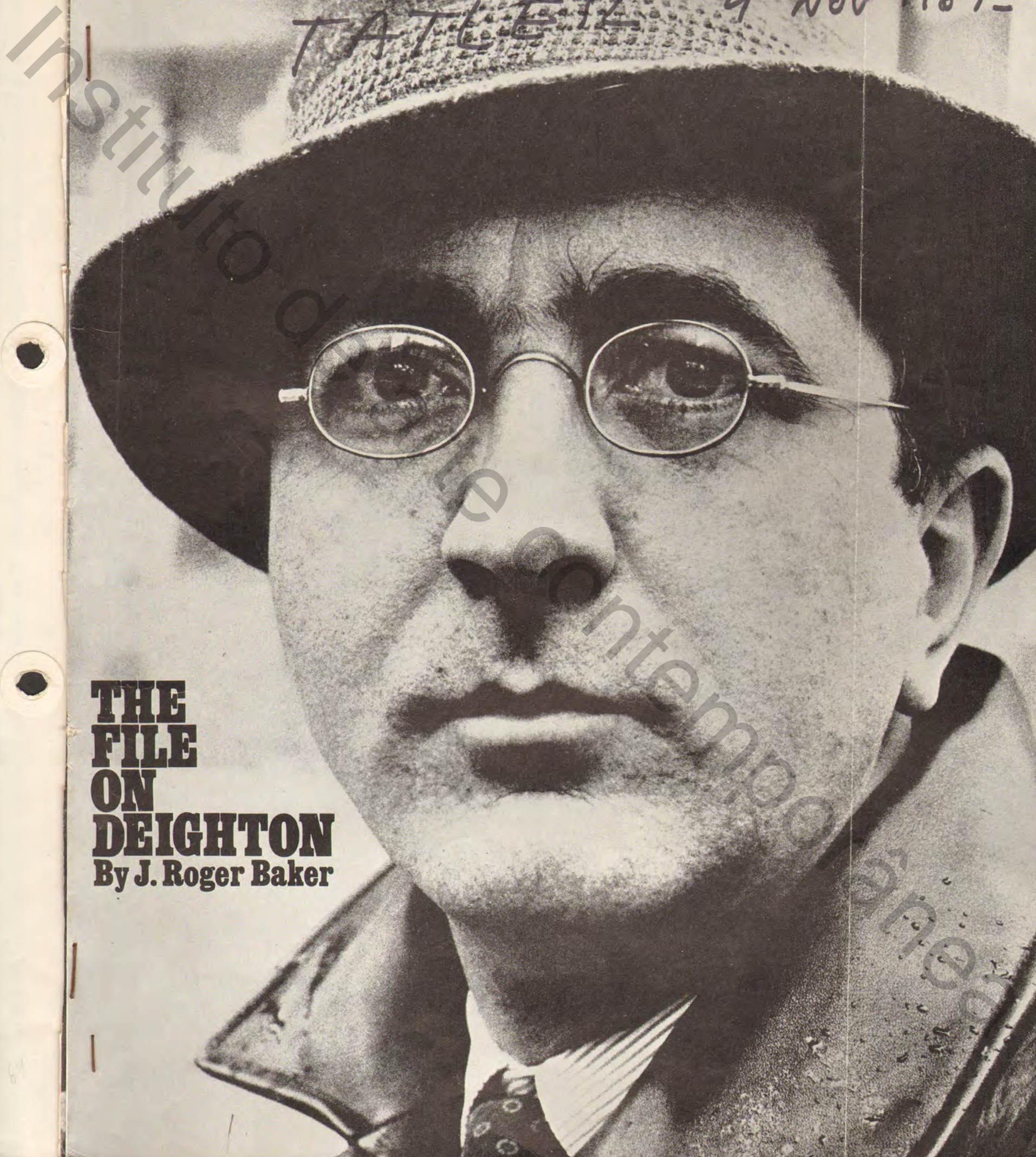


~~TATLER~~

TATLER

4 Nov 1964

**THE
FILE
ON
DEIGHTON**
By J. Roger Baker



The days have gone when artistic recognition was automatically posthumous. Now artists and art movements can enjoy and survive their fame. **ROBERT WRAIGHT** in this article acclaims kinetic the surprise success of the '60s

