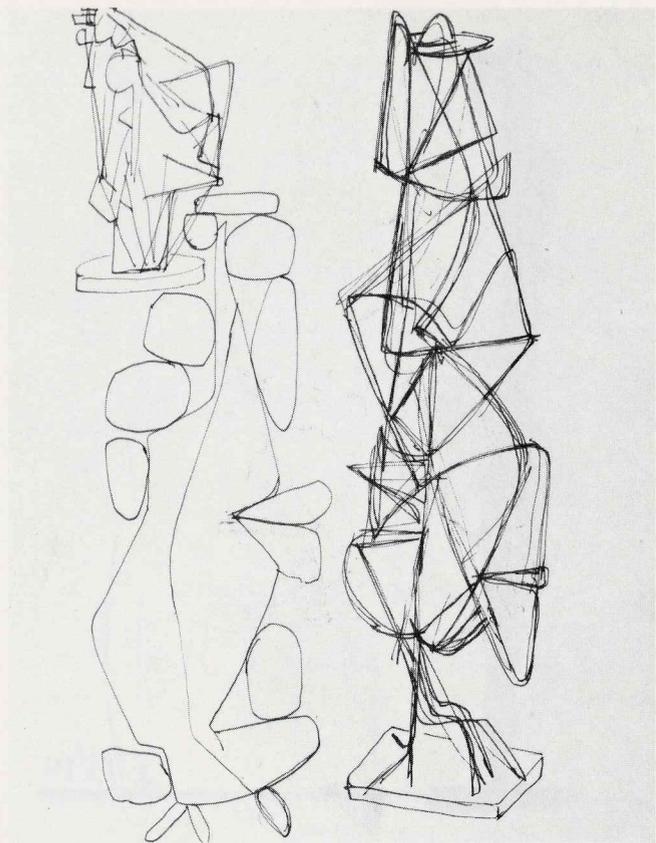
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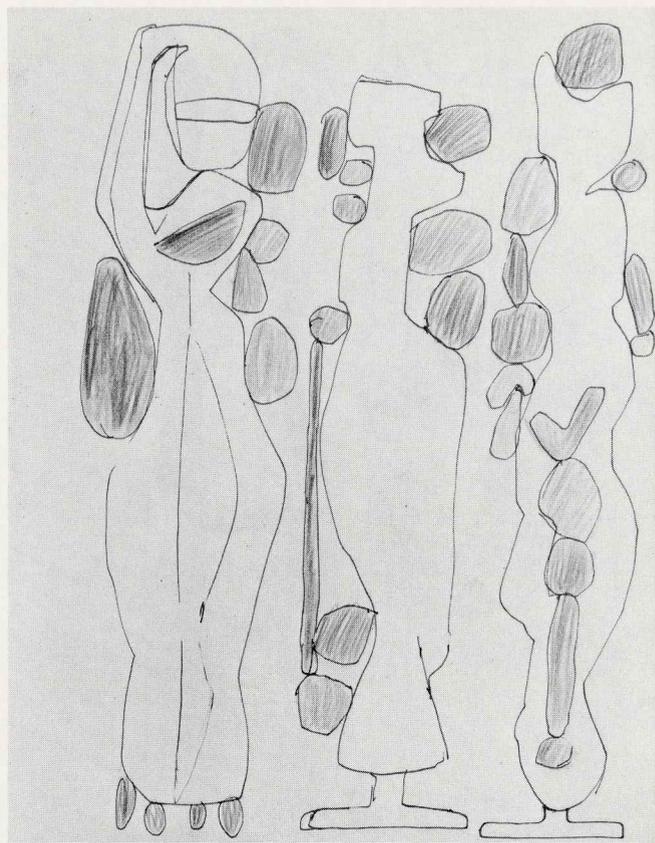
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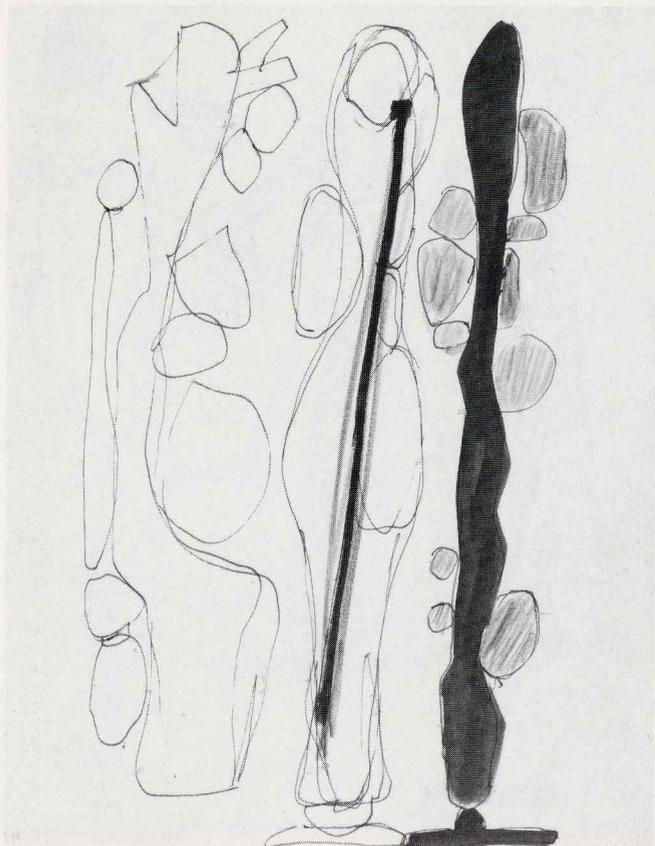
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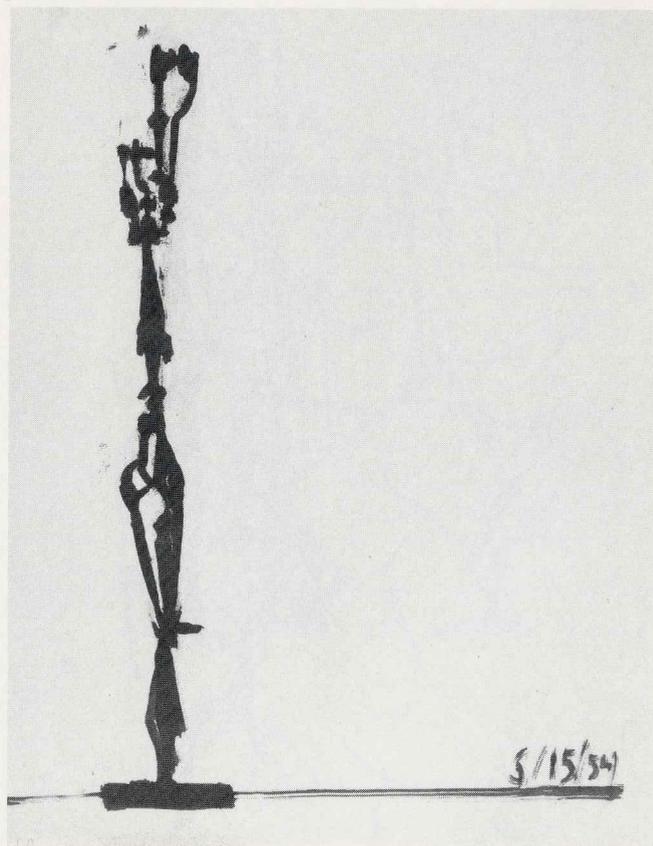


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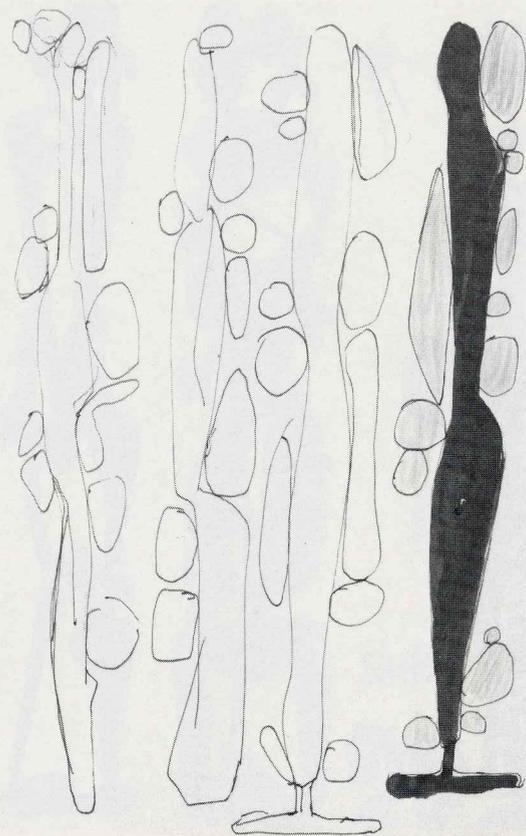


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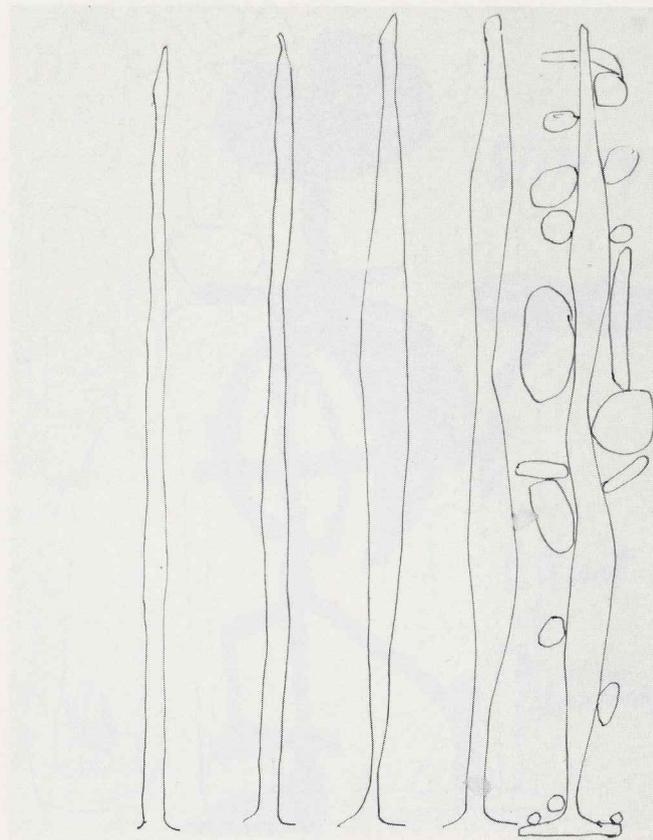
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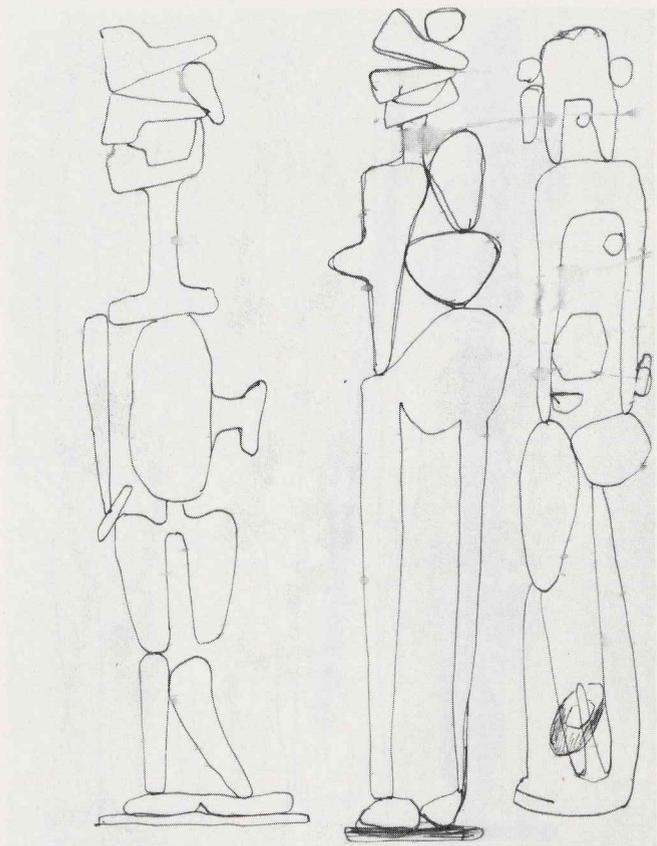
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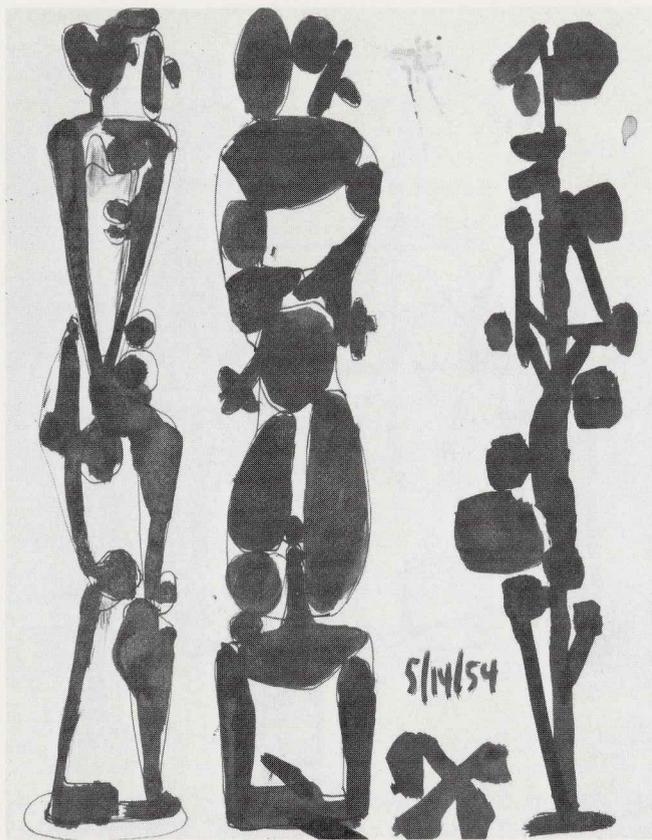


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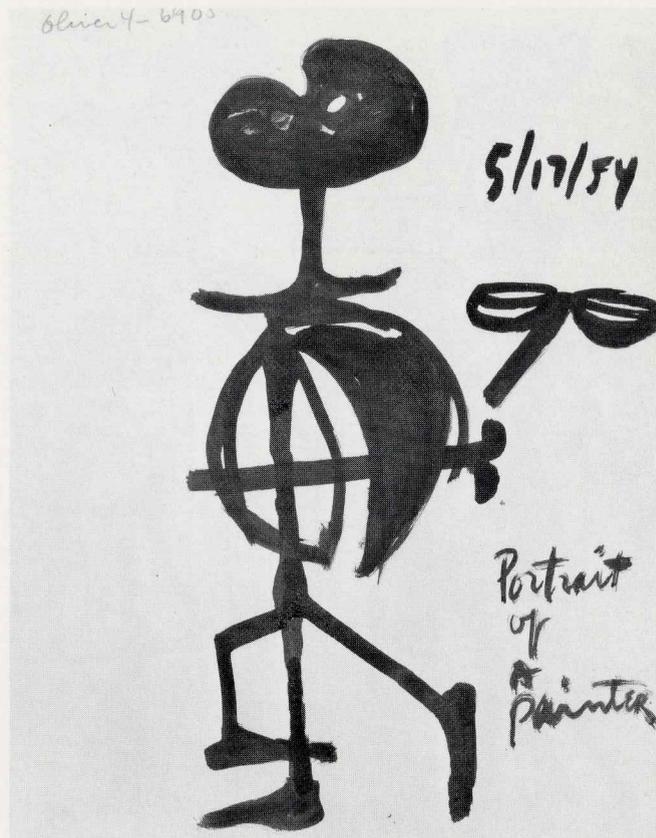


