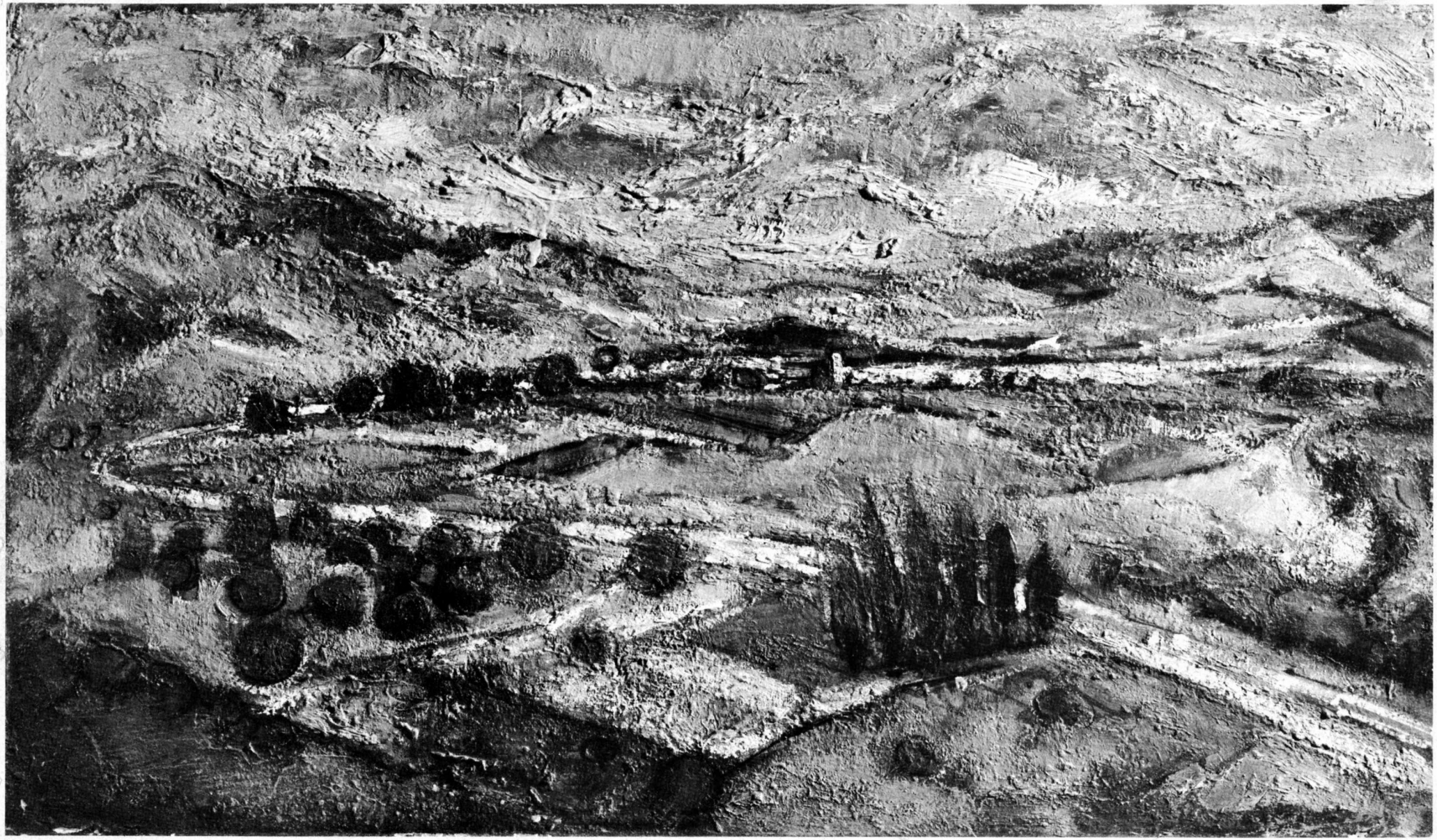
Kalamazoo College

REVIEW



Art in the Colleges

by Michael J. Waskowsky

THE ELEVENTH CENTURY MONK, Raoul Glaber, likened the effect of the great number of new churches built after 1000 A.D. to a "white mantle spread over all of Europe." In our own time, the past decade has witnessed a similar efflorescence of fine arts centers and art buildings dotting the greenswards of countless colleges across the land. Today, art is no longer the exclusive province of the large university or the venerable New England college. Even the most provincial of small schools aspires toward cultural sophistication by the acquisition of a new building and an expanded program in the arts.

The typical fine arts building houses not only classrooms with audio-visual equipment for courses in the aesthetic appreciation and history of art; it is also likely to include studios for the basic areas of creative expression — drawing, painting, graphics, ceramics, and sculpture. In addition, every college attempts to maintain a small gallery or exhibition space. Through a varied program of art exhibitions, lectures, and films on art, the small college is able to retain contact with the cultural expressions and trends of the time and shed much of its former provincialism.

It would seem from the evidence briefly noted that art is flourishing vigorously in colleges throughout the country. The large class enrollments and expanded course offerings in the appreciation and history of art; studio courses in artistic expression; the growing publication and sales of quality books on art and inexpensive reproductions of art; the purchase of art materials — all of these things represent an increased interest, involvement, and financial expenditure on the part of the college student and college administration. In fact, one is tempted to speak glowingly of a new "renaissance" in American culture and art.

