

⁴⁴ Fried's announcement of theatre's 'war' with 'modernist painting' and 'art as such' extends to a war 'with modernist sensibility as such'. This claim, which he admits is impossible 'to prove or substantiate' has a subjectivity which is only superficially masked by his pseudo-scientific presentation of three subsidiary 'propositions or theses'. One of these is quoted above; the others are: 'The success, even the survival, of the arts has come to depend on their ability to defeat theatre', and 'The concepts of quality and value—and to the extent that these are central to art, the concept of art itself—are meaningful, or wholly meaningful, only within the individual arts.'

Much of the peculiar originality of Fried's unbelievable claims is probably influenced by Stanley Cavell, a young philosophy teacher at Harvard whose ideas on aesthetics have impressed Fried very much, and to whose writings on 'Music Discomposed' and 'Must We Mean What We Say?' Fried respectfully footnotes in this essay. That the influence parallel to Greenberg's on Fried is *philosophical* does little to improve Fried's critical perspective on Greenberg's approach or his own emotional openness in direct confrontations with artistic experiences transcending traditional aesthetic categories.

⁴⁵ *Artforum*, February, April and March, 1967; excerpts from a book soon to be published by Harry Abrams in New York.

⁴⁶ London, Thames & Hudson, 1967.

⁴⁷ She speaks of styles as living realities in a history abstracted from artists' lives; thus, 'Abstract Expressionism was born of two (historic) catastrophes' (p. 155); and 'the current of geometric abstraction' is described as a 'movement, which had been active in the thirties, was to run submerged in the forties and fifties, and become central once again in the sixties' (p. 158).

More dangerous is her propagation of the Greenberg-slanted view that the 'colour-field' Abstract Expressionism of Rothko, Newman, and Still developed *later* than the 'gestural abstraction' of Pollock and De Kooning. She does this through the structure and language of her presentation of historic facts. Pollock and De Kooning are discussed in her chapters on the thirties, forties, and fifties, whereas the chronologically parallel presence and development of Newman, Rothko, and Still is mentioned only in her chapter on the 1950s; when she back-tracks (a bit awkwardly) to discuss their parallel development in the late 1940s, her verb tenses subtly re-inforce this misleading chronology: '...while De Kooning and Pollock *explored* the possibilities of gestural abstraction, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko *were working toward* a more static, reductive abstraction ...' (p. 192—italics mine).

It is not irrelevant that acknowledgements of her 'special debt' include one to Greenberg's criticism.

⁴⁸ 'The Value of Didactic Art', *Artforum*, April 1967.

⁴⁹ 'Problems in Criticism IV: Art and Politics', *Artforum*, February 1968. She sees the intense, dogmatic bent of their writing as resulting from the re-channelling of their political frustrations into art-criticism, where they are (ostensibly) more safe.

⁵⁰ She suggests people like Leo Steinberg, William Rubin, and Robert Rosenblum, who have no political reasons for avoiding questions of 'content'. These people are art-historians with academic bases, much like herself, and quite different from some other less-academic and excellent critics unafraid of 'content', like Nicolas Calas and Max Kozloff.

London commentaries

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Royal Academy Summer Exhibition at Burlington House until August 14

It has to be conceded, by even its most inveterate critics, that there are changed features in this bicentenary year's Summer Exhibition of the ROYAL ACADEMY. The central galleries which run the length of the exhibition are hung predominantly with large non-representational works; a gallery presided over by a kapok teddy-bear-valentine to John Bejeman has been devoted to what twenty years ago would have been called 'problem' works; the sculpture, instead of being concentrated to the point of indigestibility, has been dispersed throughout the show; and, overall, the works are hung less tightly with appreciable changes, which many have argued should have taken place long before this, have led inevitably to speculation about a rumoured change in the Royal Academy's policy. Such rumours and such speculation are built on the misconception that there is an established policy to change. In nothing is the Royal Academy more flexible, to the extent of vulnerability, than in its provision for selection and hanging; year by year the Selection Committee, and the sub-section of this which forms the Hanging Committee, changes and the exhibition each year reflects the new mixture, and represents the confluence of disparate criteria and opinions. It is hard to convince the confirmed sceptic of the fact that *every* work is put before the Selection Committee, and that the Hanging Committee is pre-eminently concerned with exhibiting the widest diversity of idioms consistent with a respectably high general standard. But this is so and would seem to me the only factor that might conceivably represent a 'policy'.

