

# Art: The Whitney's New Acquisitions

## Easel-Made Work Is in Negligible Minority

By STUART PRESTON

EVER a sensitive barometer to the intellectual climate of our time, the recent acquisitions show at the Whitney Museum of American Art makes two apparently contradictory impressions. It is full of surprising things and yet it arrives at a point where nothing is any longer surprising because nothing is any longer expected. Finally the sheer number of assemblages, constructions, collages and artifacts difficult to pigeon-hole, putting the old-fashioned easel picture into a negligible minority, virtually announces the demise of abstract expressionism.

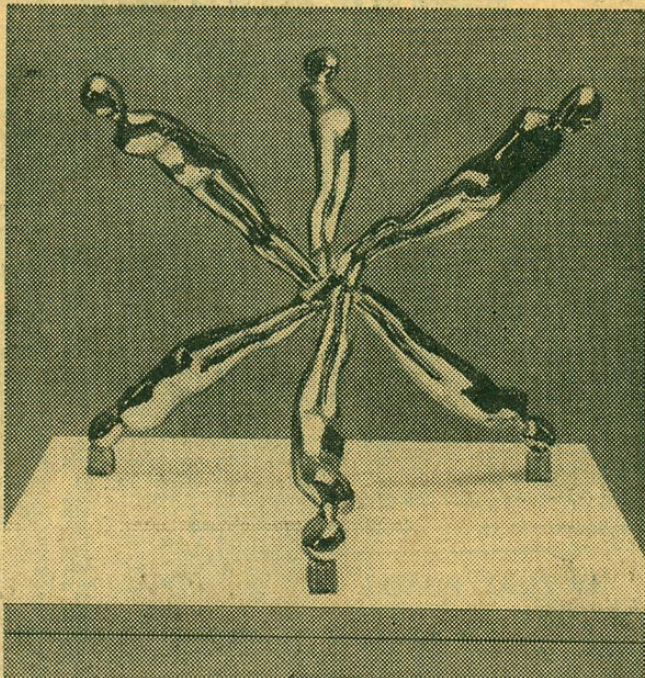
Unquestionably the eye is diverted here over and over again, registering a startled look at Mary Bauermeister's dazzling crystalline construction; at Mike Todd's assemblage incorporating golf clubs; at Jim Dine's rack of toothbrushes; at Leroy Lamis's geometrical box in plastic; at Kusama's collage composed entirely of airmail stickers; at Andy Warhol's bouquet of bowties, at Ernest Trova's gleaming, gravity-defying male and at the most repulsive object of the season, Ralph Ortiz's "Archeological Find."

Such are some of the highlights in a predominantly "way-out" group of 95 works, 63 by artists represented at the Whitney for the first time. They come as purchases and gifts, a gratifyingly large number having been donated by The Friends of the Whitney Museum.

The exhibition also makes clear that artists, if they wish to remain in the swim, will have to do some serious homework on new techniques and mediums. Painters can no longer just squeeze paint from a tube.

They must in the future become acquainted with the properties and possibilities of acrylic emulsion and Liquitex water acrylic, while sculptors will need some training in engineering as well as a mastery of Plexiglass, polyester resin, fiberglass and epoxy.

The most conservative group of new acquisitions is not on view, paintings subject to life interest by such as Paul Cadmus, Philip Evergood, Marsden Hartley, John Kane, Theodoros Stamos, and Reu-



Geoffrey Clements

Ernest Trova's chrome-plated bronze, at Whitney Museum

ben Tam. Elsewhere, artists who stop short of the non-communicative solitude of eccentricity are Elizabeth Sparhawk-Jones, Dorothea Tanning, Charles Hinman, Frederick Karoly and Joseph Cornell.

The Whitney show will continue until June 13.

Among other noteworthy exhibitions are the following:

**Gregory Masurovsky** (Albert Loeb Gallery, 12 East 57th Street): Semi-abstract figures and heads come into a refined and remote state of esthetic existence through a multiplicity of tiny pen strokes that meaningfully bite paper. This is feverish calligraphy.

**Harry Dix** (Bertha Schaefer Gallery, 41 East 57th Street): Neatly arranged junk assemblages are witness to a deft hand at carpentry and to an anxiety over letting any useless object go to waste.

**David Gray** (Feigen Gallery, 24 East 81st Street): These ship-shape hard-edge solid constructions in welded steel and painted with automobile paint are too efficient and streamlined to arouse more than a feeling that they are well done.

**KOSICE** (Terry Dintenfass Gallery, 18 East 67th Street): One of the most original exhibitions of the year, with Plexiglass constructions, not dissimilar to those by Naum Gabo, animated by flashing

lights, like those on an over-worked telephone switchboard, and by flowing, bubbling water reflecting the lights. Many of these can be called fountains, since water is the prime element in their dynamic being.

**ASOMA** (Findlay Gallery, 11 East 57th Street): Semi-abstract paintings of girls in interiors, raucously stylish in color, by a Japanese artist who steps-up Matisse's discreet way into shrill and jazzy statements. Basic good taste just prevents these blaring paintings from being intolerably loud and blinding.

**E. F. HEBNER** (Siegelau Gallery, 16 West 56th Street): All the familiar ingredients of pop art are cleverly assembled into these "cinematic paintings" by an artist who is better at exploiting the ideas of others than making an original contribution.

**MARCEL CARDINAL** (Greenross Gallery, 41 East 57th Street): Fairly entertaining mosaic panels composed of rows of shiny colored stones, pottery bits and bric-a-brac embedded in some glutinous substance make one think of boxes of jellybeans.

**SUE FULLER** (Bertha Schaefer Gallery, 41 East 57th Street): Considerable formal tensions built by these string constructions whose multicolored wire and string suggest taut energy being held at the breaking point.