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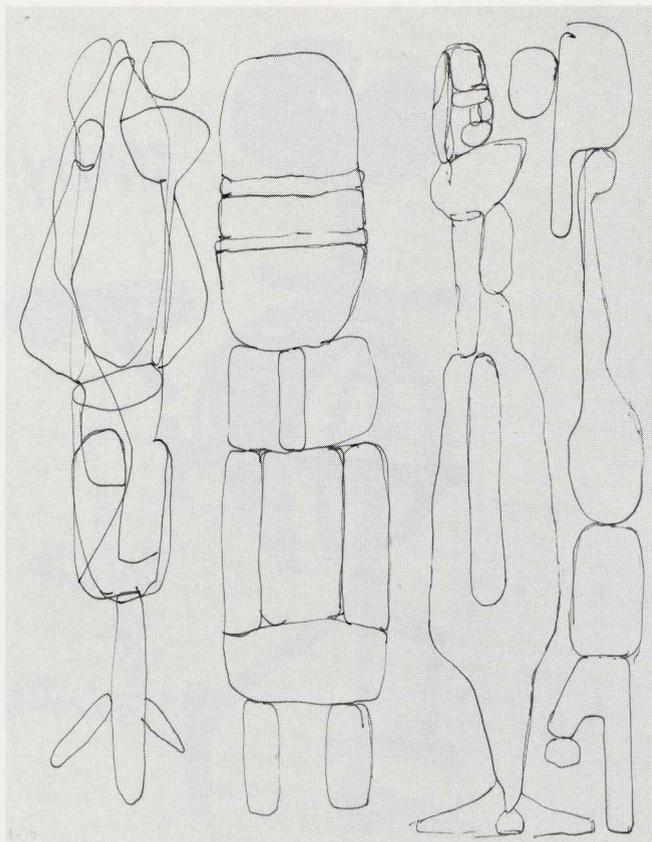
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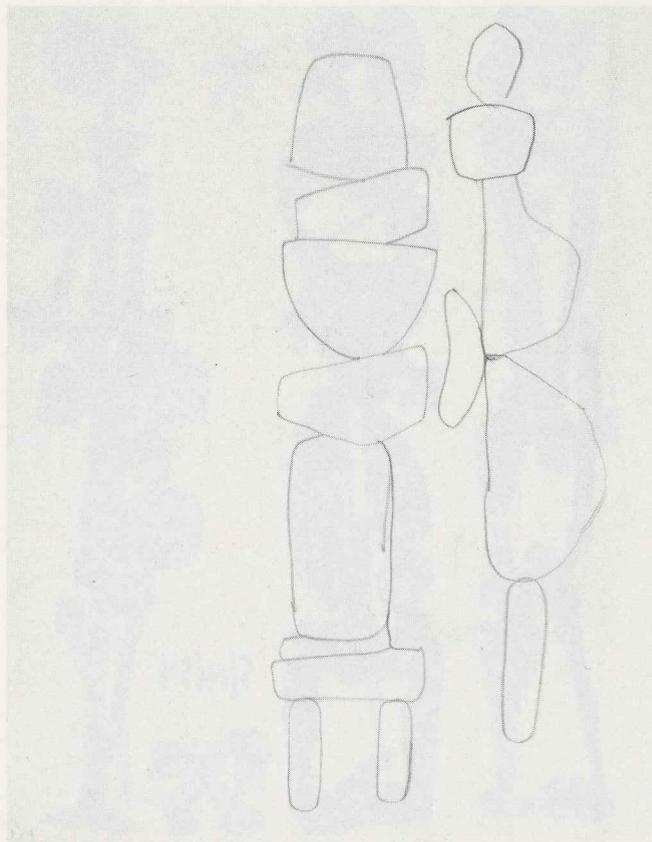


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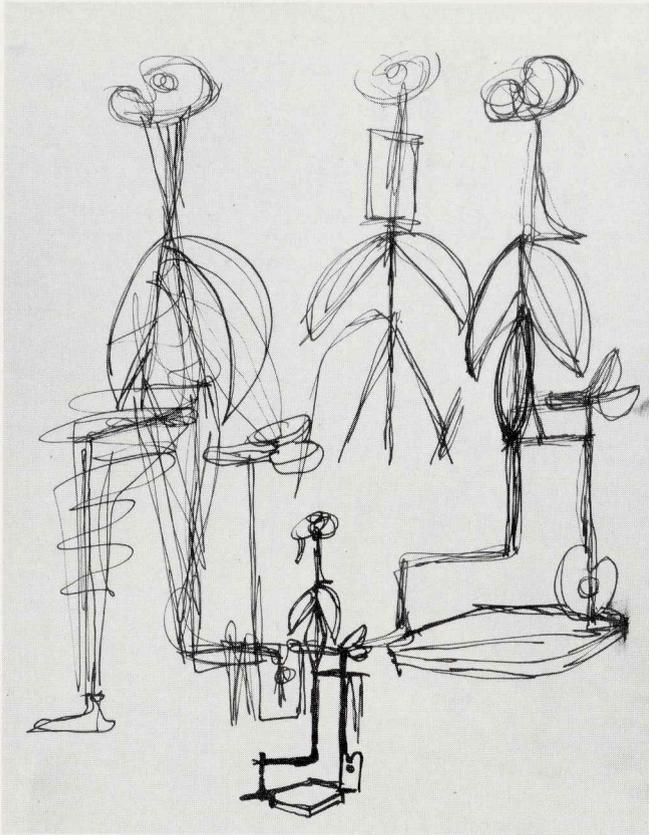


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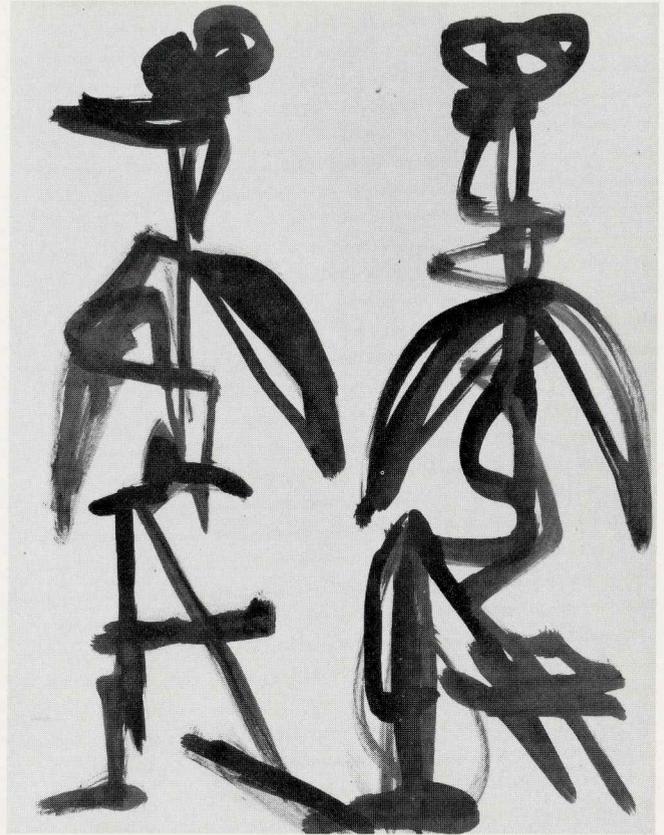
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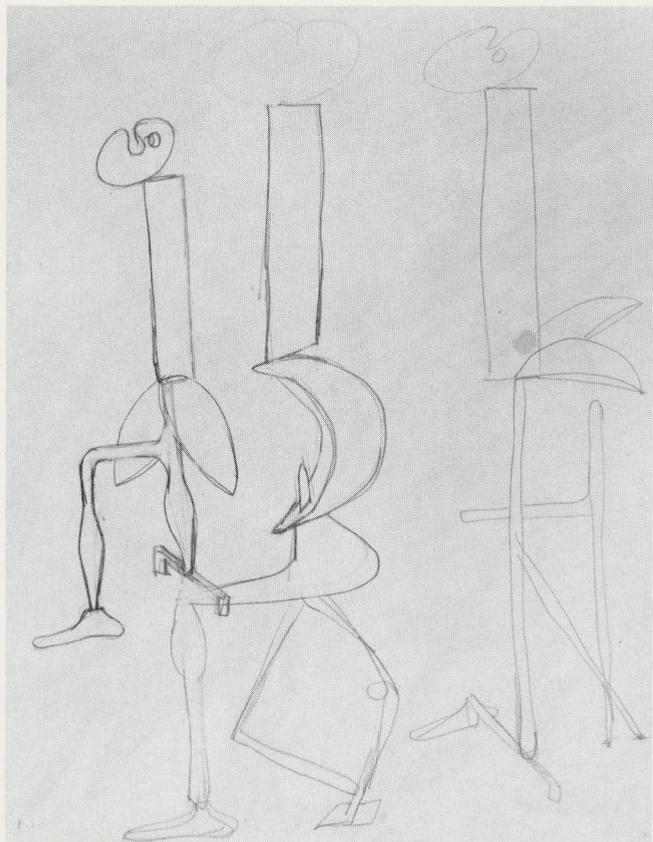
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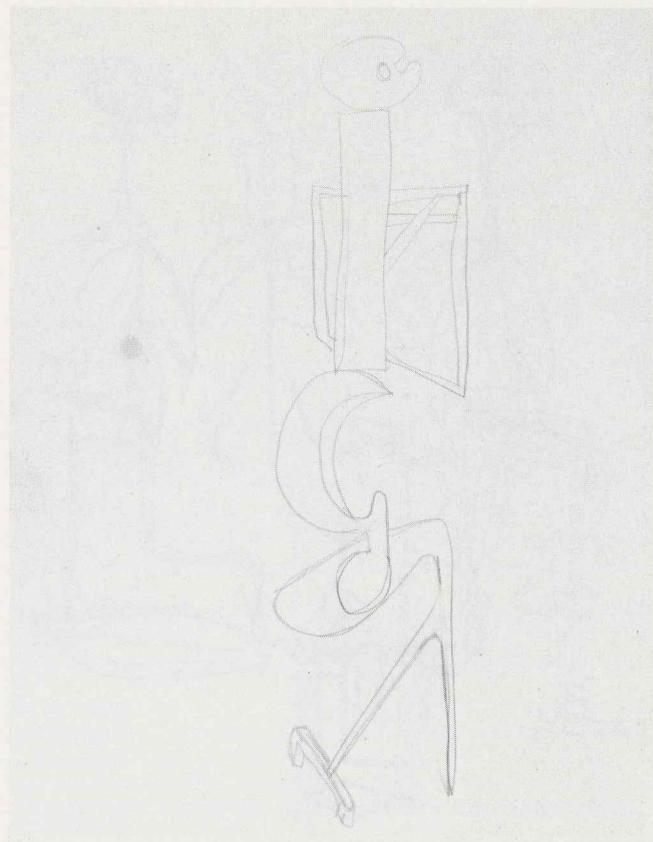


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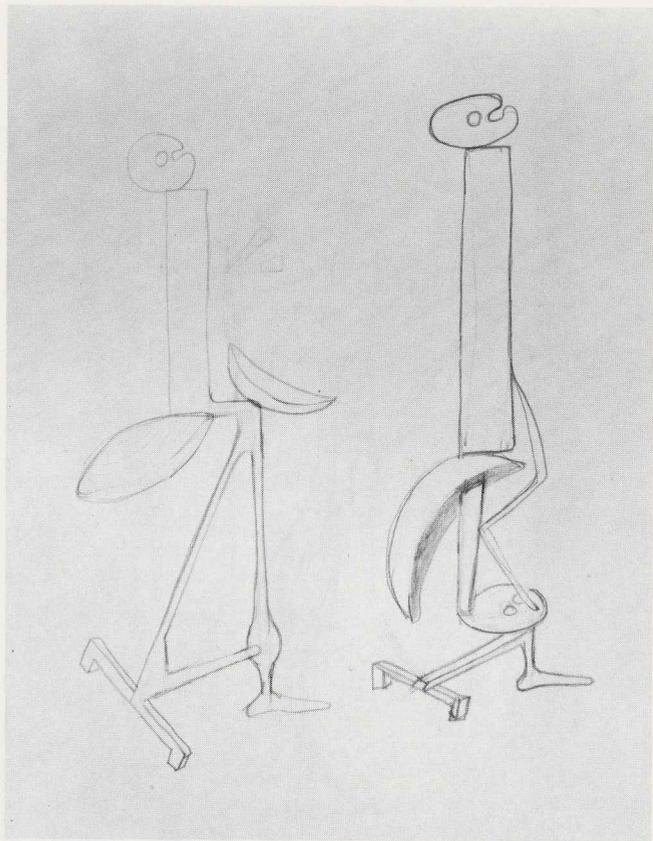


