

Europe is the hotbed of art

London Commentary by G. S. Whittet



Art is a flower that often benefits from transplanting. Cross-fertilization of ideas and images are commonplace but more than a little influential is the finding of a stimulating atmosphere, a congenial ambience where talent can find its manure from appreciation and the genuine interest of fellow-creators. This is how Paris had and still maintains its attraction for artists though its dealers seem to have lost their flair for finding them.

Sergio de Camargo is a young sculptor from Brazil, a *carioca* who has lived in Paris since 1961 and who won the international sculpture prize at the Biennale there in 1963. He held his first one-man exhibition in Europe at the Signals Gallery in Wigmore Street.

At first glance the impression of his reliefs hung on the wall is of assemblage composed from the ruins of a miniature Doric temple. Wooden cylinders of varying thicknesses are cut on the bias and glued to a flat support. In their glaring whiteness they could be Carrera marble but their apparent disorder harbours an ordered scheme that is almost classic Cubism. Though we shall search in vain for the suggestion of a form allusive to life, we find none the less that each relief has its own intrinsic image. In one, for example, we see that though each truncated cylinder is set at angle to the plane of the base, viewed from the front, each axis

is parallel or at right-angles to every other. In another, the angles will be jumbled with here and there a tiny vertical pillar punctuating the mass.

Like other contemporary sculptors using unconventional materials such as Kemeny and David Partridge, Camargo guides light and shade to lend movement to his third dimension. The tonal change varies from the faintest paling of the painted white wood to the comparative black of its deepest cross-shadowing. Some reliefs use little cylinders set broadly in faceted waves with more calm effect, others isolate just one split column that creates with its shadow an impressive singularity placed in its seemingly pre-ordained proportion of the white ground.

Frankly erotic yet with its inordinate delicacy is the relief titled *Couple* proving yet again that the shadow, never the highlights, reveals the form. In his youthful sensitivity Camargo generates inventiveness; he is no slave to a formula as we know from his plaster cast for a sombre winged sculpture and other images in the round. He is no Vasarely in relief; as I have said, he is a *carioca* who lives and works in Paris with a keen yet unhurried zest for life and art. He is one to watch.

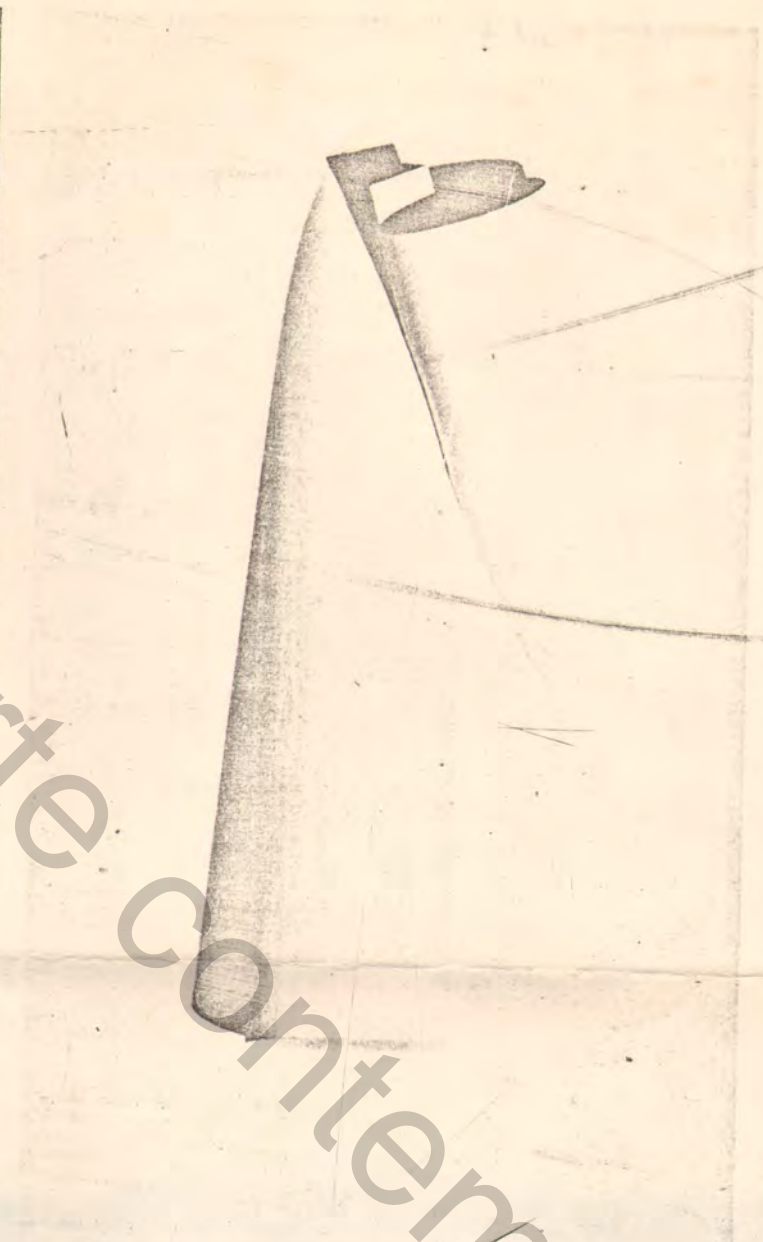
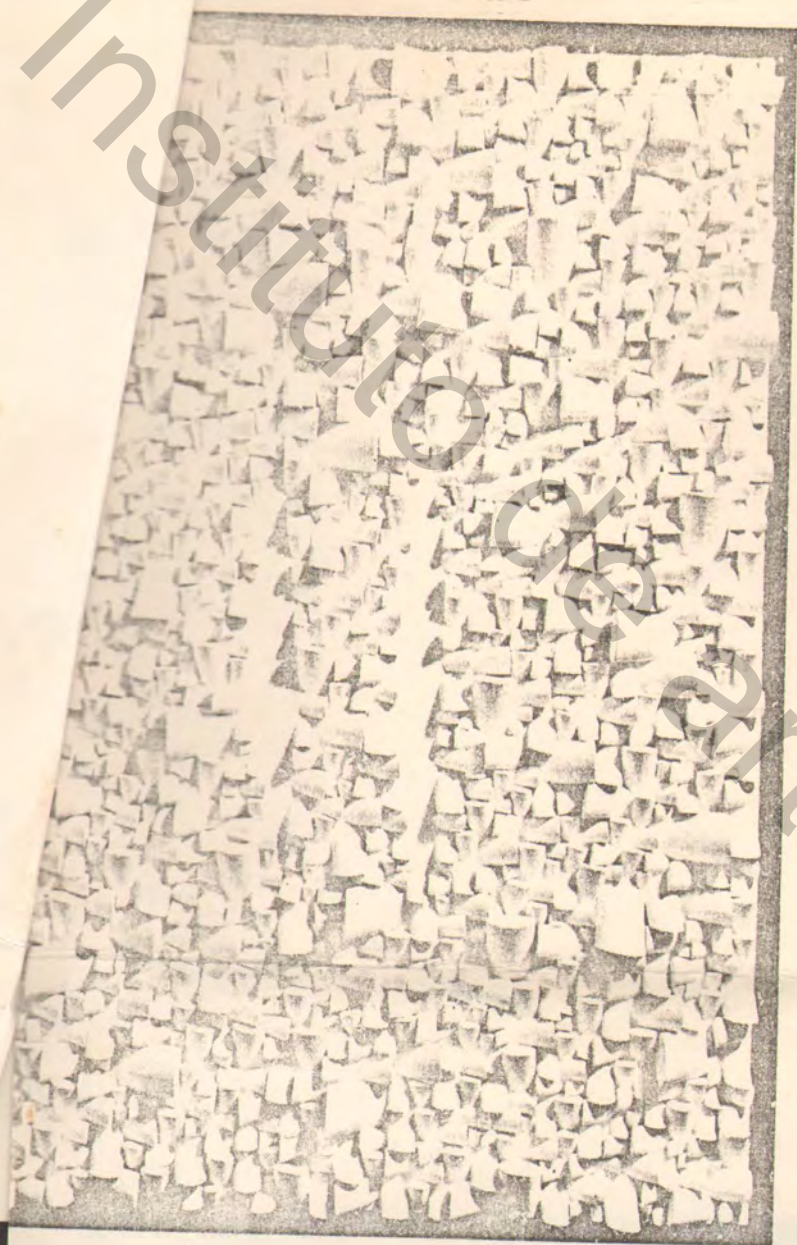
At the Commonwealth Institute gallery, with its perfect lighting, 'Indian Painting Now' brought together

