



**DUCKWORTH AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY**

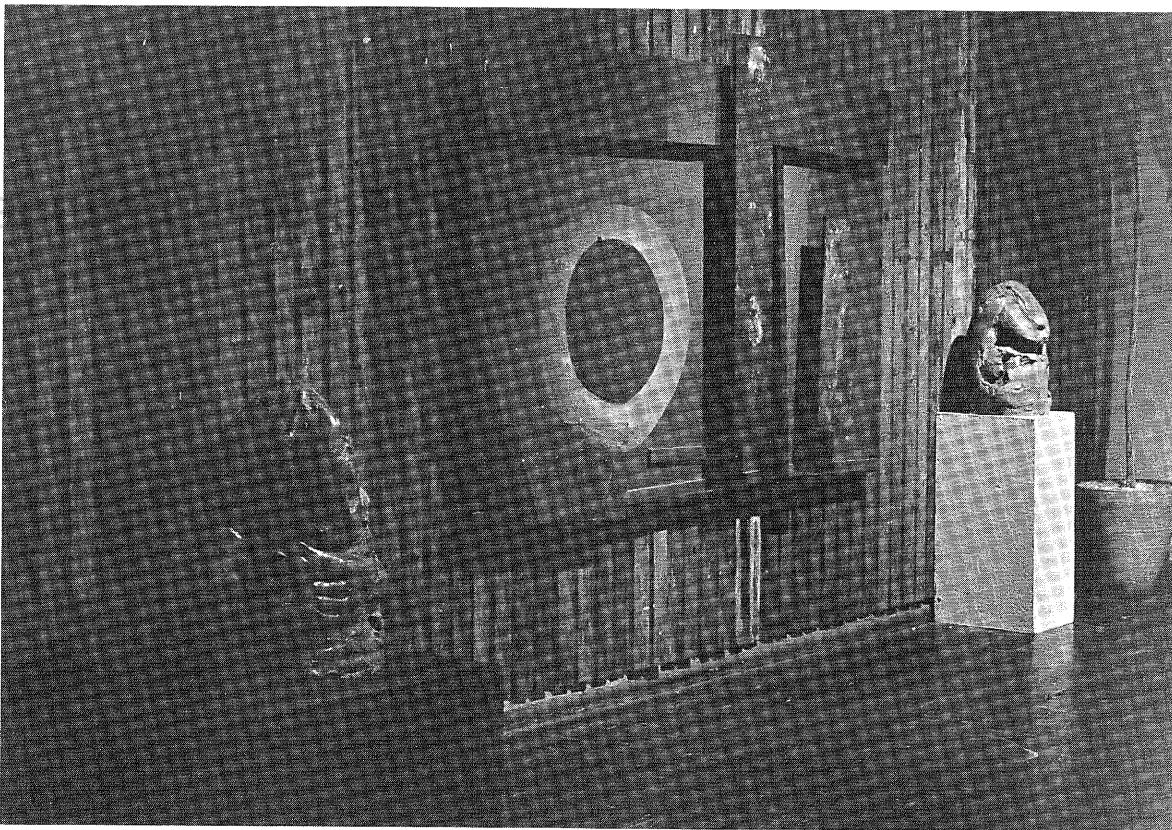


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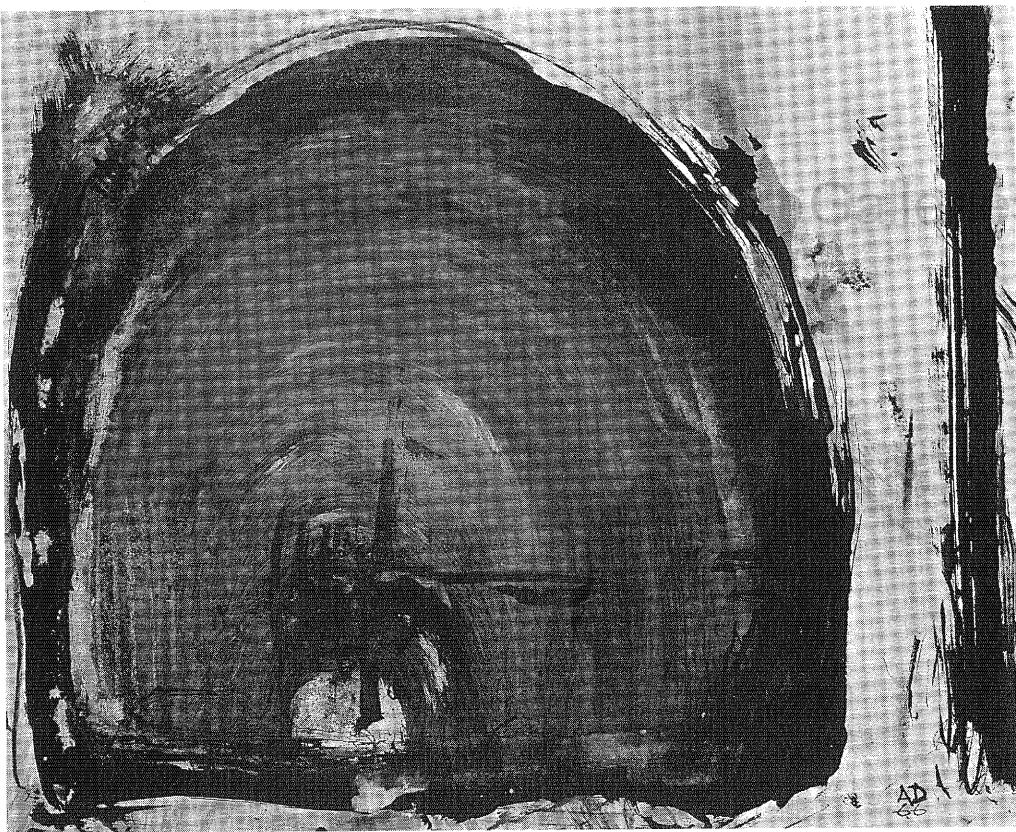
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4. HEAD STUDIES

12. HEAD



1. THE TUNNEL

AIDRON DUCKWORTH  
AN EXHIBITION OF RECENT SCULPTURE

held in the galleries of the  
JOE AND EMILY LOWE ART CENTER  
under the auspices of  
THE SCHOOL OF ART | SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
NOVEMBER 6-30, 1966.

