

**SCULPTURE: A STUDY IN MATERIALS**





**SCULPTURE**  
**A STUDY IN MATERIALS**

BAIZERMAN  
CALDER  
DEHNER  
HAGUE  
HESSE  
HUNTINGTON

LASSAW  
NEVELSON  
SMITH  
STANKIEWICZ  
VALLILA

MAY 17 – OCTOBER 30, 1978

**STORM KING ART CENTER**  
OLD PLEASANT HILL ROAD  
MOUNTAINVILLE, NEW YORK



**SAUL     BAIZERMAN     ( 1 8 8 9 – 1 9 5 7 )**

His works, as I found out long ago, do not conquer by shock methods but by a slow, if irresistible, infiltration. They have great force but they do not show it blatantly. Their voice is not that of "great winds, earthquakes and fires"; they ingratiate themselves in a subtler way. Baizerman himself is a quiet man with a soft way of speaking and mild manners. I have never heard him raise his voice. Yet, he is possessed by a fierce belief in himself and in the mission of his art, a belief that has sustained him in many a trying situation. He looks frail, but he works on a monumental scale and in a technique that requires enormous physical endurance. His subjects are limited to the possibilities of the human body but he has explored them as have only the greatest sculptors before him. The Greeks, Michelangelo, and Rodin come to mind, and it is indeed to this illustrious ancestry that Baizerman himself feels related, and indebted.

The response which is evoked in sensitive beholders by these works may recall different kinds of experience. They may suggest many things, just as Baizerman thinks of many things when he works on them. One fact is clear: his sculptures do not mirror or duplicate reality. They give the impression of weight and solidity, although they are hollow and made of thin metal. Some look like fully rounded pieces until we become aware that this is only due to the skill with which the edges have been dissimulated. Yet, even the views that expose these edges add to the formal interest. Baizerman's handling of anatomy and proportion is never literal or standardized; he takes any liberties with reality which will give to his figures more animation or which will sustain the chosen rhythm. For what counts in the end is not the poetic association, or the technical tour-de-force, but the wealth of purely sculptural imagination. This indeed is the test by which Baizerman's stature in modern art will be measured. It is here that the critical observer will make the most rewarding discoveries.





**NANA. 1931-39**  
Hammered Copper

**SCULPTURE:**

CONCERTO MECHANIQUE. 1950-57  
Hammered Copper

CRESCENDO. 1940-52  
Hammered Copper

ELEGY. 1931-39  
Hammered Copper

FIREBIRD. 1950-57  
Hammered Copper  
Lent by The William Benton Museum of Art  
The University of Connecticut

JAZZ TEMPO. 1931-39  
Hammered Copper  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Messer

NANA. 1931-39  
Hammered Copper

NARCISSUS. 1931-39  
Hammered Copper

TRANSFIGURATION. 1945-53  
Hammered Copper



## ALEXANDER CALDER (1898-1976)

If you like what you give them, you have to like what you get back.

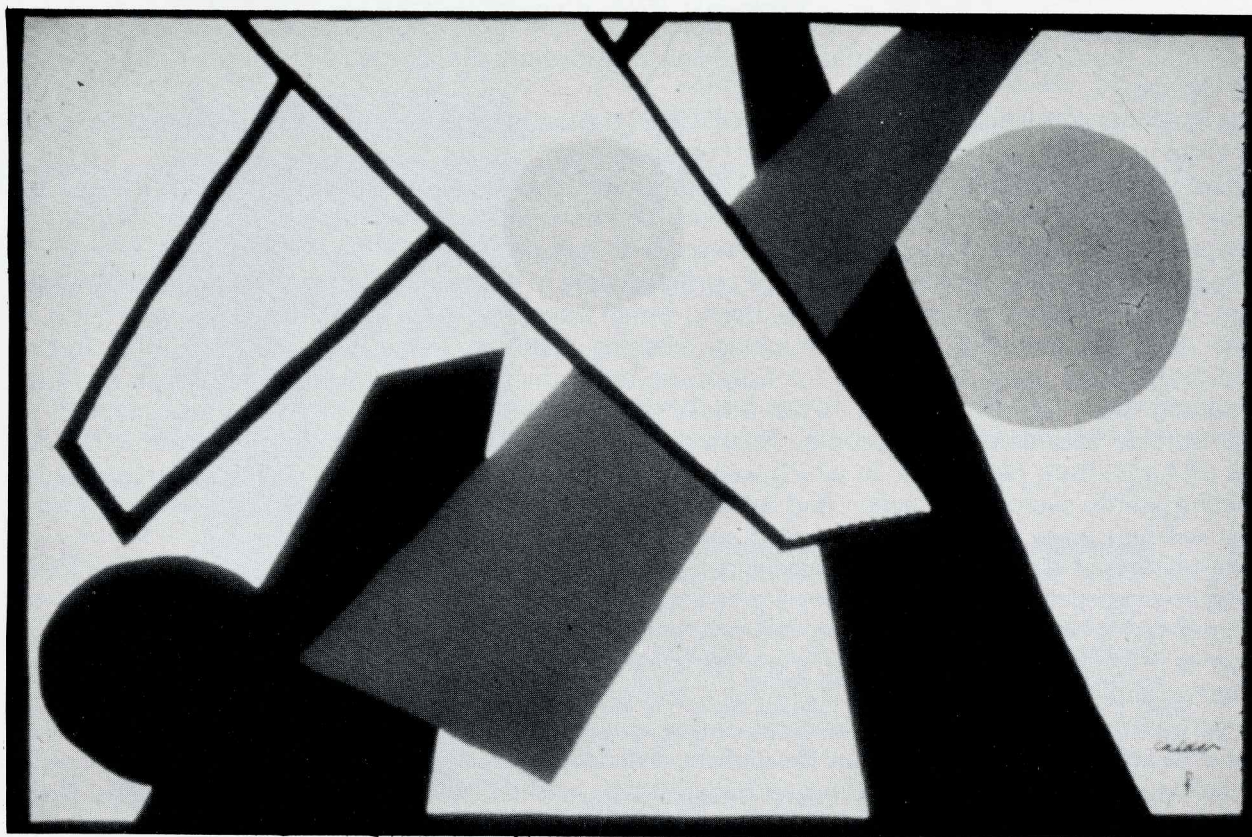
This is what Sandy said when I asked him how he felt about the way the Aubusson weavers interpret his exuberant tapestry designs. Since the early sixties he has made approximately fifty designs for execution by the skilled weavers of Aubusson and Felletin, two villages in the La Creuse area of France which have been famous for their tapestries since the Middle Ages.

In recent years many major artists, among them Calder's friend Miró, have created tapestry designs in the contemporary idiom, bringing fresh life to the ancient industry. Calder's interest began in 1960 when he designed a small Aubusson tapestry; this was followed in 1962 by a series of nine made under the direction of Pierre Baudoin. The following year Calder began working with the firm of Pinton Frères, one of the largest in the Aubusson region. His most monumental tapestry, measuring eight by twenty feet, was commissioned in 1973 by the IBM Corporation.

Calder prepares his tapestry designs in color on sheets of paper the size of his large gouaches. These function as maquettes, being mechanically enlarged to the size of the finished tapestry. The wools, imported from Australia, are dyed in Calder's brilliant, pure colors and spun, on a spinning wheel, onto large spools; the thread is transferred, as needed, from the spools to small bobbins, or flutes. Using these, the weaver follows the enlarged design which is placed beneath the loom so as to be visible through the warp threads. It takes about a month for a weaver to produce a square yard of tapestry. French law limits Aubusson tapestries to editions of six, plus two proofs for the artist. (Calder's IBM tapestry, however, was executed as a unique example; and the French government authorized special editions of two hundred for a set of six small tapestries which Calder designed in connection with the bicentennial celebration of the American Revolution.) Both Calder's signature and the weaver's trademark are woven into the fabric, with the number of the edition. Only one from an edition is executed at a time, on order, so there are variations in each example.