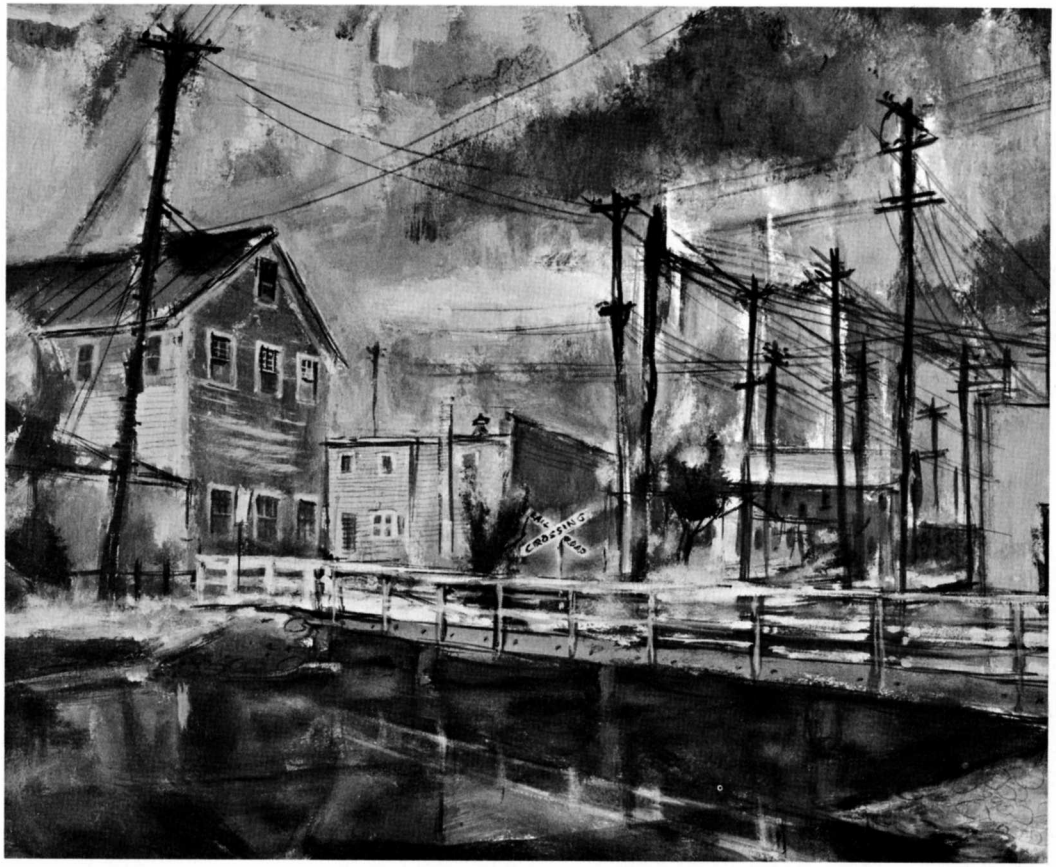
However, amidst this note of optimism and hope, anxiety and serious concern are warranted. Increased enrollments and expansion of art facilities have placed a premium on the qualified and mature teacher of art. To meet the demand, the large universities and art schools are producing annually a record number of graduate students in art, some of whom will fill the need of the artist-teacher in the college environment. However, it is not the quantity but the quality of the product that is held suspect. The mass production of a new breed of artist-teachers, conditioned by the pursuit and emphasis on the "new," the "unusual," the "shocking" — prevalent in the contemporary art scene and dutifully practiced in the art schools — is slowly transforming art on many college campuses into a sterile, quasi-intellectualized activity, undisciplined in its chaos and anarchy and formlessness, and without the basis of any existing aesthetic criteria. Furthermore, the growing scientific diletantism of art's obsessive preoccupation with multi-media gadgetry and technology threatens, ominously, the further dehumanization and degradation of the human being and the human condition.

If art, within the context of the liberal arts tradition and experience, is to fulfill its purpose to expand and sharpen human sensibilities and sensitivities, then the forthcoming decade of our time must be charged with the responsibility to discover the means by which the organic human being may be returned to its fitting relevance to creativity and the core of life itself.

Reprinted from December, 1969, *Baptist Leader*.

Acrylic paintings (1969)
by Michael Waskowsky

COVER: *Oil on panel*
by Michael Waskowksy



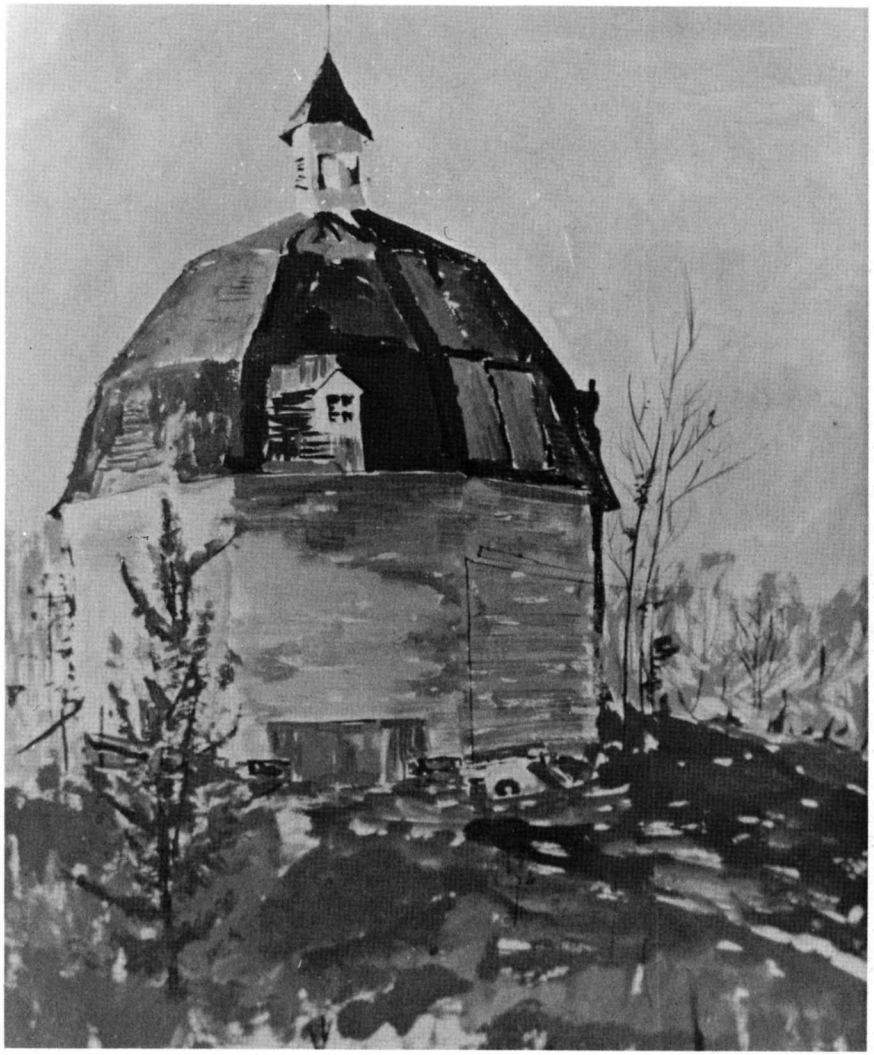
These and other recent paintings will be on exhibit in January at the GILMORE ART CENTER in Kalamazoo.