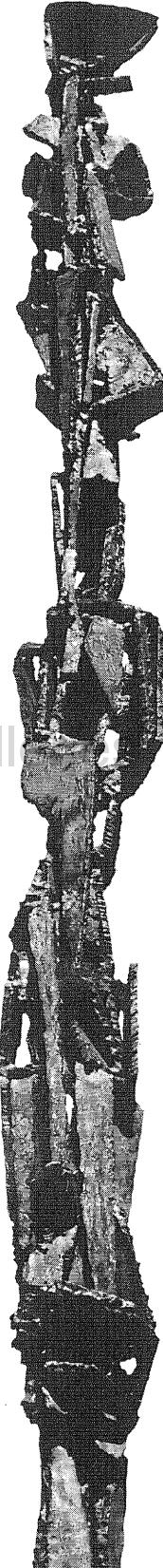
Introduction by  
LAURENCE SCHMECKEBIER  
DEAN | THE SCHOOL OF ART

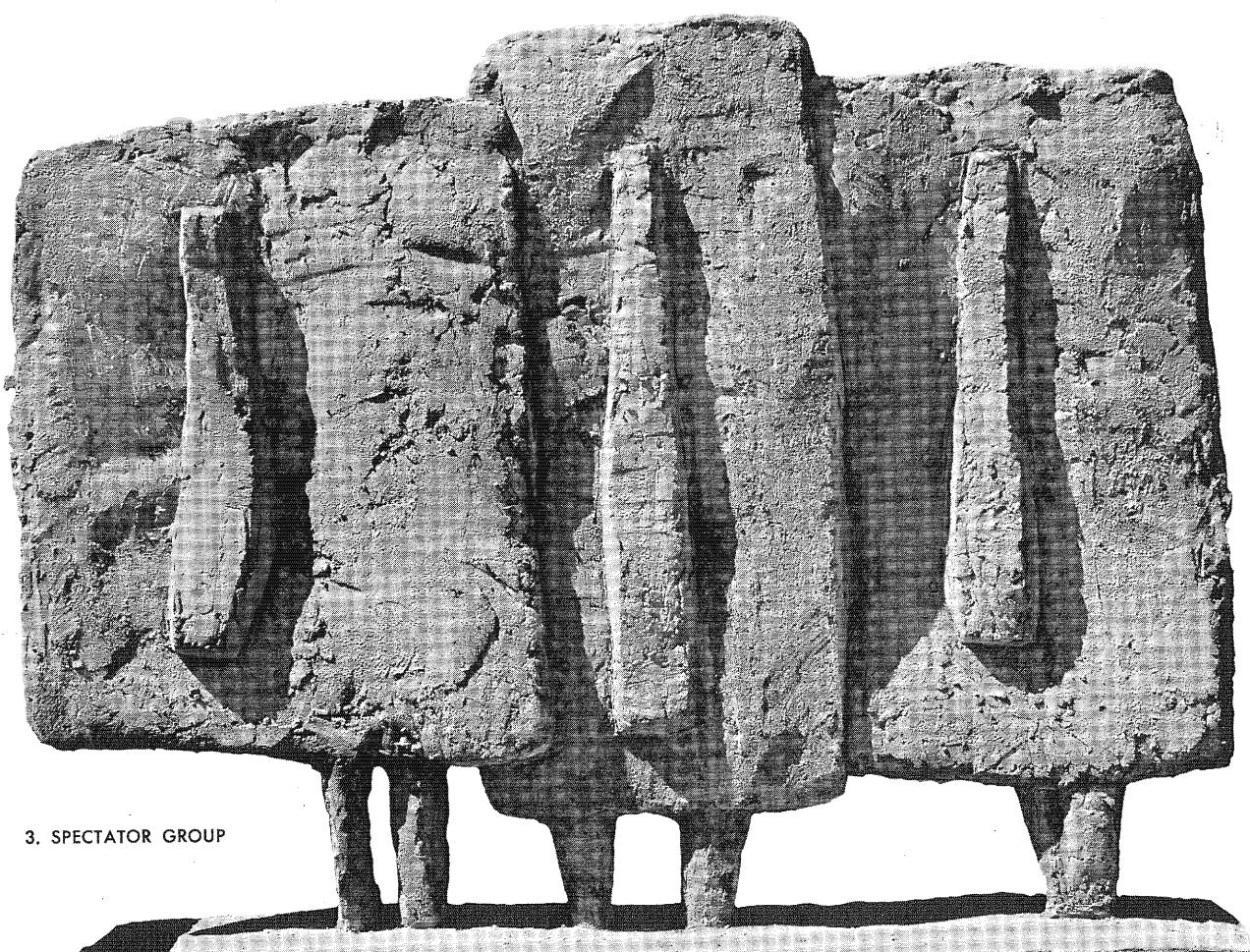
Comments by  
AIDRON DUCKWORTH

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1. ORGANIC FORM





3. SPECTATOR GROUP

## AIDRON DUCKWORTH AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

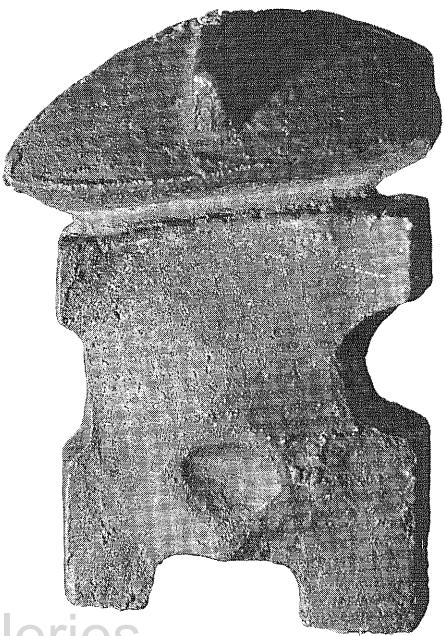
BY LAURENCE SCHMECKEBIER  
DEAN | SCHOOL OF ART