Calder's tapestries are closely related to his gouaches, but they are much larger and often more complex in design. As in all his work the compositions are deceptively casual and have the same playful element that enlivens even the most powerful of his abstractions. The tapestry medium — like lithography and large-scale sculpture — is an example of the successful collaboration with skilled craftsmen that has characterized Calder's later years. The weaver follows Calder's forms exactly but improvises to vary the weaves and textures in a free interpretation of the overall design. The tapestries are fresh works of art in their own right, blending the inventiveness of the artist with that of the weavers.





**RASOIR OU AVION**  
Dyed Wool

**MOBILES:**

**BLACK DISCS.** 1966  
Steel  
Private Collection

**SNOW FLURRY I.** 1948  
Painted sheet metal, steel wire  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Gift of the artist, 1966

**TAPESTRIES:**

**BEAUCOUP DE SOUCOUPES VOLANTES**  
(Many Flying Saucers)

**BLEU ET ROUGE CLOUS**  
(Blue and Red Nails)

**ETOILES AUX TROIS COULEURS**  
(Stars in Three Colours)

**LES ANGUILES RAYEES**  
(Striped Eels)

**LE LEZARD ET LE TETARD**  
(The Lizard and the Tadpole)

**LES TROIS JAUNES**  
(The Three Yellows)

**LIGNES DE COULER**  
(Lines of Flow)

**MES OIGNONS**  
(The Onions of Mine)

**RASOIR OU AVION**  
(Razor or Airplane)

**SILLON NOIR**  
(Black Furrow)

**SIX DENTS ROUGES**  
(Six Red Teeth)



### LIFE ON THE FARM

I painted these small works in the early forties to record my life on the farm in Bolton Landing, on Lake George, N. Y.

David Smith and I had bought the farm in 1929, the second year of our marriage, and lived there intermittently until 1940 when we made it our permanent home.

There was much beauty in our lives in that unspoiled countryside, both in our way of life and the natural setting around it. Our common ordinary chores went on apace with David's great outpouring of his abstract sculpture and my own involvement with painting.

The idea to paint the days and seasons of our lives came to me from the French 15th C. Book of the Hours, *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc De Berry*, which David had given me at that time.

The daily life included the usual cooking, cleaning, planting, harvesting, and preserving, for we raised most of our food and kept it for future use by canning, drying, smoking (both pork and fish), and salting down gallons of corn. It was a busy life, new and exciting to us, as city people, and we rather quickly became country people. Survival depended partly on information supplied by Department of Agriculture pamphlets, of which we had a great store. One, most useful, gave instructions for making a man's overcoat. Sewing and knitting went on constantly, wool provided by neighboring sheep was sent away to be washed, carded and spun.

The seasons of the year and their special activities were recorded as a kind of visual diary, depicting visiting friends such as Marian Willard and David planting trees, our nearby neighbors who helped with the slaughtering of the pigs, lumbering, sawing wood, (for that was our heat source) and other chores.

Scenes in which we do not appear show our small friend, Jamie Dodge, who stayed with me when his father and David went to New York for a few days. Two memories of St. Thomas recalled our year on that tropical island — shells, coral, shrimps, and blue sea. The old Saratoga Springs burying ground where many Revolutionary War soldiers rested, marked one of our visits a bit farther South, and the cluster of red brick buildings in Schenectady marked our eighteen month stay when David worked there on tanks for World War II at American Locomotive.

That ended that particular saga. We went back to Bolton and resumed our country life again in much the same way. I then devoted my painting time entirely to my abstract work, but the temptation to have recorded the beauty of that life on the farm was not to be put aside, only to be celebrated by rendering that life and those times in these small paintings.

Dorothy Dehner, 1978

#### Paintings:

DAVID READING ABOUT HIMSELF. 1941. Gouache on Paper

FROSTY MORNING. 1944. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

GARDEN OF EDEN. 1942. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

JAMIE'S VISIT. 1944. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

MEMORY OF ST. THOMAS. 1942. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

MEMORY OF ST. THOMAS II. 1944. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

MY LIFE ON THE FARM. 1942. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

OCTOBER. 1942. Gouache on Paper

PASTORALE. 1944. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

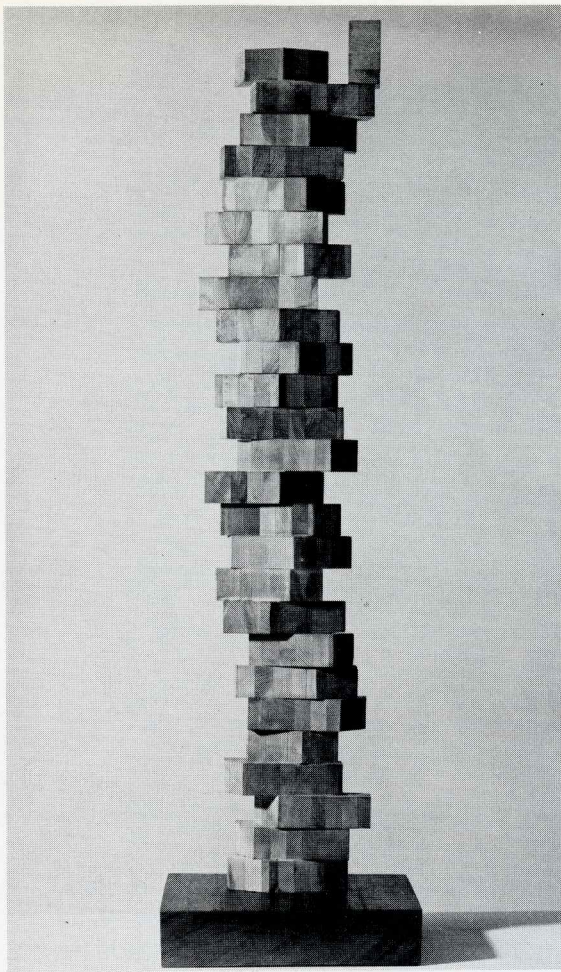
POOR ROSEBUD. 1942. Tempera on Gesso Panel

SARATOGA BURYING GROUND. c. 1943. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

VACATION AT MARIAN'S. 1944. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel

WINTERSET WITH SMALL FIGURES. 1943. Egg Tempera on Gesso Panel





**THE TALL ONE No. 2. 1978**  
Unpainted Oak

**Drawings:**

UNTITLED. 1965. Ink on Paper  
UNTITLED. 1970. Ink on Paper  
UNTITLED. 1970. Ink on Paper  
UNTITLED. 1975. Ink on Paper  
UNTITLED. 1976. Ink on Paper

A dedicated intensity and a remarkable consistency is evident in the work of Dorothy Dehner. In her sculpture, movement choreographed is manifestly expressed with a subtle delicacy uncommon in her choice of materials — bronze and wood — both in form and surface treatment. Her drawing line moves with that same quality. Evoking literary and visual sources, she transcends both by her own imagery. She is a consummate artist, sure in her craftsmanship and mysterious and inventive in her poetic forms.

Mildred Constantine, 1978

**SCULPTURE:**

ARABESQUE No. 3. 1976  
Bronze

CATHEDRAL. 1977  
Unpainted Wood

CENOTAPH No. 4. 1972  
Bronze and Aluminum  
Storm King Art Center  
Mountainville, New York

EGYPTIAN THEME. 1969  
Bronze

I CHING No. 1. 1974  
Black and Orange Painted Wood

I CHING No. 2. 1974  
Black Painted Wood

I CHING No. 4. 1975  
White and Orange Painted Wood

I CHING No. 5. 1975  
White and Orange Painted Wood

I CHING No. 6. 1976  
Black Painted Wood

I CHING WEDGE. 1975  
Painted Wood

NAVAJO DIRECTION. 1975  
Painted Wood

ODE. 1977  
Unpainted Wood

TALL ONE No. 2. 1978  
Unpainted Wood

TALL ONE No. 3. 1978  
Unpainted Wood

VIKING I. 1969  
Bronze

WELLFLEET. 1967  
Bronze

Although he first studied with Zorach, the dominant influence in his student days was John Flannagan, to whom Hague became closely attached and from whom he received the concept — to Flannagan, a religion — of direct carving. Hague's early sculpture was in stone; in the past decade he has carved wood: walnut, locust, mahogany, butternut, chestnut, elm, sycamore. His house is in the woods.