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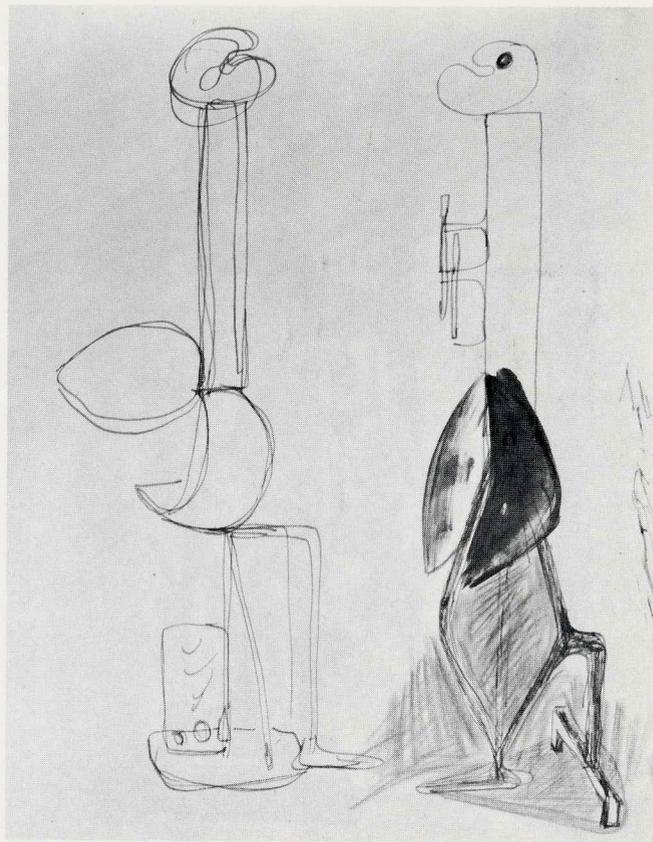
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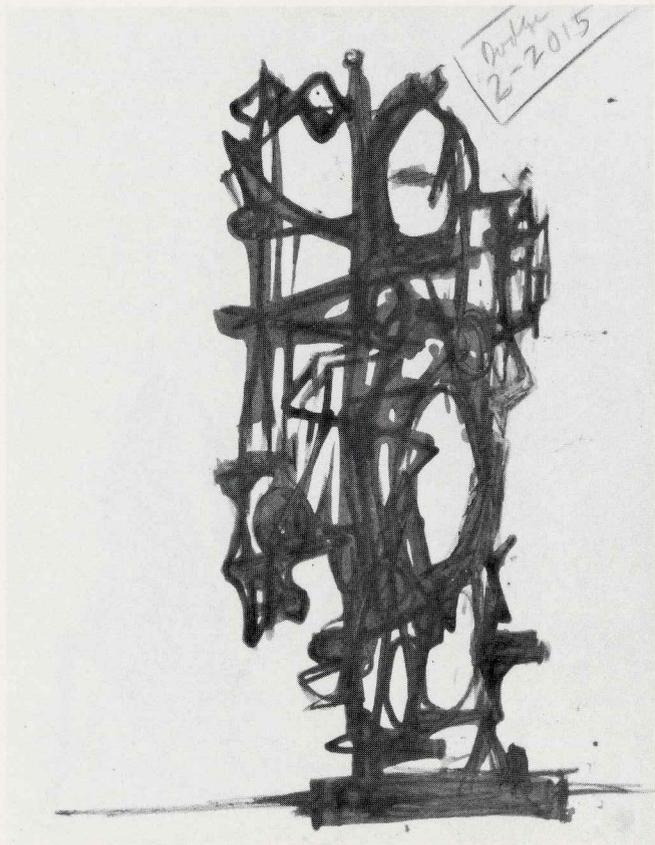
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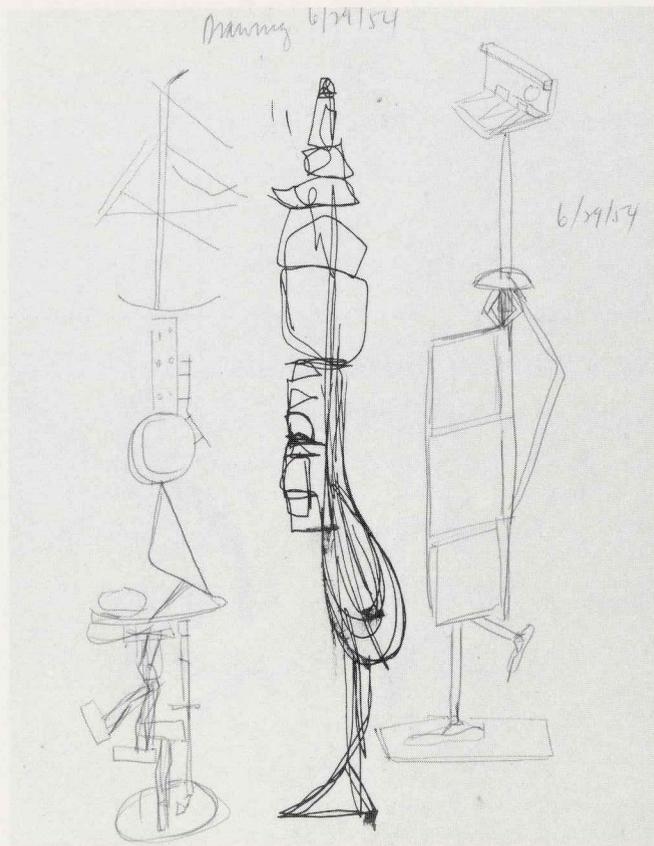
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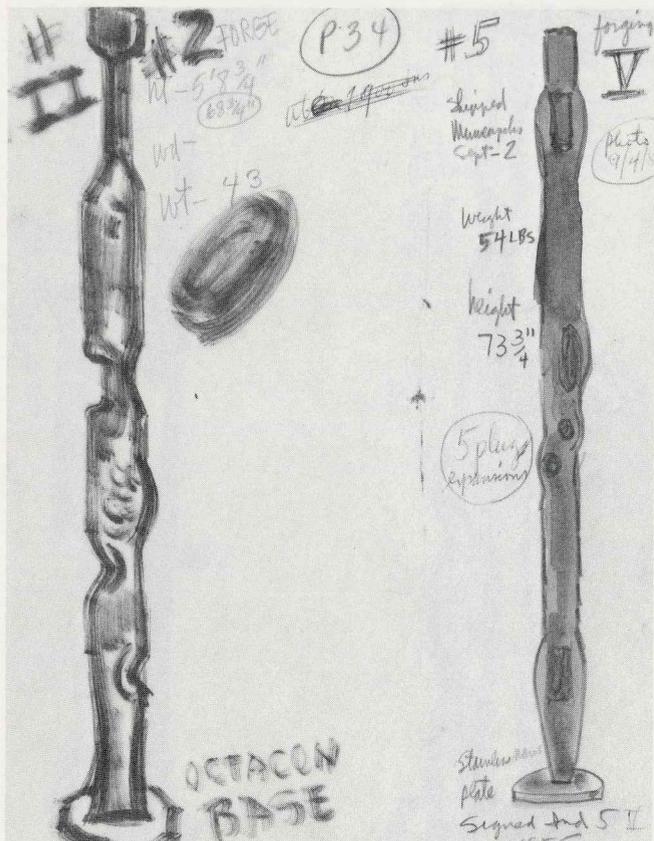
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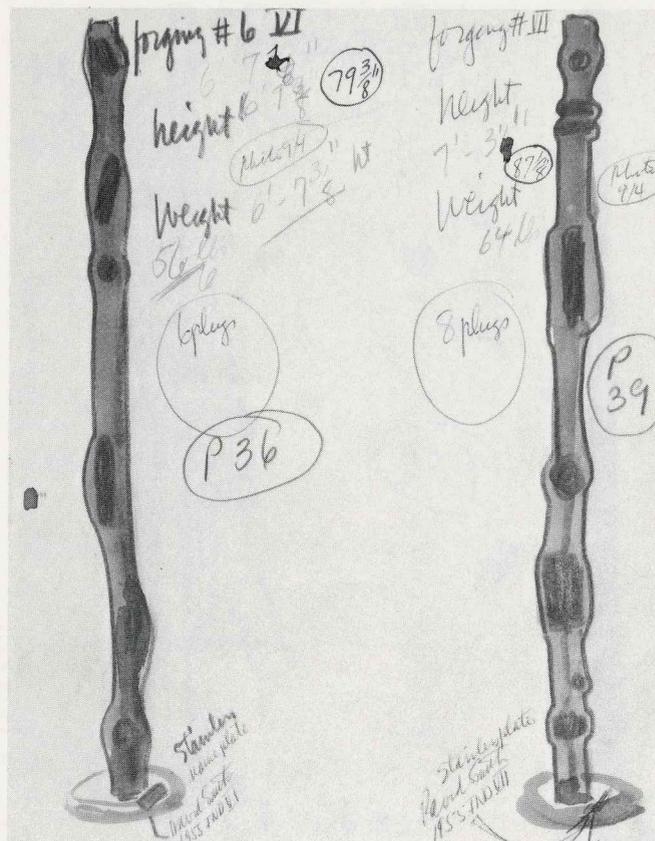
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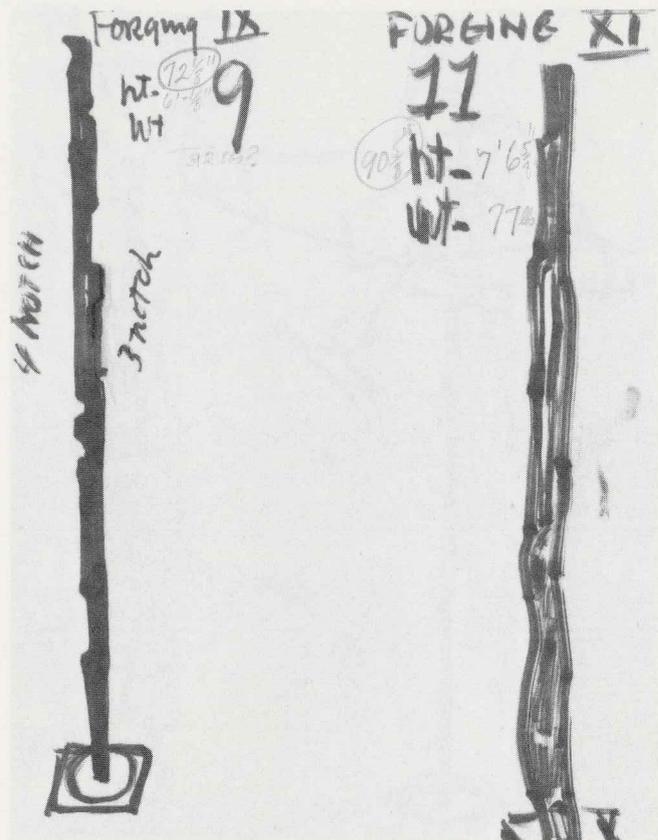
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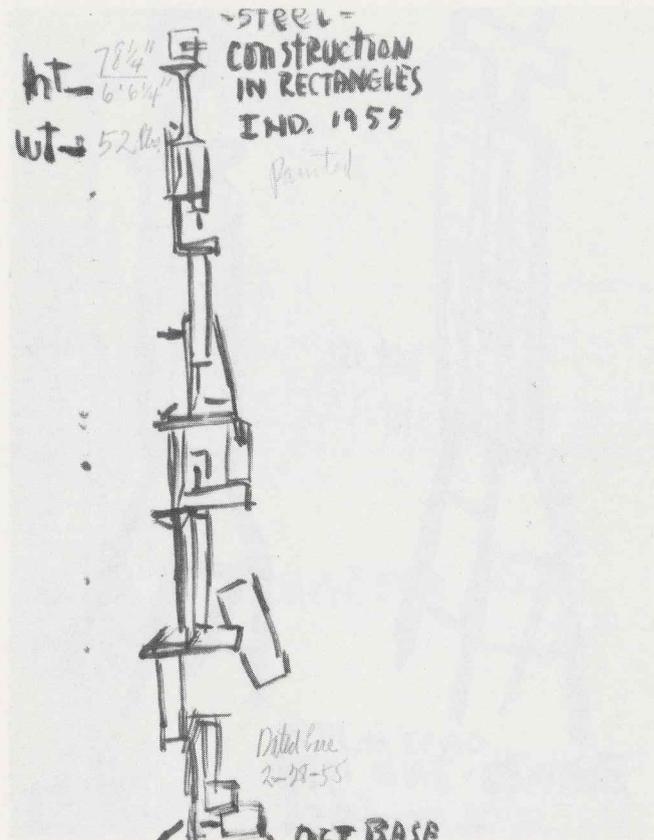
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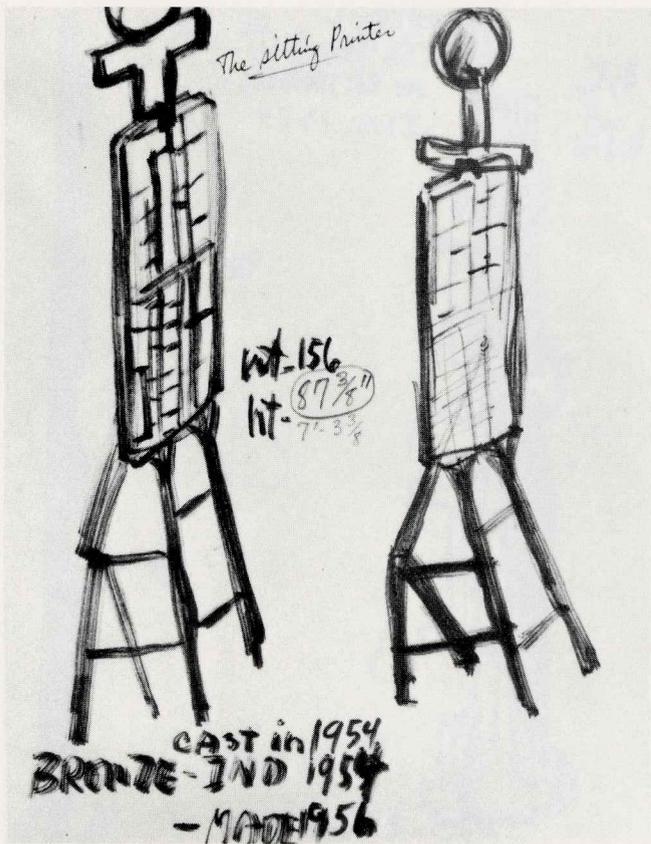
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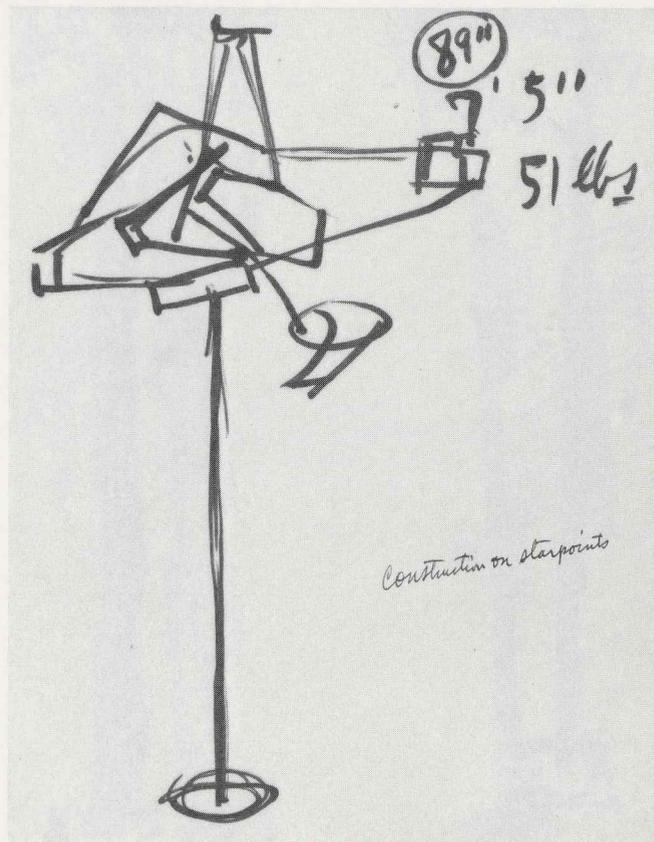
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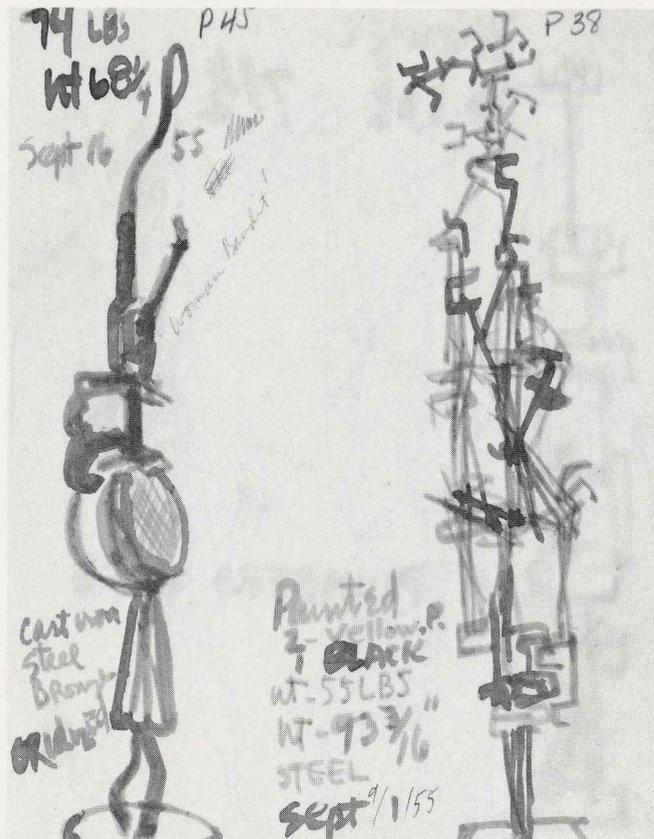
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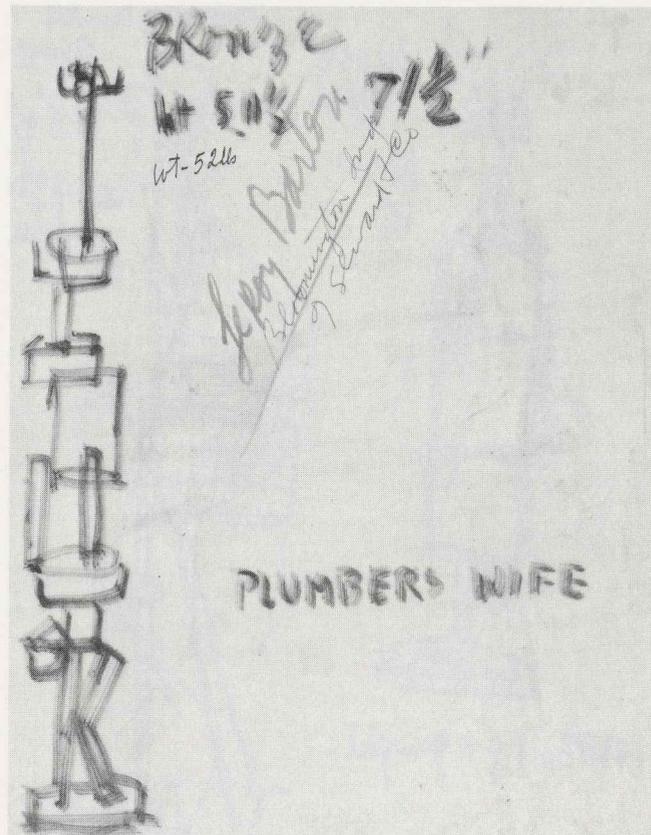


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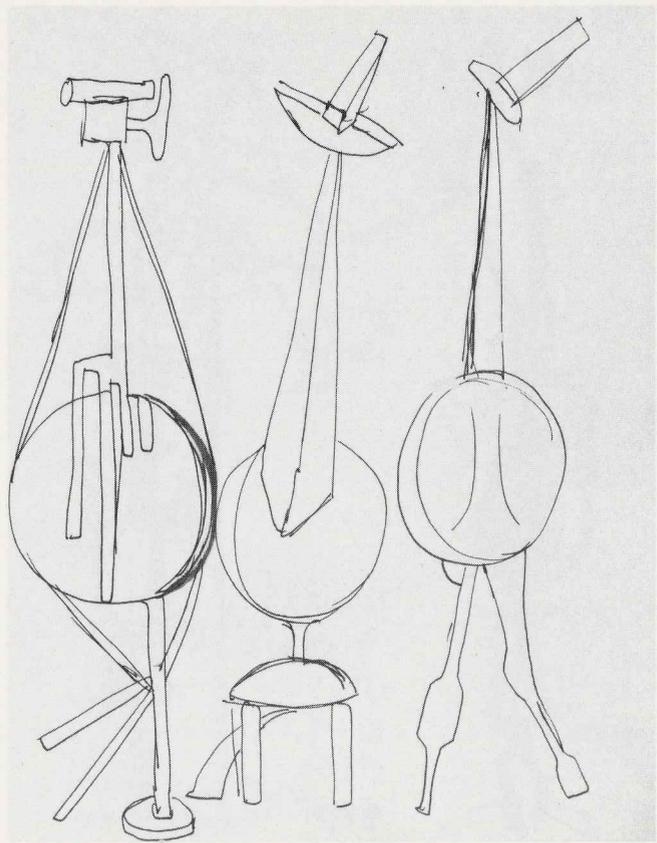
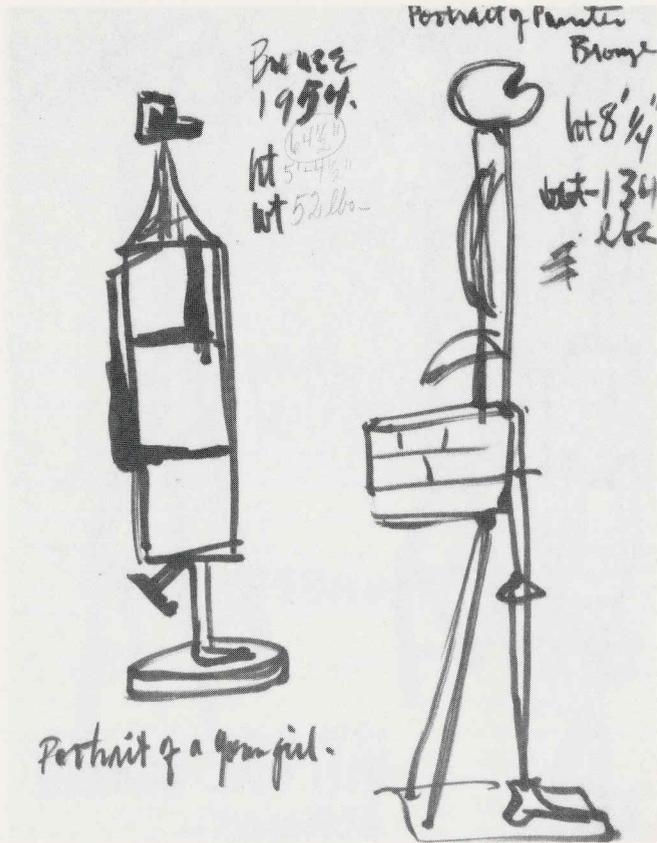