Syracuse University Art Galleries

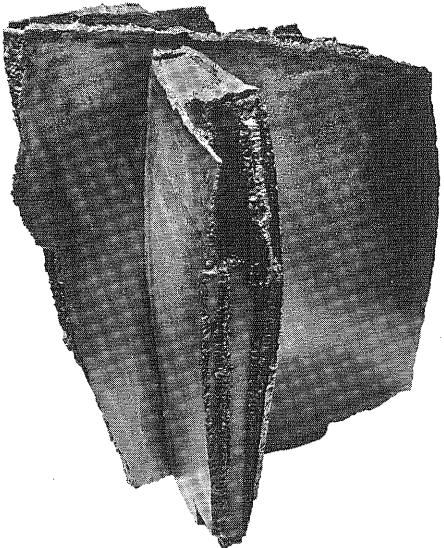
The search for the personal will which motivates both creativity and communication through the study of figure and form is the theme of this exhibition and indeed the entire artistic effort of Aidron Duckworth. The object of that search is to be found in nature but the discovery is the sole responsibility of the artist whose depth of understanding and skill in its identification present that new object which we call the work of art. It is the embodiment of a creative act, which has nothing to do with the traditional notion of beauty inherited from classic Greece, but is essentially the presentation of personal truth which must be fresh, genuine and recognizable.

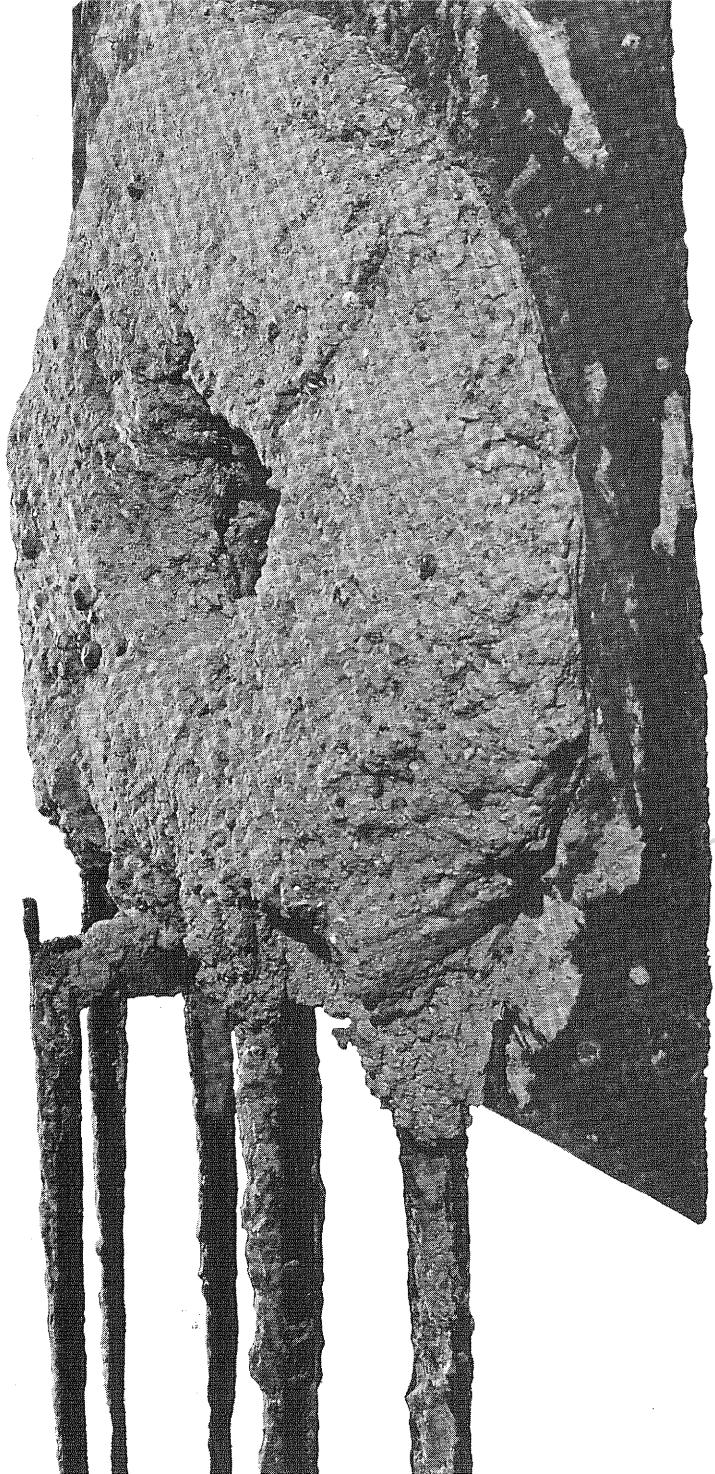
This is Duckworth's second year as Assistant Professor and head of the sculpture program at Syracuse University and his second in this country as an exhibiting artist. He was born January 23, 1920, in the market town of Spalding in Lincolnshire, England, the son of a dynamic engineer who had been active for many years on civil engineering projects in India. After finishing high school he studied engineering at the Polytechnical Institute in Lincoln, and held a part-time position as apprentice with the Anglo-American firm of Ruston Bucyrus,