Every so often something happens in art that makes us sit up and take notice. Usually we are taking notice several years too late, or at any rate much later than we ought to have done. (Sometimes—I am thinking of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists—we are 40 or 50 years late.) And when the penny finally drops we acclaim an important artist or a significant movement as if he or it had sprung, fully developed, from the womb of Juno. We are, perhaps, an improvement on our grandfathers, who were incapable of recognizing a great artist until he was dead, but too often we go to the other extreme, heaping the rewards of success on precocious students who have learned the knack of disguising their first faltering steps as daring arabesques. We fall for the meretricious and the superficial, the self-seeker and the publicity merchant, while the genuine creator and his work are ignored till, by chance, someone forces us to notice them. Marvellous, we say and pat ourselves on the back for being so quick to hail the "new" art and the "new" artist.

This is what happened recently when 70-year-old John Healey's truly marvellous "luminous pictures" were shown at the Royal College of Art. We (and I include myself in this) were quick to recognize the importance of his work and immensely pleased with ourselves for recognizing it. What we did not recognize was that this was no surprise success but an inevitable one; a major breakthrough resulting not only from more than 10 years of striving by Healey but from 70 years of *practical* work by other pioneers. It took a *Tatler* reader to convince me of that. He sent me a book he wrote 30 years ago which shows that he was himself working on the same lines before the First World War. His name: Adrian Cornwell-Clyne. His book: *Coloured Light*. His mistake: he was trying to give us a new art form long before we were ready for it.

Why is the inevitable so long coming? The answer is, once again, that the public is 50 years behind true artists. At the beginning of the century, artists envisaged a unity of art and science which, as Franz Marc put it, "will bring about the greatest reshaping of form the world has yet experienced." It is to those artists working with this aim today that the future undoubtedly belongs. The trivialities of Pop art, neo-Dada, rubbish-collages and combine-paintings that have clamoured so successfully for public attention in recent years are just so much reactionary eyewash blinding us to the really important things that have been happening. Such things, for example, as the impressive advances that have been made in kinetic art—art,



**KINETIC
SURPRISES**

Left: detail from *Cloud Canyons*, a bubble sculpture by Philippine artist David Medalla. Below: Paul Keeler, 22-year-old founder of the Centre for Advanced Creative Study, pictured at the Windsor factory of the Keeler optical firm with his younger brother, David. In the foreground is part of an ophthalmoscope awaiting assembly. Bottom: Marcello Salvadori, one of seven kinetic artists invited to exhibit works in the Centre's recent festival of modern art from Latin-America

that is, in which movement is a vital element.

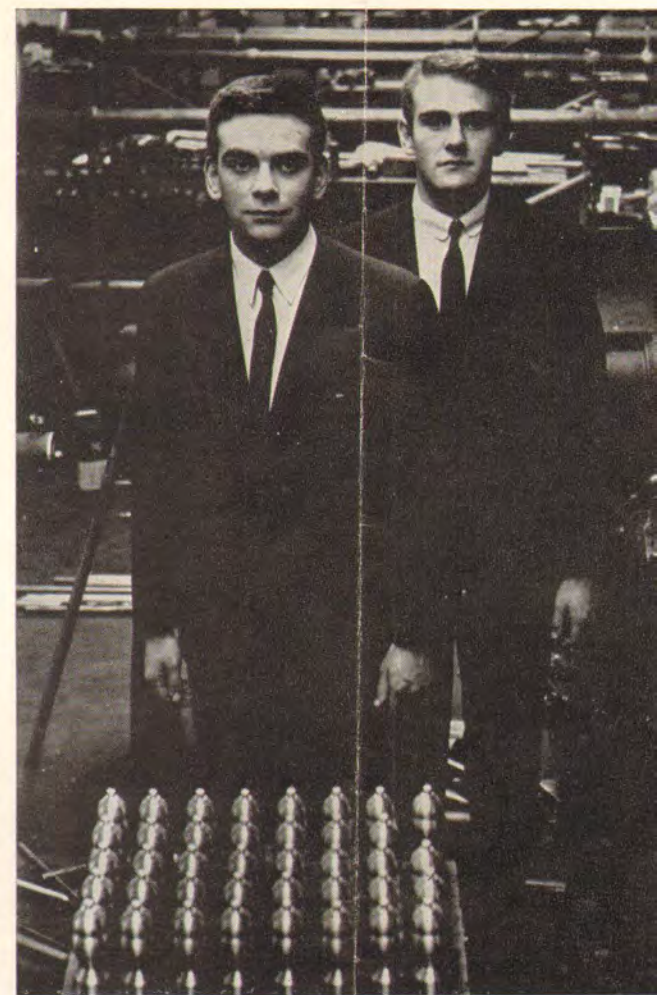
In February this year I wrote in these pages a bemused review of a small exhibition of kinetic art organized by a young man named Paul Keeler at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It was not the first time I had seen electrically-operated and magnetically-controlled "sculptures" but it was the first time I had taken them seriously as part of the art of the future. I was several years late in this but not so late as many of my colleagues.

