

One-man Show by Brazilian Sculptor

From Our Art Critic

The collection of wooden reliefs which form the first one-man show in Europe of a young Brazilian sculptor, Sergio de Camargo, at *Signals London*, 39 Wigmore Street, W.1, has a purity and assurance which make this a most refreshing visual experience. It is interesting to learn that M. Camargo was the winner of the International Sculpture prize at the 1963 Paris Biennale, one of the few prizes actually awarded to an artist by other artists.

It is paradoxical that beside the explosive political life of most of South America an art and architecture of such refinement and grace should have grown up. The architecture of Brasilia and Caracas is probably better known over here than the work of the artists, especially Brasilia, which has become in many ways symbolic of the victory of technology and harmony over chaos; but the spirit of many of the younger artists, some of whom work in Europe, appears to be closely connected with the "civilizing" aspirations of architecture. They have on several occasions worked together in a way which has excited the envy of hamstrung Europe. It is too early to say what ultimate effect an approach like this will have on an art world so concerned at present with the surface minutiae of urban life, but its immediate effect has been like a shower of clear water.

UNPREDICTABLE MOVEMENT OF LIGHT

M. Camargo's work at once impresses on this level. His reliefs are made from short, cylindrical pieces of wood sawn off diagonally so that each protrudes at an angle from the base and presents a diamond-like facet to the light. The little cylinders are crowded together at different angles to one another. Most of the exhibits are totally white, but the surface, with its terrain of valleys, channels, and peaks, throws the light in unpredictable and changing movement over the surface. An extremely subtle visual dialogue is thus established between a logical structure made of separate pieces of brick-like uniformity and the halo of light that brings the work to life.

There seems to be no striving for effect here, but a genuine observation of nature—trees and marine-forms, as well as more insubstantial but no less powerful forces—brought into subtle and precise order. His latest work, which is more geometrical and less directly allusive to organic growth, nevertheless possesses the same intuitive order, which in spite of the general whiteness and the severe limitation of means, is never cerebral.