2. FIGURE



4. HEAD





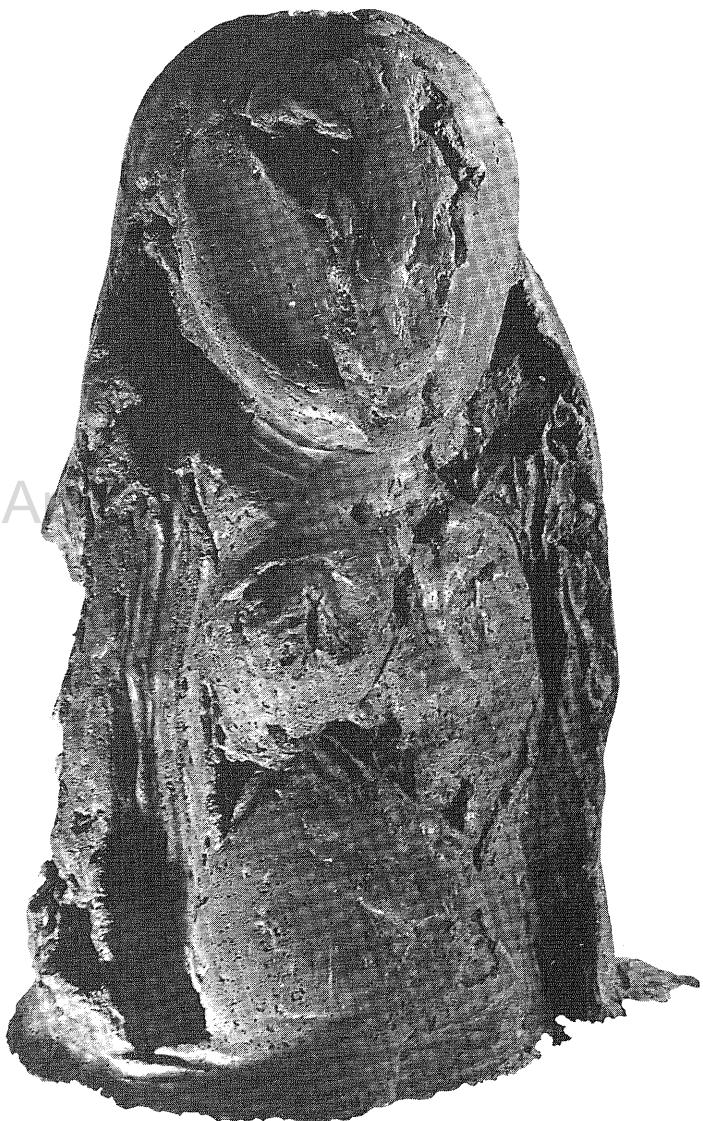
5. DETAIL OF FIGURE

working in the various areas of welding, casting, pattern-making and machine testing so that he acquired a remarkable combination of practical and theoretical experience so essential to his later career as a designer and sculptor.

This changed with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery and saw service in France and Belgium until Dunkerque, then went into officer training and served in Africa under Montgomery and later in Syria, Persia, Iraq, Palestine and other Middle Eastern countries. Having served as divisional staff officer for two years, he was appointed to the senior War College in Haifa in 1943 and after graduation was transferred to the War Office in London as an Intelligence Officer. Latterly he taught at Aldershot Officer Training School until his resignation from the Army in 1948.

From early youth, Duckworth had maintained an active interest in painting and sculpture, but it was always treated as what he called a "suspect hobby" not for serious consideration as a profession. During the service his leave time was spent at art schools and lunch hours in London were usually occupied at the Tate and National Galleries. Professional training as an artist began in 1948 with the study of sculpture at the Anglo-French Art Center in London. He spent two years at the Chelsea School of Art with sculpture as his main interest and another three years at the Royal College of Art, concentrating on product design. Following graduation in 1954, he took a position as chief designer for the firm of H. K. Furniture Ltd. in London. With his wife, the distinguished ceramist Ruth Duckworth, he then developed his own design offices in 1955 and maintained a successful career as an industrial designer, particularly in the

15. EARTH MOTHER



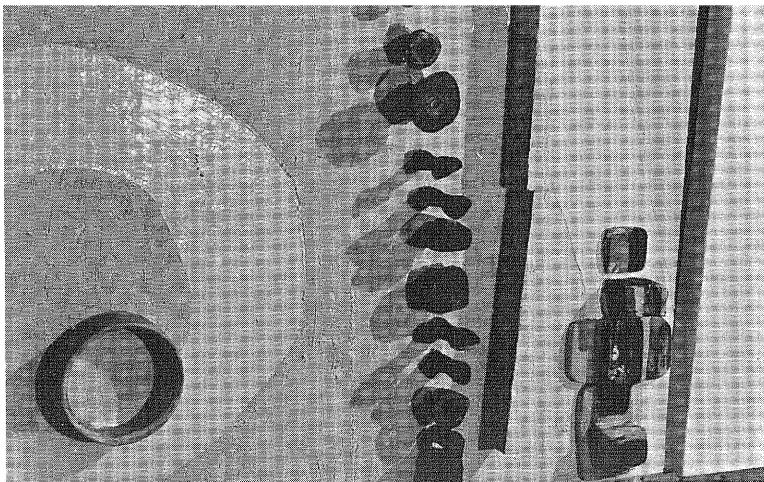
field of furniture and product design until 1962 when he gave up practice to become an independent sculptor.

During this period he had traveled extensively on the Continent, not only to the great artistic centers of France, Italy and Germany, but also on broad tours overland from the Netherlands to the Dolomites, from the Arctic Circle to the Ruhr Valley. The impact of such an experience of transfer from the bleak desolation of a prehistoric wasteland to the first bush and bird, the first primitive house and village to the black clouds and teeming activity of twentieth century industrial society, posed a frightening problem to which somehow the artist must reply. The necessity for serious concern became even more imperative when he faced industrial America early in 1965 on his arrival in this country to teach at the University of Illinois in Chicago. A tour of the American Southwest and Mexico the following summer confronted him with the vast open spaces and ageless monumental forms of nature in a scale even greater than Stonehenge. In the same mood his discovery of the magnificently primitive and elemental sculpture of ancient Mexico served to clarify his own answer to the problem of a significant sculptural expression which we see in this exhibition.