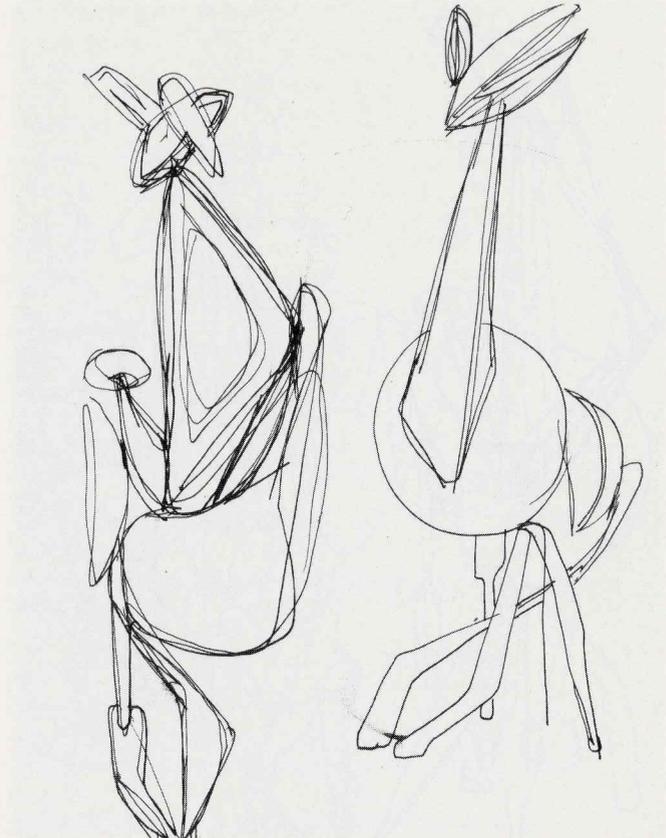
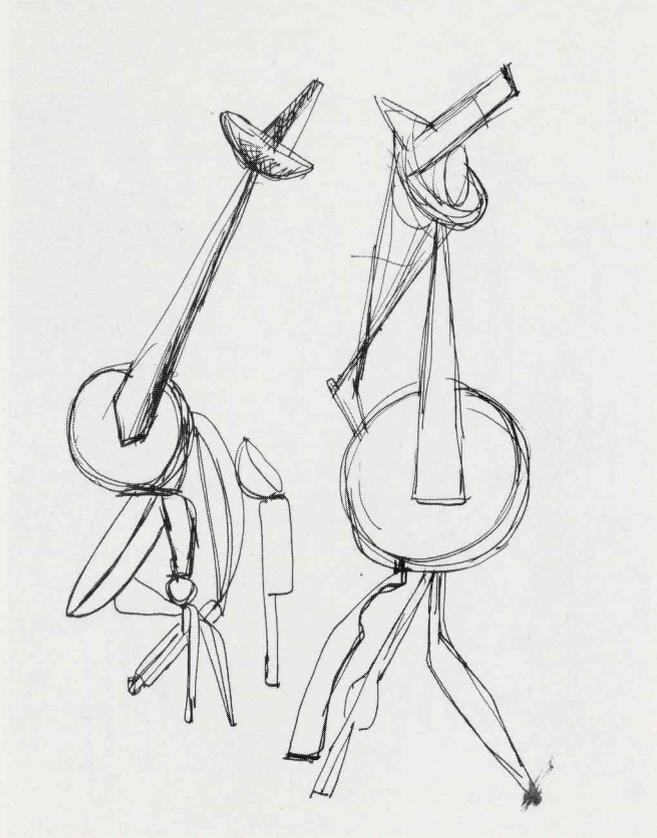
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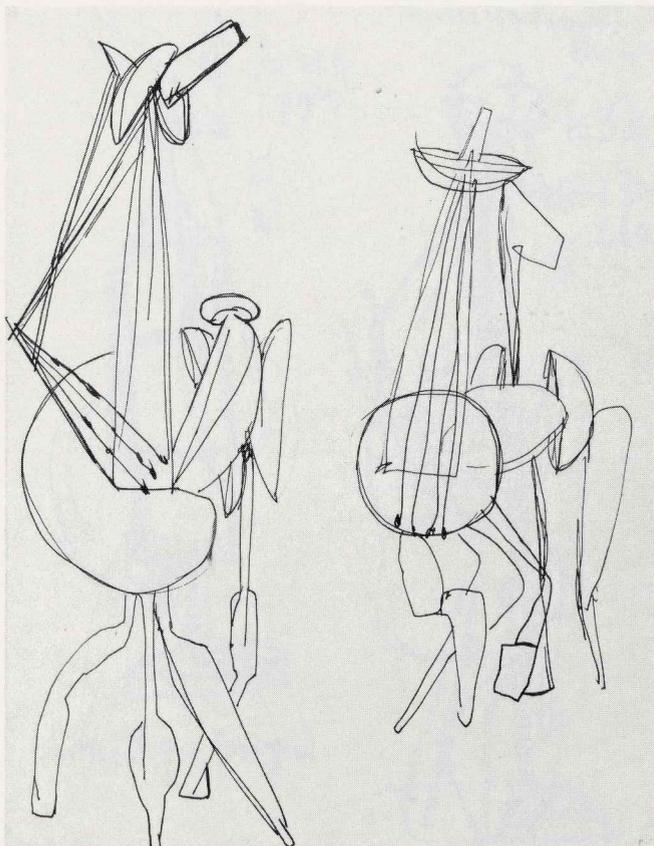
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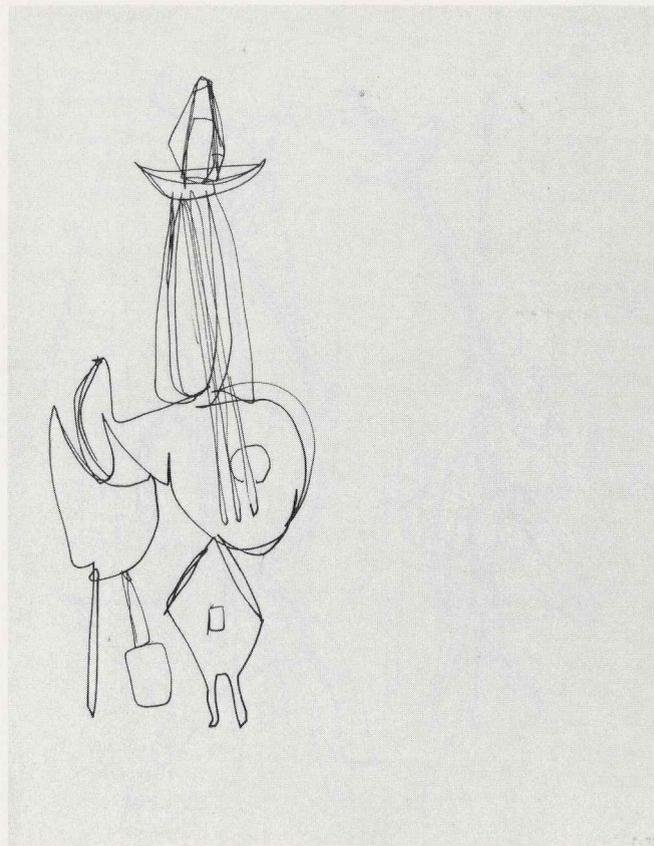
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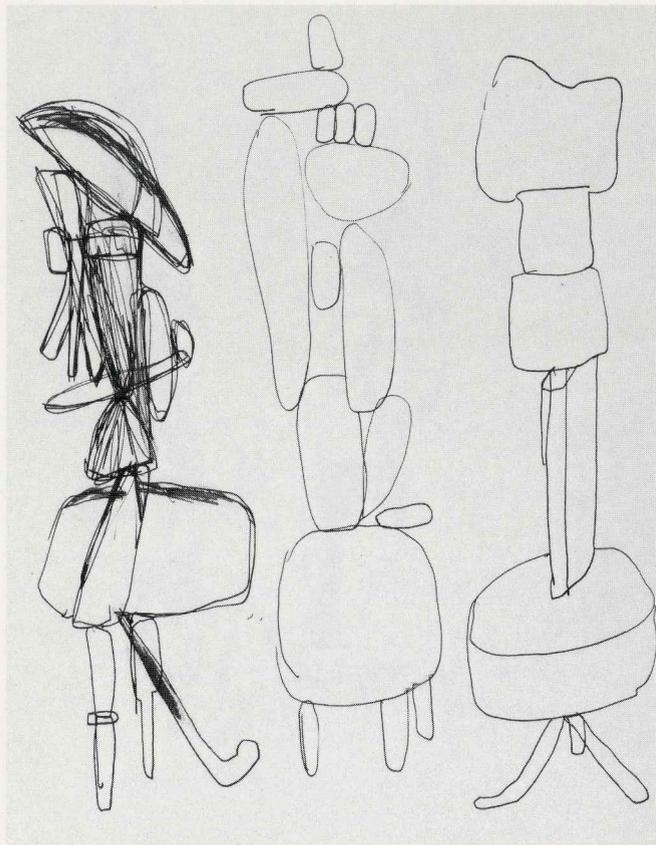


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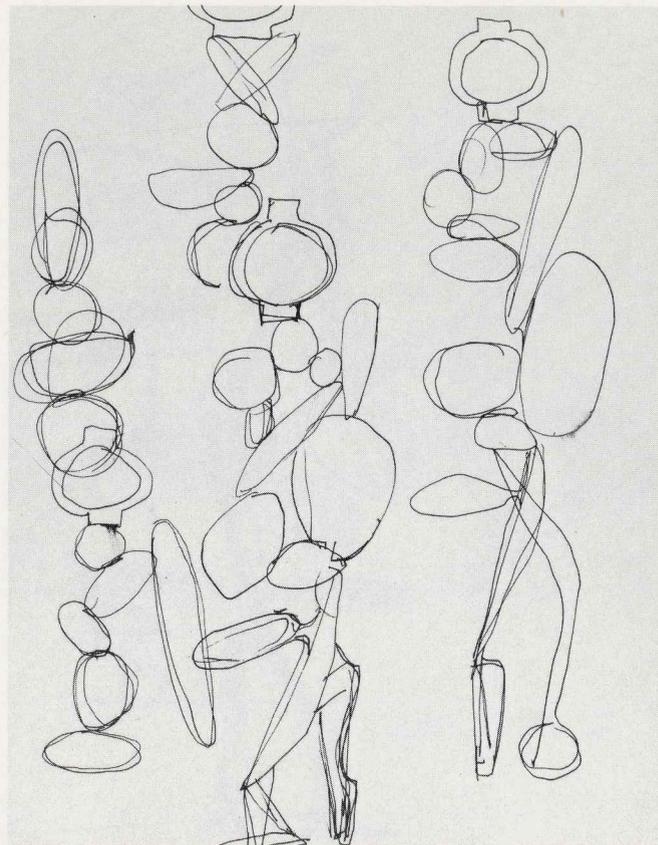


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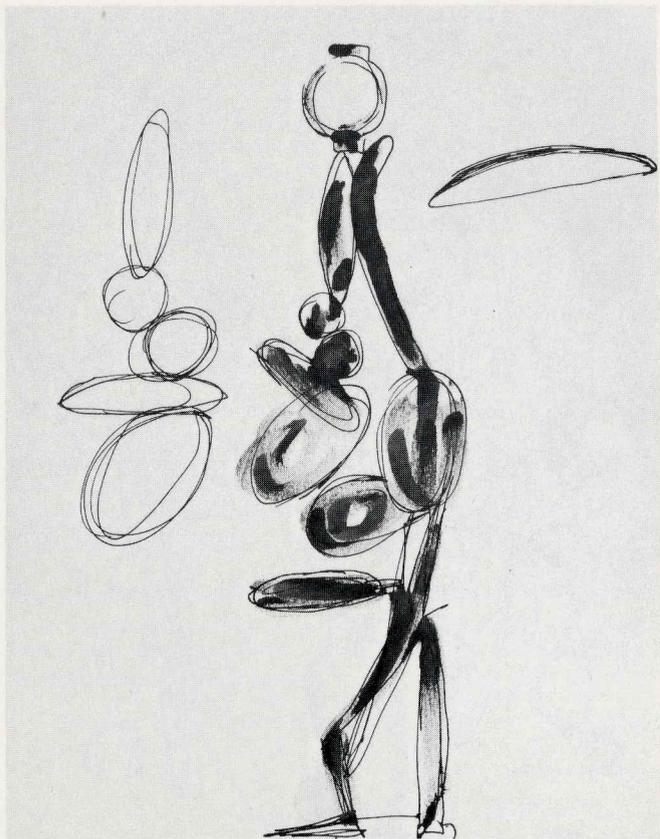
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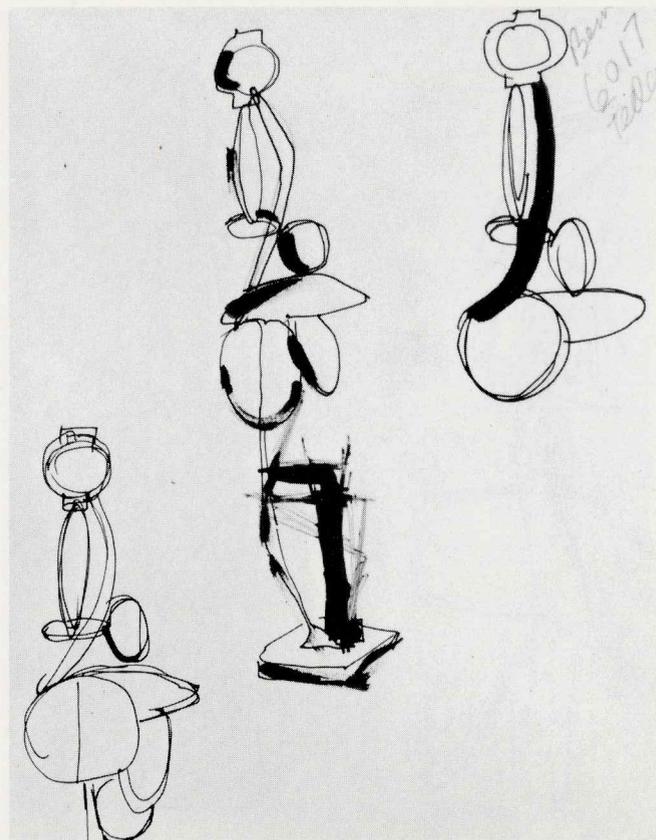
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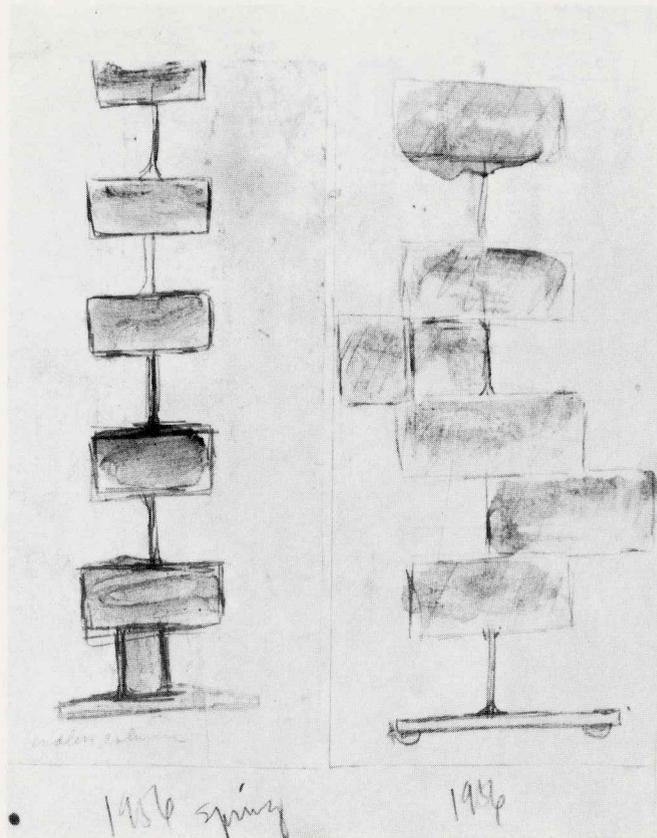
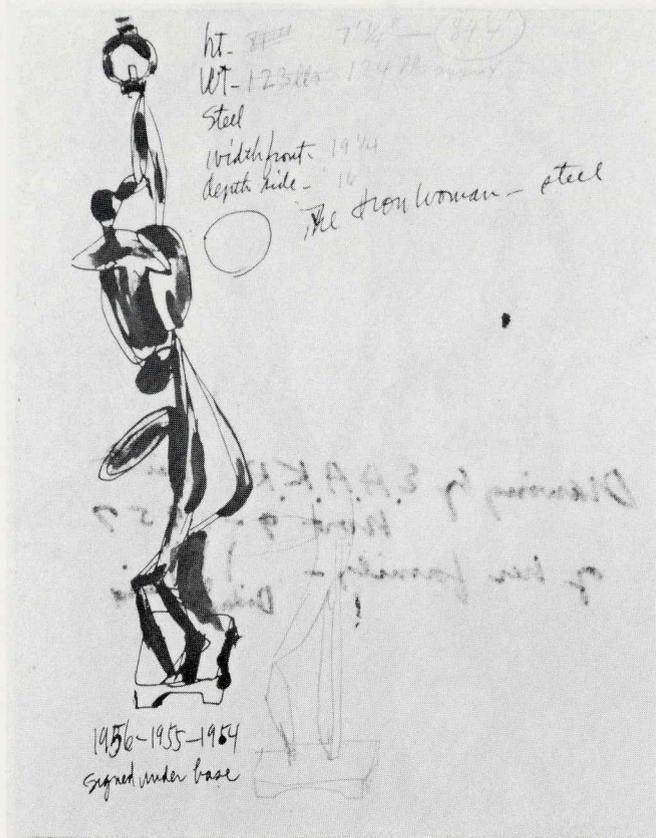
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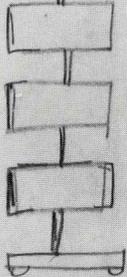
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5 Unit
chromium steel

