



POP ART USA

An Exhibition pre-
sented by the Oak-
land Art Museum
and the California
College of Arts &
Crafts; organized
by John Coplans;
shown September 7
to 29, 1963, at the

N
6994

PG

023

1963xP

Oakland Art Museum

OAKLAND ART MUSEUM



709.73

OHp

3 0750 01405 3957

001 20 64

Oakland Municipal Art Museum

The Honorable John Charles Houlihan, *Mayor*
Wayne Thompson, *City Manager*

Oakland Museums Commission: William J. Hayes, *Chairman*; Howard Willoughby, *Vice-Chairman*; Marjorie Gibson, Paul G. Manolis, Y. Charles Soda. William H. Brett, *Acting Administrator*

The Art Museum Staff: Paul Mills, *Director*; Hazel Bray, Minette Martin, *Educational Assistants*; Frederic P. Snowden, *Registrar*; Theodore Cohen, *Preparator*; Dorothy Delahoussaye, Elaine Hodgins, Nancy Mazetis, Elbert Swanson, Lewis Ferbrache, Muriel Robinson

California College of Arts and Crafts

Trustees: James S. Moulton, *Chairman*; Garfield G. Merner, *First Vice-Chairman*; Robert H. Bolman, *Second Vice-Chairman*; Elwood M. Gill, Robert L. Philippi, Marjorie H. E. Benedict, Vernon C. McIlraith

Harry X. Ford, *President*

Cover Design by Tony Delap
Printed by David Printing Co.

The dimensions given in
the captions are in inches;
height precedes width.

All rights reserved by
The Oakland Art Museum
1000 Fallon Street
Oakland 7, California

Foreword

Paul Mills, Director, Oakland Art Museum

The Oakland Art Museum, in both its collections and exhibitions, is primarily concerned with the art of California from the earliest times to the present. It is sponsoring the *Pop Art, USA* exhibition to give the bay area its first comprehensive look at this new movement, which is of course, international in character, but also to call attention to the significant work done by certain Californians in this style which has been overlooked in most of the eastern exhibitions.

John Coplans, who has organized the exhibition for the museum, is a painter, Editor-at-large of *Art Forum* and a critic for *Art International*. He was a visiting faculty member at the California College of Arts and Crafts here in Oakland and at the Berkeley campus of the University of California and is now on the faculty of Chouinard Institute in Los Angeles. A South African by birth who came to America from England, he has considerably enlivened the California art scene. The museum is most grateful to him for undertaking the organization of this exhibition and for his assistance in other recent museum presentations.

Many others have helped to make this exhibition possible, principally the artists, owners and galleries who have kindly lent works for the exhibition; the museum expresses its deep appreciation to them, and to those credited elsewhere who assisted Mr. Coplans.

Lenders

Mr. and Mrs. Abe Adler
 Amel Gallery
 L. M. Asher family collection
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Blankfort
 Mr. Irving Blum
 Leo Castelli Gallery
 Ceeje Gallery
 Comara Gallery
 Dallas Museum of Fine Arts
 Dilexi Gallery
 Dwan Gallery
 Robert Elkon Gallery
 Mr. Jim Eller
 Ferus Gallery
 Mrs. Melvin Hirsch
 Mr. and Mrs. Burt Kleiner
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 Felix Landau Gallery
 Rolfe Nelson Gallery
 Mr. Vernon Nikkel
 Pace Gallery
 Esther Robles Gallery
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rowan
 Allan Stone Gallery
 Bertha Schaefer Gallery
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Solomon
 David Stuart Gallery
 Mr. and Mrs. John Weber

American Painting and Pop Art

by John Coplans

Although this exhibition is the first to attempt a collective look in considerable depth at the current phenomenon of what for the time being is broadly labeled as Pop Art¹ (as well as those artists who now appear as harbingers of this new art), it has been preceded by a series of important museum exhibitions within the last year that have examined various aspects of this heterogeneous activity:

- September 1962 "The New Painting of Common Objects" organized by Walter Hopps at the Pasadena Art Museum.
- March 1963 "Six Painters and the Object" organized by Lawrence Alloway at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.
- April 1963 "Popular Art" organized by Mr. and Mrs. C. Buckwalter at the Nelson Gallery of the Atkins Museum, Kansas City.
- April 1963 "Pop Goes the Easel" organized by Douglas MacAgy at the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston.
- April 1963 "The Popular Image Exhibition" organized by Alice Denney at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art.
- July 1963 "Six More" organized by Lawrence Alloway at the Los Angeles County Museum (mainly a repeat of the Pasadena Exhibition) and shown with the traveling version of "Six Painters and the Object."

Abstract Expressionism, the first brilliant flowering of a distinctly American sensibility in painting, is a movement in which the prime innovators and the most important artists are largely based in New York. Another characteristic is that,

without exception, all the early work of the painters in this movement can be seen as a direct confrontation of, and struggle with, the dominating influences of European painting. In contrast, Pop Art reveals a complete shift of emphasis in both geographical location and subject matter. The first body of work that has emerged from this new movement is widely dispersed between the two coasts—this simultaneous eruption is an important factor neglected by all the organizers of the previous exhibitions, with the exception of Pasadena's "New Painting of Common Objects." It points up several aspects of the new art that have received little consideration in the past. The curious phenomenon, particularly in these times of easy communication, of a group of artists widely separated geographically, who, without knowing, for the most part, of the existence of the others, appear at roughly the same time with images startlingly different from those which dominated American painting for two decades and yet strikingly similar to each other's work, points to the workings of a logic within the problems of American painting itself rather than to the logic of dealers and pressure groups. If the logic of abstract expressionism was hammered out in fiery quarrels in Greenwich Village bars by the most intensely speculative group of painters America has yet produced, the logic of this new art, by a quite different, but equally valid process, forced itself on artists geographically isolated from one another and yet faced with the same crisis.

The subject matter most common to Pop Art is for the most part drawn from those aspects of American life which have traditionally been a source of dismay to American intellectuals, and a source of that glib derision of "American culture" so common among Europeans; the comic strip, mass-media advertising, and Hollywood. Some critics argue that the employment of this subject matter places the artists in the morally indefensible position of complacent—if not joyous—acceptance of the worst aspects of American life. Others, however, insist upon finding a negative moral judgment implicit in the work. The artists,



Roy Lichtenstein, *Tex!*, 1962
62 x 80, oil on canvas
Lent by the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles

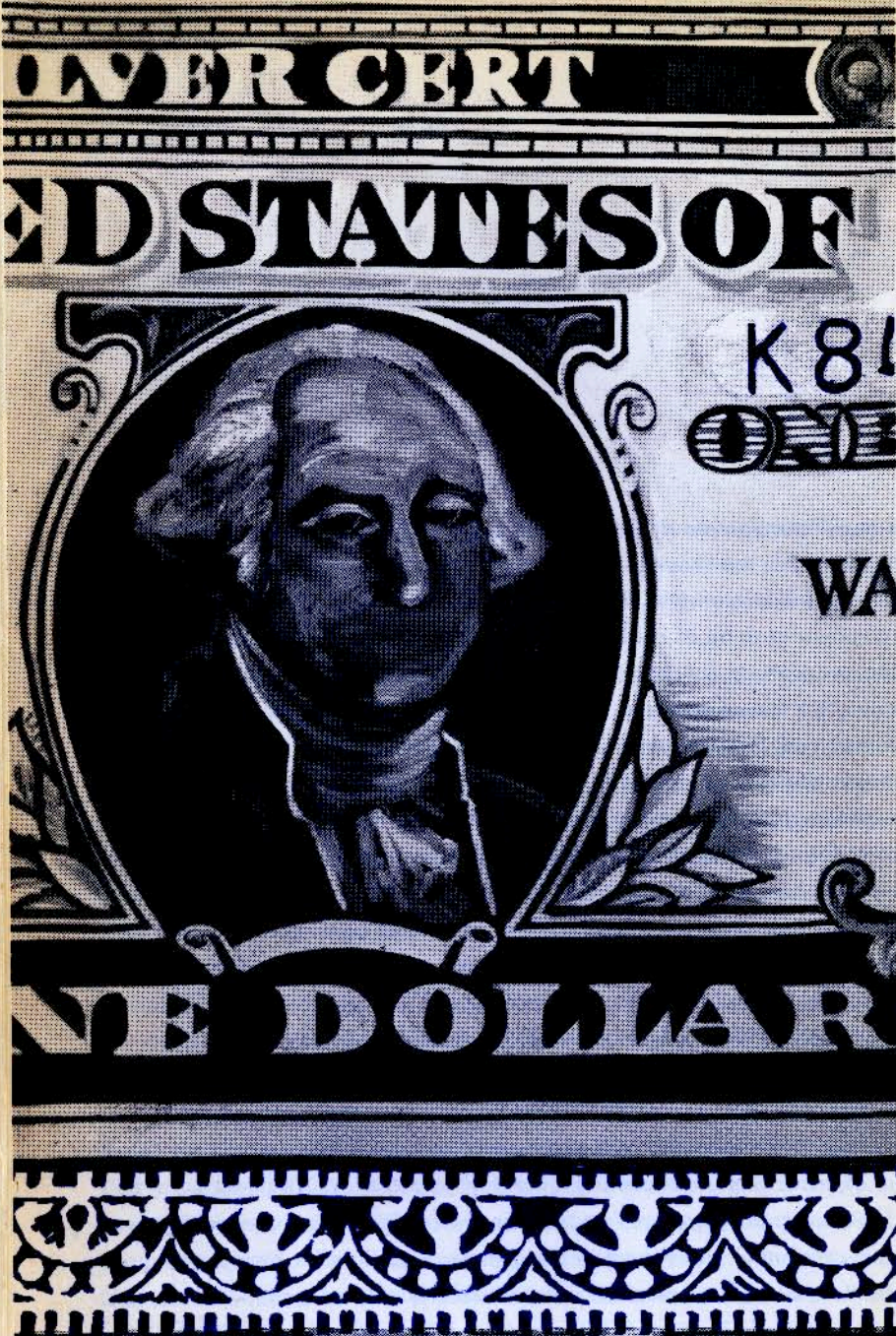
for the most part, remain silent, or, worse, perversely make public statements feeding the fury of the party they consider more absurd. For of course neither position approaches the real problems of this new art or searches the nature of the crisis which has brought it forth.

That crisis is essentially the same crisis the abstract expressionist painters faced, and solved so brilliantly in their own way: the problem of bringing forth a distinctly American painting, divorced from the stylistic influences and esthetic concerns of a tradition of European art which has lain like a frigid wife in the bed of American art since the Armory show. (And why hasn't anyone seen the re-creation of the Armory show as the greatest irony possible in the light of this new American painting?) If, during the last decade, abstract expressionism has been thought of—at least in this country—as finally having solved the problem of the creation of a distinctly American art, here is a whole new generation which has engendered widespread confusion by thinking otherwise. Seen from this point of view the painters of the soup can, the dollar bill, the comic strip, have in common not some moral attitude toward their subject matter that some say is positive and others say is negative, but a series of painting devices which derive their force in good measure from the fact that they have virtually no association with a European tradition. The point is so utterly plain that one is astonished at how often it has been missed. For these artists, the abstract expressionist concern with gesture, with the expressive possibilities of sheer materials is out—all Expressionistic concerns (and Impressionistic ones as well), abstract or otherwise, are out. A sophisticated concern with compositional techniques, formal analysis or drawing, is also out, and, indeed, Lichtenstein will depart from his usual comic strip paintings to lampoon a famous Picasso cubist painting, or a well-known art book's diagraming of the composition of an important Cezanne.