In Duckworth's artistic development, the communication of visual creativity, which he calls the art of teaching, became an essential ingredient. He had some exposure to teaching in the military service and at Kingston School of Art, but his first real challenge appeared in the art schools of this country where a veritable kaleidoscope of traditions, reactions, group ideologies and strong individualities serve to confuse and frustrate the young artist in process of



7. GERMINATION



6. PANEL

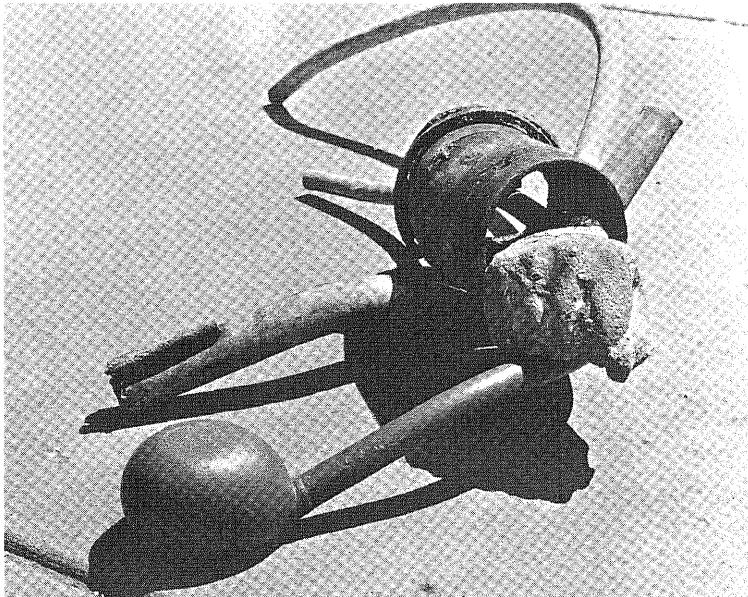
finding his own aesthetic fulfillment. Duckworth's position has been stated many times and is perhaps most clearly reflected in the comment accompanying this exhibition. What he expresses in welded steel, wood and concrete, whether modelled, carved or "assembled," is essentially the philosophy he proposes to his students. The search is for personal truth, the means is primarily through the figure and the discipline of drawing, the medium is the endless variety of the sculptor's materials and their technical mastery. "The barrier to the recognition of truth," he says, "is fear and the attendant sloth, personal vanity and protective tradition which it shelters."

The now traditional cry of "freedom from fear" is not limited to political and social problems, but encompasses the aesthetic as well. In this age of what Jean Cocteau once called "monstrous vulgarity," where words, expressions and forms have lost their meaning through ignorance and misuse, we need to return to the true meaning of "realism." It is not the obvious world of the recognizable object, nor intellectualized realm of psychological or symbolic association, but the inner reality of the spirit as revealed by artistic form. In the hands of an artist, the rubble, rust and crumbled ruins so characteristic of our man-made landscape have become extraordinary instruments of clairvoyance and indeed, Dubuffet has become a dominating influence on the new art of this decade. It has a striking brutality, but also deep tenderness, and in the struggle to reach beyond the sentimental, Duckworth notes that brutality sometimes provides the safer course.

There is no conflict here between the frequently divergent roles of artist and teacher as a creator—or discoverer—of new values. The artist is also a teacher

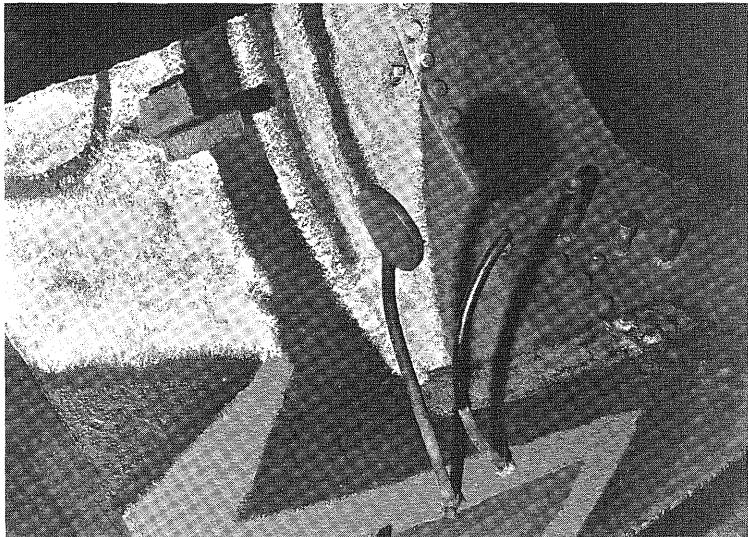
simply because the process of discovery is conditioned by and integral to communication. Not long ago Duckworth organized an exhibition of "found objects" on one of the lawns adjacent to the Art Center on the University campus. It was composed of the most ordinary objects: water-worn boulders, a crushed automobile, twisted farm machinery, and gaunt, rusted and jagged girders from a discarded building site. Compared with the monumental and man-made sculpture on the surrounding campus, these objects were artless, but in their stark character and striking arrangement they stood strong and clear with an air of challenging innocence. They were a denial of quality in execution and mechanical craftsmanship; their justification was an appeal to the imagination and the acceptance of phantasy and its potential stimulation in everything which surrounds us. Though much discussed and severely criticized by students and the public, the teaching function of this modest outdoor exhibition was successful and the grove still continues to serve as an intriguing center of artistic interest.