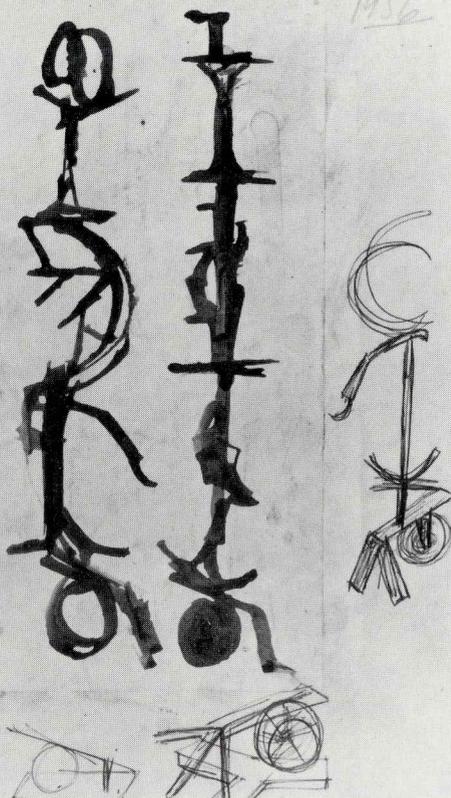
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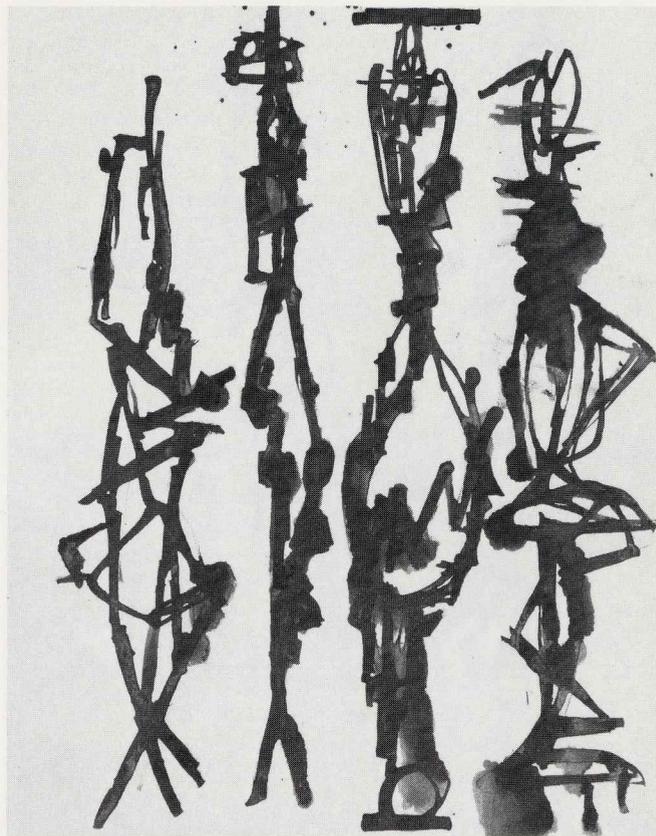


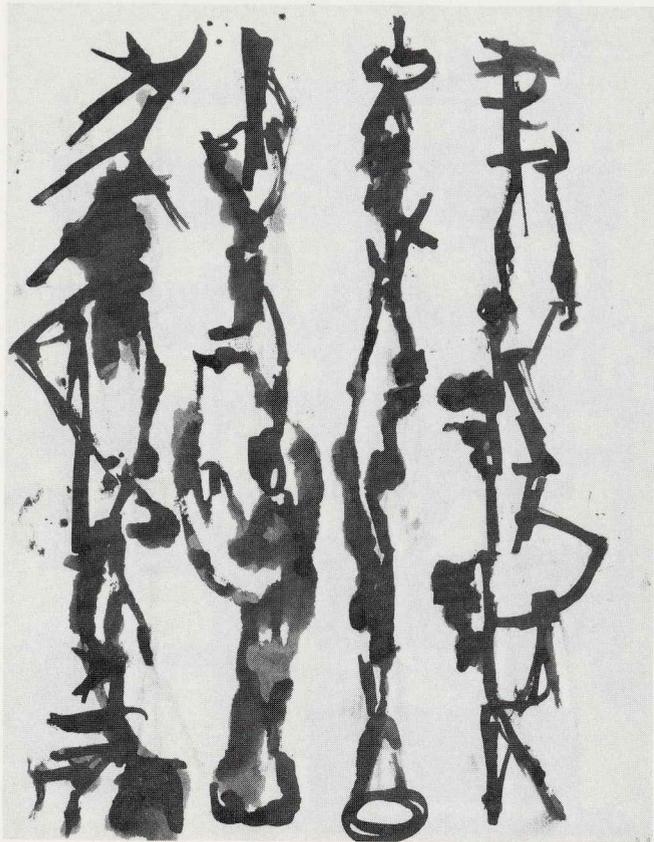
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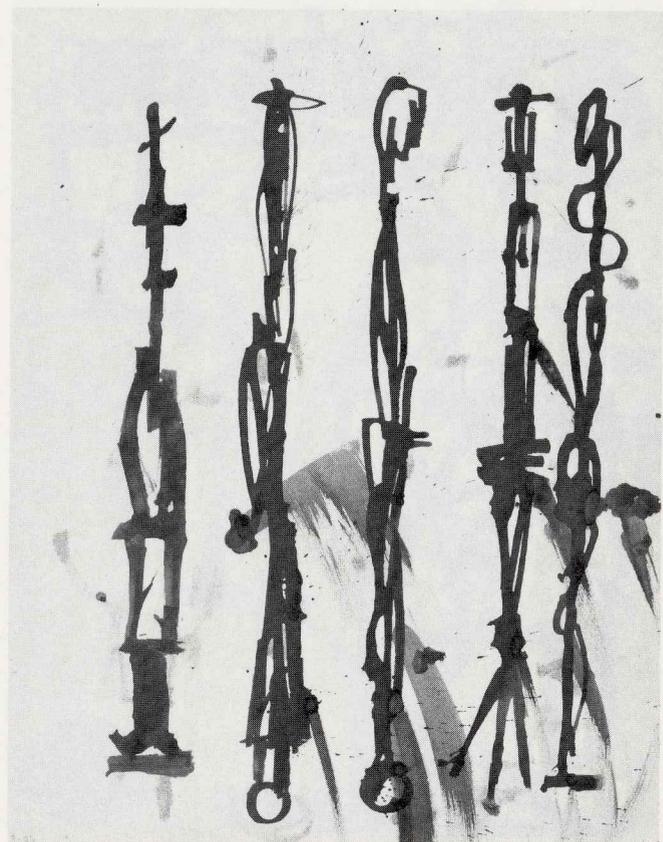
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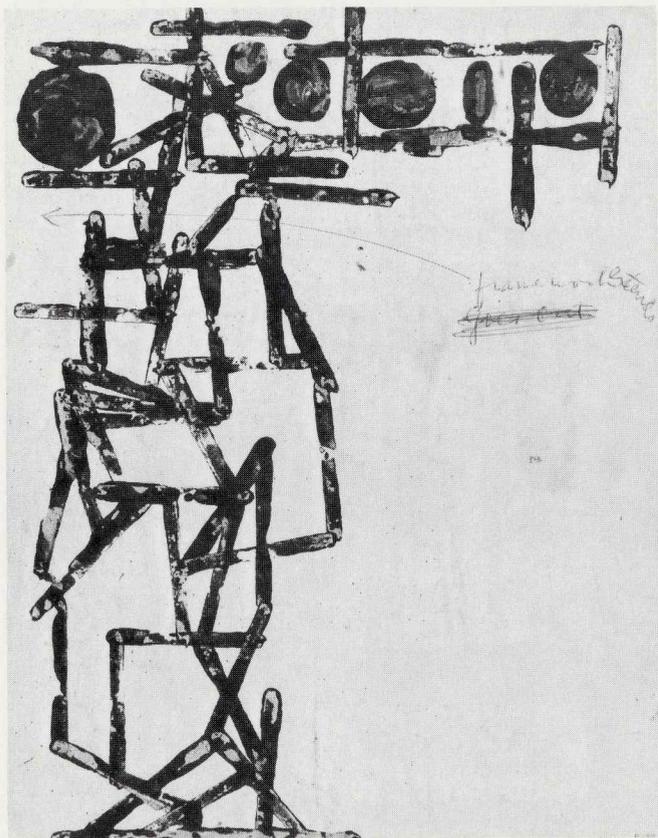


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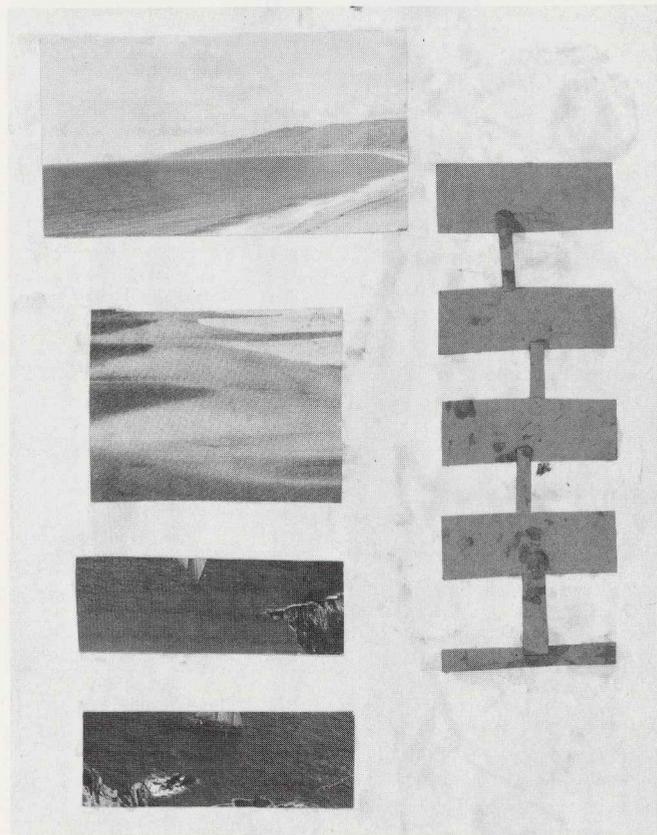


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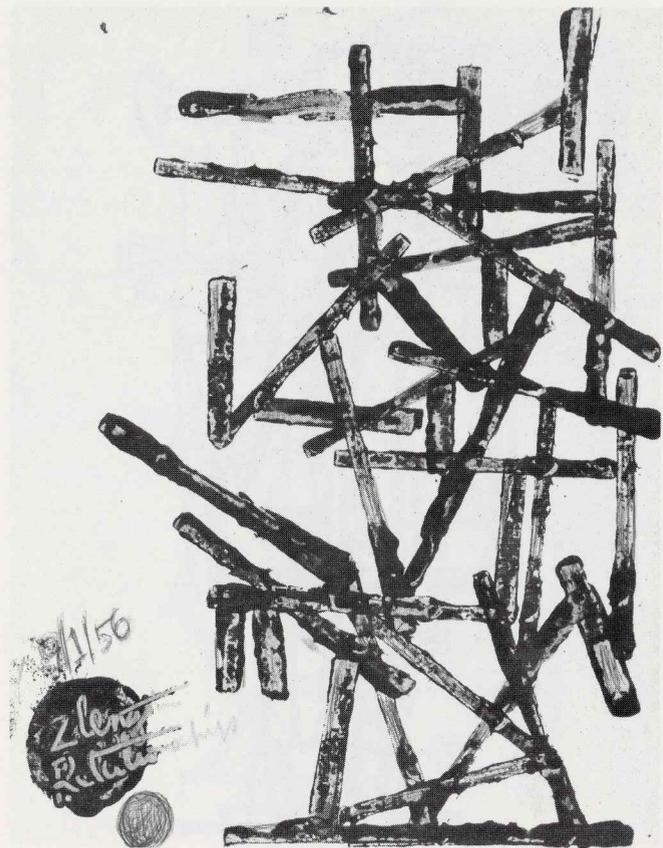


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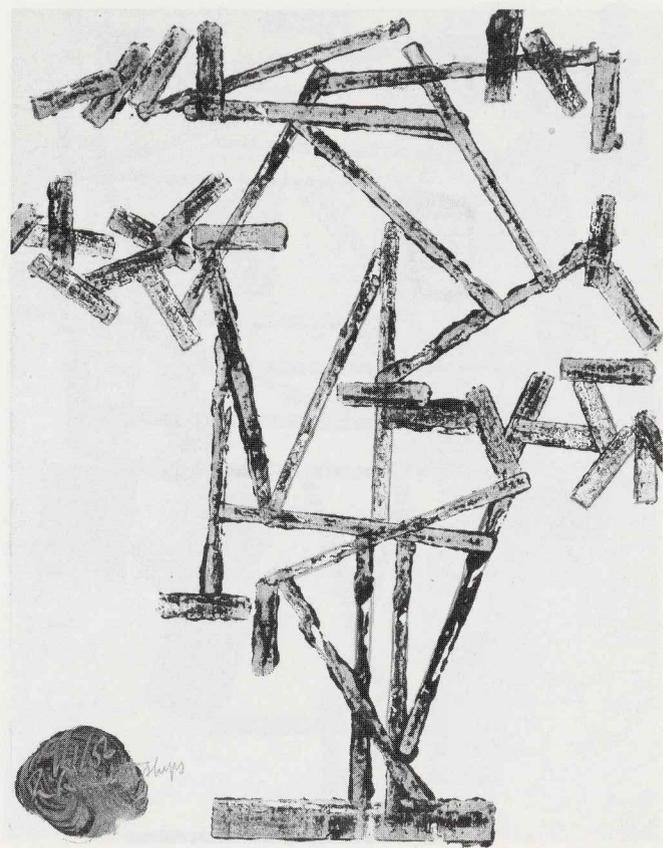
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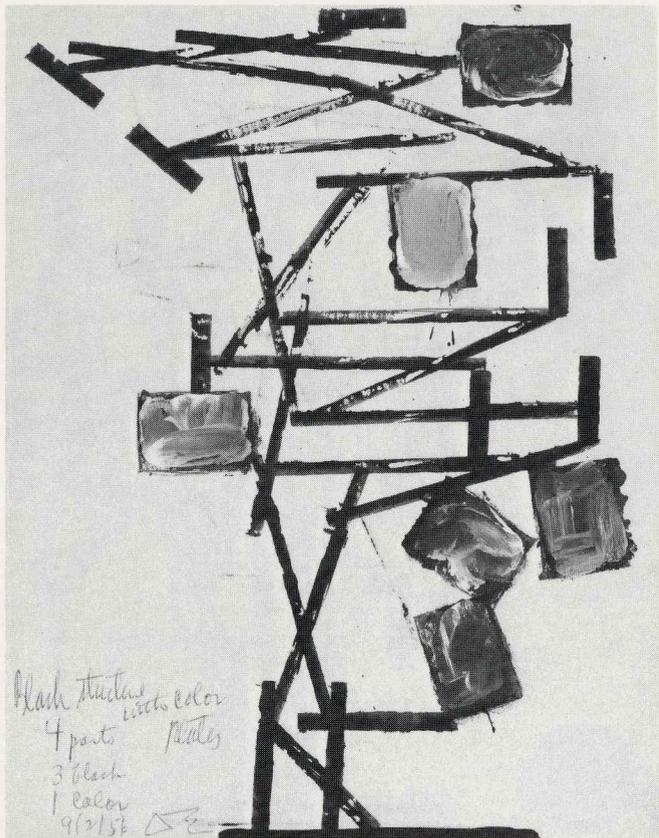
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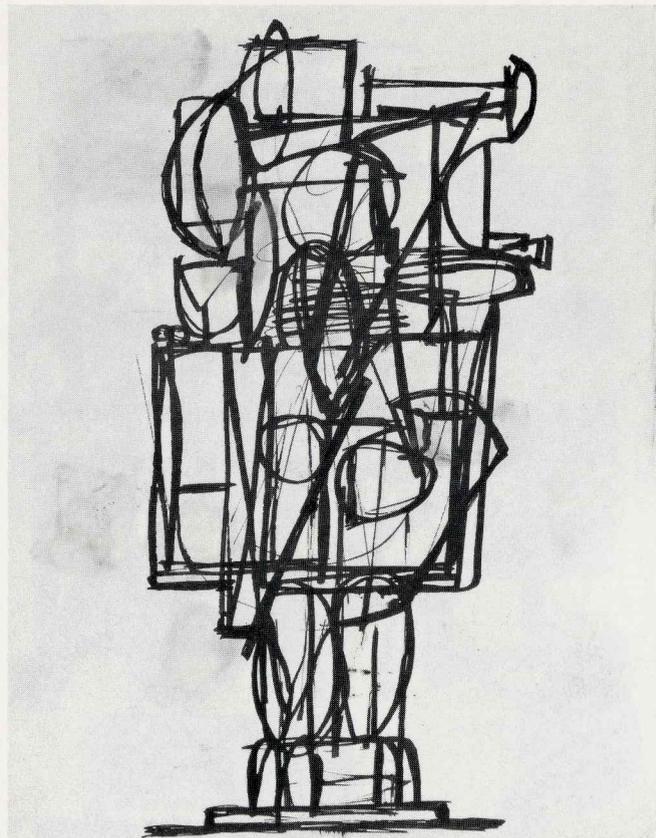
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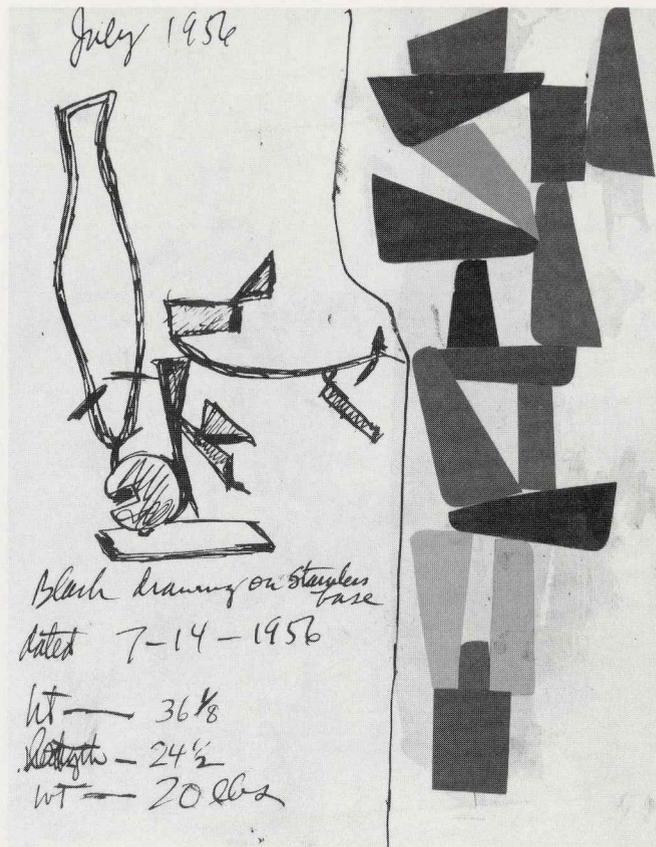
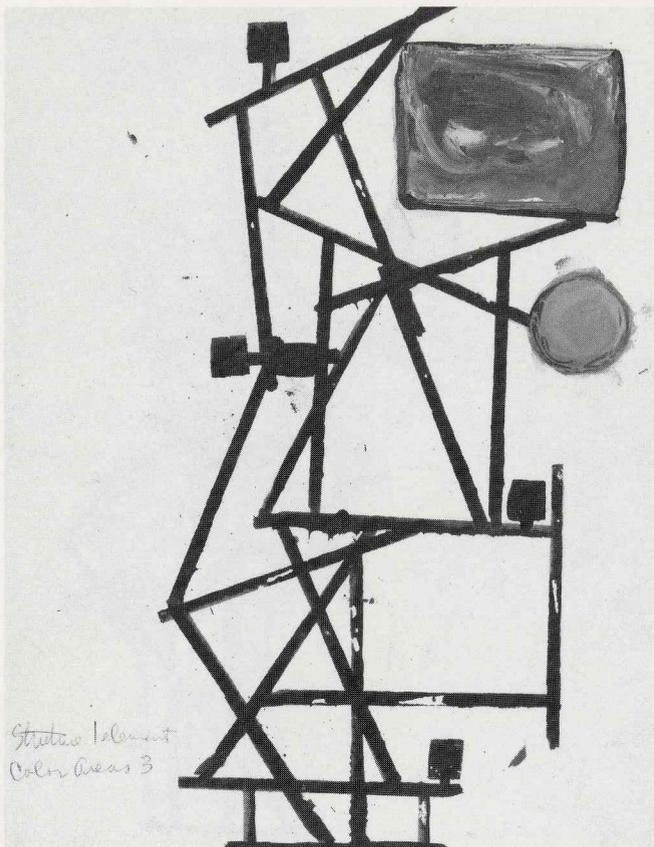