The early stone sculptures are severe in their continuous definition of the cubic dimensions within which the limited action of space takes place. In wood, Hague has found an astonishing freedom, cutting deeply into shadows, allowing light to spurt along projections. There is almost no memory of the original cylindrical tree-trunk in some of these sculptures.

The skin of the sculpture is polished until the surface has both depth and an immediate existence at the point where light hits it — like the face of a clear lake. This increases the complexity of the interplays of light and shadow, weight and buoyancy, hill and hollow.

Many of the sculptures are torsos or figures cut off at odd places, like the classic marbles which Hague studied so carefully in Greece and Egypt. They are also abstractions, and at times the anatomical memory is as distant as that of the tree-trunk.

The forms are "difficult" and refer to themselves, with their own logic, to their own order. Unlike the abstractions of Brancusi, they do not seek an essence — the birdness of flight or the universality of the egg-shape. Hague's sculptures are of an age that cannot deal in certainties. They are individual personalities, their humanity is specific and becomes general by the very strength of its unique, human quality. The fact that they are beautiful is what makes this quality so moving.

*Thomas B. Hess, 1956*

In the last thirty years, of all the artists I have known, there have been only three whose eyes I could trust — Gorky, Tomlin and Guston — and I have used them in my own development.

*Raoul Hague*





GROEG KILL. 1970  
Walnut

#### SCULPTURE:

FIGURE IN ELM 1948  
Elm Wood  
Lent by the Whitney Museum of  
American Art, New York; Gift of  
the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation.

GROEG KILL. 1970  
Walnut  
Zabriskie Gallery

OHAYO WORMY BUTTERNUT. 1947-48  
Butternut  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Katherine Cornell Fund

SWAMP PEPPER WOOD. 1956  
Swamp Pepper Wood  
Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine  
Meriden, Connecticut



## EVA HESSE (1936–1970)

### SCULPTURE:

ACCESSION IV. 1967

Steel with Rubber

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

SANS II. 1968

Fiberglass

Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art,  
New York; Gift of the Albert A List Family  
and of Dr. and Mrs. Lester J. Honig

SCHEMA. 1967

Latex

Courtesy Droll/Kolbert Gallery

UNTITLED. 1965

Enamel Painted Cord over Wood or Metal and Hose  
Courtesy Droll/Kolbert Gallery

UNTITLED. 1966

String and Wood/Gray

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

UNTITLED. 1967

String over Latex (Balloon)

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

UNTITLED. 1967

Latex with Nine Hemispheres

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

UNTITLED. 1967–68

Glass Case with Three Shelves

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

VINCULUM II. 1969

Latex on Wire Mesh, Wire, Staples, String  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Gilman Foundation Fund

### DRAWINGS

REPETITION NINETEEN. 1967

Pencil on Graph Paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

REPETITION NINETEEN I. 1967–68

Gouache, Watercolor, Brush and Pencil

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

REPETITION NINETEEN (First of Three Versions), 1967

Pen and Ink on Tracing Paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

REPETITION NINETEEN (Second of Three Versions). 1967

Pen and Ink on Tracing Paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

UNTITLED. 1967

Ink on Graph Paper

Private Collection

Courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

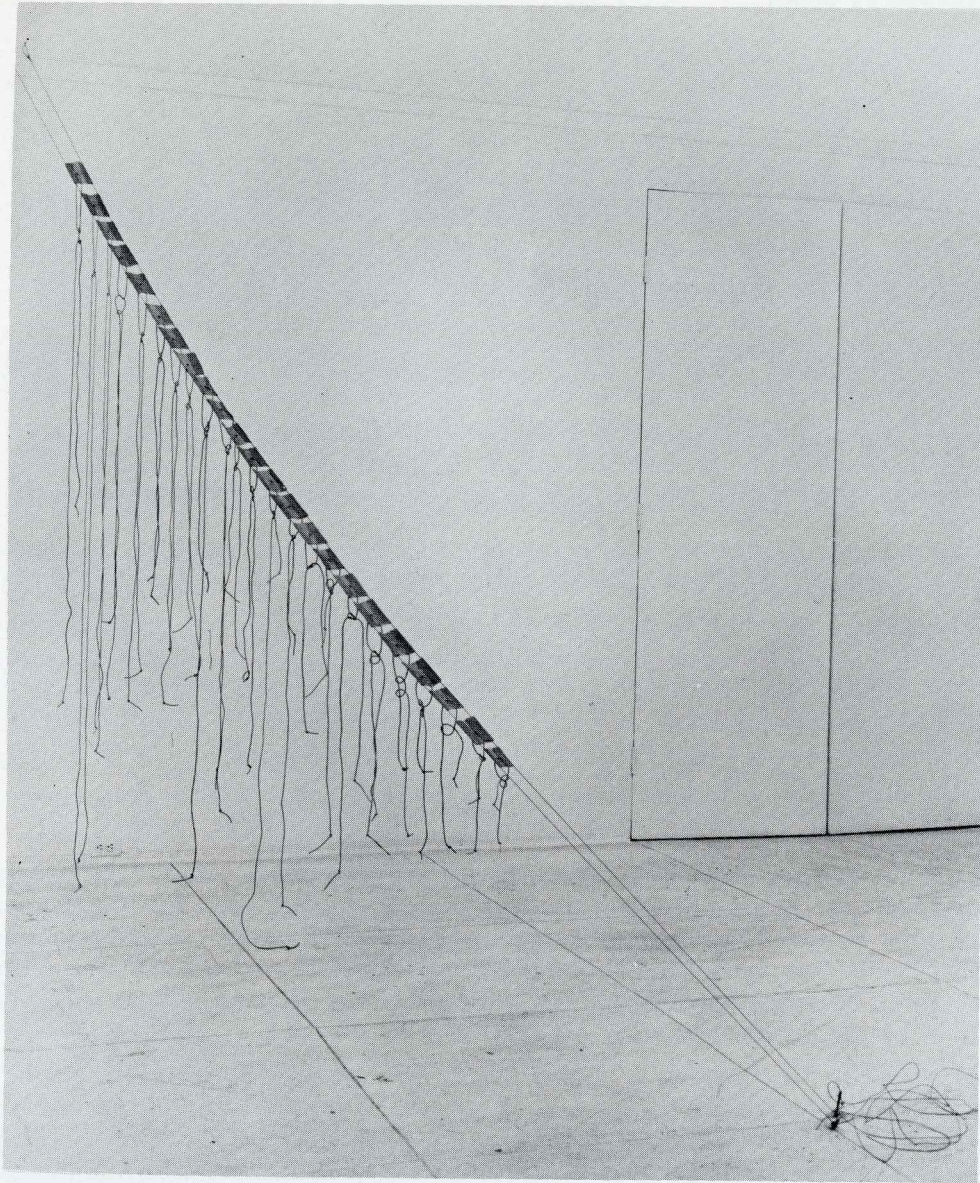
UNTITLED. 1968

Ink Wash on Paper

Neuberger Museum

Gift of Roy R. Neuberger





**VINCULUM II. 1969**  
 Latex on Wire Mesh, Wire, Staples, String  
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
 The Gilman Foundation Fund

"I would like the work to be non-work. This means that it would find its way beyond my preconceptions.  
 What I want of my art I can eventually find. The work must go beyond this.  
 It is my main concern to go beyond what I know and what I can know.  
 The formal principles are understandable and understood.  
 It is the unknown quantity from which and where I want to go.  
 As a thing, an object, it accedes to its non-logical self.  
 It is something, it is nothing."



Many times, I feel the essential energy that brings a sculpture into being flows not **from** me but **through** me. I accept a lot on faith: the faith that this endeavor is basic and necessary to the greater human enterprise: that art can be the repository of ineffable spiritual values.