A further challenge to this new direction in art is that of shallowness. This condemnation is based upon the principle that transformation must occur in

order to differentiate an art image from a similar image in the real world. Certain artists within the broad category of the movement, it is claimed, in particular Warhol and Lichtenstein, fail to effect such a transformation, and if they do, it is so minute as to be of relatively no importance. The very essence of this new art lies precisely in its complete break from a whole tradition of European esthetics. This is accomplished by the particular choice of subject matter which is put into a new fine art context. This is the transformation.

While it would seem neither to damn nor approve the material of its inspiration—indeed to appear totally disinterested in the moral problems it raises—Pop Art does take subtle and incisive advantage of deeply rooted cultural meanings and demonstrates how for the artist the seemingly common and vulgar everyday images, messages and artifacts of a mass communicating and consuming society, can give rise to the deepest metaphysical speculations. Warhol's rigid, simple, mass-produced and standardized symmetry is only a point of departure behind which lies an assertive individuality, despite his non-committal painting technique. Hefferton's deliberate and highly-disciplined suppression of the decorative quality of paint by substituting a non-esthetic and primitive handling is also totally personal and at the same time his images insidiously recall a host of associations concerning "political expediency." Lichtenstein's flattened, blown-up and arrested images from the comics subtly pose real issues of the crisis of identity. In contrast to these three, Goode in his highly ambiguous milk bottle paintings employs a rich sensuous quality of paint. Oldenberg's painted plaster edibles parody the anxious, violent type of caricature and expressive use of color that has marked so much of modern art since Van Gogh but which has now become an inexpressive formal device and cliché in academic circles. If some of these images are dead-pan, an underlying violence seeps through as in Ruschá's calculated word images.² Blossum's cool, detached and simply-painted monotone image of twenty-five minutes ticking away on



Robert O'Dawd, Silver Certificate #K8, 1963
48 x 32, oil on canvas

a parking meter may appear indifferent to the tortured quality of life, the subject matter of the human condition painters, but it is in fact loaded with suppressed anxiety.

What at first sight appears to be a rather restricted movement employing a narrow range of imagery is in fact enormously rich in the variety of artists it encompasses; at the same time this is not meant to imply that there are no sharp qualitative differences among these artists as in those of any other movement. What is of intense interest, however, is that these artists are looking at and using the most thoroughly- and massively-projected images of our time—images so looked-at that they have become accepted, overlooked and unseen—as a raw material for art.

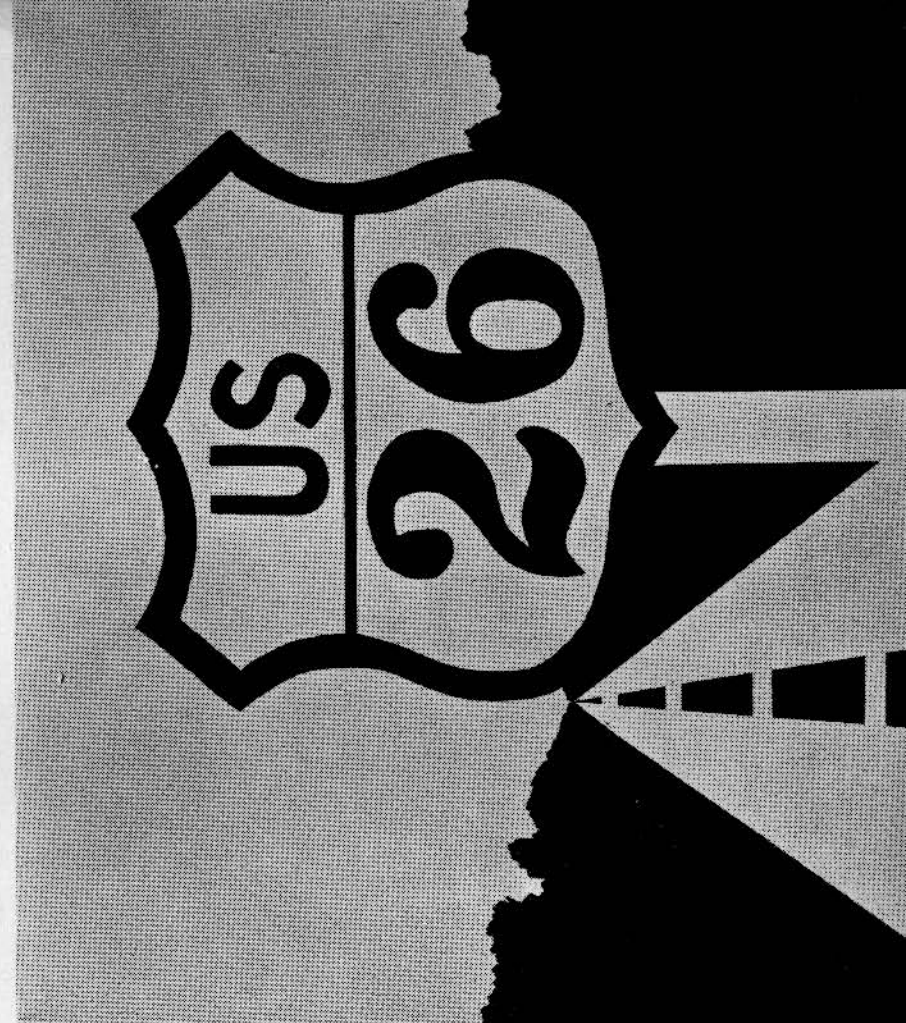
The emergence of this new art forces the re-evaluation of those artists in the past who have seemed merely eccentric or whose imagery and direction seemed peripheral to the course of American painting since World War II. Obviously Stuart Davis and Gerald Murphy, both considerably influenced by Leger, anticipate certain aspects of Pop Art in imagery and technique—Davis for his use of blown-up sign fragments and references to popular culture and jazz, Murphy for his billboard style and American vulgarity. A more recent forerunner activity than that of Davis and Murphy spanned the last fifteen years in various cities. In Paris was the American expatriate William Copley, a post surrealist with images full of cheesecake eroticism, patriotic folklore and sophisticated vulgarity. In New York were Larry Rivers with an imagery derived from American folklore and contemporary popular sources, but without the radical innovation of technique that would separate his work from abstract expressionism, and Ray Johnson, a pioneer in the use of the cheapest graphic techniques. In San Francisco Wally Hedrick traced ironic reflections onto radios, television cabinets and refrigerators, and Jess Collins "rewrote" the action and content of comic strips by collaging within existing printed images. Another curious figure is Von Dutch Holland, the Southern Californian hot rod stripper, a genuinely popular artist

whose eccentric imagery and high craft technique combined with a visionary attitude was admired by younger artists. The two key and most significant artists who are usually included within the Pop category are Jasper Johns³ and Robert Rauschenberg, but they should rather be regarded as direct precursors who provided the momentum, concentrated insights and focus of ideas that triggered the broad breakthrough of this new art, Rauschenberg for his concern with art as a direct confrontation of life, transforming his environment into art in a strange, compelling new way, and Johns for the potent questions he raised on the discontinuous quality of symbols. Billy Al Bengston⁴ appears to be one of the first artists to have recognized exactly what Johns and Rauschenberg were opening up; from 1959 on he completed a broad spectrum of work within the new idiom, but his more recent penumbric, hard-surfaced optical images are more concerned with a heightened awareness of the strange beauty and perfection of materials and have little to do with Pop Art.

- (1) A phrase coined by Lawrence Alloway in the early 'fifties to describe the strong forerunner activity in this direction by Eduardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton and others in London. Its subsequent usage cannot, however, be made his responsibility. The value of Alloway's consistent insight into this movement, incidentally, cannot be overestimated.
- (2) Ruschá is the first artist in the movement to have published, in an edition of one hundred copies, a book entitled "Twenty-six Gasoline Stations." A series of photographed images, it should be regarded as a small painting.
- (3) See Alan R. Salomon's perceptive introduction to the catalog of "The Popular Image Exhibition" at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, 1963, for a statement on Rauschenberg's and John's contribution.
- (4) Dine, who occupies a half-way position between assemblage and the new art, had a one-man exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York in January, 1962. It was Bengston's dealer, Irving Blum of the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles who gave the first one-man exhibition in July of 1962 to Warhol, a critical artist in the new movement who made a clean break with his Campbell Soup series.

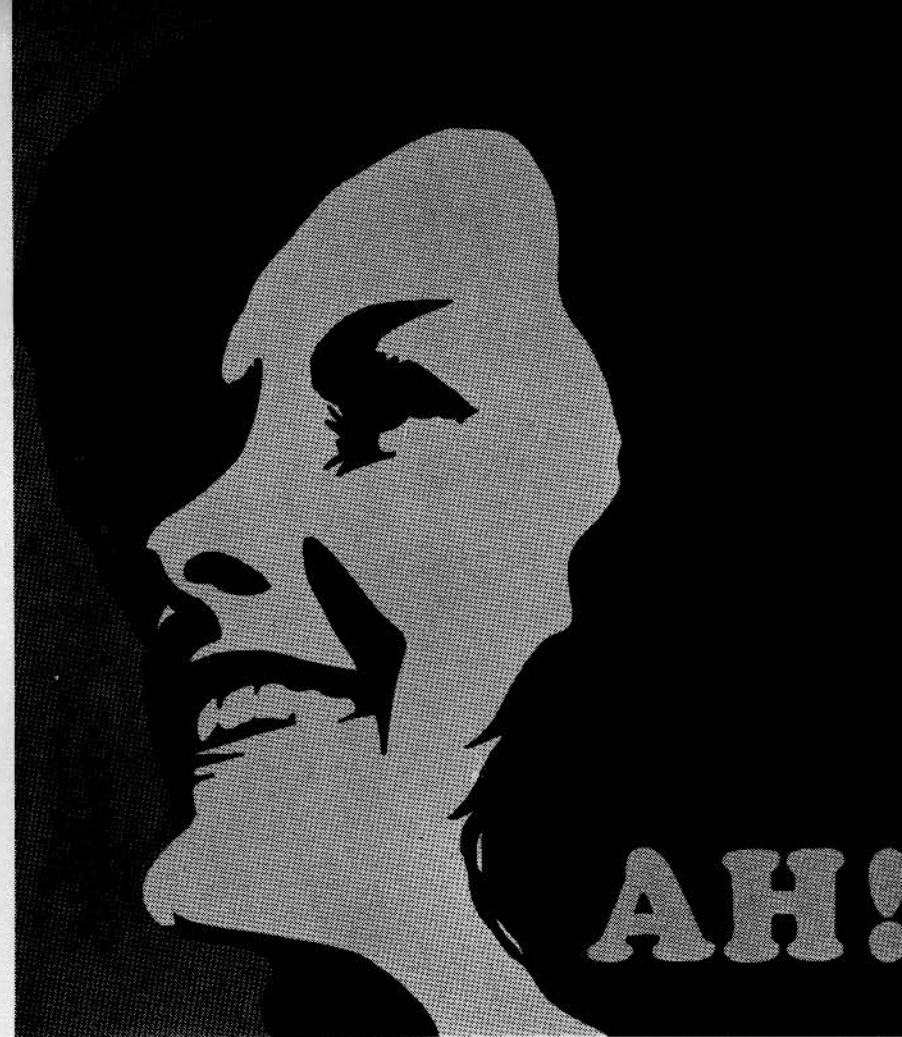
I wish to particularly thank Mr. Walter Hopps, acting Director of the Pasadena Art Museum, who generously placed at my disposal a massive amount of his own material on the new art, Mr. Phillip Leider, Managing Editor of *Artforum*, for his extensive help on the introduction and Mr. Irving Blum for his unstinted personal assistance in locating works for the exhibition.