After the Oxford exhibition Keeler mounted a more extensive show at the Redfern Gallery, in London. Still more recently he founded what he calls, with a grandiosity that will no doubt be justified one day, *The Centre for Advanced Creative Study*. At present it is in a flat in Kensington but soon it is to move to more spacious premises in Wigmore Street. The Centre is dedicated to "Art's imaginative integration with technology, science, architecture and our entire environment." It offers a continuous series of exhibitions of work in this field in which, as yet, British artists are lagging far behind.

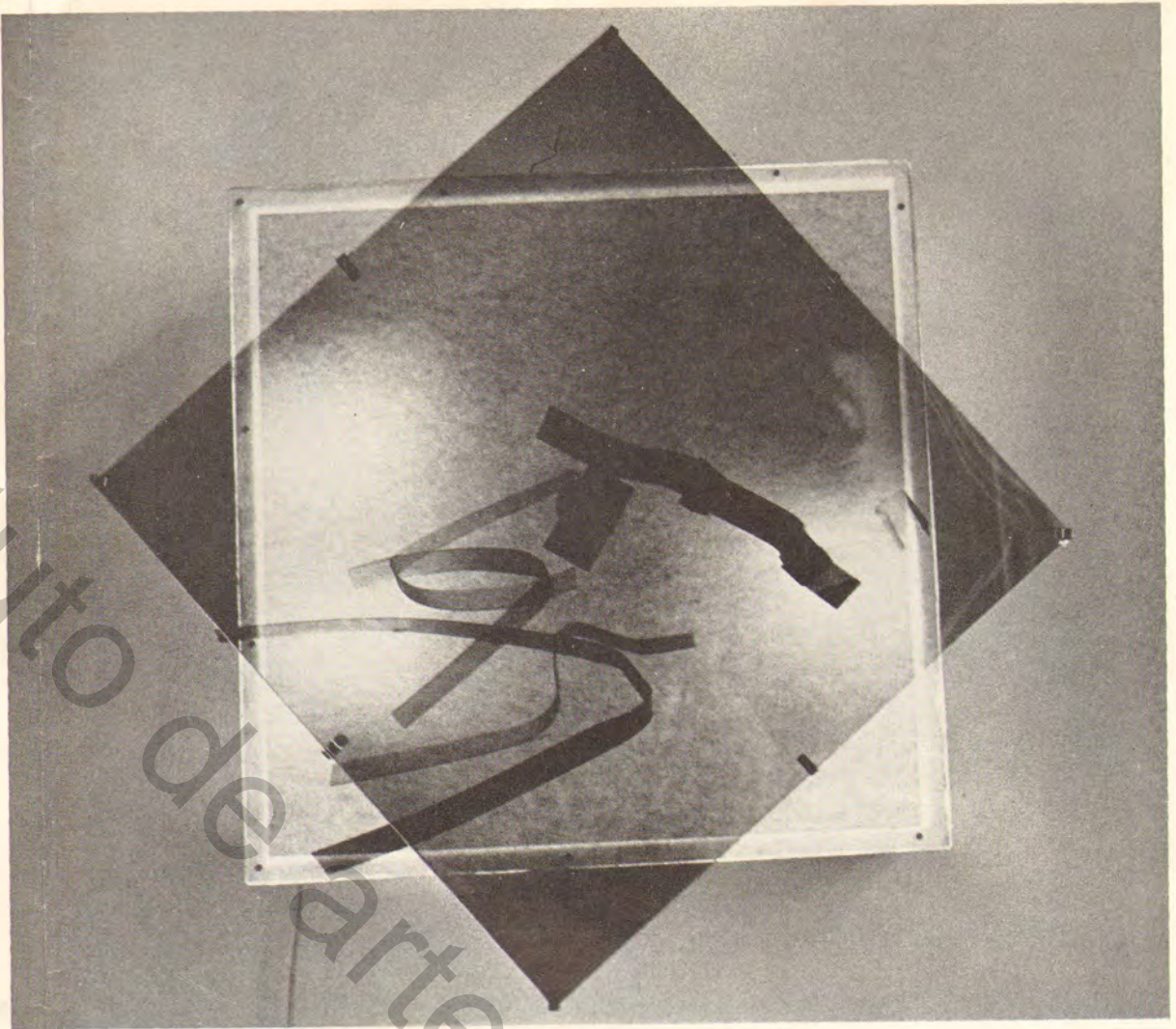
The current exhibition is almost entirely of works by artists from 21 Latin-American countries. It is a revelation, not only of the "progressiveness" of the artists in South America, but also of certain governments there who evidently encourage the idea of employing such artists for the decoration of public buildings. The next exhibition, opening this month in Wigmore Street, will be a one man show by the Greek Takis who is famous for his gravity-defying magnetic sculptures.