Santayana wrote: "Sensuous beauty is not the greatest or the most important element of effect, but it is the most primitive and fundamental and the most universal. There is no effect of form which an effect of material could not enhance."

Humans' first impulse to beauty, the first act of aesthetic consciousness, was the selection and collection of "special" rocks or pebbles; these collections have been found in caves predating mimetic or symbolic cave art.

My friend and quarryman, Don Rood, once said to me: "Stone is like gold or oil: once you get it in your blood, you can't get it out." For me, steel and especially stone have manifold intrinsic beauty. I spend a lot of time in quarries searching through stone formed partially by the quarrying process, looking for significant form, relying predominantly on a visual/visceral sense of what is significant for me. The germination of a sculpture comes often from the unique form or color or surface of a specific stone. The stone is combined with steel: stainless, corten or hotrolled.

My engagement with the materials is a dialogue of two natures: that of the material and my intuitive sense of touch, drawing and my vision of beauty. I work not merely willfully but allow the potential unique to each material to speak as well, to let their nuances prevail. Whether by hand or by collaboration with craftsmen in fabrication, I act in concert with that dialogue. Drawing in its widest sense, plays a major role in **how** I act.

The ultimate challenge is to articulate and transform the materials and to claim space in such a way that all the elements maintain their integrity yet transcend their inherent identity to cohere into a presence imbued with autonomous life, manifest as a metaphor of human feelings, reveries and aspirations.

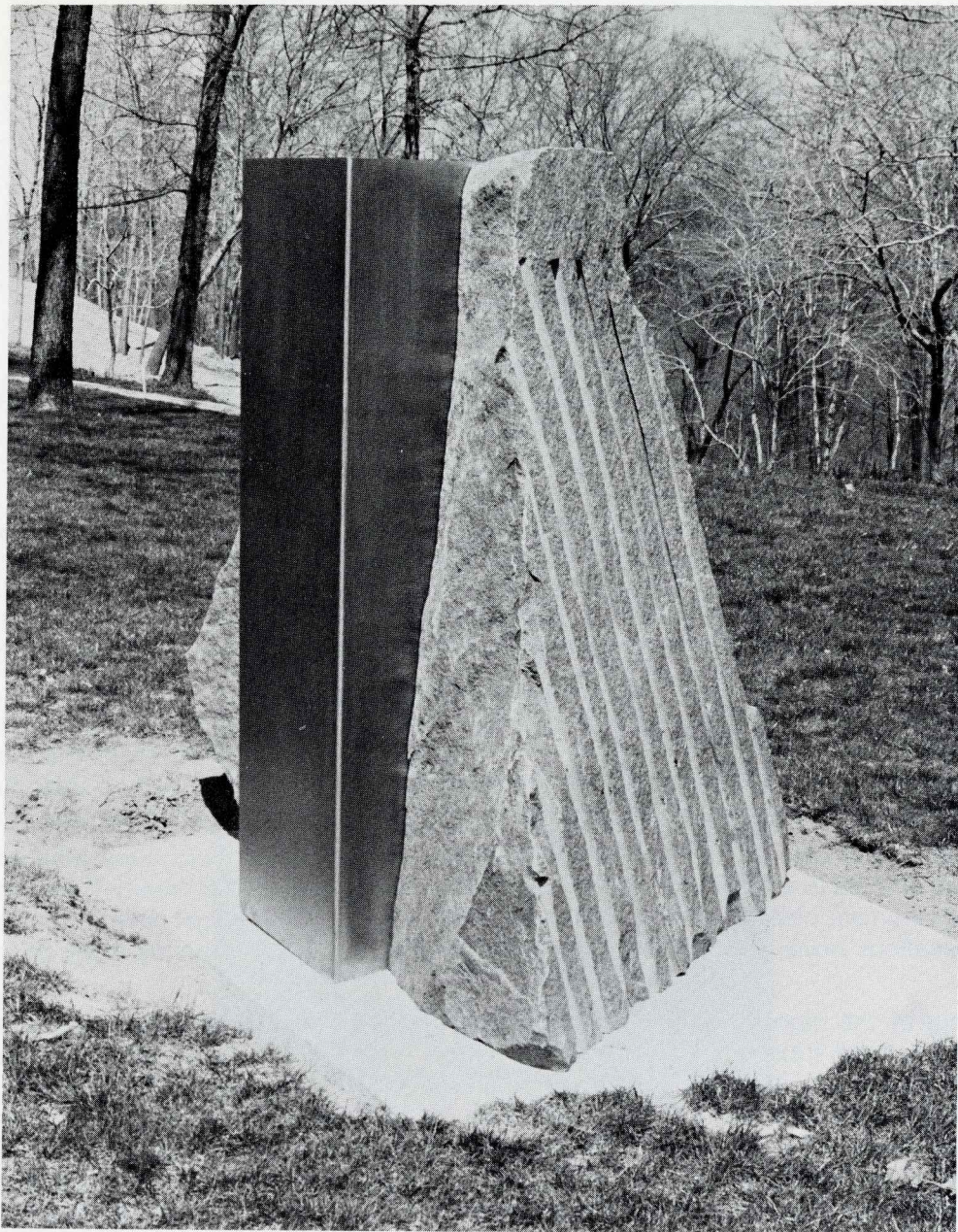
This is a trace of my encounter in the world, focused and embodied in formal plastic terms: it is my affirmation of the boundless human spirit and the mystery of existence.

*Jim Huntington*  
1978

**DRAWINGS:**

UNTITLED. 1978	—	Graphite on BFK Paper
UNTITLED. 1978	—	Graphite on BFK Paper
UNTITLED. 1978	—	Graphite on BFK Paper
UNTITLED. 1978	—	Graphite on BFK Paper





**INHERITOR (for Jake). 1978**  
Granite and Stainless Steel

#### SCULPTURE:

ADAM'S EDGE. 1976  
Bluestone/Corten

CLOVER'S COLUMN. 1976  
Bluestone/Corten

INHERITOR (for Jake). 1978  
Granite and Stainless Steel

NORTHERN CORNER. 1977  
Bluestone/Stainless/Corten

RETURNING. 1978  
Steel and Bluestone

ROOD'S RAINBOW. 1976  
Bluestone/Hotrolled

SPACE FOR KEITH JARRETT. 1975  
Bluestone/Hotrolled

UNFOLD FREE (for my parents). 1976  
Bluestone/Stainless



## A CONCEPT OF NATURE

As a young art student I was urged to study nature. For the sculptor, that meant primarily, the human body. My favorite sculptors were the Greeks — Praxiteles, Phidias, etc. and the Renaissance figures — Michelangelo, Donatello, etc. When I began to expand my horizons by museum visits and much reading of the history of art, the word "nature" began to include animal forms and landscapes. My first encounter with abstract art, about 1928 — Duchamp-Villon's "The Horse" and paintings of Kandinsky, Jacque Villon, Arp, Delaunay and others, changed my view of art dramatically. By 1933, I had a difficult choice to make — to follow the traditional figurative direction or a totally new direction — open-space abstract sculpture. It appeared to me that the frontier of art lay in the latter direction. The work of Brancusi, Gonzales, the constructivists, excited me. In imagination, the new realm of open-space sculpture was similar to the open frontier of the West in the 1840's.

Although it seemed that I was abandoning nature, in fact, I have always had a great love and interest in nature — often spending as much time at the Museum of Natural History as at the Metropolitan Museum. My curiosity drove me to explore and enjoy many aspects of "reality," including reading books on physiology, geology, astronomy, cosmology. I wanted to see the whole picture of nature.

The anthropocentric idea of man as being outside of nature appeared ridiculous. Man is intimately a part of nature and participates in its every process. The word "nature" or "reality" encompassed all creation — man, animals, plants, mountains, the earth, the solar system, the galaxies! All nature looked like a vast marvelous never ending open-space kinetic sculpture. The supreme work of art — living organism.