AID'Arcangelo, U. S. 26, 1962
14 x 16, oil on canvas
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John W. Weber,
Los Angeles

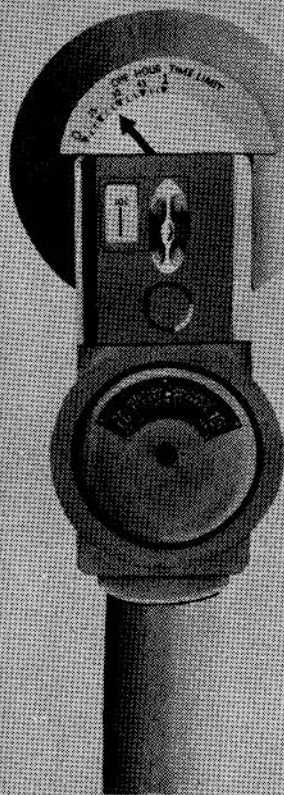




Anthony Berlant, *King Size I*, 1963
 9 3/4 x 8 1/4, metal construction with painting
 Lent by the David Stuart Gallery, Los Angeles

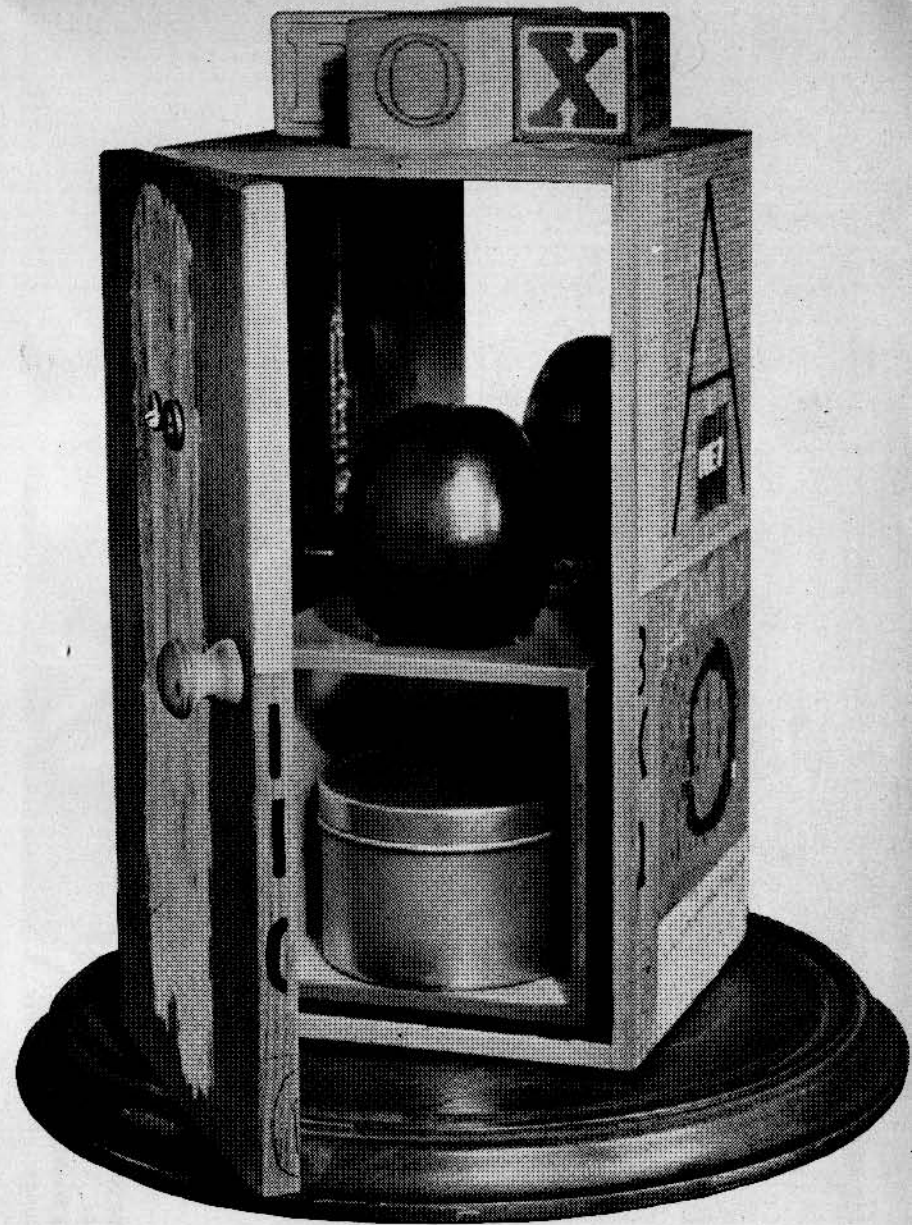


Patrick Blackwell, *Ah!* 1963
 64 x 71, oil on canvas



TWENTY FIVE MINUTES

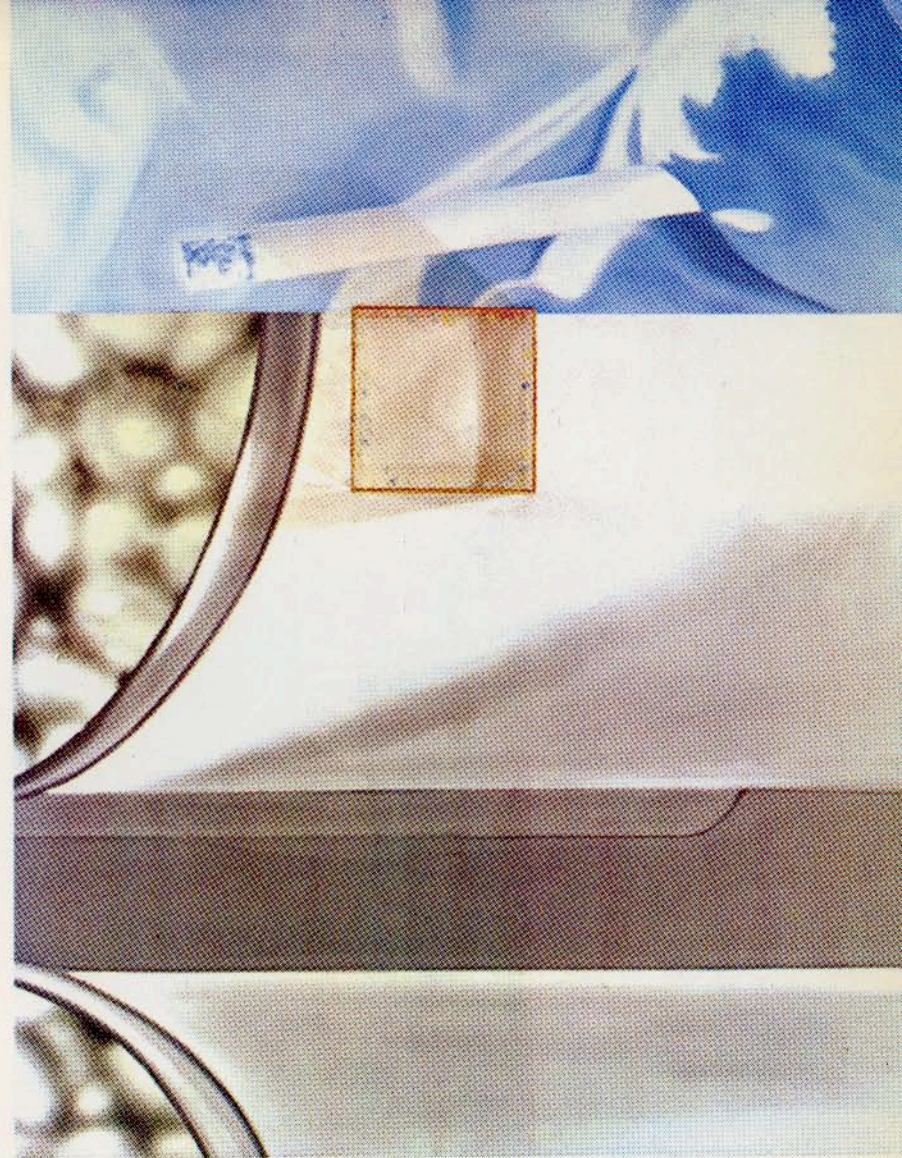
Vern Blosum, *25 Minutes*,
36 x 29, oil on canvas
Lent by the L. M. Asher family, Los Angeles



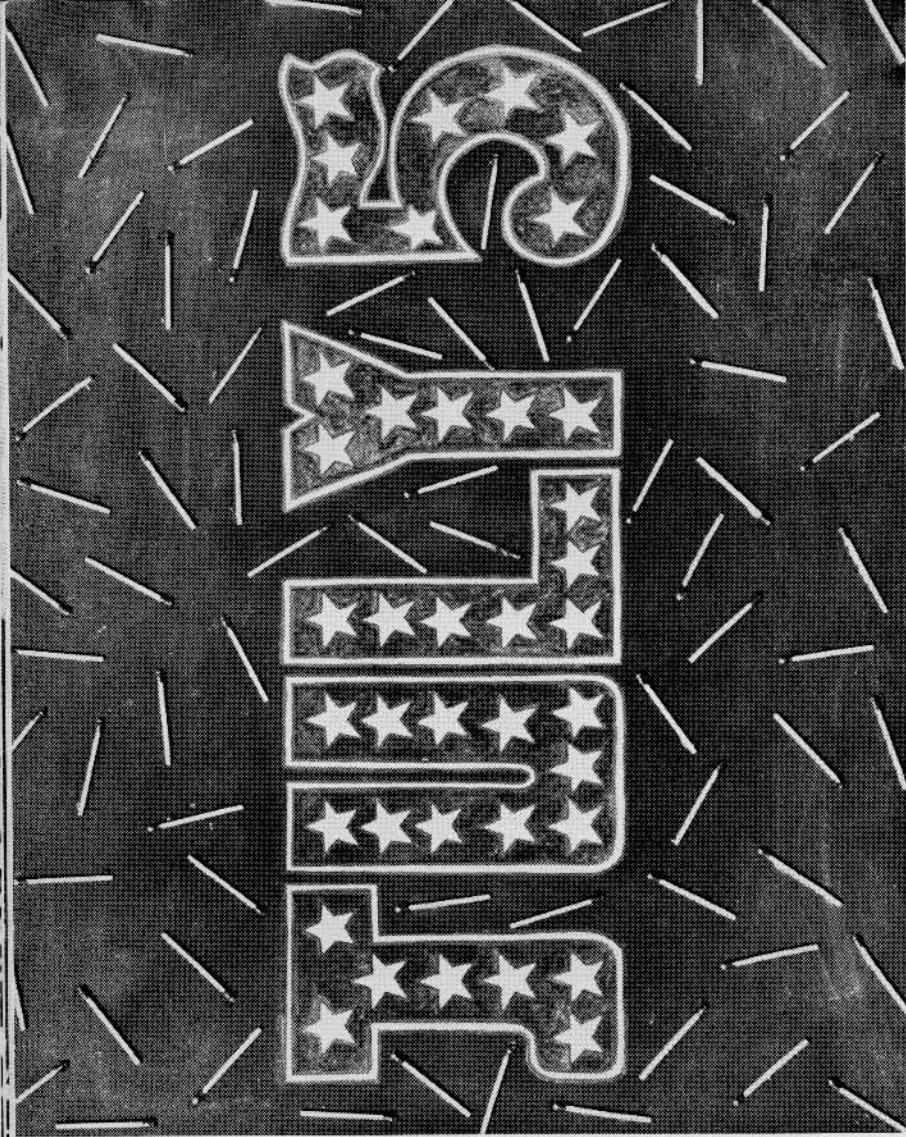
George Brecht, *Redemption Box*, 1961
12 x 6 x 6, mixed media
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John W. Weber, Los Angeles



