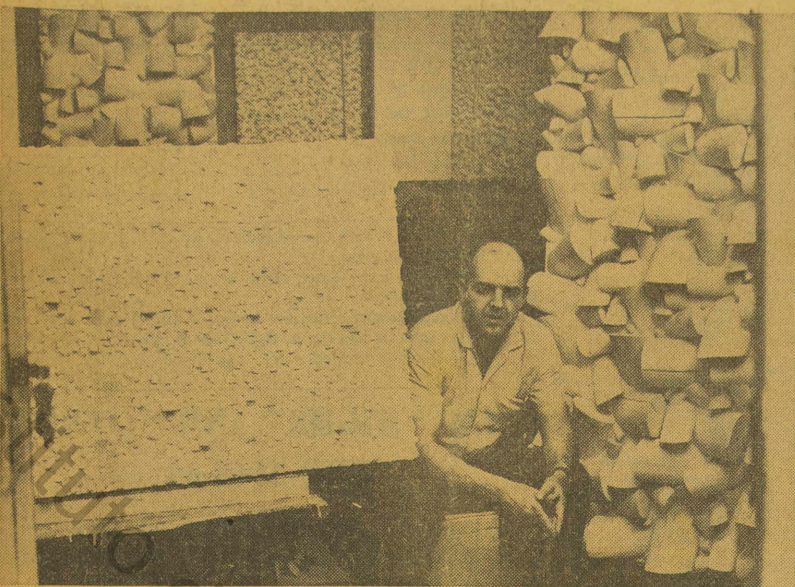


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Growths and Globules

by PAUL GRINKE



Sergio de Camargo and reliefs

The enterprising new Signals London Gallery in Wigmore Street have turned to South America with their latest exhibition of work by Sergio de Camargo, a Brazilian sculptor. Camargo, like so many of the artists shown at this gallery has arrived in England via Paris where he won the International Sculpture Prize at last year's Biennale, and the atmosphere of the Rue de Seine rather than Brasilia seems to pervade his work.

Camargo's wooden reliefs evolve from a simple technique of meticulously placed geometric wooden shapes, basically truncated cylinders, which protrude from a flat surface; the whole being painted white or a primary colour. A major variation on this central theme is a series of free-standing tree trunks, like telegraph poles, which incorporate painted wooden chips and fragments in the form of crystalline growths. The carefully graduated size of each component preserves a feeling of some supra-human order, in much the same way as pebbles on a beach have a look of being placed there deliberately by a giant hand.

Camargo's imagery is mineralogical; inorganic matter still embedded in its matrix and gleaming dully like an unpolished semi-precious stone. These reliefs have the feel of *objets trouvés*, full of hidden possibilities yet complete in themselves as all natural objects must surely be. Some of them have a definite resemblance to fossils. Camargo's reliefs, with their fascinating interplay of rough bristling texture and pure hard whiteness are as stimulating as a brisk walk round the White Cliffs of Dover and considerably more rewarding to the eye.

From North America comes Edward Avedisian, now showing at the Kasmin Gallery, always a great entrepôt for the latest in American painting. Avedisian's paintings have a strong hallucinatory quality

with restless amoeba-like shapes bearing bold asymmetrical markings undulating, or quietly glistening, in an inert field of colour. His globules and circles cluster disturbingly in phalanxes on the canvas and have the appearance of minute undersea organisms magnified many times so that their phosphorescent clarity is enhanced by the neutral tones of their environment.

Yet unlike John Hoyland's comparable schemata recently exhibited at the Marlborough New London Gallery, these shapes are rigidly circumscribed and react only within set limits. Avedisian is by no means an entirely academic painter, but is also a striking manipulator of colour and optical effect within the framework of American painting which has been established during the last few years. These large canvases have a restrained vitality and visual impact which must be reassuring to those who foresee an impasse in non-figurative painting.

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Patrick Caulfield, at the Robert Fraser Gallery is an exact English contemporary of Avedisian but some hundreds of light years away

in style. Caulfield employs regurgitated images which could easily be moribund in most other hands but seem at times to gain new life in his. The range of subject matter is disarmingly traditional; sunlit bays, crumbling ruins and simple still-life presented with all the imagination and single mindedness of the silhouette artist to be found at the end of every 19th-century pier.

His technique is analogous to that of the cartoon maker, a projector of simple images with disconcerting clarity, but unlike Roy Lichtenstein the American Pop Artist, he does not feel the need to reproduce the cartoon *in toto* to make his point. The paintings are bold, almost brash, with the subject always rigorously delineated in outline, to emerge like a cut-out from a cereal packet and stand tottering on cardboard feet.

Sometimes this is effective as in the *Still Life on Table* or *The Perfume Jar* but at other times it seems gratuitous; it is almost always disturbing. Despite this seemingly superficial and naive appearance Mr. Caulfield is no primitive, and one suspects that his major fault is, if anything, oversophistication.

City Grant for Third Festival

The Court of Common Council, after a limited amount of opposition, yesterday approved a grant of £35,000 to the City Arts Trust for a third City of London Festival in 1966.

For the first festival, in 1962, it made a grant of £7,500 and that was increased to £25,000 for last year's festival.

Lord Drogheda, chairman of the trust, commented yesterday: "Clearly from our point of view it would have been very tragic if the City had not decided to continue with a grant to the festival. This does establish an alternate year pattern and is convincing proof of the interest being taken by the City in the arts."

"They can rest assured that we shall do our best to justify the confidence they show in us, by putting on something very worthwhile."

He said it was hoped it would be possible to open and close the festival with performances in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mr. Ian Hunter, the artistic director, stated: "Detailed planning, which has been in progress for some months on a tentative basis, can now go ahead. It is a great advance on previous years when we never had more than nine months in which to prepare the festival programme. We now have nearly 18 months."

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