The workings of the human mind are controlled by the laws of nature and each mind is unique. As an artist I want a more substantial prehension of nature — to feel the matter energy space time continuum, to enter into the universal landscape of marvels. Which reminds me of my favorite story . . . . There was a Chinese Painter, Wu Tao Tzu, who lived in the T'ang dynasty. Wu Tao Tzu was working on a large scroll depicting a mountain, a stream, and trees. The emperor happened to be passing by and he stopped to admire the work. Wu Tao Tzu went up to the mountain depicted in the scroll, opened the door, stepped inside and beckoned the emperor to follow him, saying there were much greater wonders inside. When the emperor reached the painted mountain, there was no door. Wu Tao Tzu disappeared into his painting and was never seen again.

*Ibram Lassaw*  
1978

### DRAWINGS:

CONTINUITY II. 1971  
Black India Ink on Paper

NUMBER 1. 1975  
Acrylic on Paper

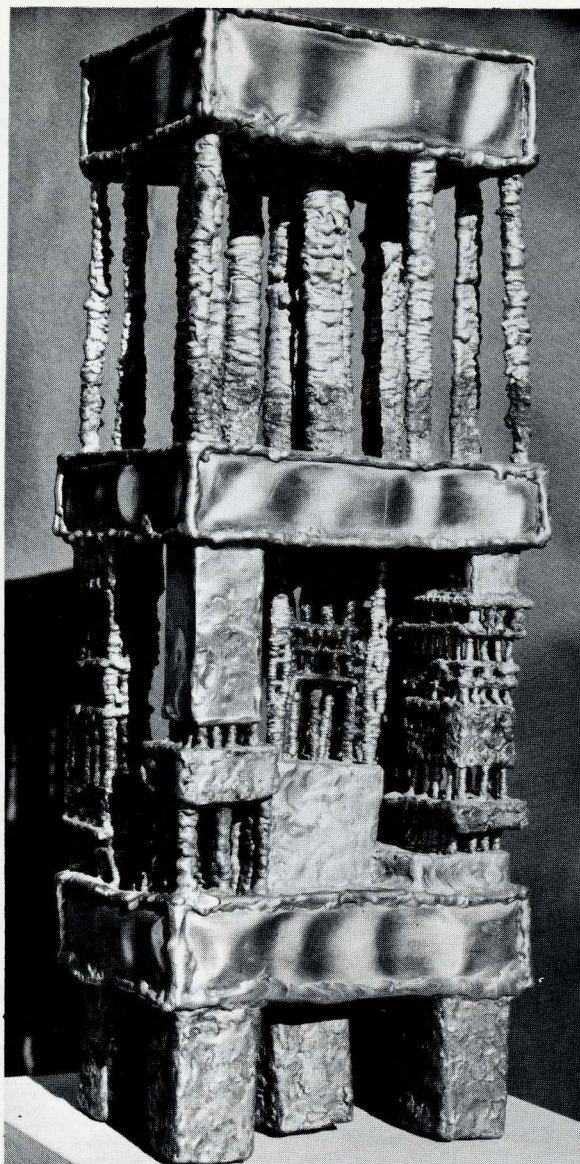
NUMBER 2. 1975  
Acrylic on Paper

NUMBER 4. 1975  
Acrylic on Paper

NUMBER 5. 1975  
Black India Ink and Black Acrylic on Paper

5-2-75. 1975  
Acrylic on Paper





**CARYATIDS VI. 1974**  
Various Metals

# SCULPTURE:

ABODE OF TIME. 1976  
Red Brass

ANGEL. 1955  
Welded Bronze  
Neuberger Museum  
Gift of Roy R. Neuberger

CARYATIDS VI. 1974  
Various Metals

CONTINUUM. 1977  
Brass  
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Kahn

INTERSPACE I. 1969  
Silver and Bronze  
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Kahn

KWANNON, 1952  
Welded Bronze with Silver  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Katharine Cornell Fund

OUROBOROS. 1967  
Brass and Bronze

SET OF SEVEN. 1977  
Copper and Brass

"My total conscious search in life has been for a new seeing, a new image, a new insight. This search not only includes the object, but the in-between places, the dawns and the dusks, the objective world, the heavenly spheres, the places between the land and the sea . . . Whatever creation man invents, the image can be found in nature. We cannot see anything of which we are not already aware. The inner, the outer equal one." \*

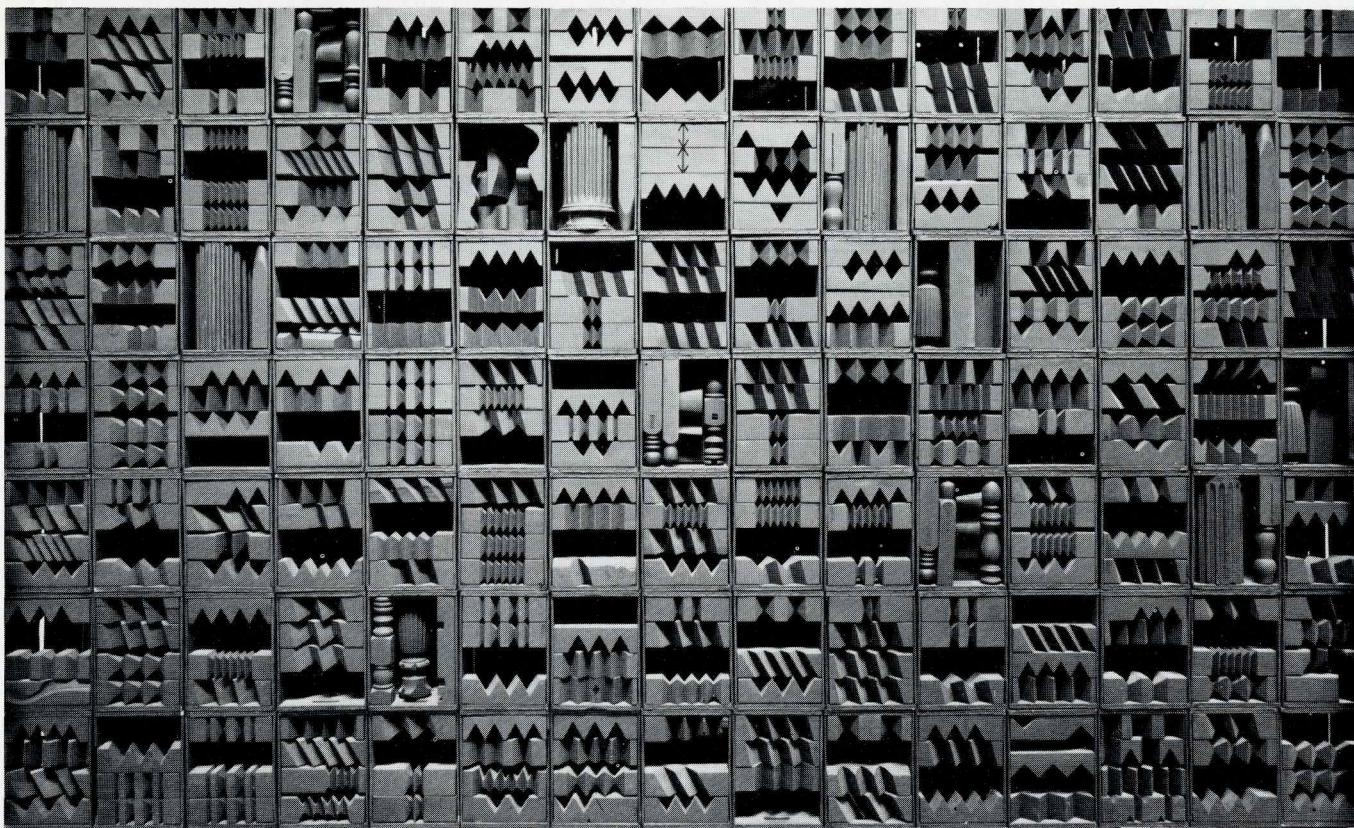
Wood was the only material that allowed her the spontaneity and impulsiveness her characteristic impatience required. Direct welded metal, at that time, was alien to her sensibility, and she frankly admits that it offended her femininity. But she was impressed by the works created in this medium by Gonzales and Picasso, and she admired the later works being produced, under their influence, by David Smith.