Patricia Bauer and
Michael Waskowsky,
Light Fine Arts Building

Patricia Bauer '69
Display designer for retail department store,
Ann Arbor, Michigan

ALABASTER SCULPTURE

"Alabaster is well-suited for non-representational expression. The beauty of the stone precludes striving for a detailed rendering of the real world and demands only the definition of mass in a unique and harmonious manner. I enjoy this freedom which comes in drawing a form out of a piece of alabaster. It satisfies me in a way that imposing an already existing idea on a stone does not."



Marion Banister '62
New York City
TEMPERA

"Near my home one autumn morning I painted this octagonal barn in temperas. I had just returned to this land of heedless, rapid change from my Peace Corps term in the quiet and exotic Andes of Peru. I found tranquility in painting and drawing in wooded northeastern Ohio.

This old building, one of eight such barns still standing in Ohio, is over one hundred years old. Each season sees it lean a bit more on its solid dry frame. Where shingles and boards have fallen off, rain, wind and snow have depleted its strength.

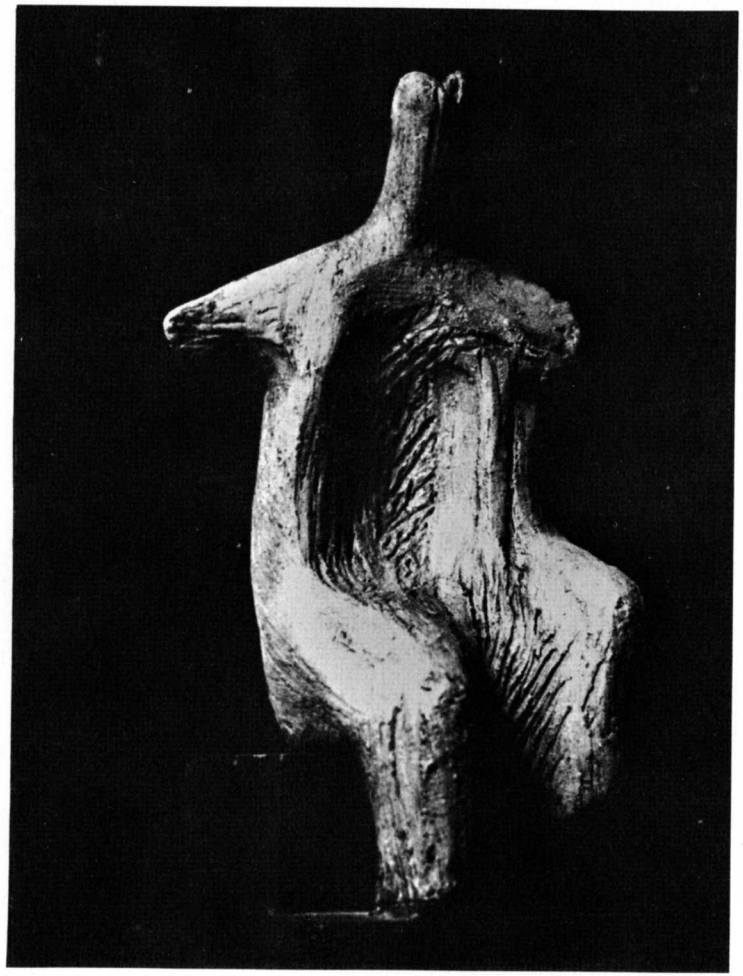
In Geauga County, the barn is the only testimony to the artistic concern of the early pioneers.

I paint in New York City now where everyday I see around me landmarks toppled to make way for aesthetically shoddy complexes."

Marcia Wood '55
M.F.A., 1956, Cranbrook Academy of Art
Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1960-61
Harvard University, Summer, 1963
MacDowell Colony, Spring, 1966
Assistant Professor of Art, Kalamazoo College

FOUR STRIDING FIGURES FROM THE BACK
BRONZE RELIEF

"Whether it is an involvement in the studio with the actual practice of an art, or the study of important works of art, in both instances the student is confronted with sensibility and emotion. There in the work of art is an expression of how it feels 'to be.' It strikes me that one of the major educational values that comes through art is this involvement that encourages feeling to keep up with intellect."