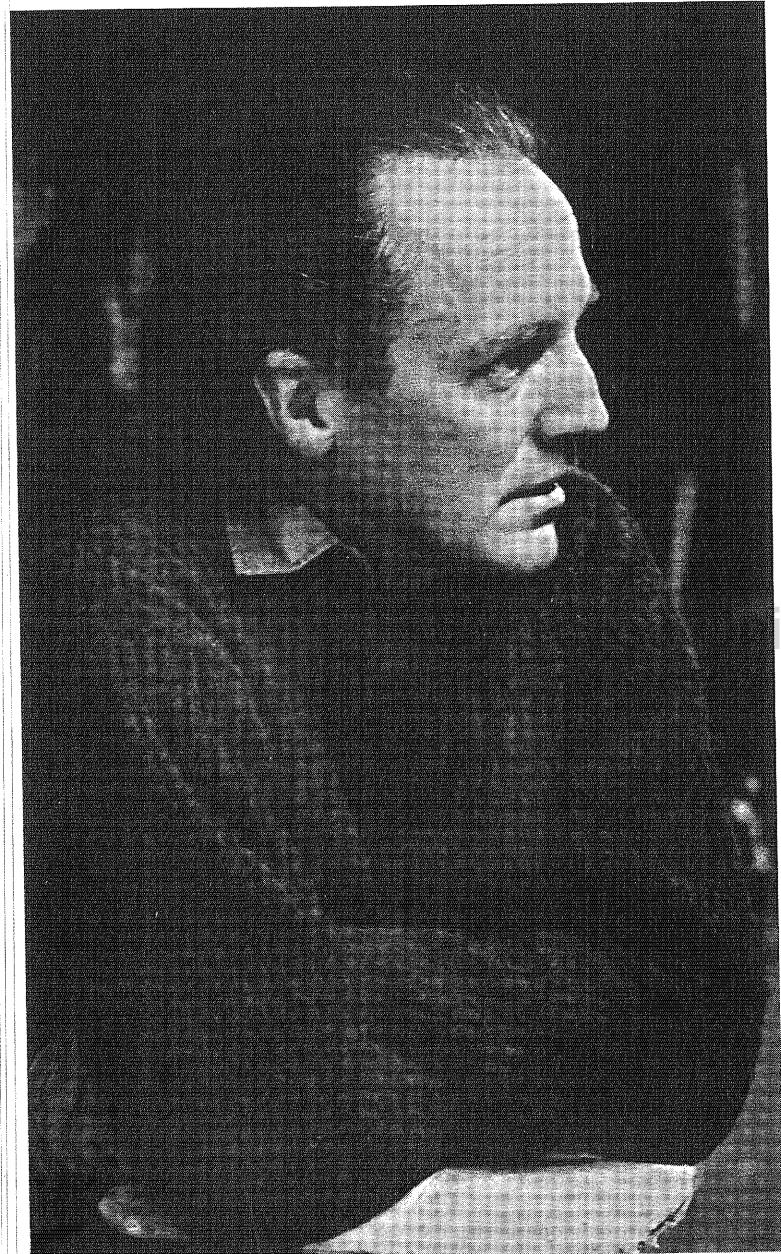
Duckworth's sculpture represents a series of achievements along this road of aesthetic progress. Non-historical as it may seem, the search for this new realism has its own tradition that is uniquely of the twentieth century. It defies classification as to style. It is neither Cubist nor Fauve; neither Dada nor Surrealist. Indeed its exaltation of the raw and naked material through primitive forms carries a pioneering spirit of great promise. Though he has exhibited his sculpture on a professional basis only during the past half dozen years, this promise is already a materialized achievement. Its immediate background had to do with man's "ritualized environment" as expressed in more abstract constructions. His return to the figure and the significant personal form reflects the new challenge.



9. DREAM

8. RITUAL PROCESSION





## COMMENTS BY AIDRON DUCKWORTH

### University Art Galleries

There is nothing so poignant as the ultimate loneliness of the individual. He is born alone, he loves alone, he dies alone. Throughout the successive phases of my work I have tried to express this isolation. The problem is communication. To communicate is to touch and where touch is prohibited is silence. But where to touch? It hardly matters. And how to touch? Only those who love know how. Foot touches foot, needle pierces cloth, chisel cuts wood. Where love is absent there may still be skill to excite admiration, so communication is qualitative.