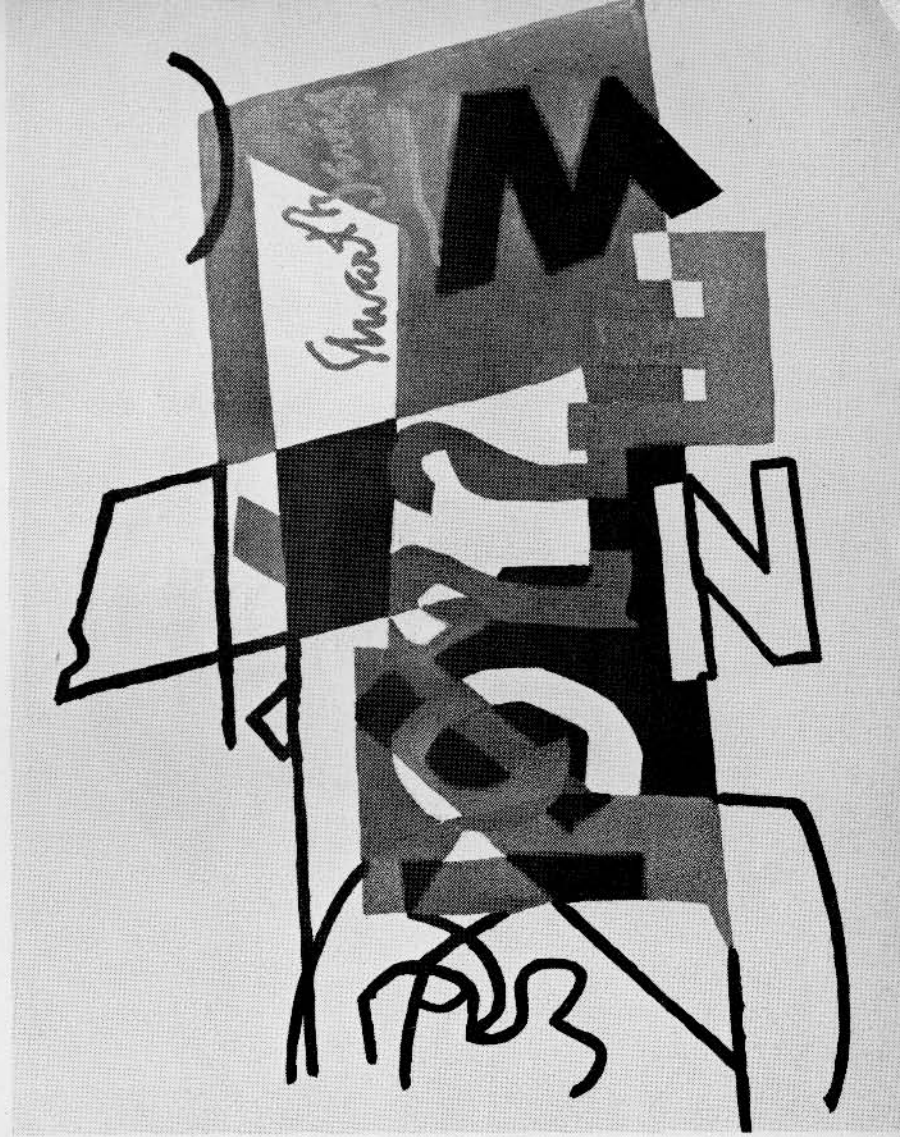
Jess Collins, *The Tricky Cad*, 1959
 19 x 7, newspaper collage
 Lent by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Conner



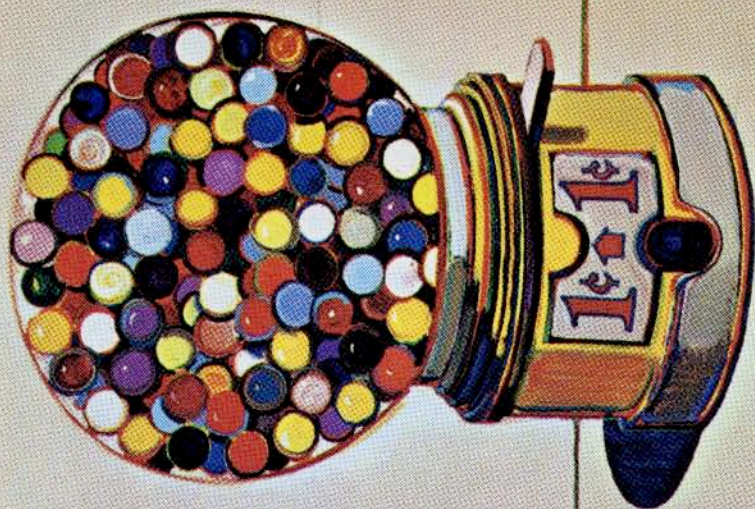
James Rosenquist,
The Space that Won't Fail, 1962
 48 x 60, mixed media on canvas
 Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Burt Kleiner,
 Beverly Hills



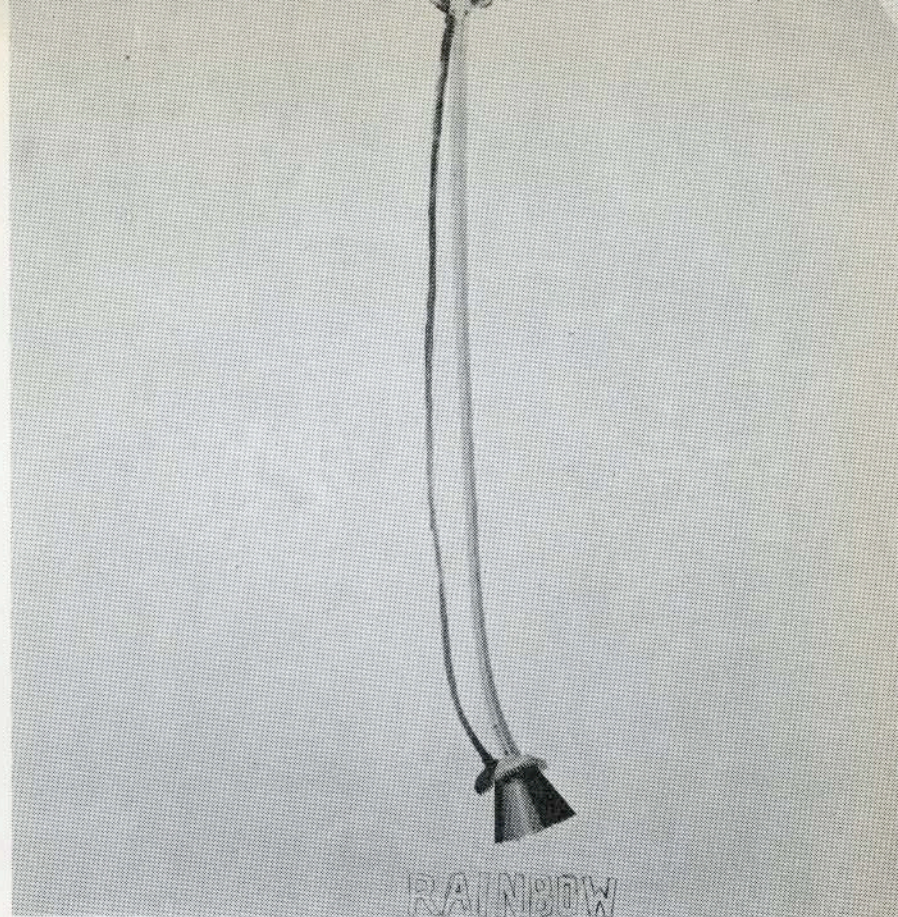
William Copley, *5th July, 1962*
24 x 30, collage and oil on canvas
Lent by the Esther Robles Gallery,
Los Angeles



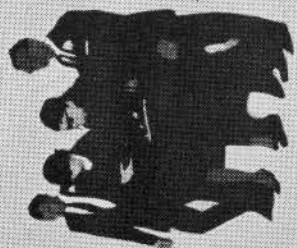
Stuart Davis, *Study for Combination*
Concrete No. 2, 1956
10 1/2 x 14, Gouache
Lent from a private collection,
Los Angeles



Wayne Theibaud,
Jaw Breaker Machine, 1963
26 x 31 1/2, oil on canvas
Lent by the Allan Stone
Gallery, New York



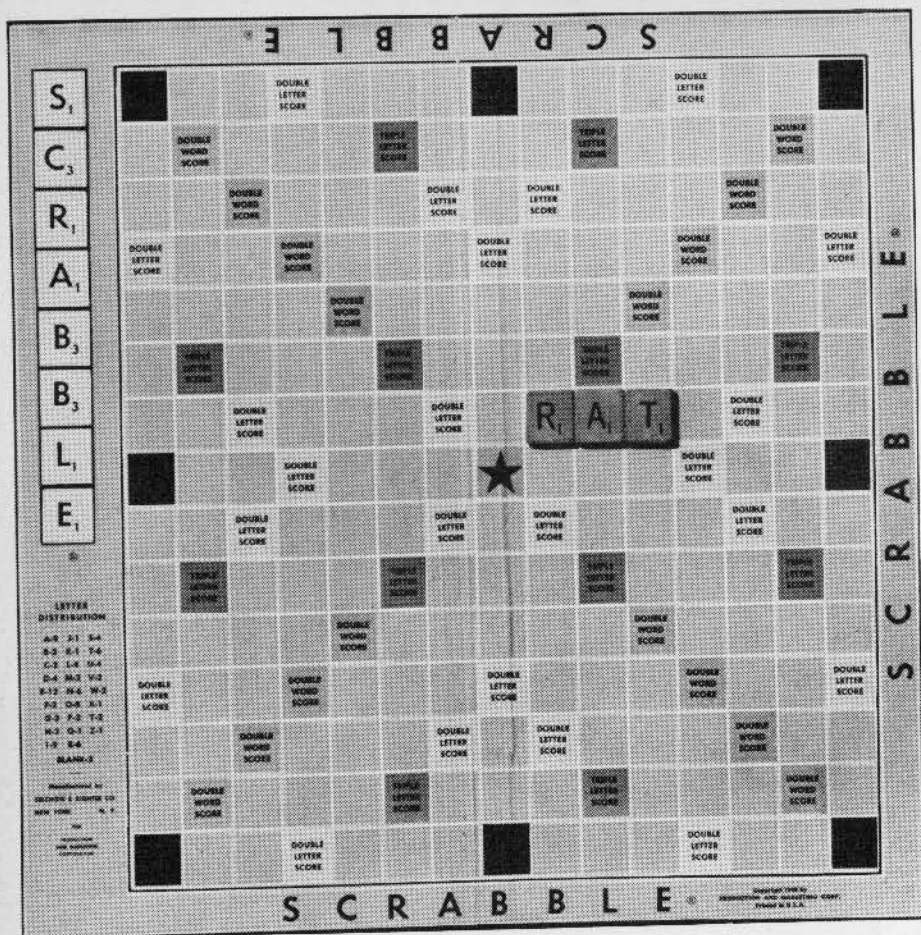
James Dine, *Rainbow*, 1962
72 x 72, mixed media
Lent by Mr. Vernon Nikkel, Clovis, New Mexico