Soon Keeler will be launching from the Centre a small travelling exhibition that will tour 10 universities. At the same time he will be making a selection of works to be shown at the Royal Scottish Academy at the invitation of the Scottish Division of the Arts Council. This exhibition, called *Movement in Art*, will trace the growth of kinetic art from the germs of simulated movement in Cubism and Futurism, through the air-assisted movement of Calder's mobiles, to the many varieties of mechanical and illusory movement incorporated in the work of such artists as Pol Bury, Marcello Salvadori, J. M. Cruxent, Soto and Agam, and on to the bubble-sculptures of David Medalla, the robot "paintings" of P. K. Hoenich and the electronically motivated "random art" of the Italians' *Group T and Group N*.

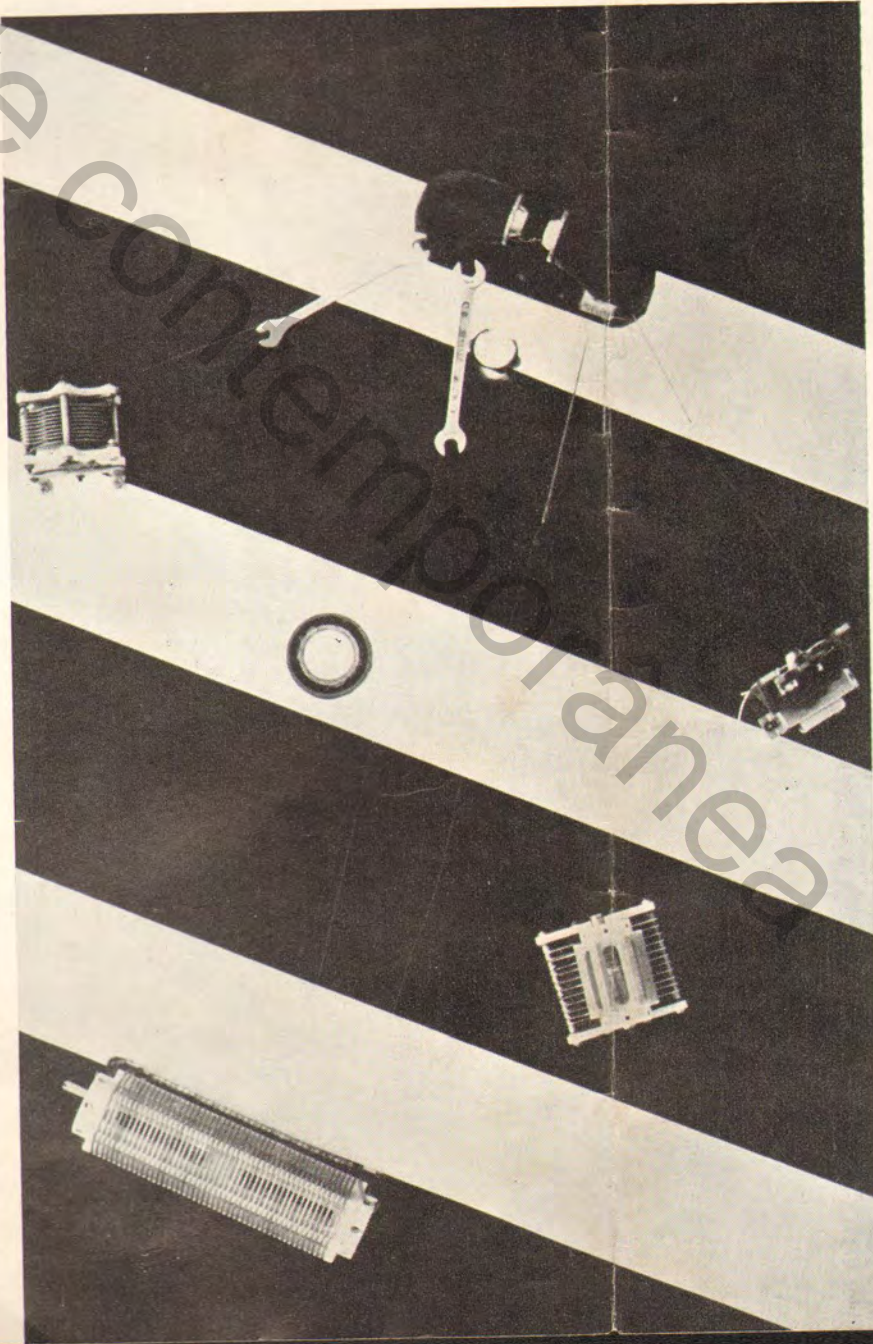
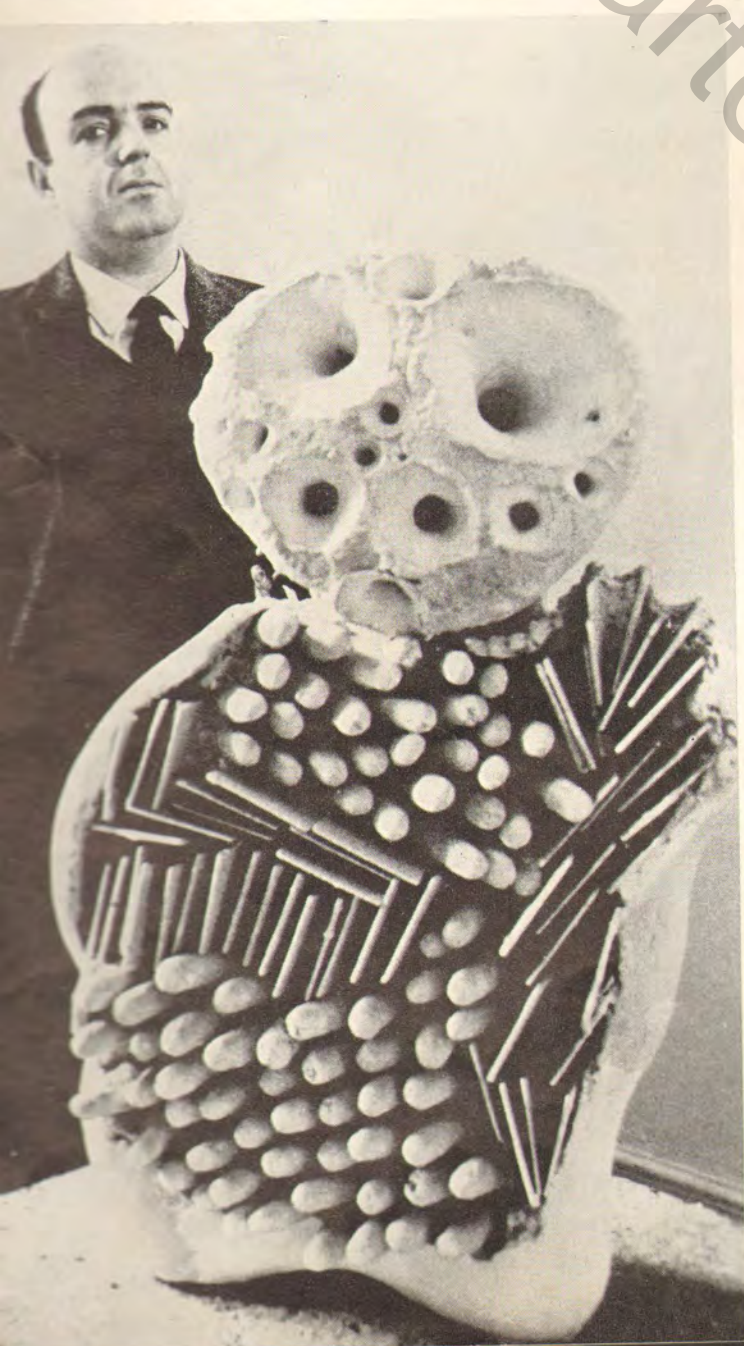
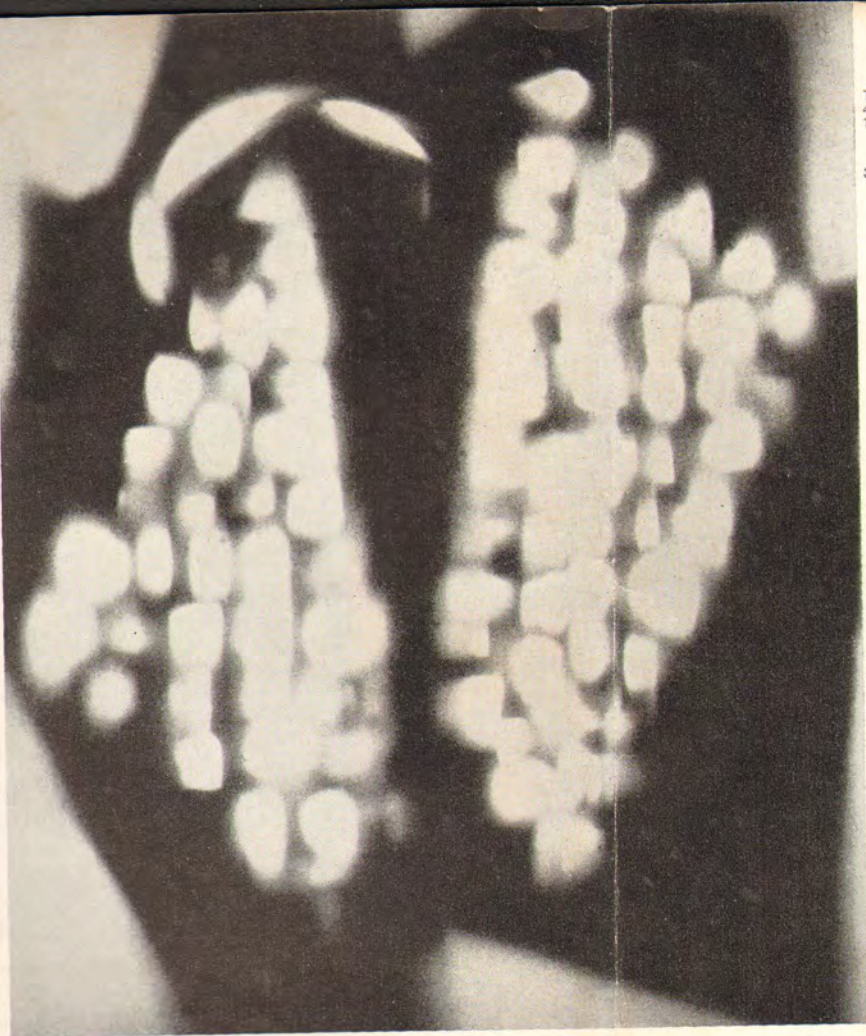
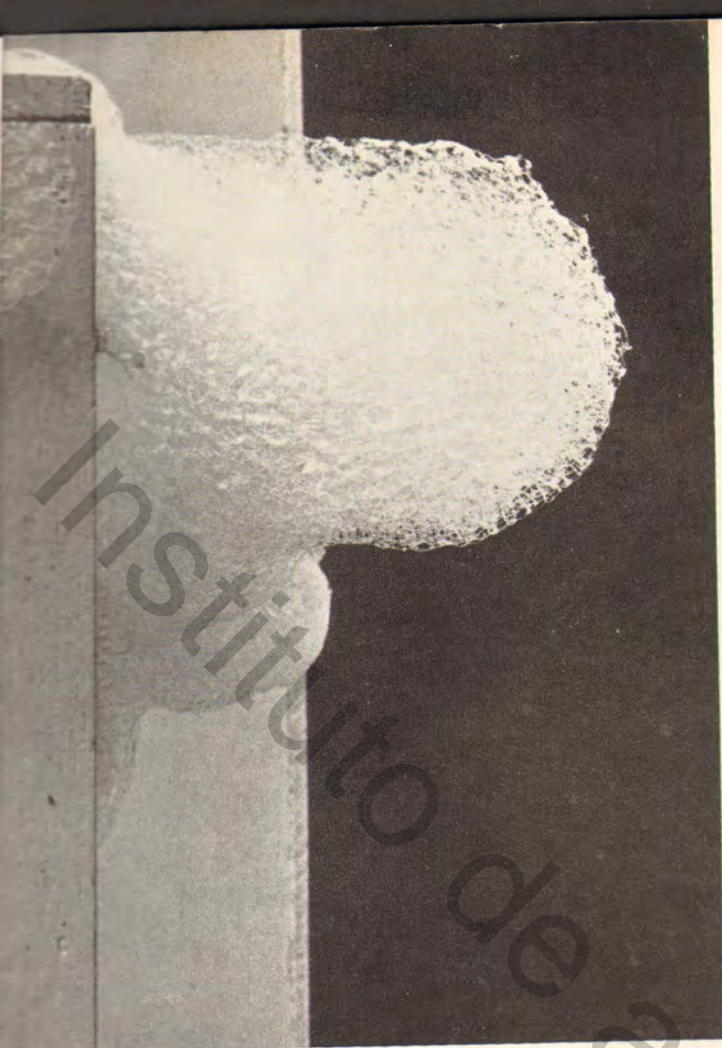
So, through the Scottish backdoor, what is likely to prove the most far-reaching art-revolution of this century, looks like getting belated official recognition. After that, all that is needed is that the dealers see kinetic art as a commercial proposition and it will be sealed with the only success symbol that everyone understands—money.



PHOTOGRAPHS: CLAY PERRY



Above: Venezuelan artist J. R. Soto's *Vibration*. Top: *The Smile*, a mobile object utilizing polarized light, by Italian artist Marcello Salvadori. Opposite page, top left: a detail from David Medalla's bubble sculpture *Cloud Canyons*. Opposite page, top right: a mobile light picture entitled *Lumidyne*, by American artist-astronautic scientist Frank J. Malina. Below left: Sergio de Camargo, the Brazilian artist, with his sculpture *The Rich Boy*. Below right: a magnetic sculpture by the Greek Takis





Above: Sir John Rothenstein, a patron of the Centre for Advanced Creative Study. Right: Viscount & Viscountess Esher, also patrons of the centre, at Watlington Park, Oxfordshire. Below: Folding copies of *Signals*, the centre newsletter, are (from left) Paul Keeler, Sergio de Camargo, Guy Brett and, in the foreground, Christopher Walker, David Medalla and Gustav Metzger