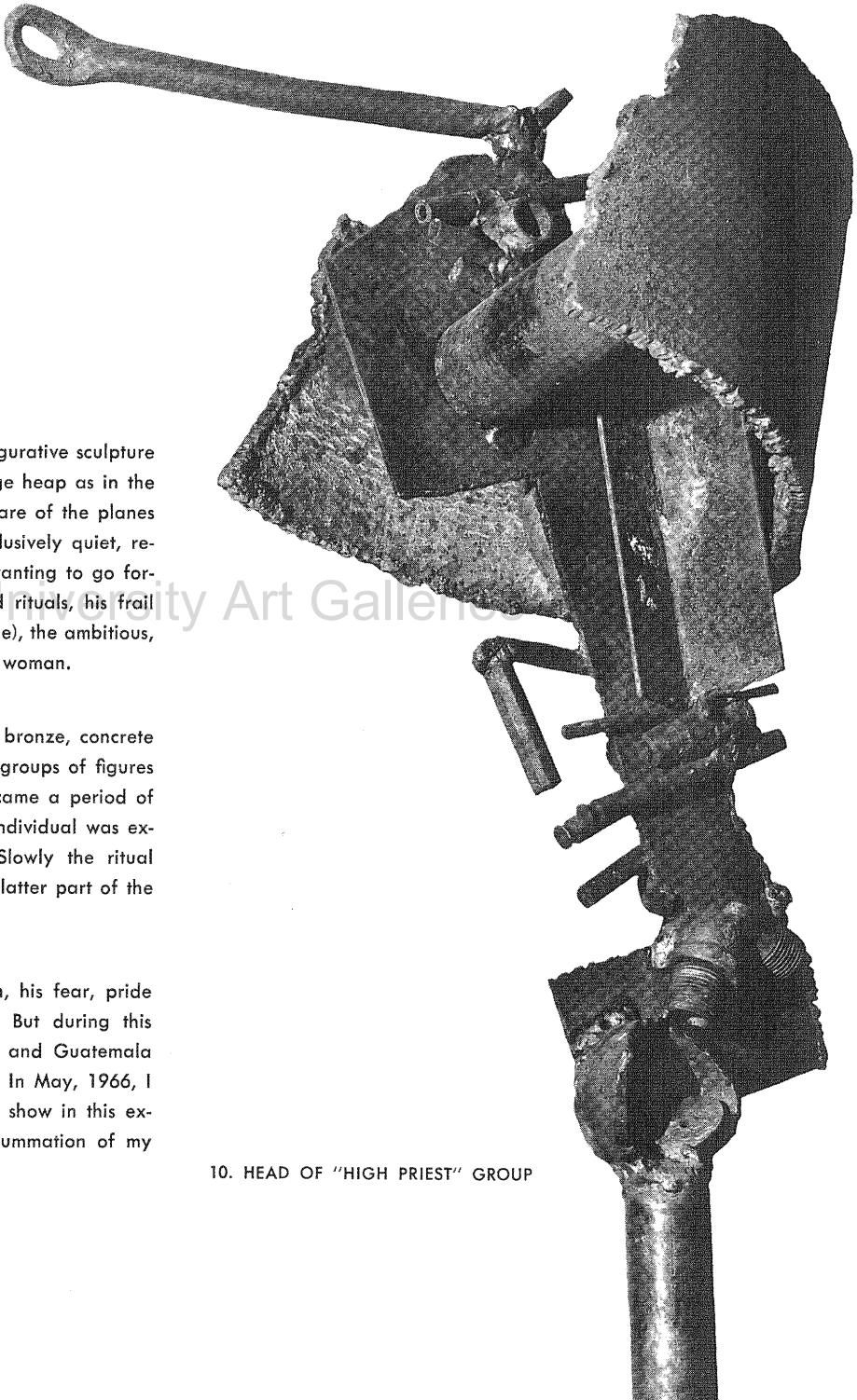
There are different types of communication. A viaduct or an airplane can communicate a poetry of imaginative daring. A machine tool presents a direct declaration of powerful purpose. By the same token, a well shaped leg should merely communicate an ideal capacity to move and the breast an ability to feed. But these are potentialities. They have no value if the will to use them is absent.

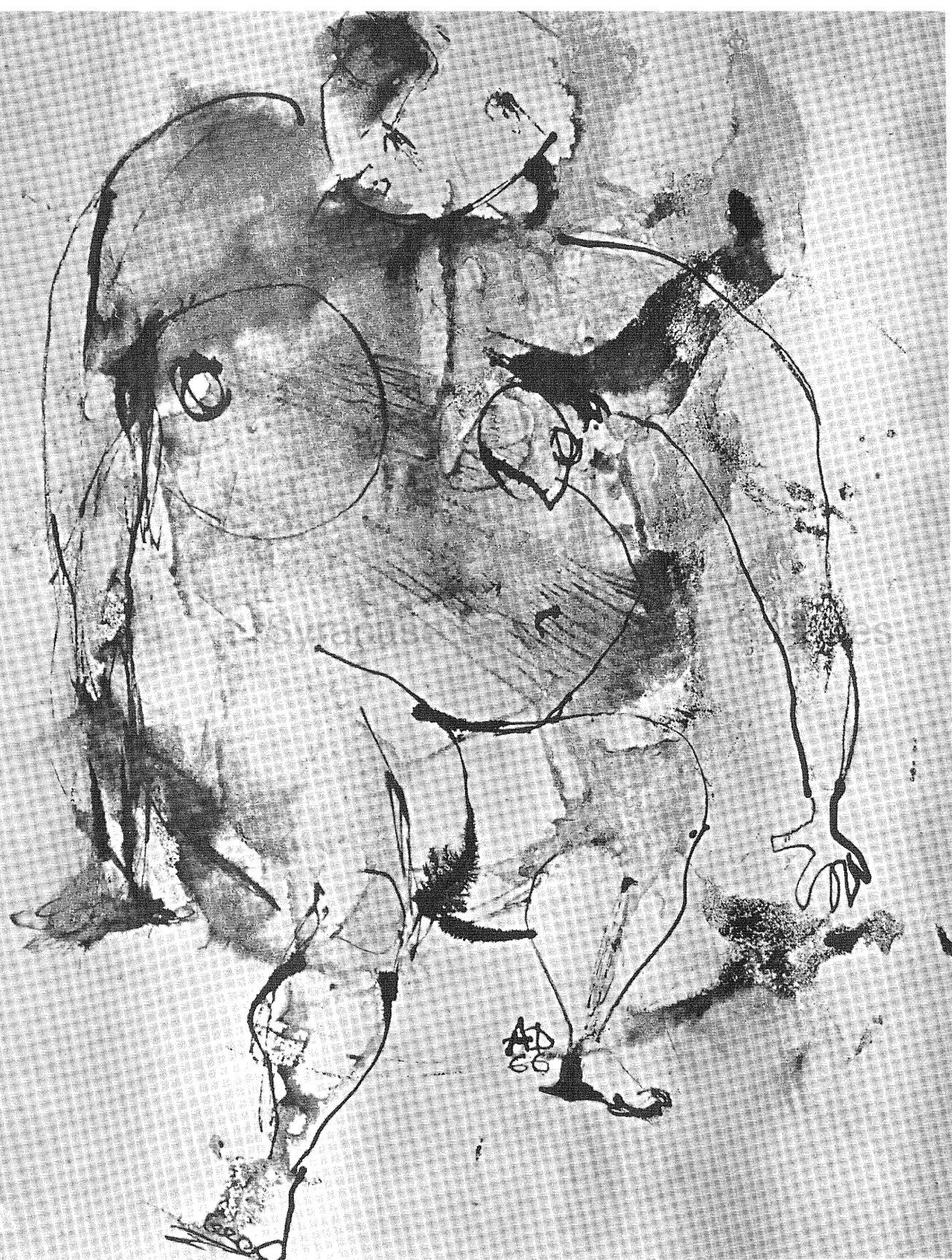
So I search for this elusive will. I search to create abstractly figurative sculpture of such power that it sits as serenely undisturbed in a garbage heap as in the most carefully designed setting. A mountain is superbly unaware of the planes that fly over it or the men that crawl over its surface. The illusively quiet, reflective core of man absorbs me, his fear and curiosity, his wanting to go forward and retreat at the same moment, his organization and rituals, his frail insignificance in his setting, (yet for him he only is of significance), the ambitious, visionary, poetic, quality of man and the earthy profundity of woman.