Roslyn Drexler,
Funeral Procession, 1963
19 x 15, oil, collage
Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery,
New York



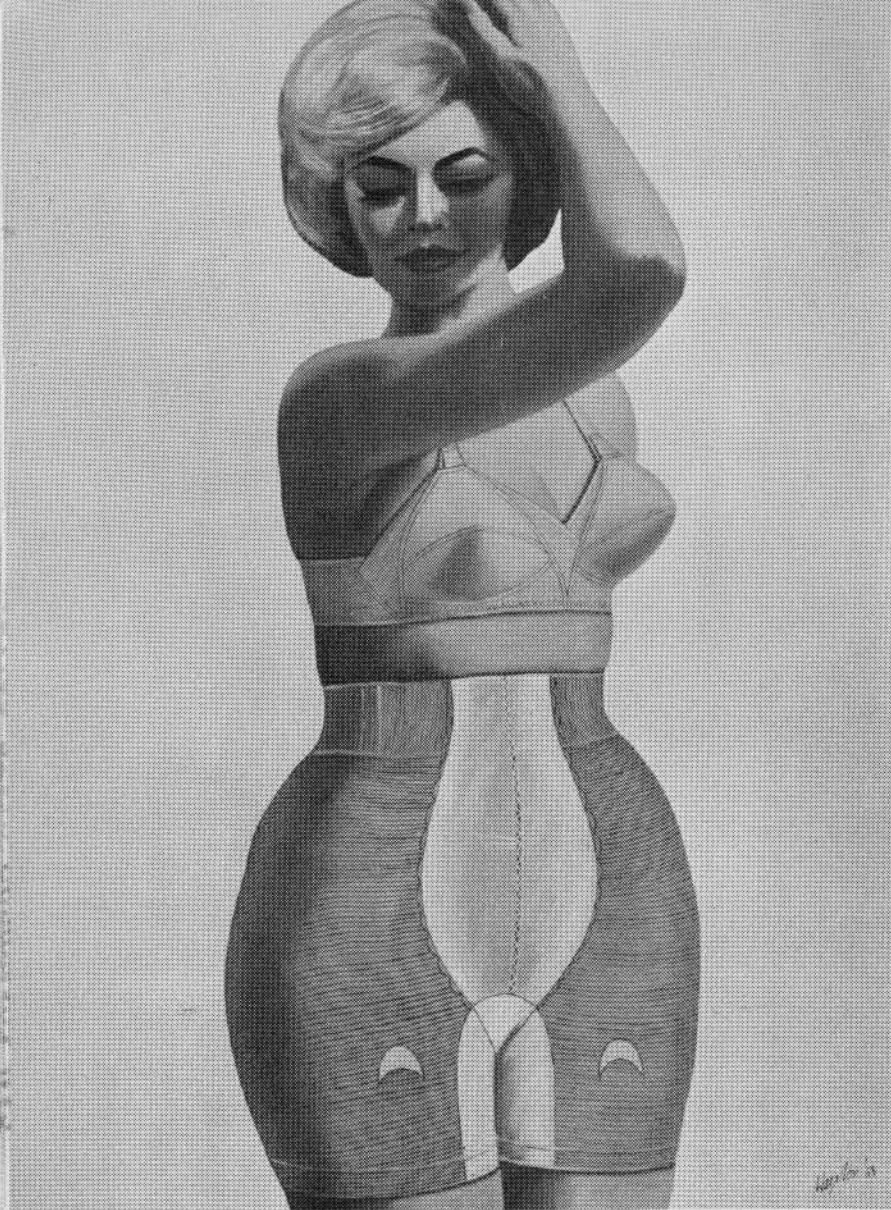
Walker Everett, *Goddesses of Liberty Loan*
26 x 30 1/2, oil on canvas
Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York



Jim Eller, *Scrabble Board*, 1962
14 x 14, mixed media
Anonymous loan



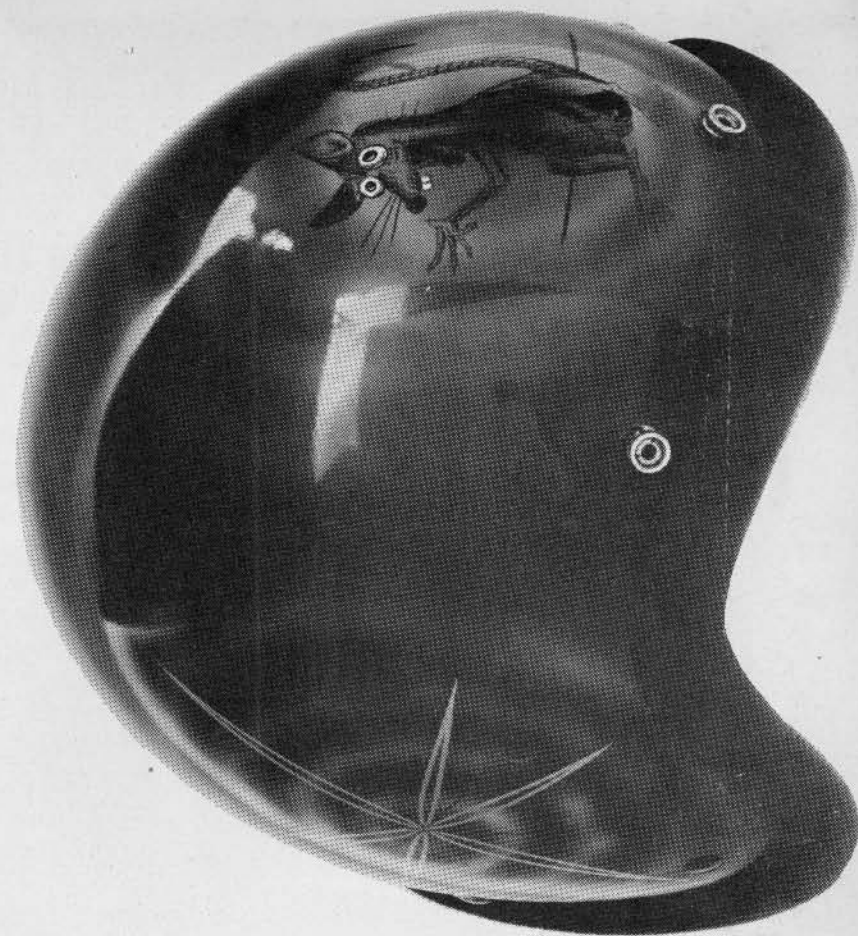
Joe Goode, *Canoga Park*, 1962
66 x 66, oil on canvas and milk bottle
Lent by the Rolfe Nelson Gallery, Los Angeles



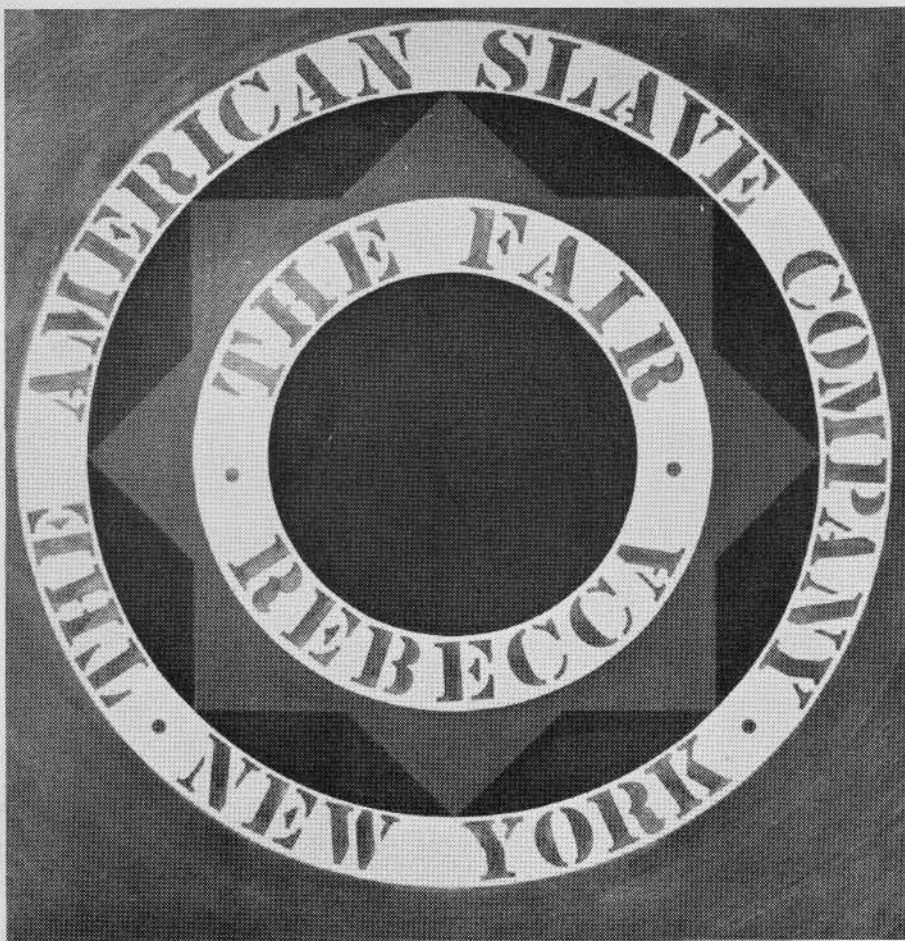
Herb Hazelton, *Maria Lupe*, 1963
48 x 36, oil on canvas
Lent by the Ceeje Gallery, Los Angeles