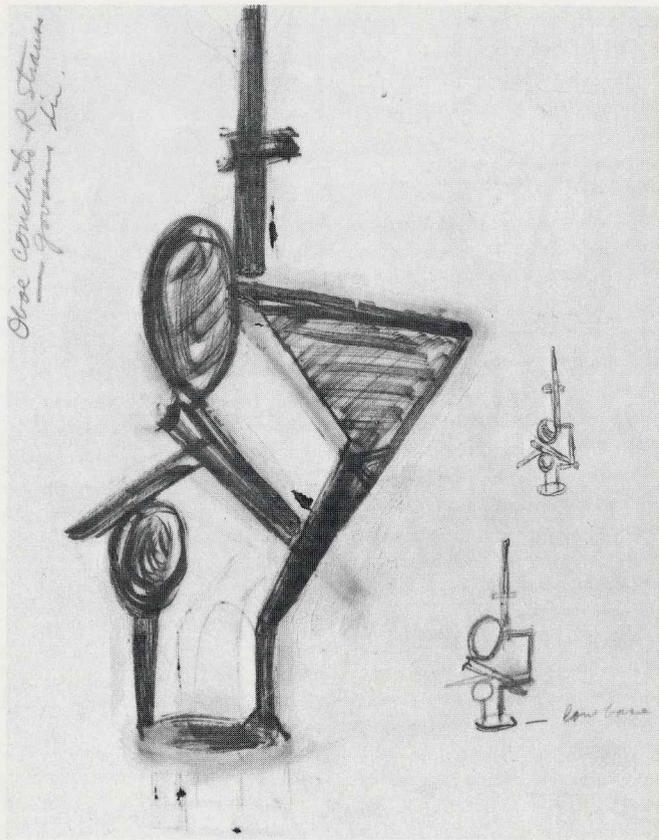
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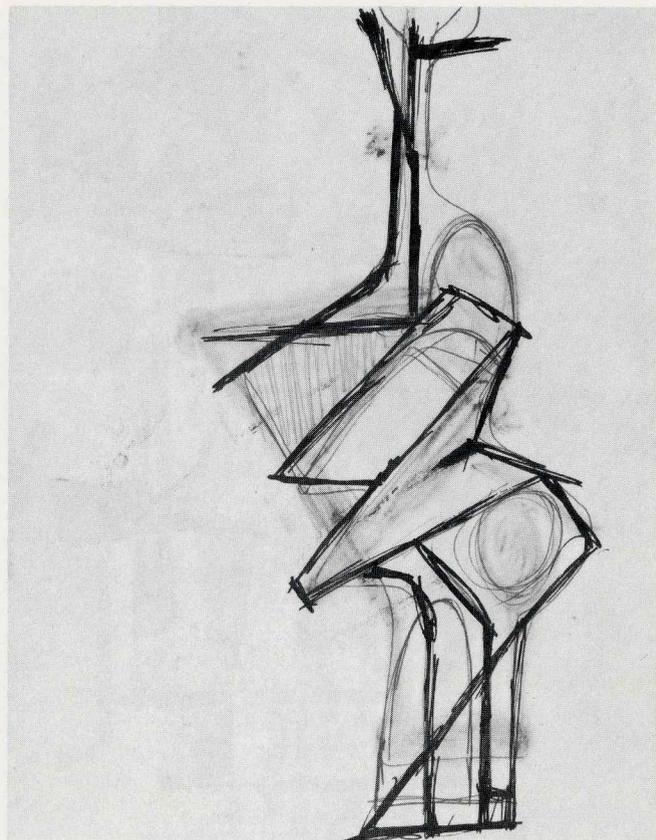
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verso

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TANKTOTEM V

1955-1956

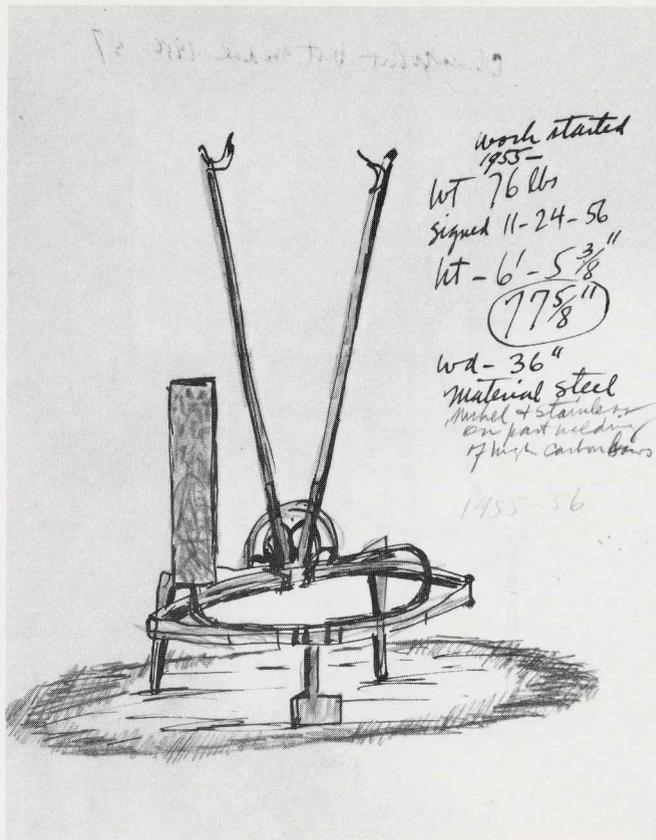
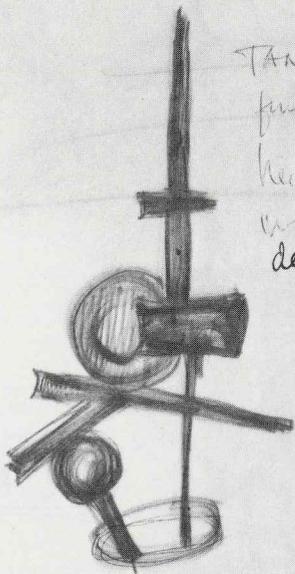
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finished 11-14-56

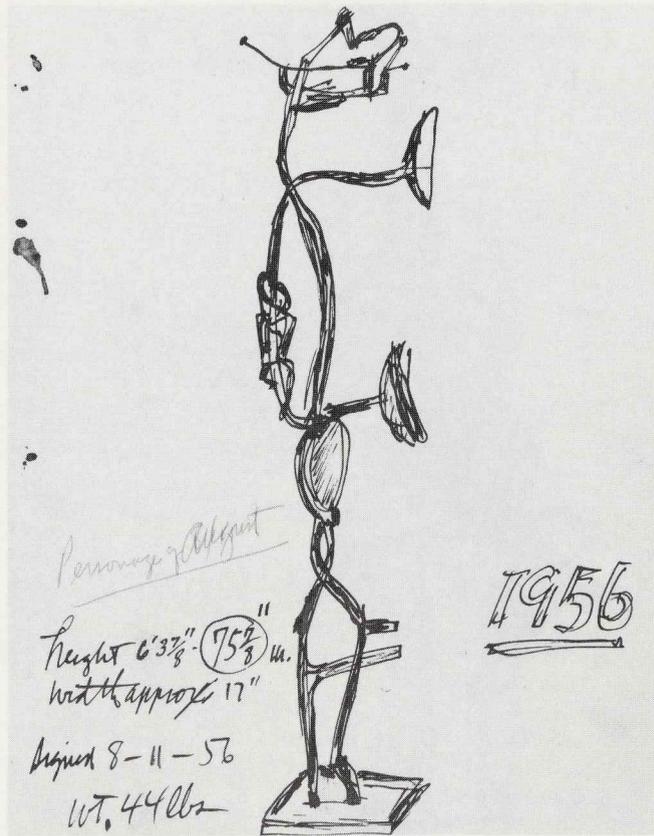
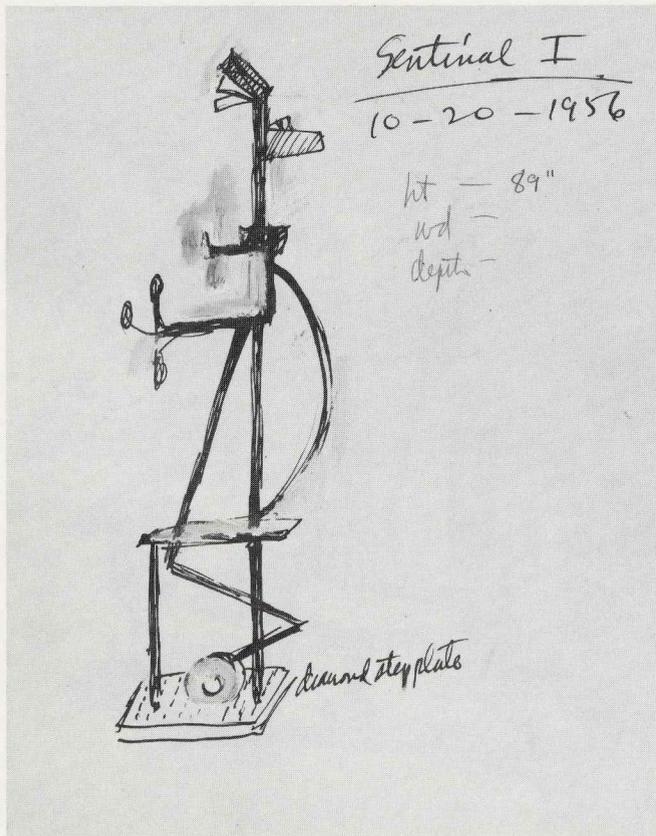
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width — 4' 3"

depth — 1' 8"

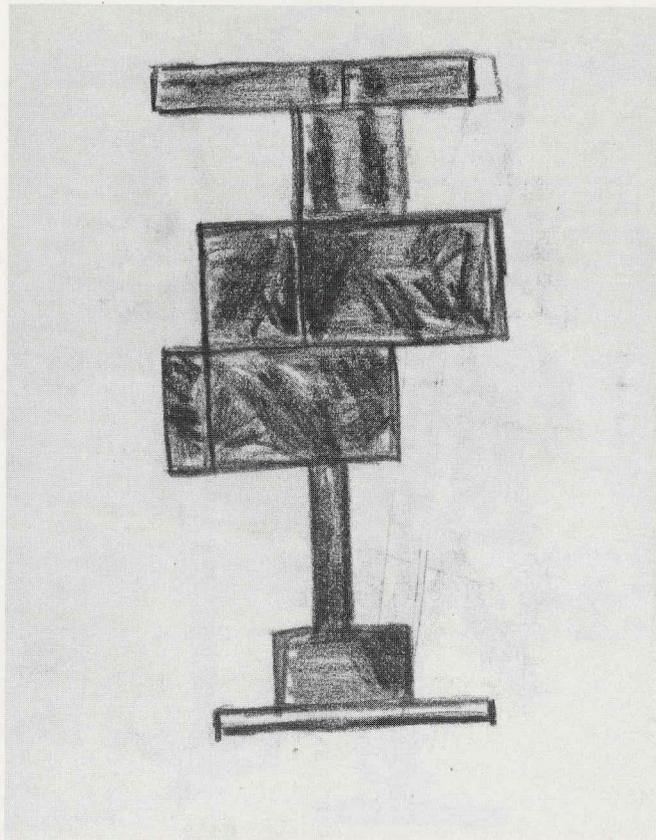


work started
1955
wt 76 lbs
signed 11-24-56
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(77 5/8")
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material steel
w/ hub + stainless
on part welding
17 high carbon bars
1955-56