As the antithesis of the black wood sculpture, the white wood suggests some visual comparisons. If the space of the black work is indeed infinite in illusion and distant in perception, the white works are finite, nonillusory, and hyperactively accessible. Each element is richer in form and more baroque in juxtaposition than those within the black sculpture. The black sculptures challenge our ability to perceive the forms at all; the white sculpture is a perpetual challenge to our ability to focus on specific areas of the dazzling activity that is created by the panoramic plethora of forms. One is not drawn into the field of white with the same, almost physical absorption of the black. The stillness of dawn is rarely witnessed, and our dreams are less familiar with this cold, shadowless setting that over-exposes every gesture. Consequently, the inability to enter the white increases its scale. The black, regardless of scale, is inhabitable and therefore more humanistic.

\* Louise Nevelson, from John I. H. Bauer, **NATURE IN ART** (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1957).

Statements taken from **LOUISE NEVELSON** by Arnold B. Glimcher, Praeger Publishers, Inc., New York, 1972.





# **LUMINOUS ZAG NIGHT. 1971**

Painted Wood

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Gift, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Singer

## **SCULPTURE:**

**DARK SHADOWS. 1957**

Painted Wood

Collection of The Newark Museum

**DAY NIGHT No. 20. 1973**

Black Painted Wood

Neuberger Museum

**DOUBLE IMAGE. 1976**

White Painted, Direct Welded Aluminum

The Pace Gallery, New York

**DRUM. 1976**

White Painted, Direct Welded Aluminum

The Pace Gallery, New York

**FLYING FLOWERS. 1958**

Black Painted Wood

Grey Art Gallery and Study Center

New York University Art Collection

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Mildwoff

**LUMINOUS ZAG NIGHT. 1971**

Painted Wood

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Gift, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Singer

**LUNAR LANDSCAPE. 1959**

Black Painted Wood

Harford Yang

**MODEL FOR CELEBRATION II. 1976**

Black Painted, Direct Welded Aluminum

The Pace Gallery, New York

**UNTITLED. 1958**

Wood Painted Black

Dorothy Dehner

**UNTITLED. 1959**

Wood

Grey Art Gallery and Study Center

New York University Art Collection



## DAVID SMITH (1906–1965)

The sculptures by David Smith, which form a significant section in the collection of Storm King Art Center, cover an illustrious decade in the artist's work from 1954 through 1964. They are installed in extensive sculpture gardens much as they were when David Smith completed and placed them within his own fields at Bolton Landing and observed them throughout the changing seasons. The thirteen sculptures came to the Storm King Art Center collection as a gift from the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation in the spring of 1967. They stand as a tribute to a most distinguished American sculptor and serve as a focal point in a developing collection of 20th century sculpture.

David Smith began his career as a painter and often returned to painting during his more than thirty years as a sculptor. His interest in color, flat planes and reflections is to be seen in much of his sculptural works. He took special delight in applying weathered looking earth colors to steel and bronze and to the found industrial metals which he so skillfully fashioned into his own particular visual statement. The earliest of his sculptures in the Storm King Art Center collection, entitled *The Sitting Printer*, was completed in 1954. A cubist collage of found metal objects, it is built around a typesetter's composing tray which becomes the torso topped by a metal disc forming the head. A bronze with green patina, this seated personage measures seven feet in height. Its abrupt rhythms and forthright use of materials characterizes Smith's work of the mid 1950's.

A second work, begun in 1954 and entitled *The Iron Woman*, is one of a dozen pieces composed of steel slabs in various sizes which Smith actually forged, hammered or shaped in a metal press directly from the raw steel. This in itself was a remarkable feat even at Smith's Terminal Iron Works that was his studio at Bolton Landing. In this sculpture the upward and downward thrust of the forged forms meet in a central swirl of deftly contained shapes. The varied angles of the surfaces catch the light and give the piece a remarkable lightness and grace.

Smith restlessly explored many three dimensional visual patterns and movements leading finally to the great monumental steel sculptures of his last prolific years. In *Five Units Equal* of 1956 the cubed rectangles are set on a central shaft. These repeated blunt forms give a strong sense of solidity and changing intensity as the viewer observes the piece from different angles. Its mustard green color, quite different from the green patina of other pieces in this period, seems to accent the geometric images as they become a commanding part of the surrounding gardens. Two other works, *Portrait of a Lady Painter* and *Personage of May* are sculpture collages of found objects fashioned some three years later than the above mentioned *The Sitting Printer*. *Personage of May* is starkly simple in its vertical stance. Its spade-like head is supported by a long somewhat heavy shaft around which an irregular sheet of metal is attached to suggest the torso and its enveloping cloak. Its casual simplicity gives it a detached but haunting presence.

In 1958 David Smith began to use stainless steel in his creation of monumental outdoor sculptures. In Storm King Art Center's work, entitled *XI Books III Apples*, 1959, the artist employed an electric burnishing tool to create brush-like strokes that catch the changing light. The effect is one of dazzling calligraphy as the light shifts and changes on the surfaces of the squares and discs of stainless steel that composes this authoritative sculpture. This particular work heralds the imposing *Cubi* series of twenty-eight monumental stainless steel sculptures completed during the years from 1961 until Smith's death in 1965. Also completed in 1959 is *Study in Arcs*, painted a strong yellow orange, slightly weathered in tone. It is considered the most lyrical of Smith's later works. Growing out of a circular base are a cluster of nine curved slightly tapered lengths of steel. The modular steel form is repeated and built into a magnificently articulated, fully three dimensional image. Viewed from any angle its calligraphic tracery is a crescendo of soaring arcs.

*Raven V* and *Albany I* complete Smith's 1959 sculptures in the Storm King Art Center collection. *Raven V* is reminiscent of the artist's *Royal Bird* of 1948 in its horizontal composition and its bird iconography. More simplified than the earlier work, *Raven V*, in its forward thrust and its skeletal form becomes a strong, floating image that simplified, reappears in the smaller sculpture, *Albany I*. The latter, painted a flat black, is entirely abstract in its perfectly balanced discs and chunky rectangles. Perhaps it is Smith's bird iconography brought to its ultimate realization.

The 1960's representation of David Smith's sculpture in the Storm King Art Center collection is noted in *Three Ovals Soar* and *Tank Totem VII*. In such works David Smith again brings together the qualities of both sculpture and painting into visually eloquent and sophisticated imagery. The three oval shapes set on a very tall steel shaft are a prime example of the artist's stylistic solution to the attenuated forms made possible by the sheer strength of the material itself. Again, as in *XI Books III Apples*, the burnished surfaces are highlighted by the changing light and the varying angles of vision. In *Tank Totem VII* familiar forms (the disc, the rectangle and the curved tapered length of steel) make up the principal structure. However to the steel components Smith has brought an added and intriguing dimension through the skillful use of painted rectangles within the structure itself. The large rectangle that constitutes the upper right section of the composition is painted white in exact proportion to a second white rectangle painted within the confines of the circular concave disc fashioned from a tank end. The dark blue background color and the single tapered and curved length of steel unite the two rectilinear forms. In this work the artist has achieved a remarkable pictorial study in lines and subtle planes.