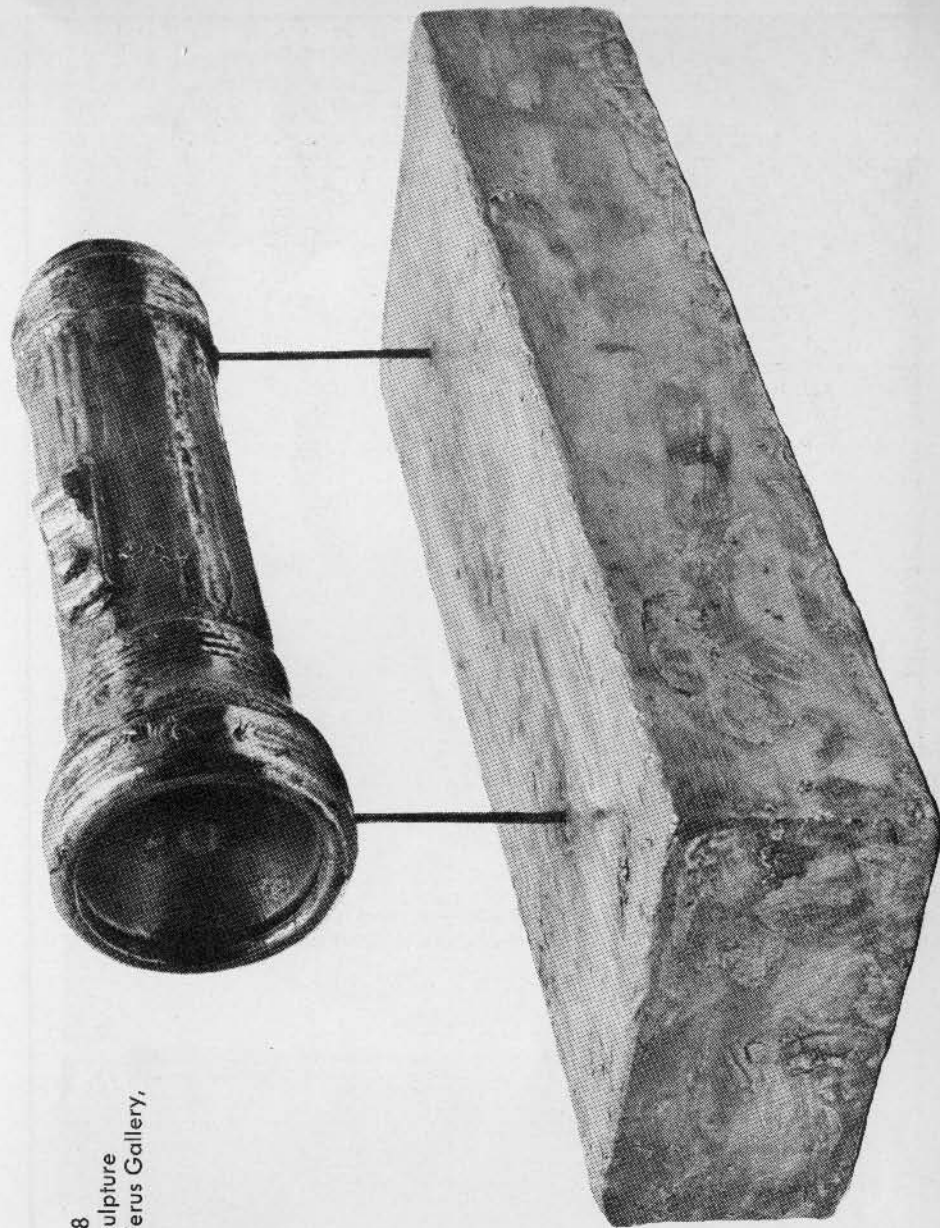
Phillip Hefferton, *Winkin' Lincoln*, 1962
96 x 66, oil on canvas



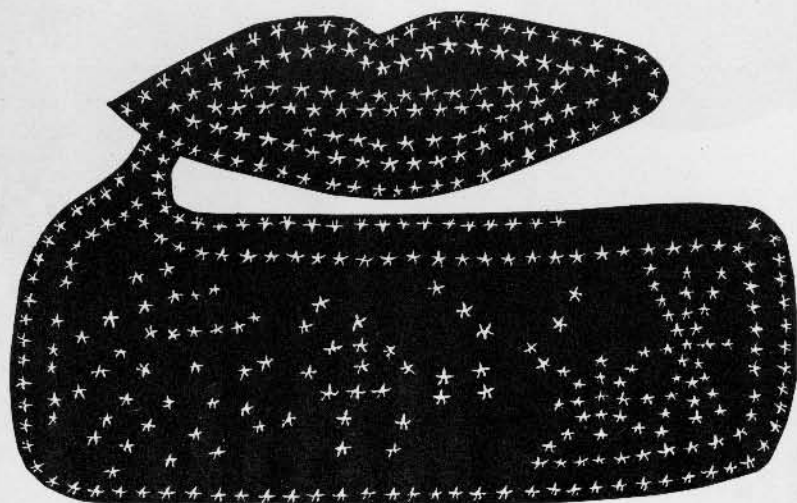
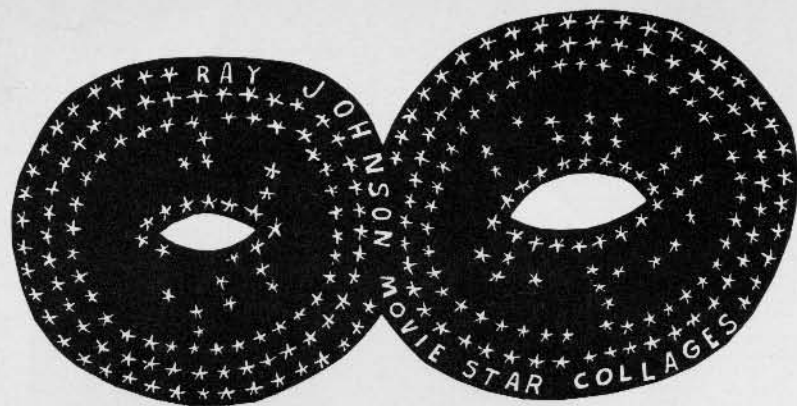
Von Dutch Holland, *Helmet*, 1962, 10" diam.
oil paint on motorcycle helmet
Lent by Mr. Jim Eller, Los Angeles



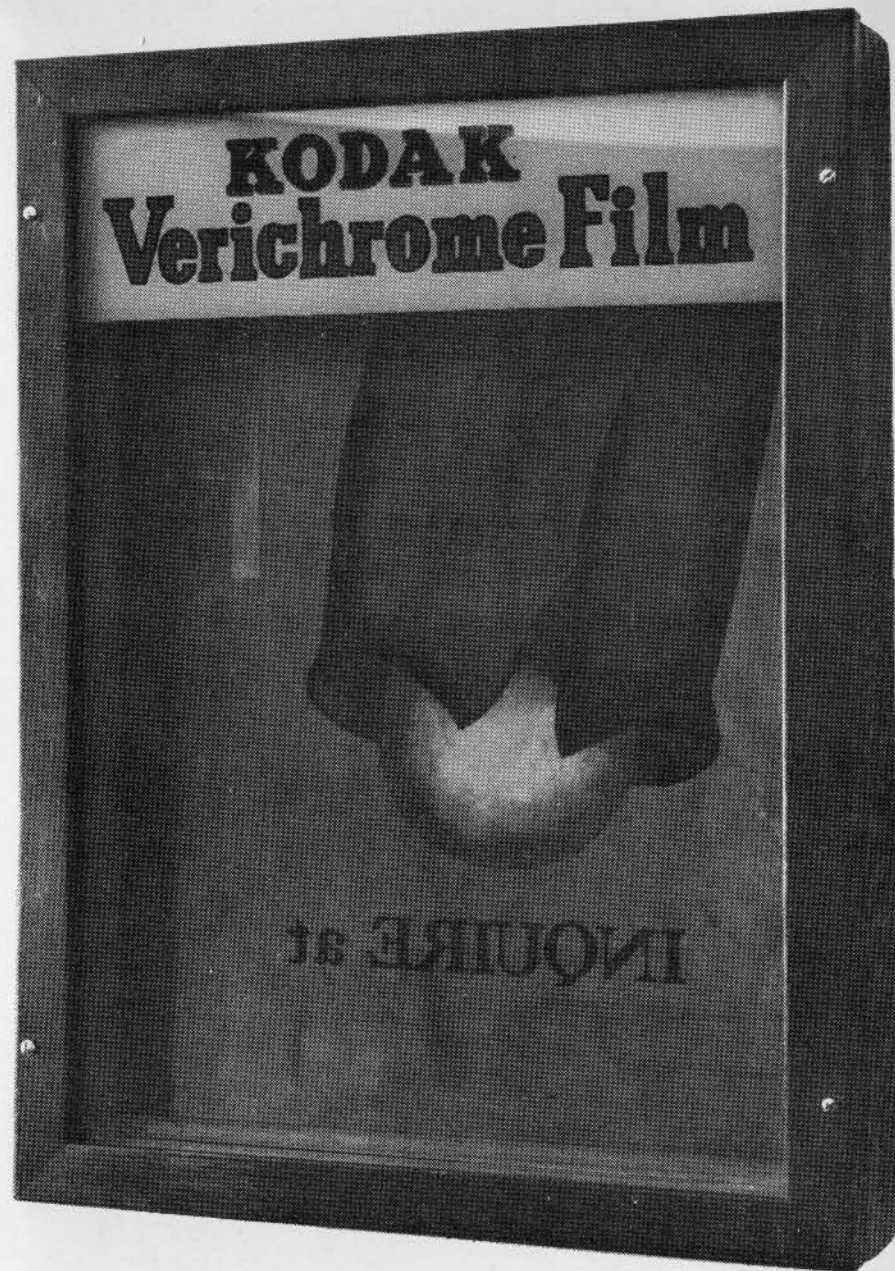
Robert Indiana, *Fair Rebecca*, 1961
40 x 38, oil on canvas
Lent by the Rolfe Nelson Gallery, Los Angeles