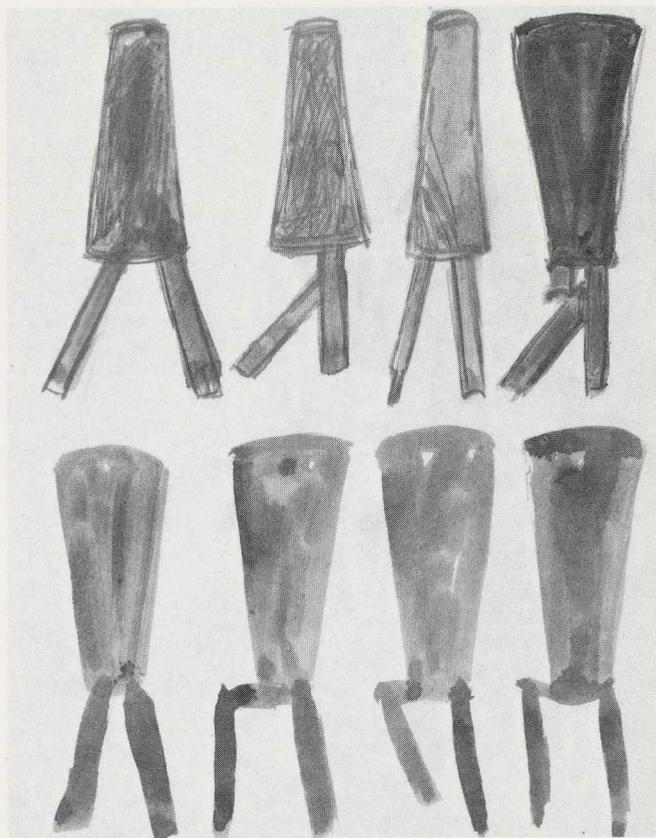
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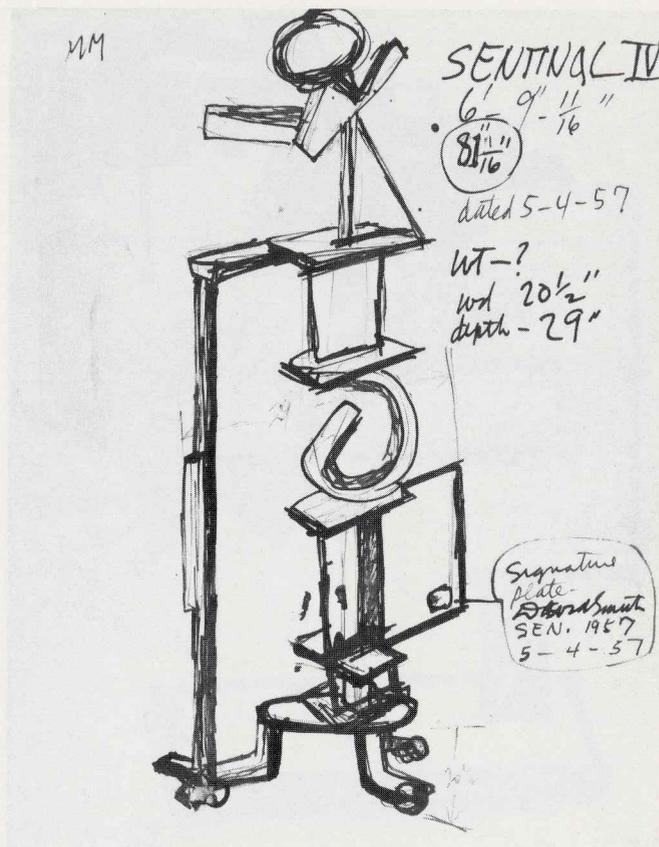
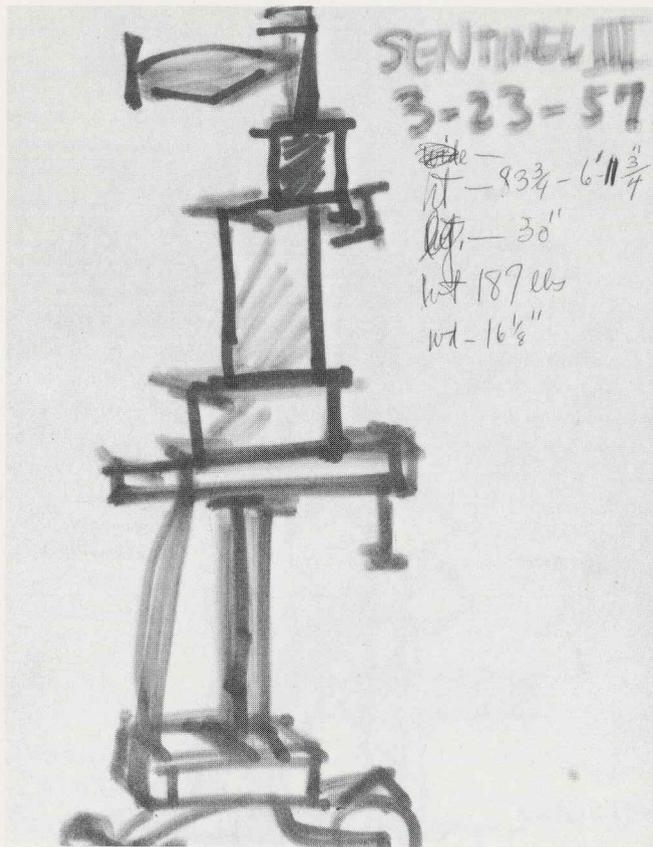
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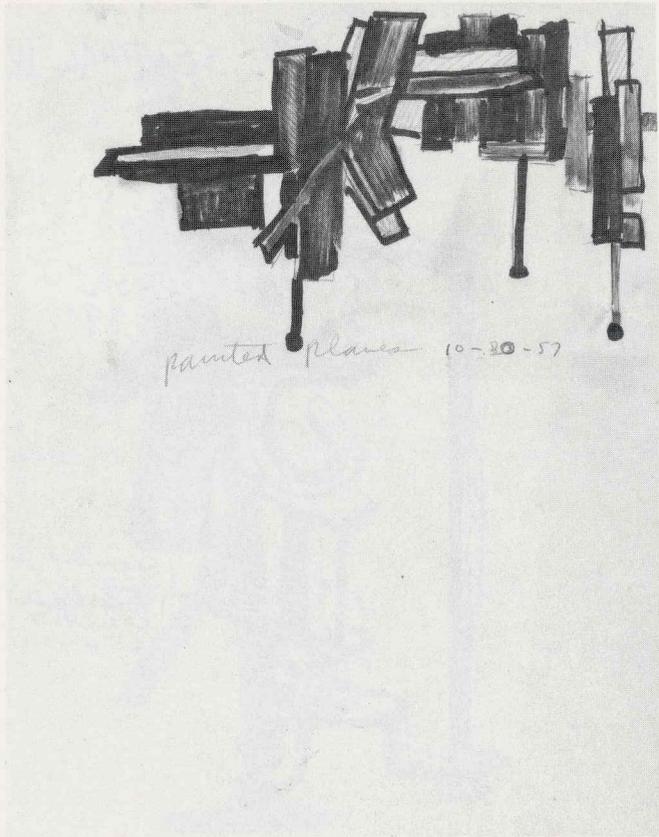


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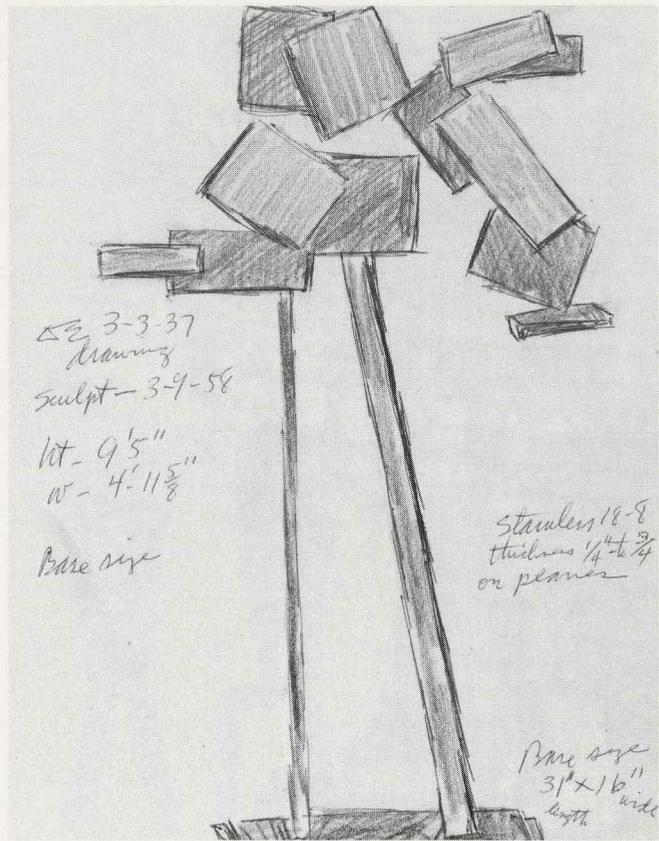


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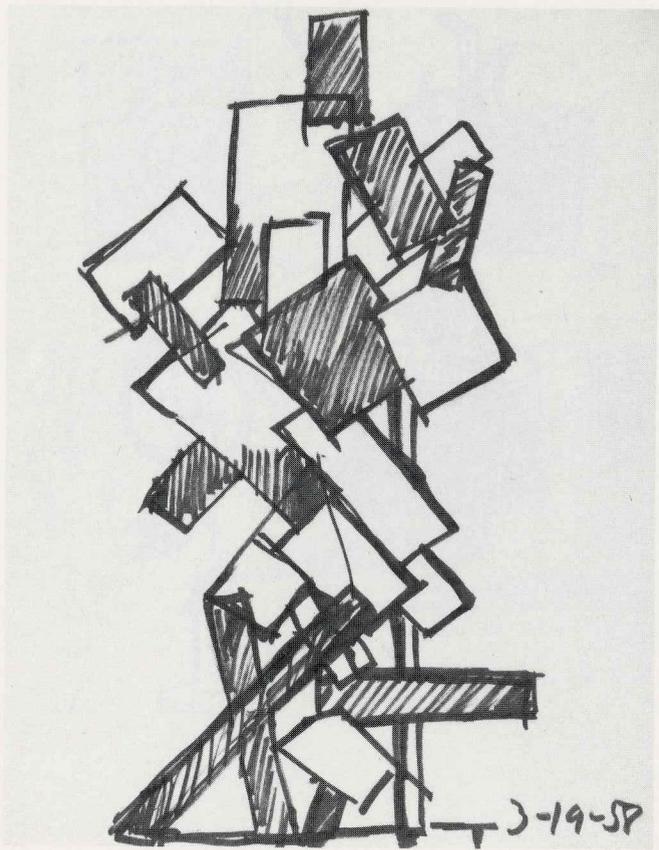




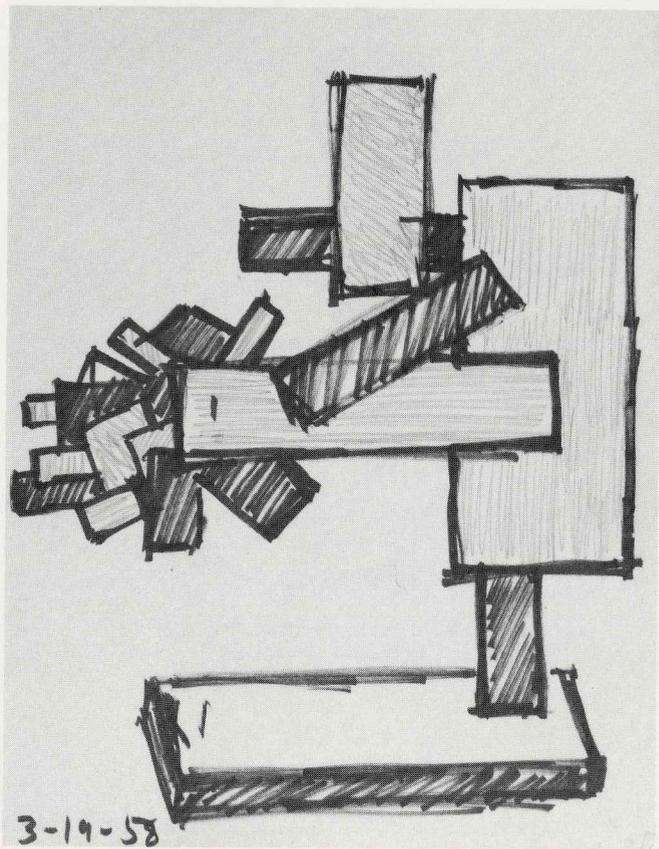
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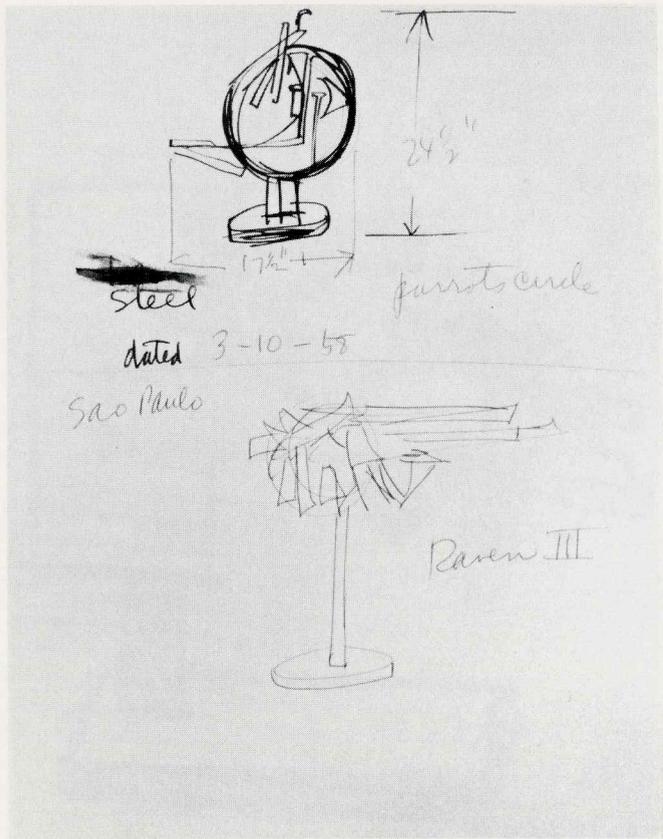
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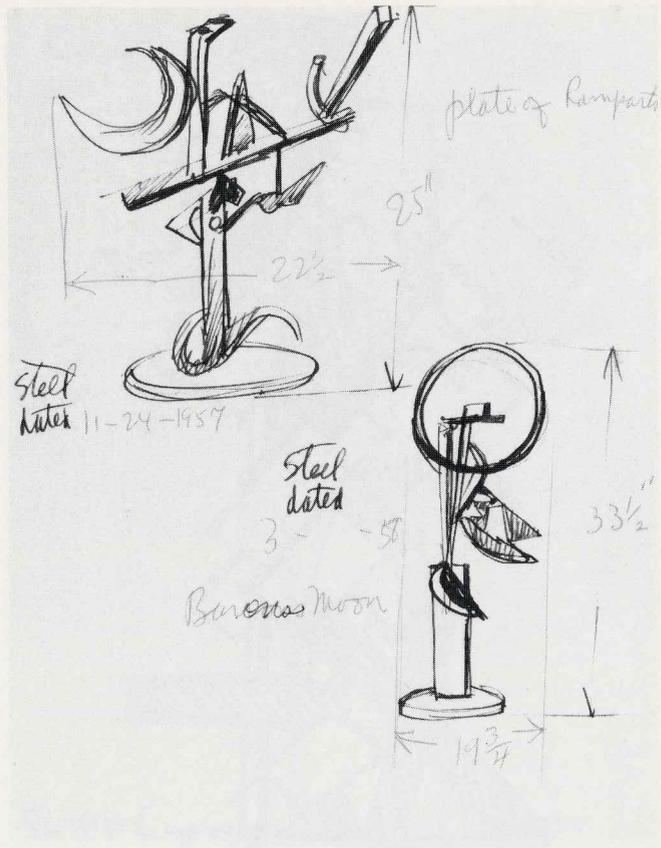
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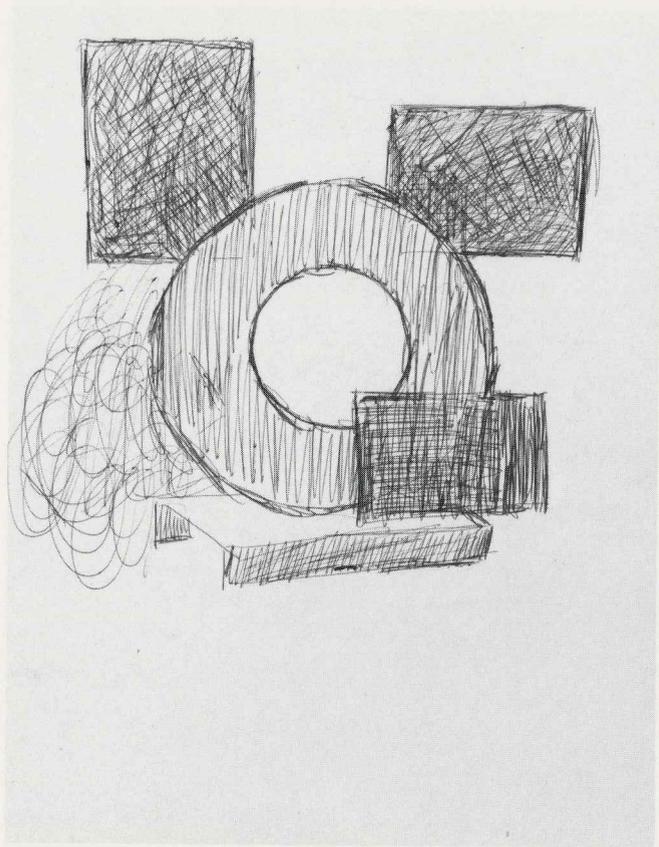
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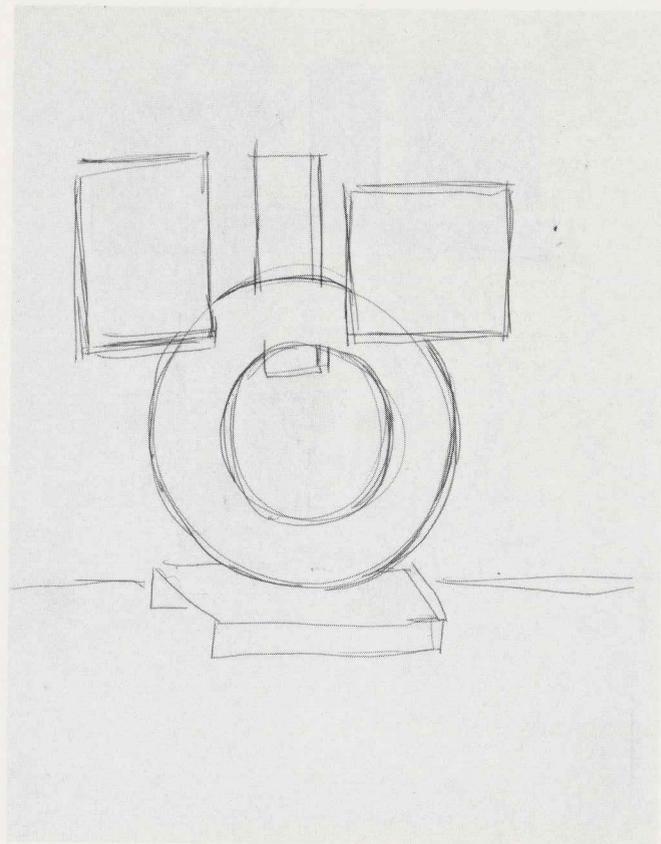