Manzo
with Model, 1957
23½ in.
er Gallery

rgo
number 19/46, 1964
wood 32½ × 24 in.
Gallery

rgo
Couple' number 1, 1964
wood 32½ × 24 in.
Gallery

1965



the works of six artists of diverse character and influence. Gaitonde and Samant have been affected by the New York abstract expressionism through contact with that city. The latter, who lives in Bombay now, has created rich textures with incised plaster effects of old walls to which subtle but warm colour schemes add atmosphere of enduring civilizations. M. F. Husain, the oldest exhibitor, has travelled and shown in the West previously and an early source was obviously Matisse, just as Picasso has impressed Tyeb Mehta.

Best-known to London gallery-goers are Francis N. Souza and Avinash Chandra. Both are represented in some range in which Souza displays the greater diversity. For Souza his painting is the expression of attitudes—to life, to priests, to politicians, to women, especially to women. Even in his landscapes there seems the urge to personalise trees and architecture so that jagged toothy outlines savage the skyline. Altogether tender are his seated nudes where a breast-bone deliberately distorted accentuates our reaction to the living form which is urgently and immediately contoured on the canvas.

In Chandra we are no less conscious of the presence of the female image. It is inherent in the floating orbs and priapic symbols no less than where it is more

explicitly stated. Constellations and explosions in cosmic paths perform their parabolic trajectories across his canvas or paper in warm colours; like outer space itself seen through a telescope there are no voids, in the distance is always a further galaxy. Sheer inventive genius weaves design of unending variety between our eyes and the background, never without meaning, never without joy, never without spontaneity.

Giacomo Manzù, world famous as a sculptor, has been painting for years on the theme of the Painter and His Model, already the subject of sculpture in 1958-59. Until now he has refused to exhibit the canvases and for the first time they were on view at the Hanover Gallery. Inge, whom he has sculpted many times, is treated here with the endowing richness of colour and the fresh and fluid rendering of her in a Matisse-flowered peignoir recalled vividly my memory of lunching with her and Manzù at the studio of fellow-sculptor Franta Belsky and his wife when Manzù was here a few years ago. Vividness, in fact, is the keynote of these paintings and drawings; the brush no less than the kneading fingers are instruments of evoking human life that has always been the hallmark of Manzù.

Two English painters having associations with the Euston Road School, Lawrence Gowing and Adrian