Another factor in the situation is of course the changing character of the submitted work, and the

absurdity of attempting to determine the shape of an exhibition in advance of the receipt of works is self-evident. And equally self-evident is the fact that there can be selection only of what is submitted, and if the Royal Academy Summer exhibition does not yet include certain aspects of the contemporary situation in the arts this is not attributable to policies of exclusion but to the fact that no good representative submissions are yet available for inclusion.

The changes in the character of this year's exhibition have been made possible by an increase in support coming from serious younger artists. And what have they to lose? They will not easily find walls of comparable size to take the large works they habitually paint; they will not find a similar situation in which no commission is deducted from sales; a situation in the hands of fellow artists, many of them directly related to the younger generation through connection with art schools and colleges (until his election the new President himself was on the visiting staff of the Slade School); a perennial situation in which fashion and commercial viability are wholly subsidiary to more fundamental criteria. It is this latter feature which is particularly appreciated by many artists of maturity who have ceased to enjoy the attentions of the critics but have not ceased to produce good things. And this is equally true of the considerable number of artist/teachers whose annual output may, through force of circumstance, be limited in amount but not necessarily in quality. Artists who have satisfactory opportunities for exhibiting with a dealer's gallery are understandably indifferent but they represent a comparatively small fraction of the total creative situation in this country. The Academy's increasing liberality may soon prove to be the main, perhaps the only, factor protecting the interests of a sizeable, and seemingly expanding, number of British artists.

Maurice de Sausmarez

Sculpture by Camargo at Gimpel Fils until June 8

If you were to follow Camargo's work from its beginning to the white reliefs he is making today, you would see a process in which the static volume of traditional sculpture has been gradually disintegrated. You would follow his exploration of the language of modern art in terms of his own experience, as he gradually evolved his own structure. He by-passed the possibilities of disintegrating static volume in a mechanical sense, the articulation of limbs or systems of stresses between inter-related members, or anything that this approach might have led to. Instead, for him, volume has swelled and opened like a flower or a fruit, in a sense drawing light into itself to accomplish this growth.

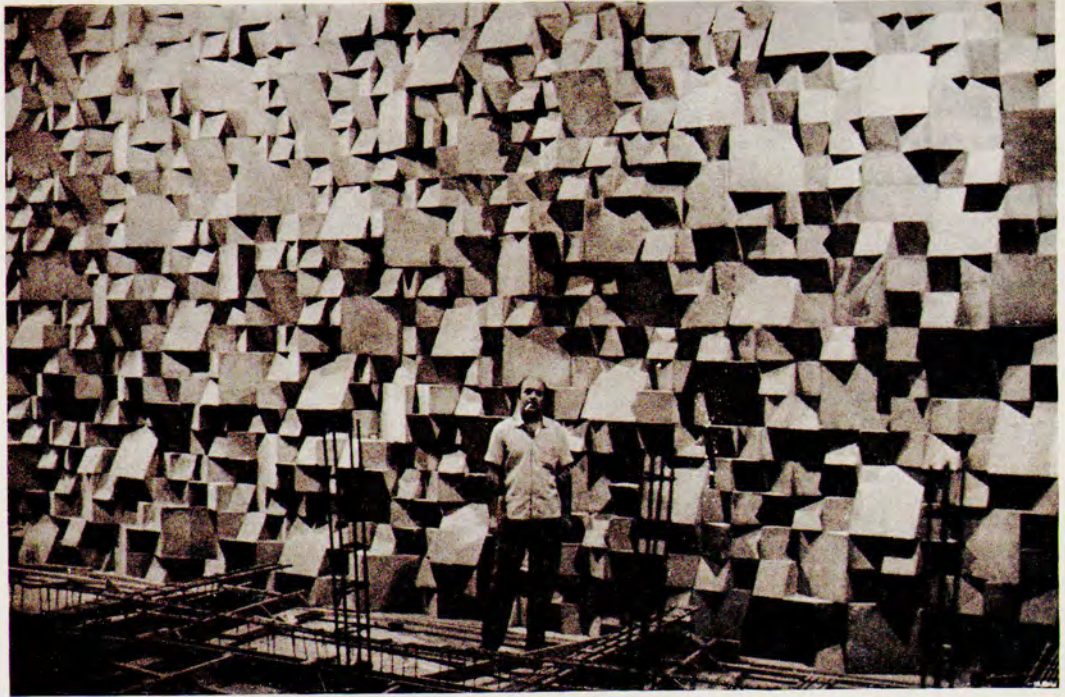
This process has brought the sculptor's material (wood) and light into a new relationship, a kind of reciprocal relationship in which matter is seen as a