69

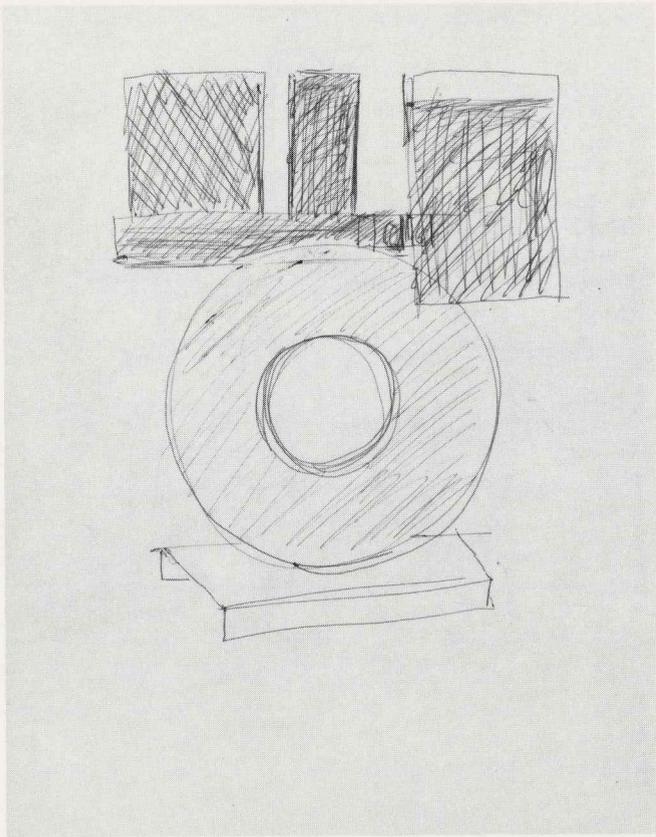


recto

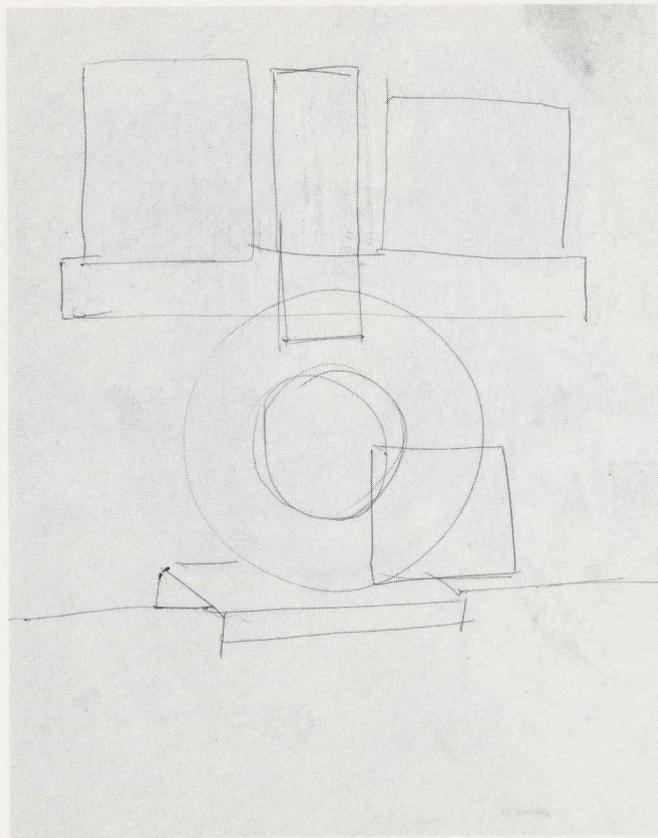
71



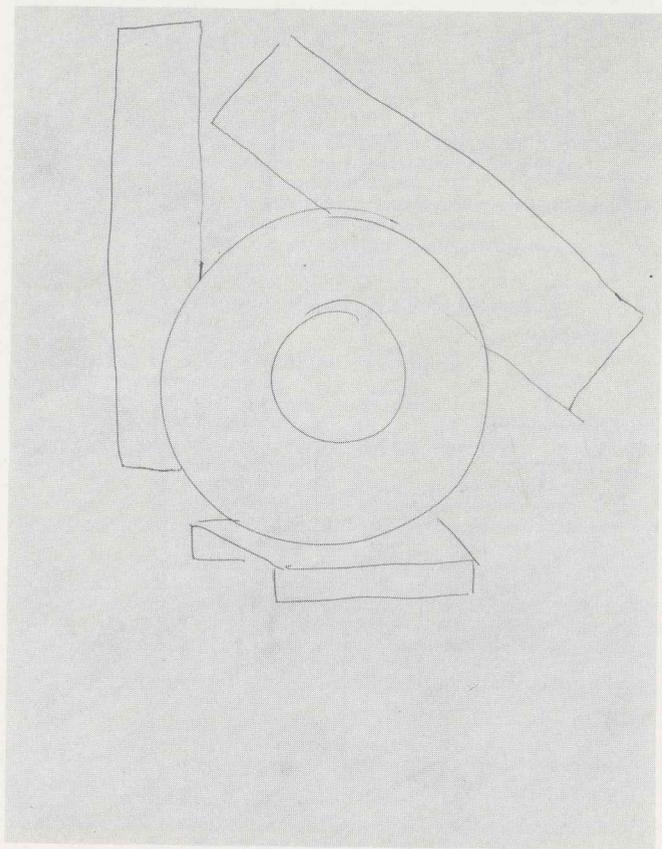
verso



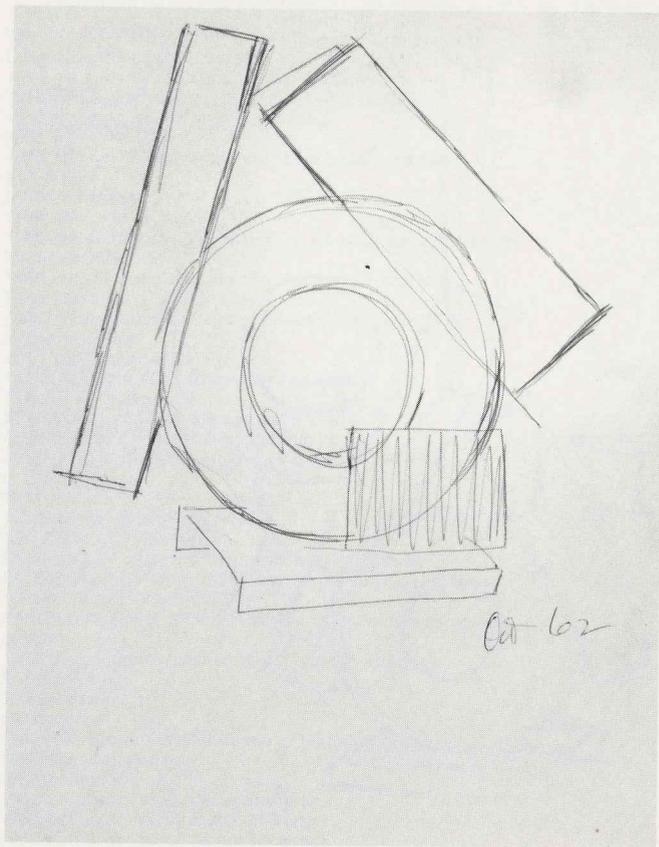
recto

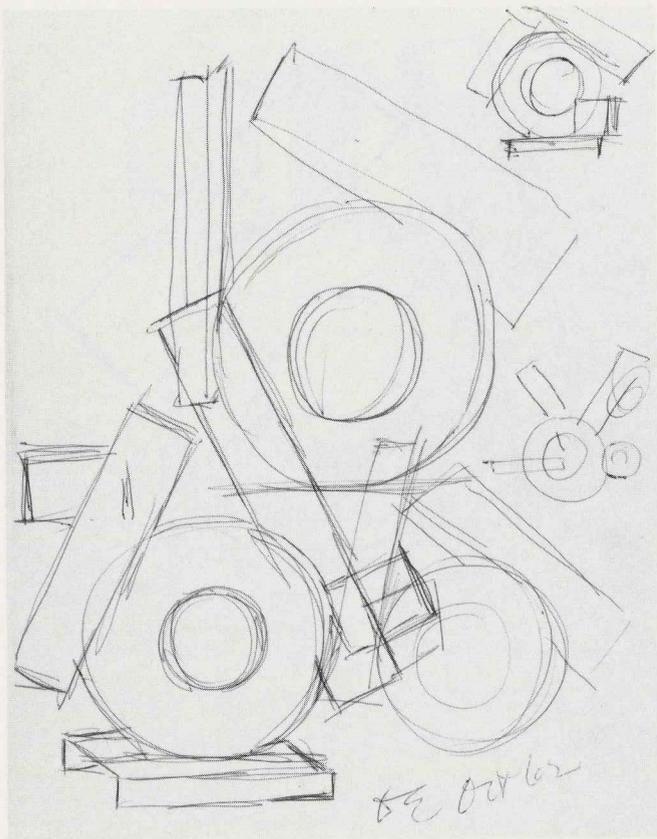


verso

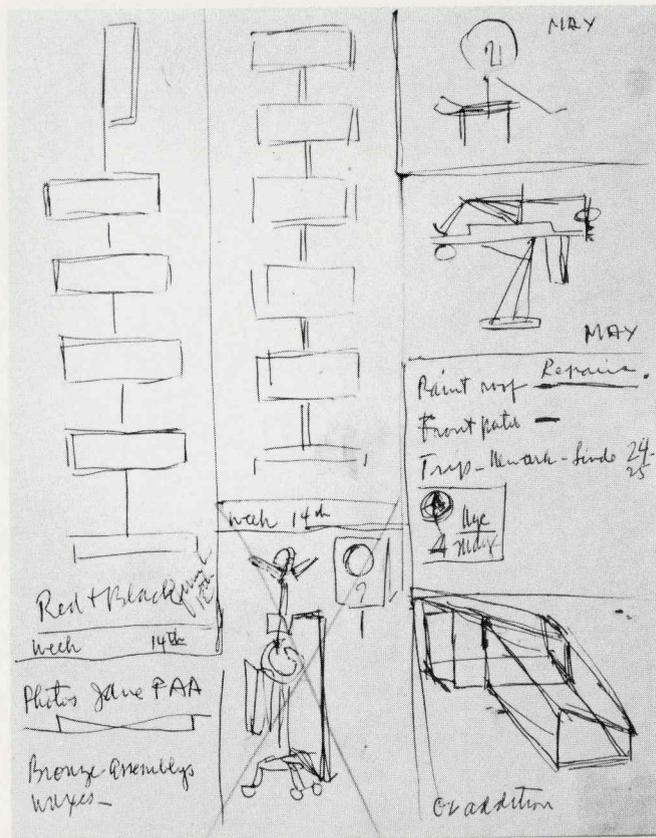


73





70



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CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

All drawings measure 10 5/8" x 8 1/4"

Unless otherwise indicated, all works lent by Mekler Gallery, Inc.,
Los Angeles

1. 1954, ink
2. 1954, ink
3. 4/28/54, ink with pencil
4. 1954, ink with pencil
5. 1954, ink
6. 1954, ink and colored pencil Lent by Ms. Kathleen Lustgarten
7. 1954, ink and colored pencil (recto), ink (verso)
8. 1954, ink, colored pencil, ink wash
9. 1954, ink Lent by Mr. Sam Bernstein and Mr. Bruno Chiarruttini
10. 1954, ink (recto), ink and paint (verso)
11. 5/14/54, ink, ink wash and colored pencil
Lent by Mr. Adam Mekler
12. 1954, ink (recto), ink (verso)
13. PORTRAIT OF A PAINTER, 1954, ink wash
14. 1954, ink
15. 1954, ink
16. 1954, pencil (recto), pencil (verso)
17. 1954, pencil
18. 1954, ink, pencil, colored pencil
19. 1954, pencil
20. 1954, colored pencil, crayon, watercolor
21. 1954, ballpoint and ink
22. FORGING II and V, 1955, ink, marker and pencil
23. FORGING VI and VII, 1955, pencil and ink wash
24. FORGING VIII and X, 1955, pencil, wash and marker
Lent by Mr. Ira Young
25. FORGING III and IV, 1955, marker and pencil
26. FORGING IX and XI, 1955, ink and pencil
27. STEEL CONSTRUCTION IN RECTANGLES, 1955, marker
28. THE SITTING PRINTER, 1956, marker Storm King Art Center
29. 1955, ink wash (recto), PLUMBER'S WIFE, marker (verso)
30. CONSTRUCTION ON STAR POINTS, 1955 or 1956, marker
31. PORTRAIT OF A PAINTER/PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL,
1956, marker
32. 1956, ink
33. 1956, ink Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Burton Fink
34. 1956, ink (recto), ink (verso)
35. 1956, ink
36. 1956, ink
37. 1956, ink
38. 1956, ink and ink wash Lent Anonymously
39. THE IRON WOMAN, 1956, ink and ink wash Storm King Art
Center
40. THE IRON WOMAN, 1956, ink and pencil, Storm King Art
Center, donated by Gloria Gil
41. 1956, ink and ink wash, Storm King Art Center
42. 1956, pen, pencil and ink Storm King Art Center
43. 1956, ink wash (recto), ink wash (verso)
44. 1956, ink wash
45. 1956, collage (recto), ink (verso) Lent by Mr. and Mrs.
Abe Adler
46. 9/1/56, ink wash
47. 1956, ink wash and ink
48. 1956, ink wash with oil paint (recto), ink wash (verso) Lent by
Mr. Adam Mekler
49. 1956, ink, ink wash and oil paint Lent by Dr. and Mrs.
Terry Turkat
50. 1956, marker, acrylic and pencil (recto), ink, pencil and
ballpoint (verso)
51. JULY 1956, ink with collage
52. TANKTOTEM V, 1955-56, marker and pencil
53. 1955-56, ink and pencil
54. SENTINAL I, 10/20/56, ink and paint
55. PERSONAGE OF AUGUST, 1956, ink
56. SENTINAL II, 1956-57, marker and ballpoint
57. c. 1956, charcoal
58. 1957, ink wash and colored pencil
59. 1957, ink, pencil and colored pencil
60. SENTINAL III, 1957, marker
61. SENTINAL IV, 1957, ink Lent by Mr. Earle Colman
62. PERSONAGE OF MAY, 1957, pen, pencil, ink (illustrated on
cover), Storm King Art Center
63. PAINTED PLANES, 10/30/57, marker, ink pencil and colored
pencil
64. 1957, ballpoint and colored pencil Lent by Gloria Gil
65. 3/19/58, marker
66. 3/19/58, marker
67. 1958, marker
68. 1958, ink Storm King Art Center, donated by Gloria Gil
69. 1958, ballpoint and ink
70. 1962, ballpoint
71. 1962, ballpoint (recto), ballpoint (verso)
72. 1962, ballpoint (recto), ballpoint (verso)
73. 1962, ballpoint (recto), ballpoint (verso)
74. 1962 (?), ink and pencil Storm King Art Center, donated by
Gloria Gil

DAVID SMITH

- 1906 born March 9 in Decatur, Indiana
- 1923 takes correspondence course from the Cleveland Art School
- 1924 attends Ohio University in Athens, Ohio
- 1925 works as welder and riveter at Studebaker plant, South Bend, Indiana
- 1926 moves to Washington, D.C. and attends evening courses in art and poetry at George Washington University
moves to New York and attends evening classes at the Art Students League with Richard Lahey
- 1927-32 studies painting (full time) at the Art Students League with teacher John Sloan and Jan Matulka
- 1929 buys property in Bolton Landing, New York for summer use
(painting in abstract surrealist style at this period)
- 1932 makes first sculptures of welded steel — (in 1933 he painted welded steel — may have been the first to do so in the United States)
- 1934-40 rents working space and use of the forge in Terminal Iron Works on Brooklyn waterfront
- 1935-36 travels in Europe
studies etching with Stanley William Hayter
- 1937 works on Federal Art Project of W.P.A.
begins *Medals for Dishonor*
- 1938 first one-man exhibition at Marian Willard's East River Gallery
- 1940 moves permanently to Bolton Landing and produces large amount of sculpture
- 1942-44 works at American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York assembling locomotives and tanks
- 1948-50 teaches at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York
- 1950 receives John Simon Guggenheim Foundation fellowship — renewed in 1951
- 1953 begins "Tank Totem" series
teaches University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
- 1954 teaches Indiana University, Bloomington
- 1955 teaches University of Mississippi, Oxford
- 1957 begins "Sentinel" series
retrospective exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.
- 1959 begins "Albany" series
- 1961 one-man exhibition Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh and Otto Gerson Gallery, New York
- 1962 spends one month in Voltri, Italy where he makes 26 sculptures (2 were commissioned) for the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto
"Voltron" series made from tools he used in Italy
- 1963 starts "Cubi" series of stainless steel sculptures
The Museum of Modern Art circulates retrospective exhibition of 50 drawings to the United States and Canada
- 1964 continues "Cubi" and "Zig" series
completes about 140 paintings of nude models
- 1965 appointed by President Johnson to National Council on the Arts
Died May 23 in an automobile accident
The Museum of Modern Art organizes retrospective exhibition which travels throughout Europe

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Nos. 28, 39, 40, 41, 62, 68, 74, Joseph Gill
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