SEATED FIGURE
TERRA COTTA

Lyle Gerts '68
U.S. Army, Vietnam
MURAL in Severn Hall, Kalamazoo College,
depicting college sports

Nancy Wolff Underhill '56
Studied painting at
Cleveland Institute of Art
Represented by Malvina Freedson Gallery

GOD'S EYE
ACRYLIC COLLAGE
(appeared in the Chautauqua Annual Show of American Art 1969 and juried shows in Cleveland)

"This is a white acrylic circle with painting surrounded by a square of black felt. This 'painting' is primarily collage, gleaned from magazines, and black acrylic line drawing. The collage material is varnish in high gloss medium while the white portions are varnish in flat medium, creating an interesting surface pattern. One gets the impression of black and white, but reds, greens, and yellows and many values of these colors have been used to give a feeling of depth and warmth — a sort of 'glow' to the painting."

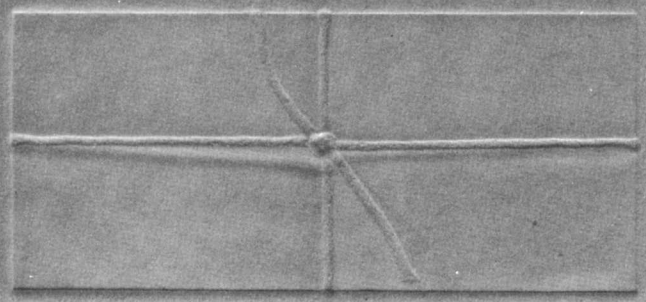
Joyce Tiefenthal Macrorie '54
M.F.A., 1955,
Cranbrook Academy of Art
Adjunct professor,
Western Michigan University
ENGRAVING ON LUCITE
(black and white)
with embossing

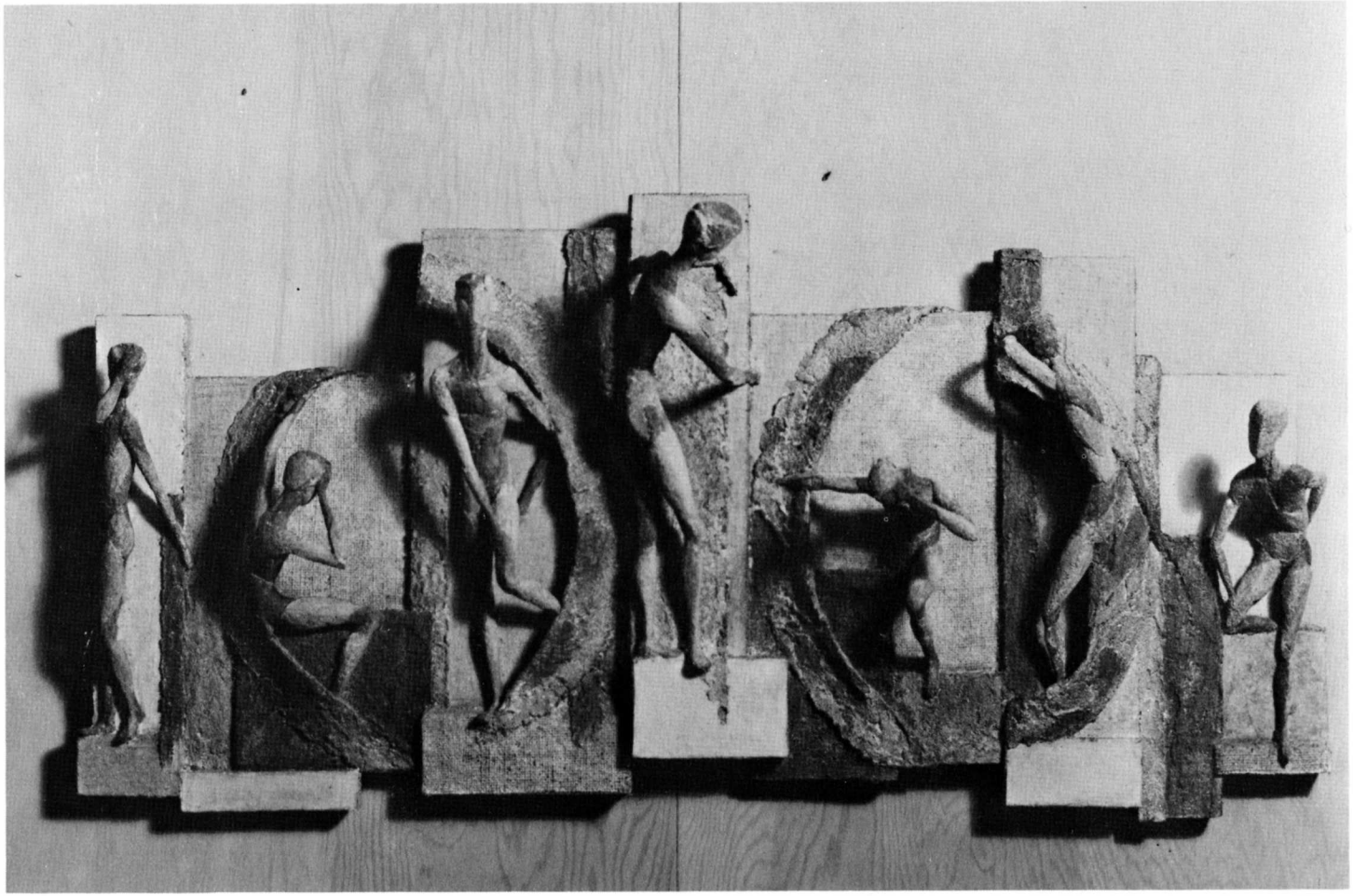
"This piece was a present for my mother's birthday and it was intended to be somewhat whimsical. The engraved part is realistic enough to be comforting but it is still an illusion; the embossed package is an illusion, too, but of a different kind. It suggests that a real package is hiding under the paper. The pull between the two kinds of illusion is what interested me as an artist."