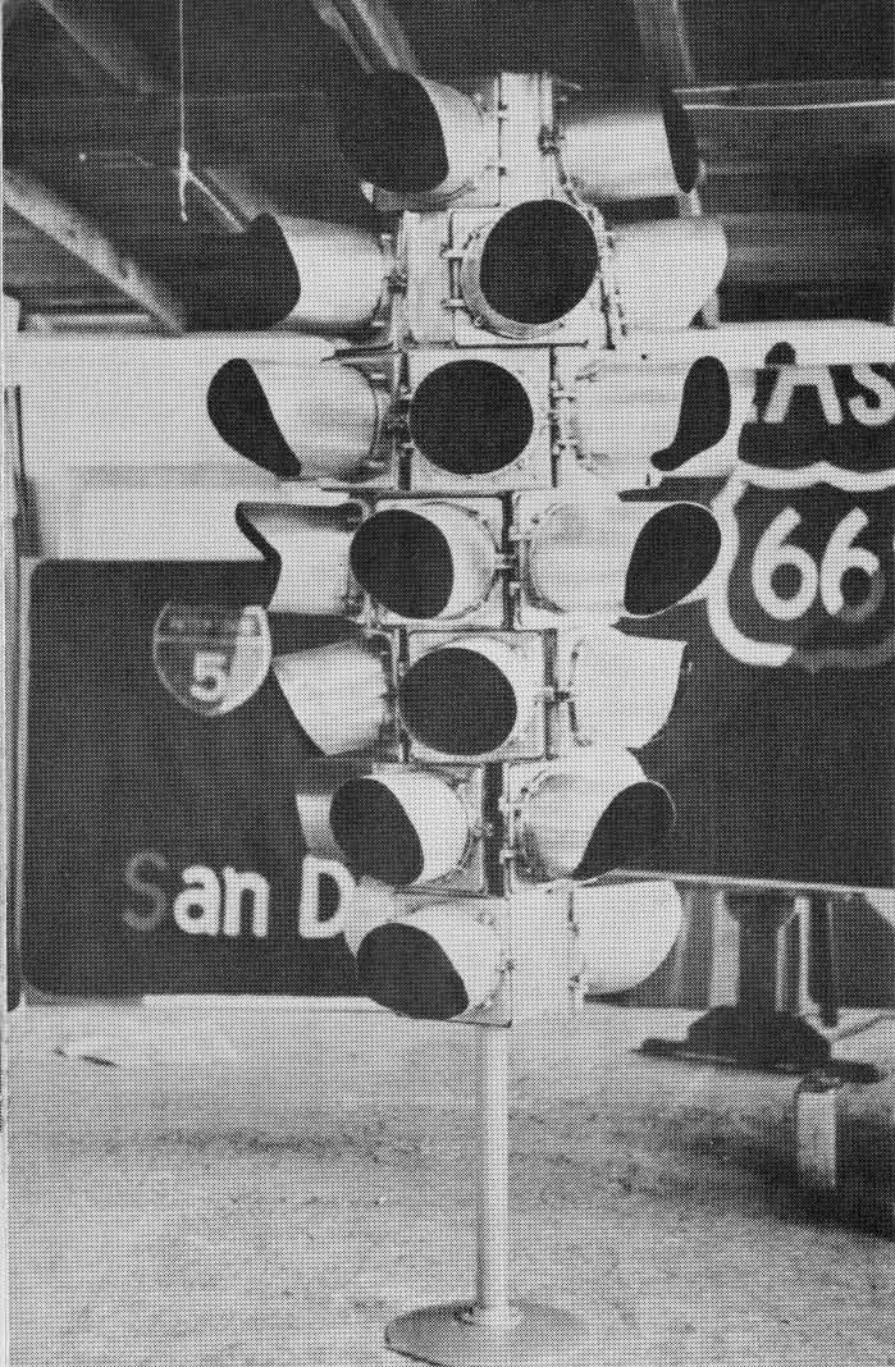
Jasper Johns, *Flashlight*, 1958
5 x 8 x 4, bronze and glass sculpture
Lent by Mr. Irving Blum, the Ferus Gallery,
Los Angeles



Ray Johnson, Mask
14 x 9, lithograph
Lent by the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles



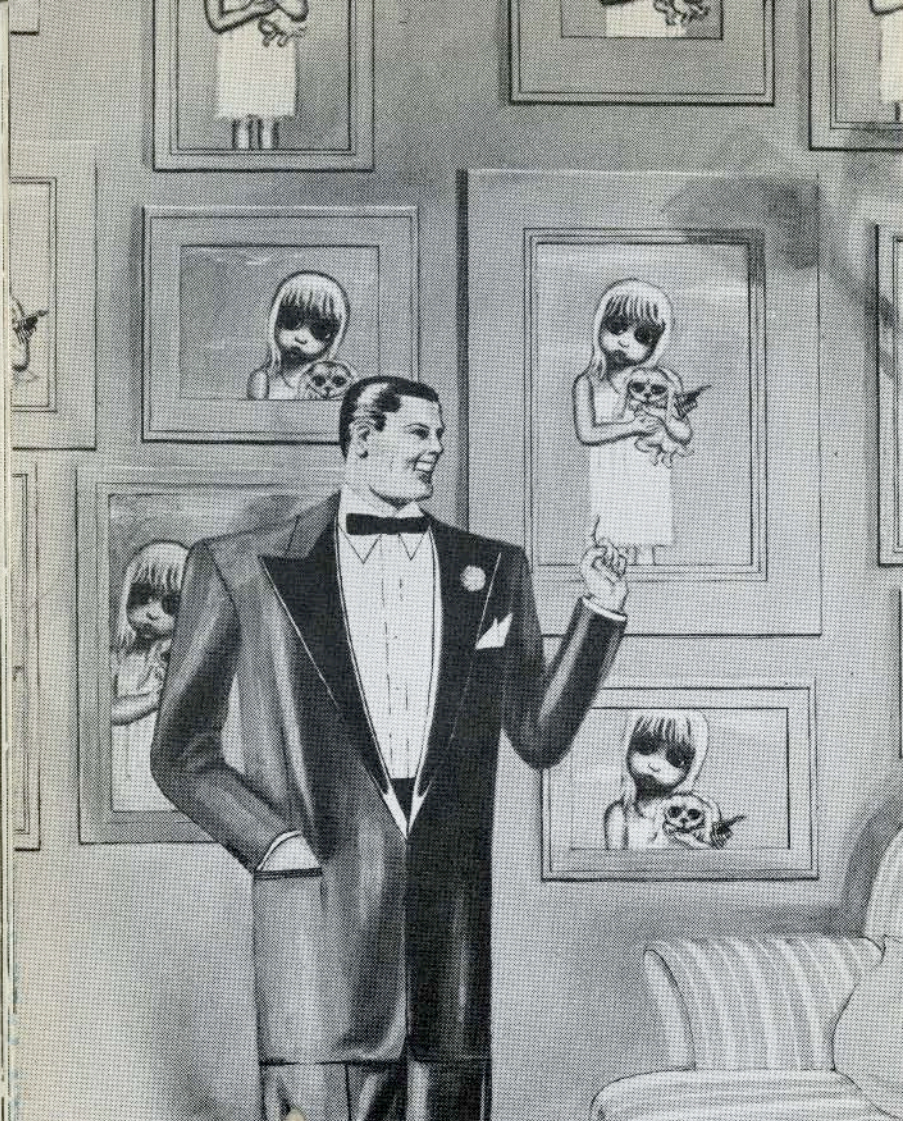
Leslie Kerr, Kodak, 1963
15 x 11 x 2, mixed media
Lent by the Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco



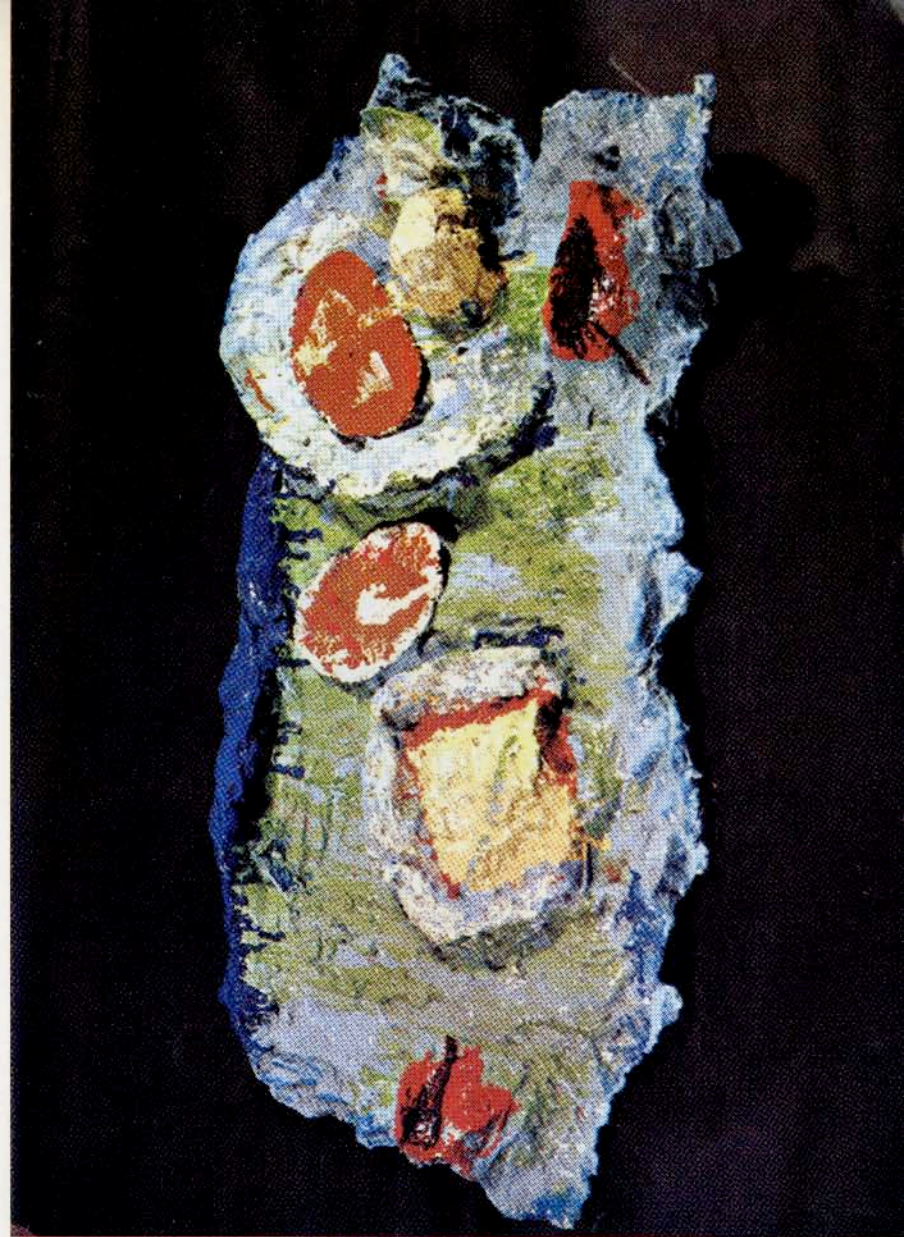
Roger Kuntz, *King Signal*, 1962
108" high, aluminum
Lent by the Felix Landau Gallery, Los Angeles



Al Leslie, *Untitled*, 1962
9 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 4, metal, plaster and oil paint
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Abe Adler, Los Angeles



Mara McAfee, *Mechanical Man with Pretty Pictures*, 1963
51 x 40, oil
Lent by the Amel Gallery, New York