function of light and light is seen as a function of matter. Light becomes body, and body becomes light. Camargo has reduced the material solidity of volume by exploding it in a scale of anonymous elements (which are nevertheless still volumes and not graphic figures) and painting everything white. By this opening process, the static, finite, corporeal density of matter is exchanged for the constantly and minutely varying densities of light—the ordinary light always around us. 'Exchanged' is really the wrong word because light doesn't obliterate the volume, but fuses with it.

This too suggests the sense in which Camargo's reliefs are concerned with movement. Space is not marked out and divided; movement consists in a shifting of densities. And these are always seen in relation to a void, which is either the blank wall surrounding the relief or areas of white board within the work. In a recent work, where you can slide open a panel in the relief, it's to reveal another light-sensitive surface at a deeper level.

To see the work of art as something *receptive*, no longer autonomous, runs right through modern art, with Malevich's *White on White* canvas, Brancusi's reflecting volumes, Schwitters' *Merz-column*, Vantongerloo's prisms, Moholy-Nagy's *Light-space modulator*, Yves Klein's 'traces' of natural forces. Today the idea embraces poetry, music and architecture, and the actual existence of a work may depend on it, as in David Medalla's foam-sculpture where air generates the structure, or in Lygia Clark's work, where the spectator does. The responsiveness of Camargo's sculpture must to some extent be constrained by the special emphasis of a gallery environment and fixed lighting.

Guy Brett



Camargo Wall in Foreign Ministry, Brasilia, during construction

100th exhibition (mixed show) at Grabowski from June 18

It is normal and not wholly unreasonable to blame the gallery system (as well as the critics, of course) for the ills that befall art. The survival of the system, however, suggests that artists' discontent is not absolute and if we look for the reason for that we soon find ourselves distinguishing between galleries and galleries in the light of their activities. Some blatantly sell rubbish to people feeble-minded and wealthy enough to take it. Others specialize in gilt-edged art objects, which may or may not mean high standards but usually goes with personality cults; these tend to invest time and effort in direct and indirect publicity campaigns to persuade the world of the former and inflate the latter. Others operate much more simply and on a broader front, presenting the work of a wide range of often young

and untried artists, and incidentally expressing their directors' inclinations more than their skill at manipulating the art market.

One such is the GRABOWSKI GALLERY. Mateusz Grabowski runs a business with one hand and the gallery with the other. I should guess the two hands never play in harmony. The gallery venture stems from his enjoyment of art. It probably also compensates for the career in architecture he had to waive in favour of the more immediately practicable one of the pharmacist. Certainly the enjoyment is there: Mr Grabowski obviously gets fun (as well as trouble) out of the gallery. There is also a kind of piety about him—a sense of filial piety that keeps him putting Polish art before a not too responsive British public in spite of rather incomplete co-operation from the Polish authorities. And also a sense of reverence before man's need to create images.

His first exhibition opened on February 5, 1959. On June 18, a little short of ten years later, he presents his hundredth exhibition. It will be a kind of party. Thirty-six artists, selected out of the many more that appeared in the ninety-nine preceding shows, will be represented by one recent work each.

The range and the quality of this exhibition, in so far as is possible, illustrates the range and quality of Mr Grabowski's activities. Apart from British and Polish artists, he has shown artists from Belgium, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway as well as the East. He has shown groups

Below left, **Jeffrey Steele** *Aallotar* 1967, oil on canvas, 50 × 40 in.

Below, **William Tucker** *Untitled* 1968, plaster and wood, 5½ × 11½ in. Grabowski Gallery, London