10/10

A Birthday Present for a Former Literalist

Joyce T. Macrorie

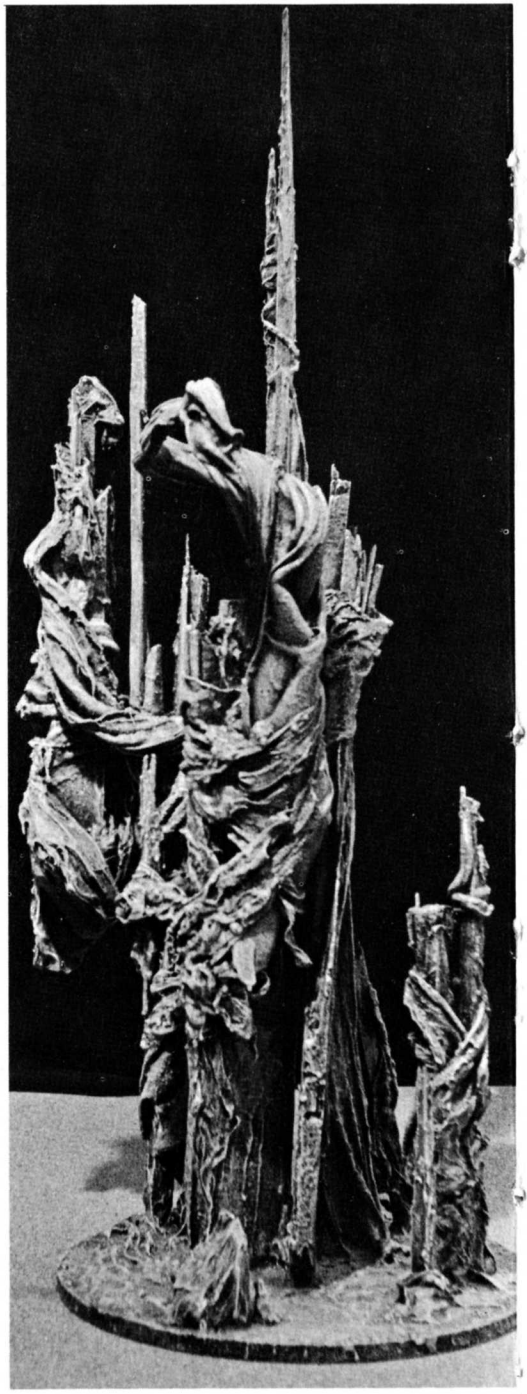




Marjorie Burgstahler Stone '54
M.F.A., Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1956
Huntingford Hartford Fellowship, 1956-57
Represented by Rex Evans Gallery, Los Angeles

RONDO
WOOD MACHE RELIEF, 42 inches long

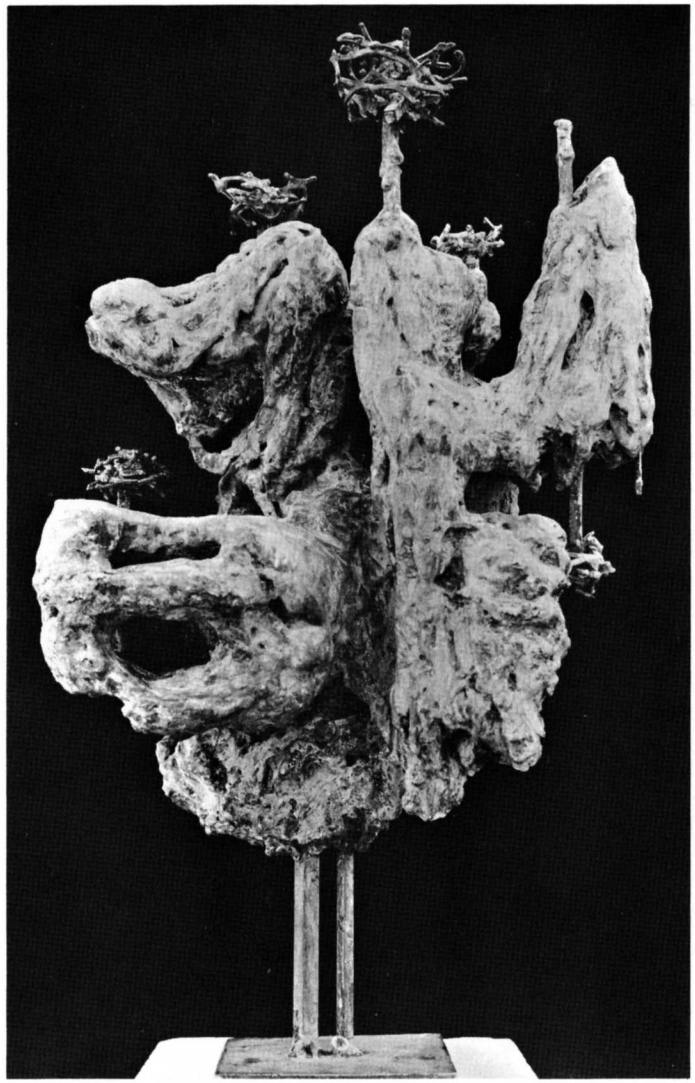
"Man lives in infinite space; however, man's life revolves within many or few abstract spaces depending on his involvement with life. These spaces not only overlap within one person's being but merge endlessly to other beings. Ultimately some total form takes place. My concern with executing this concept is to bring about a form that is as perfect as possible — implying the ultimate hope of man."