In 1962 David Smith spent a month in Voltri, Italy near Genoa where, as the guest of an Italian metallurgical concern, he produced the prodigious number of twenty-six sculptures. This entire series was later exhibited at the summer festival at Spoleto. All welded pieces, they record Smith's many stylistic interests in the early years of the 1960's. These works of industrial metal scrap of monu-

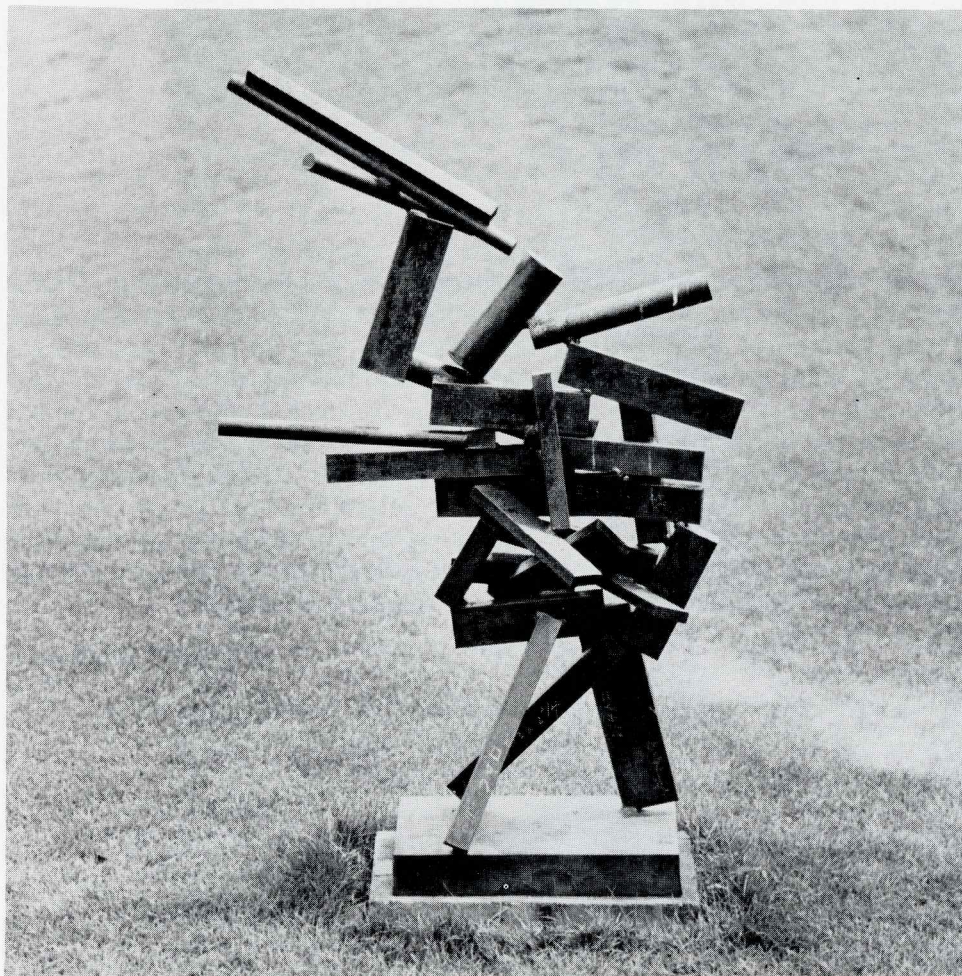


mental proportions are very large assemblages. Storm King Art Center's Voltron XX is of more modest size. Its combination of industrial sections and tools — tongs, wrenches and weights — all serve not only as rugged forms in the composition but as expressive symbols as well.

Becca 1964, the latest Smith work in the collection, is a collage of many small steel units welded together. Its combined elements, although more complicated than those of Albany I, evoke a similar abstract power. A diminutive name for Smith's daughter Rebecca, the title Becca appears on a number of his sculptures during this period.

To his acceptance of 20th century idioms, materials and tools Smith also brought an extraordinary strength and integrity of vision. His large oeuvre mirrors the visual achievements, and on occasion, the human frustrations of the mid 20th century. David Smith has summed up his own ideas of the artist and his work: "You know who I am and what I stand for. I have no allegiance, but I stand, and I know I stand and I know what the challenge is, and I challenge everything and everybody. And I think that is what every artist has to do . . ."

— — *Una E. Johnson, 1971*



**BECCA. 1964**  
Steel

#### SCULPTURE:

ALBANY I. 1959  
Painted Steel

BECCA. 1964  
Steel

XI BOOKS III APPLES. 1959  
Stainless Steel

FIVE UNITS EQUAL. 1956  
Painted Steel

PERSONAGE OF MAY. 1957  
Bronze

PORTRAIT OF A LADY PAINTER. 1957  
Bronze with Green Patina

RAVEN V. 1959  
Stainless Steel and Steel

SITTING PRINTER. 1954  
Bronze with Green Patina

STUDY IN ARCS. 1959  
Painted Steel

TANK TOTEM VII. 1960  
Steel

THE IRON WOMAN. 1954–56  
Painted Steel

THREE OVALS SOAR. 1960  
Stainless Steel

VOLTRON XX (VOLTON XX). 1963  
Steel



Several things in the making and the experience of sculpture seem to me worth mentioning. One is the knowledge that it is difficult to make a sculptural gesture without portraying either some attitude of the human figure or some experience of space, either architectural or free. In most cases there is some sculptural imitation of some creature form or action; even in many "non-objective" works there is a posture or attitude which is evocative. And whether or not this reference is discernable there is always in good sculpture the construction of a space that one can encompass or imagine to be encompassed. Then there is the interchangeability of two or three dimensionality. Just as a painting on a flat surface can conjure the sensation of vast space, the structure of a sculpture can be seen as a two dimensional image, a pattern. And when that two dimensional derivation intimates another three dimensional idea the seeing of sculpture gets a little complicated. I believe that the presence of these ideas or qualities is what gives a work the presence without which it cannot qualify as art.

*Richard Stankiewicz*  
1978

## SCULPTURE

AUSTRALIA NO. 9, 1969

Welded Steel

Storm King Art Center

Mountainville, New York

CELLIST. 1956

Steel and Iron

CHAIN PEOPLE. 1960—28.