In 1960-63 I expressed this theme in a "Spectator" series of bronze, concrete and welded steel sculptures. These were isolated figures and groups of figures caught in a moment of unguarded contemplation. After this came a period of two years when the dominance of the environment over the individual was expressed in constructions of wood, concrete and ceramics. Slowly the ritual significance of color began to assert itself which spanned the latter part of the 1964-65 constructional period and the return to welded steel.

Here man in his ritualised environment, and man in isolation, his fear, pride and imagination, were expressed in form and polychrome. But during this period a visit to the southwestern states of America, Mexico and Guatemala developed a need to express this theme in clay and concrete. In May, 1966, I began the series of clay modellings, cast in concrete, which I show in this exhibition. Although largely monochrome they are for me a summation of my work to this time.

10. HEAD OF "HIGH PRIEST" GROUP

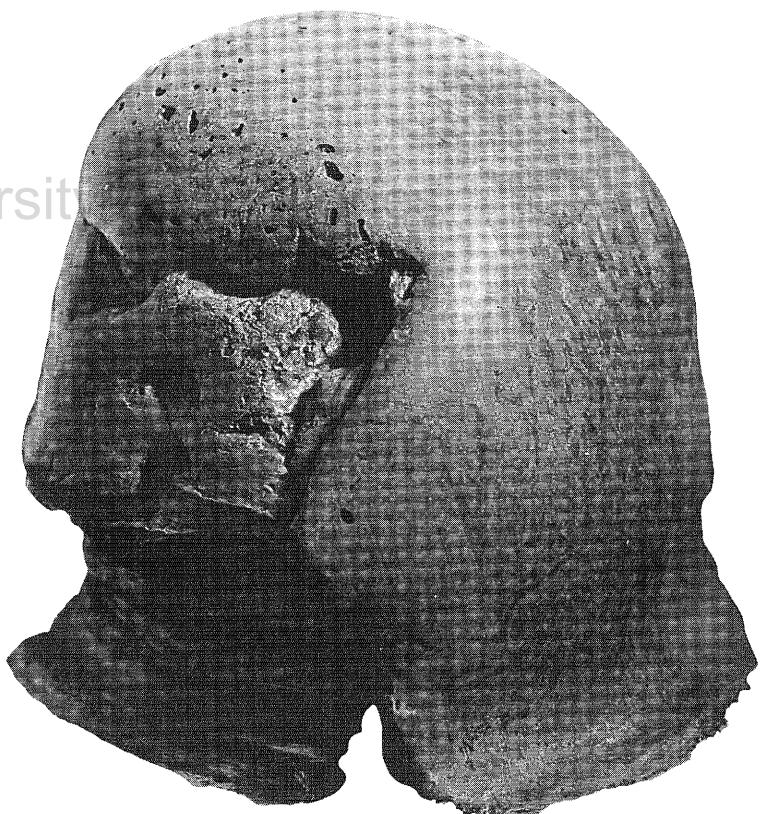




2. WOMAN



11. HEAD



13. HEAD

## CATALOG

### SCULPTURE

#### 1. ORGANIC FORM

Welded Steel  
7' x 8" x 8"

1960

#### 2. FIGURE

Bronze  
4" x 3" x 1½"

1961

#### 3. SPECTATOR GROUP

Concrete  
4' x 6'  
1962

#### 4. HEAD

Welded Steel with Patina  
App. 3' x 3' x 1' 8"  
1963

#### 5. DETAIL OF FIGURE

Welded Steel & Concrete  
6' 6" x 3' x 1' 6"  
1963

#### 6. PANEL

Wood, Ceramics, Fiberglass,  
Paint, Plaster  
4' x 6'  
1964

#### 7. GERMINATION

Welded Steel  
4' 6" x 2' x 1' 8 "

1965

#### 14. FIGURE

#### 8. RITUAL PROCESSION

Welded Steel and Paint  
3' x 2' 6" x 1' 4"  
1965

#### 9. DREAM

Welded Steel & Painted Concrete  
3' x 1' 6" x 8"  
1966

#### 10. HEAD OF "HIGH PRIEST" GROUP

Welded Steel and Encaustic  
7' x 2' x 1'  
1966

#### 11. HEAD

Black Ceramic  
App. Life Size  
1965

#### 12. HEAD

Black Concrete  
11" x 12" x 10"  
1966

#### 13. HEAD

Black Concrete  
7' x 7" x 8"  
1966

#### 14. FIGURE

Grey Concrete  
7½" x 5" x 5"  
1966

#### 15. EARTH MOTHER

Pink and Grey Concrete  
45" x 28" x 24"  
1966

### DRAWINGS

#### 1. THE TUNNEL

Ink, Wash and Crayon  
24" x 18"  
1966

#### 2. WOMAN

Ink and Wash  
24" x 18"  
1966

#### 3. WOMAN

Ink, Wash and Crayon  
24" x 18"  
1966

#### 4. HEAD STUDIES

Ink and Conte  
24" x 18"  
1966

#### 5. FIGURE STUDIES

Ink and Conte  
24" x 18"  
1966

#### 6. HEAD

Wax Resist, Ink and Wash  
24" x 18"  
1966



Syracuse University Art Galleries



3. WOMAN



5. FIGURE STUDIES

6. HEAD