SCULPTURE AND DETAIL IN PLASTIC

Whitney Sevin '53
M.F.A., 1958, Cranbrook Academy of Art
Associate Professor of Art, Grand Valley State College, Allendale, Michigan

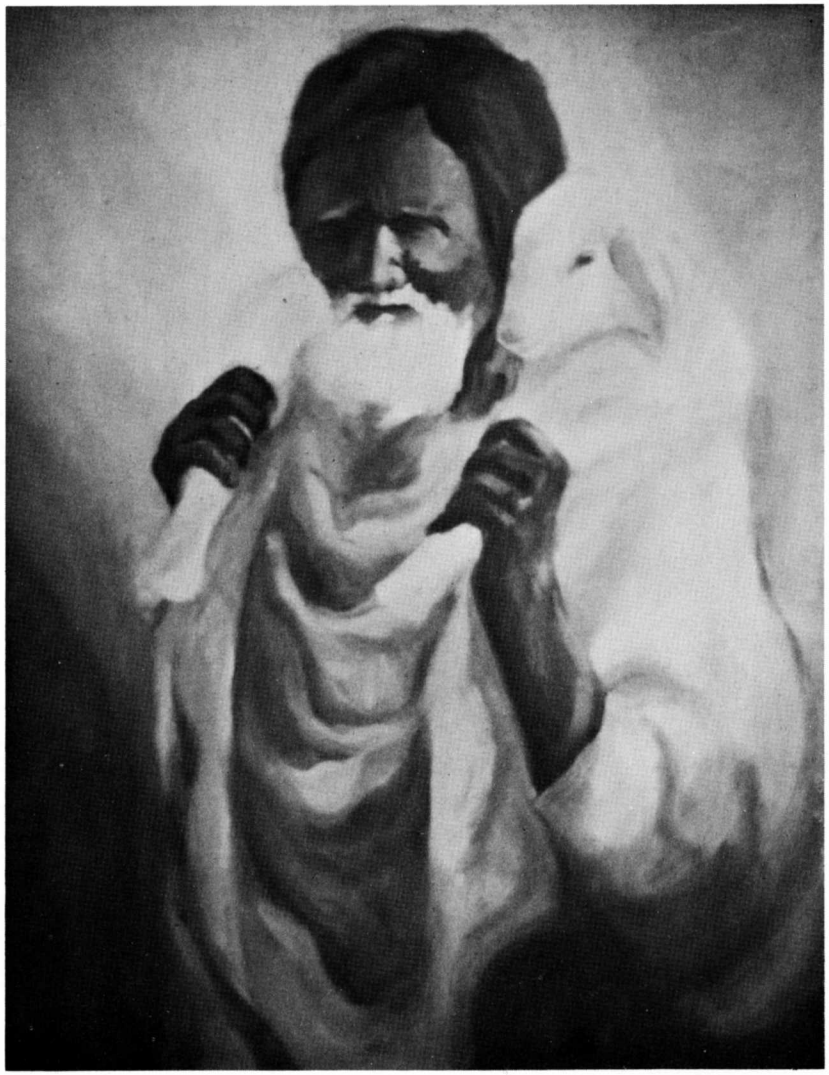
Re sculpture in plastic: *"The particular type of plastic used in this sculpture was polyester resin. In the raw state, it is a very thick liquid. By adding drops of hardener, the plastic will become solid in fifteen to thirty minutes. Dark powdered pigments such as blue, red, brown or black were first mixed into the liquid to make the surface opaque. At times, white was added to make the surface gray so that light would be reflected to enable the study of the forms as work progressed. Thixotropic (powdered glass fibres) was used for strength, and silica sand brought about a slightly grainy texture. The structure of the sculpture was made from a circular piece of plywood, a splintered wood crate, and cloth. When the plastic form was completed, the surface was painted with acrylic paint, starting with coats of dark gray and building toward a white with each successive coat."*



AERIE
WELDED METAL AND PLASTER SCULPTURE

Janice Janik '66
M.S. in Art Education, Pratt Institute, 1967
Elementary art consultant, Holland, Michigan
PRINT (INTAGLIO), 1967

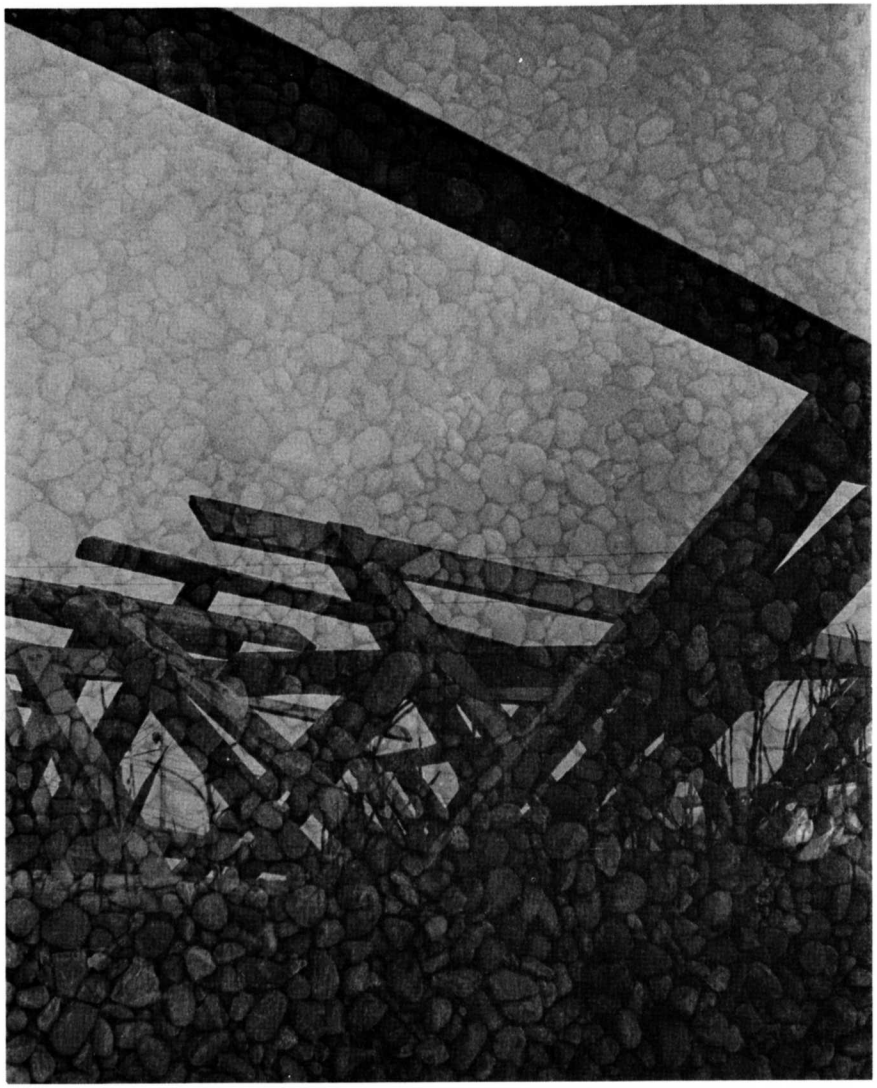
"This is the third in a series of prints that began with a group of figures. Gradually, the original figures were abstracted and techniques of aquatint, relief etching, and soft ground etching were employed, using the values of white, black, and gray. The intent was to create a sense of movement as achieved in sculpture in three-dimension. Consequently, space becomes flattened as black shapes are first 'read,' then grays, then white."