Steel

Hanford Yang

KABUKI DANCER. 1956

Iron and Steel

Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art,

MARIONETTE. 1960

Steel

PLAYFUL BATHERS. 1960—61

Steel

RAILROAD URCHIN. 1959

Steel and Iron

THE BRIDE. 1955

Steel

UNTITLED. c. 1959

Steel

UNTITLED. c. 1963

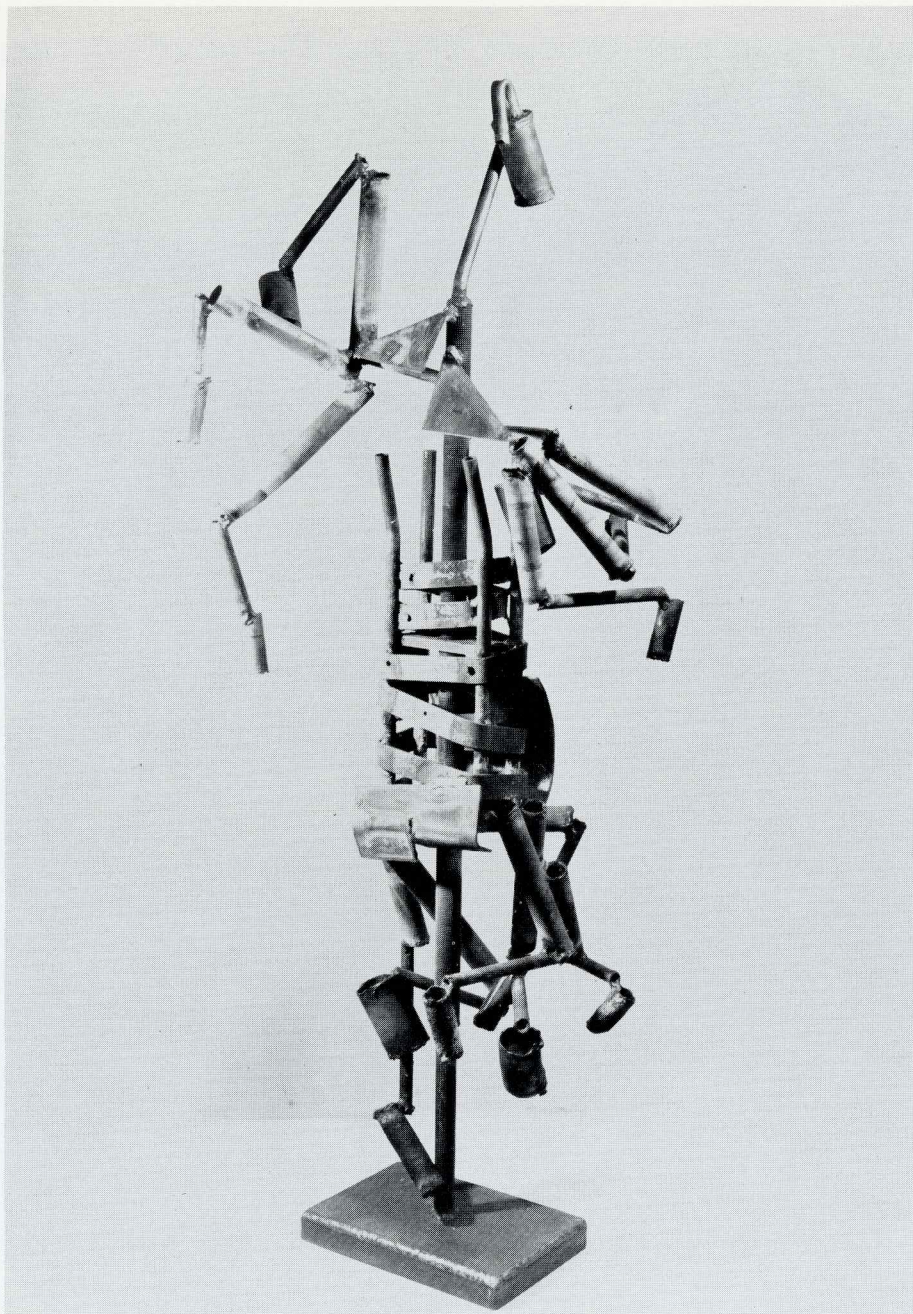
Steel

UNTITLED. 1972—2

Steel

Hanford Yang





**MARIONETTE. 1960**  
Steel

**SCULPTURE:**

UNTITLED. 1973  
Steel

UNTITLED. 1973-3  
Steel

UNTITLED. 1973-8  
Steel

UNTITLED (Wall Relief). 1976  
Steel

UNTITLED (Wall Relief). 1977  
Steel

Unless otherwise indicated all works on loan  
from the artist and Zabriskie Gallery,

URCHIN IN THE GRASS. 1956  
Iron and Steel

The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Gift of Philip Johnson

1971 (Relief). 1971  
Bronze

1971 (Relief). 1971  
Bronze

1978-1. 1978  
Bronze

1978-2. 1978  
Bronze



I am interested in creating a sense of place. In each piece the sense of place is determined by the relationship between outside to inside in terms of both size and color.

I start with an image of a dwelling, but not with the intention of creating architecture. In the process of working, references to tables, columns, and podiums emerge, and these references serve to qualify the dwelling.

In the finished image I am more interested in the kind of place that is suggested than in the dwelling or house that is part of that image.

*Marja Vallila*  
1978

#### CERAMICS

CLOUD HOUSE. 1978  
Clay

OUTLOOK. 1978  
Clay

CLOUD PALACE. 1978  
Clay

COURTYARD. 1978  
Clay

#### SCULPTURE

CHIMNEY HOUSE. 1977  
Steel and Copper

CLIFF HOUSE No. 2. 1977  
Steel

COLUMN HOUSE. 1977–78  
Steel

COPPER COURTYARD. 1977  
Steel and Copper

DESK HOUSE. 1978  
Steel and Lead

ELEVATED COURTYARD. 1977  
Steel

HOUSE ON THE PLAIN. 1977  
Steel

#### DRAWINGS

UNTITLED. 1977  
Graphite/Wax

UNTITLED. 1977  
Graphite/Wax

UNTITLED. 1977  
Graphite/Wax

INTERIOR HOUSE. 1977  
Steel and Copper

LOST HOUSE. 1977  
Steel

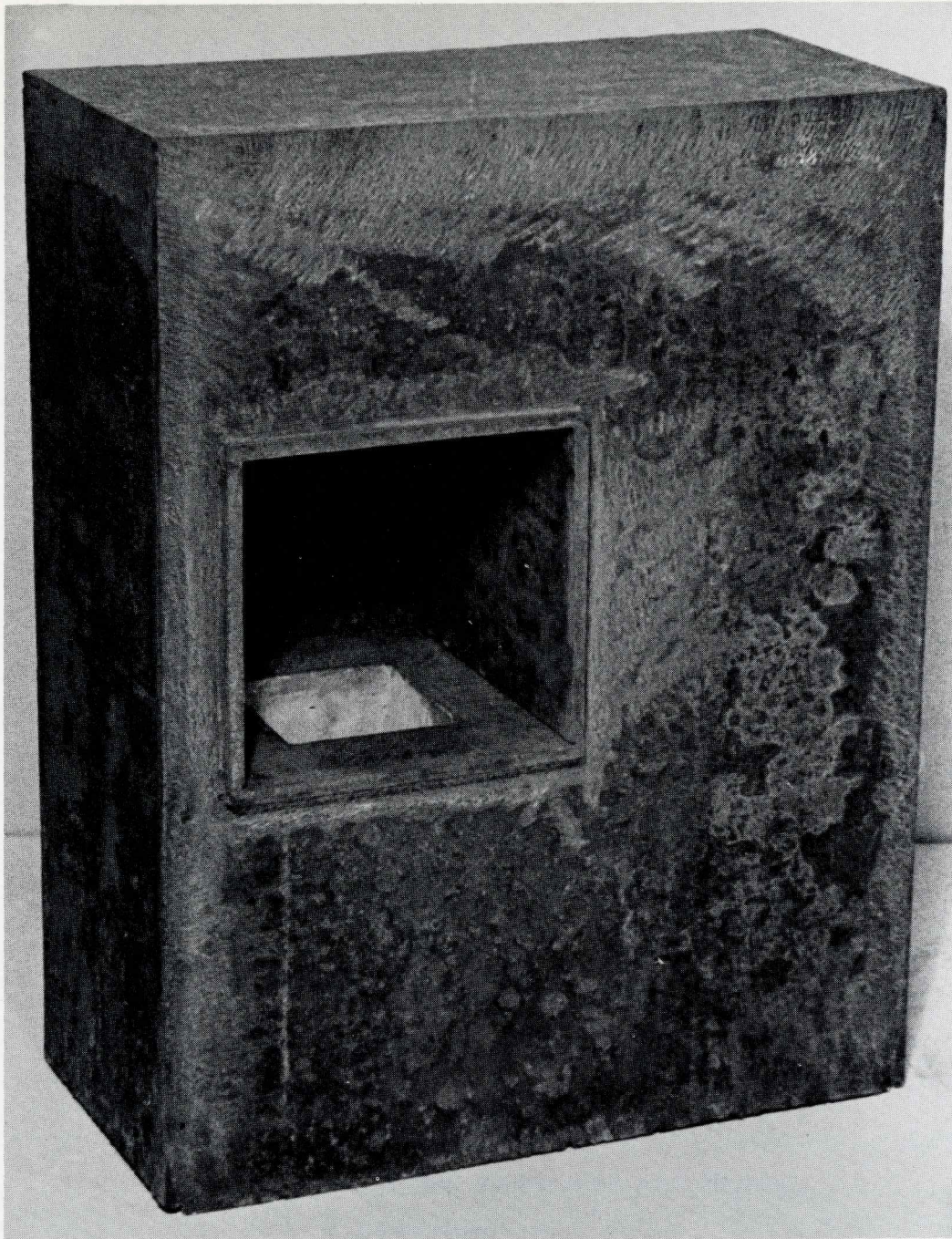
NEW HOUSE. 1978  
Steel

SINK HOUSE. 1977  
Steel

TRENCH HOUSE. 1977  
Steel

WEDGE HOUSE. 1978  
Steel and Lead





INTERIOR HOUSE. 1977  
Steel and Copper



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