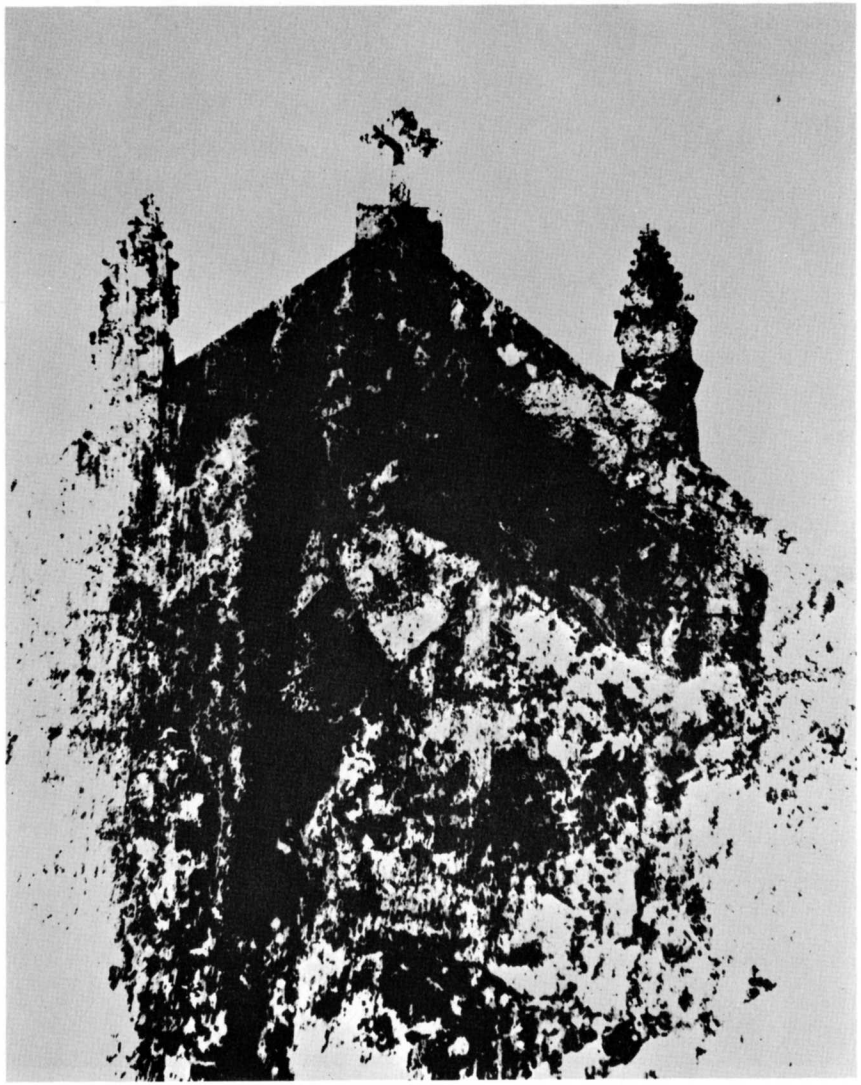


Gena Eldredge Schultz '63
Vallejo, California
GREEK SHEPHERD
OIL PAINTING

Gretchen Van Atta '68
Pomona, New York
CINDY
OIL PAINTING, 1968

Barbara Paxson '67
Served one year as VISTA Volunteer, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as high school art teacher
Graduate study, Pratt Institute
Occupational therapist, Cambridge, Mass.
FAMILY
ACRYLIC PAINTING, 1966
"I like acrylic paint for its bright colors. I had just returned from my foreign study in Africa when I did this painting. The beautiful black people wth their rich-colored clothes were very inspiring to me."





Steven Elkinton '69
American Friends Service Committee, Washington, D.C.
PHOTOGRAPHS, black and white
Drying Nets and Pebbles
The Moldy Church

Jennifer Smith Sanderson '66
Kalamazoo, Michigan

POTTERY

"I work in ceramics to enjoy the total involvement that medium demands; the finished product is often of secondary value to the art of making it. When ceramics facilities are not available, graphics provide a second, but a less exciting, way of expressing visual pleasure — a different form which is two-dimensional. But the two media are complementary; both depend on drawing for a beginning, both rely on line for success in their composition."

Anita A. Zeltins '61
M.F.A., 1965,
Pratt Institute
Art teacher,
St Luke's School,
New York City

TERRA COTTA SCULPTURE, 1961

Virginia Molnar '68
Graduate student, Pratt Institute
SCULPTURE, 1969
"The piece of sculpture is composed of wire, polyester resin, Sobo glue and paper. The purpose is a combination of the feeling for man, his universe, despair and hallelujah."

Brent S. Jenkins '68
Alternate Service Duty, Dallas County (Tex.) Hospital District
GARGOYLE
BRONZE SCULPTURE, 1968

Barbara Meier '68
Graduate student,
University of Arkansas,
Fayetteville, Arkansas

WILLIAM O

OIL PAINTING, 1968

Joseph Pizzat '49
Ed.D., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955
Post-doctoral study, Pratt Institute, 1961
Chairman, Art Department, Southwest Minnesota State College, Marshall, Minnesota

TREES AND SHADOWS
ACRYLIC ON MASONITE, 1963

"A liberal arts education should be based on a balanced interaction of varied academic disciplines and human endeavors. Art as a deeply personal experience within the framework of a liberal education should not be isolated from the mainstream of human achievement. Rather, it should be used to propagate those inner values inherent in artistic expression of a creative population. Art so concerned in education is not limited to a few, but open to all; not merely used to develop the sensibilities of the talented, but those of all; not meant to cherish and cling to the past, but to gain in understanding of the present; not thought to be confined to a studio or classroom, but to envelop one's total environment. Art in this light should not only develop human beings as artists but also cultivate that which is special in each of us."

The Fine Arts and the Liberal Arts College

by Robert D. Dewey '47, Dean of the Chapel

AS THIS SPECIAL ISSUE of the *Review* makes clear, Michael Waskowsky gave substance to his belief that the function of art is "to expand and sharpen human sensibilities." He was equally concerned with quality, warning against a dilettantism which "threatens, ominously, the further dehumanization and degradation of the human being and the human condition." He shared with many of his colleagues a concern about the future of the arts generally and at Kalamazoo College in particular.

In this time of ferment and change there are legitimate reasons for re-assessing the quality and function of the arts in the liberal arts college.

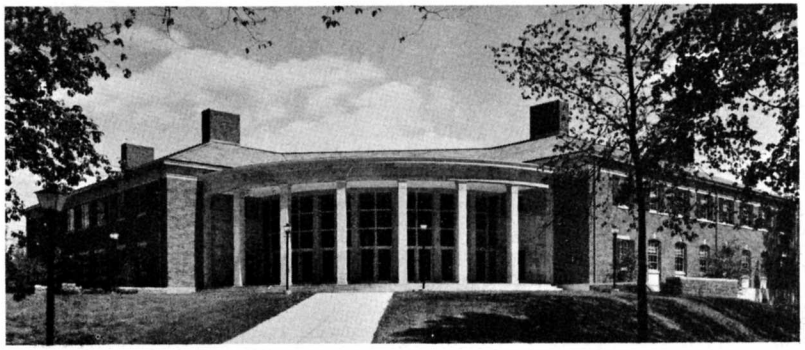
If personal growth and development are legitimate concerns of liberal arts education, then opportunities for participation in and appreciation of the creative and expressive arts are indispensable. In a remarkable degree art, music, dance, speech and drama, all nurture what might be called the "reserved self" in contrast to that societal self which is the target of so much of the curriculum. Students go to school to learn how to function in society and to contribute something to it. But their own identities are not totally reflected in either the training they receive or the roles they will take in society. Yet to them the "reserved self" is the more crucial, and one could venture a guess that persons whose educational experiences have included the stimulation of this "reserved self" make the best citizens. Not infrequently it is a poem, or a musical work, or a part in a play, which stimulates the student's reserved self and opens him to new growth and development.

Most learning is from the outside in — bodies of content to master, skills to absorb through contact with those more skilled, objective data to analyze, arrange, and use. But surely learning in the arts is possible only from the inside out, through the expression of that which is within. There are skills in the arts, yes, but a commitment to express what is inside one is a pre-requisite to their mastery. Such inside-out learning ought to cut back inhibition and increase one's sense of freedom, identity and independence. This is good in itself. There should also be some over-spill; inside-out learning ought to have an impact on the learning process in general and should serve more effective learning across the board.

In an increasingly technological society, the arts provide a humanizing influence of tremendous significance. The sheer demands of a society such as ours tend to flatten out existence and make it one-dimensional. The arts, which heighten experience and sharpen its meanings, provide an important counter-force to this tendency. It is no accident that the demand for community theaters, art centers, and music groups is growing. As work patterns change and leisure becomes more plentiful, people discover a hunger to express themselves, to create — or to appreciate when they cannot create — in short, to discover meanings and values beneath the horizontal level of daily life. The liberal arts college that satisfies this hunger teaches its students to be fully functioning human beings as well as competent members of society.

Interest in the arts is rising on many college and university campuses, partly because the young are so sensitive to the social needs cited above, and partly because the arts, like religion, are oriented to meaning and value with which the young appear to be so concerned. As shifts go — first to the natural sciences, now to the social sciences, and even to religion — the arts may well be next. Surely this is the time to enhance the teaching and appreciation of the arts. And surely the liberal arts college is the place to sharpen human sensibilities and to relate the rich resources of the arts to the total environment of learning.

EDITORIAL BOARD THIS ISSUE: Phyllis S. Dykhouse '33, Harold J. Harris, Harry Randall '46, Walter W. Waring, Marcia Wood '54, Marilyn Hinkle '44 (Editor).



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