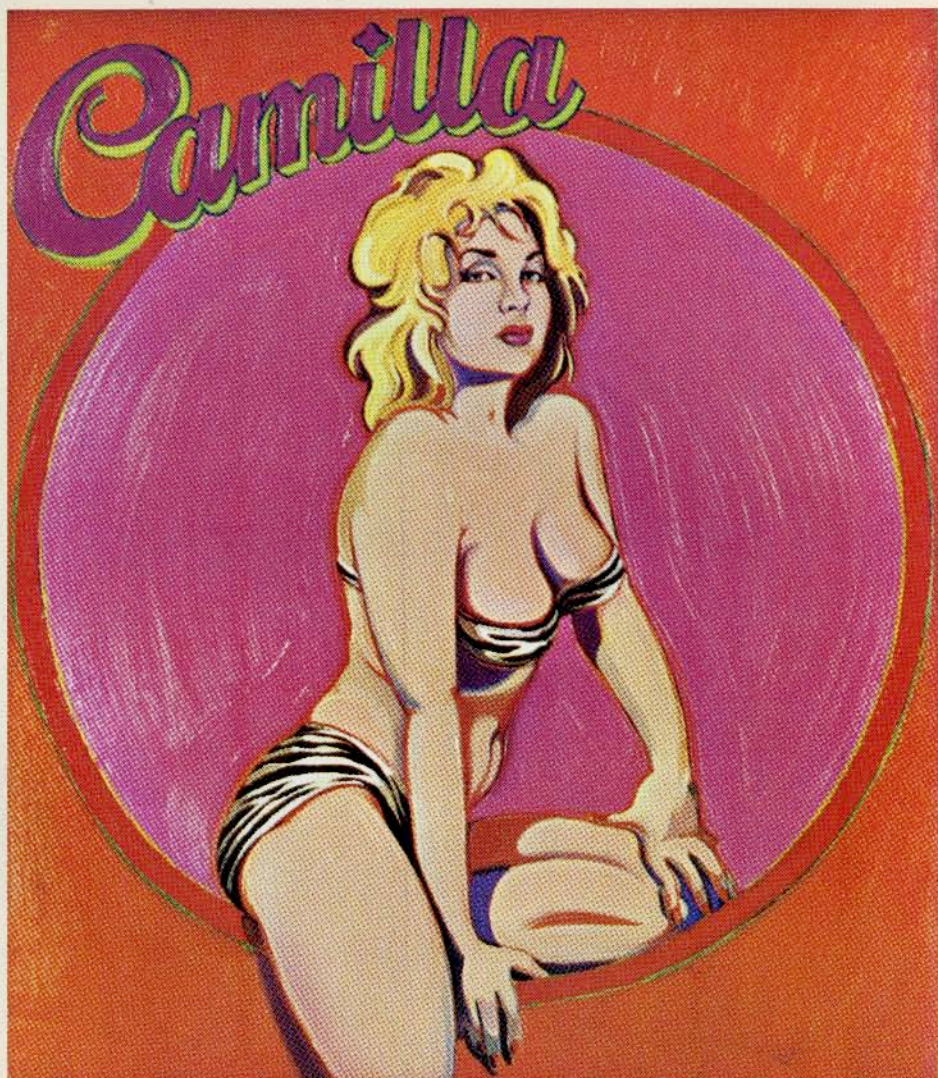
Claes Oldenburg,
Food Platter, 1961
32x21x7, painted plaster
Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Burt Kleiner,
Beverly Hills



Robert Moskowitz, *Untitled*, 1961
24 x 48, collage
Lent by the L. M. Asher family, Los Angeles

Gerald Murphy, *Razor*, 1922
32 x 36, oil on canvas
Lent by the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts,
collection of the Foundation for the Arts,
gift of the artist

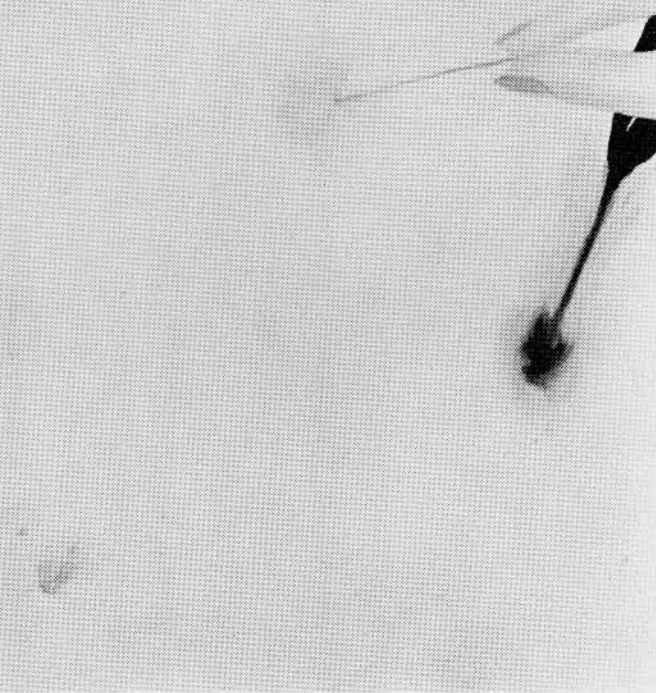




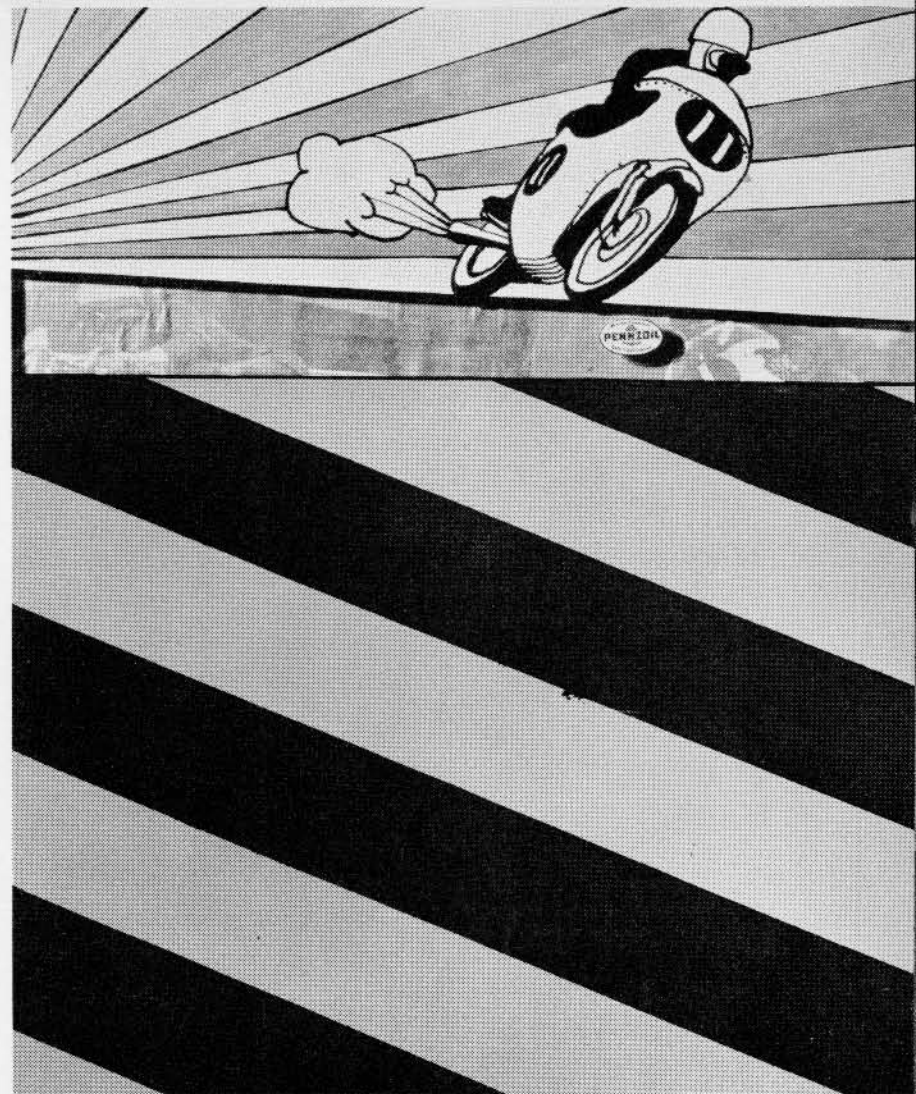
Mel Ramos, *Camilla, Queen of the Jungle*, 1963
 26x36, oil on canvas
 Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York



Jack Ogden, *Plenti Grand*, 1962
 60" x 60", oil on canvas



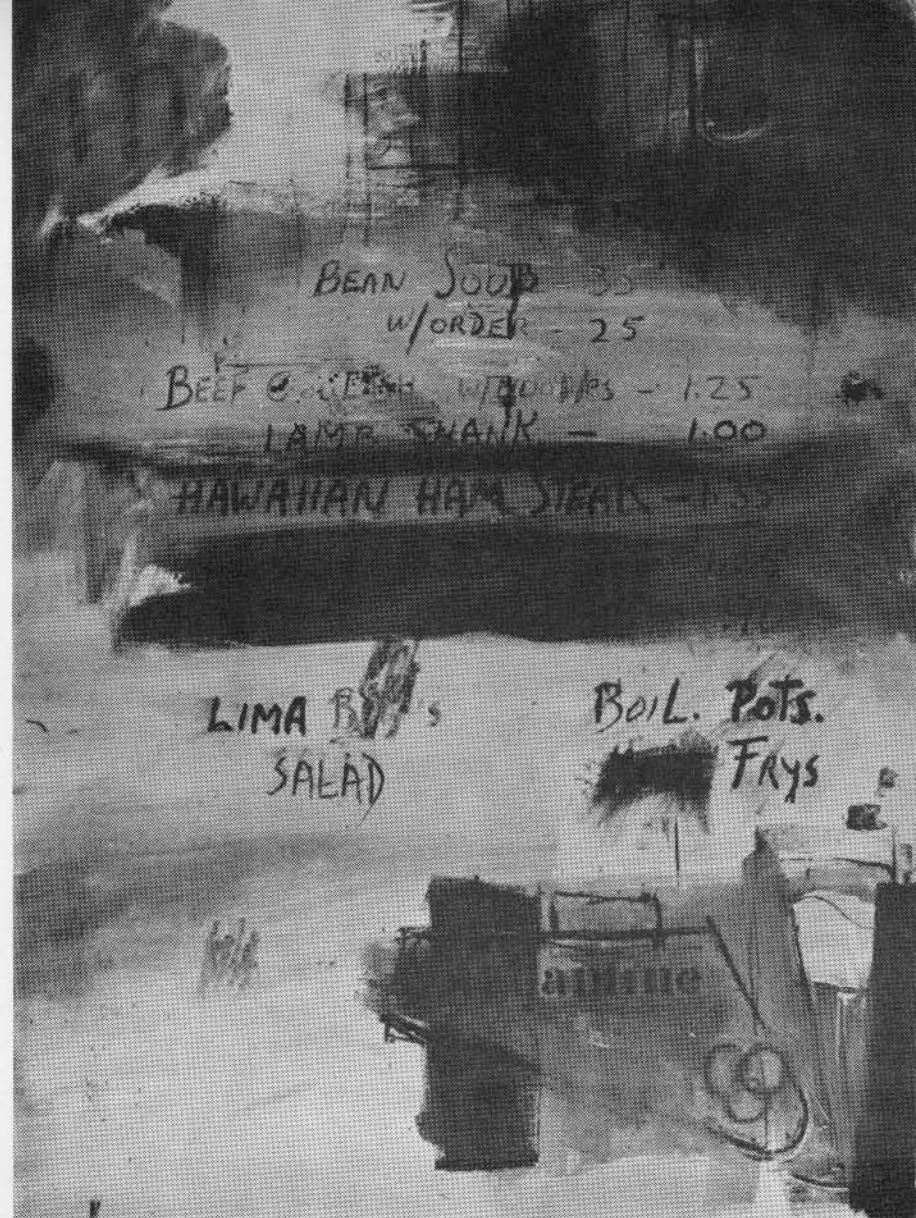
Michael Olodort, *Number One*, 1963
46 x 46, oil on canvas



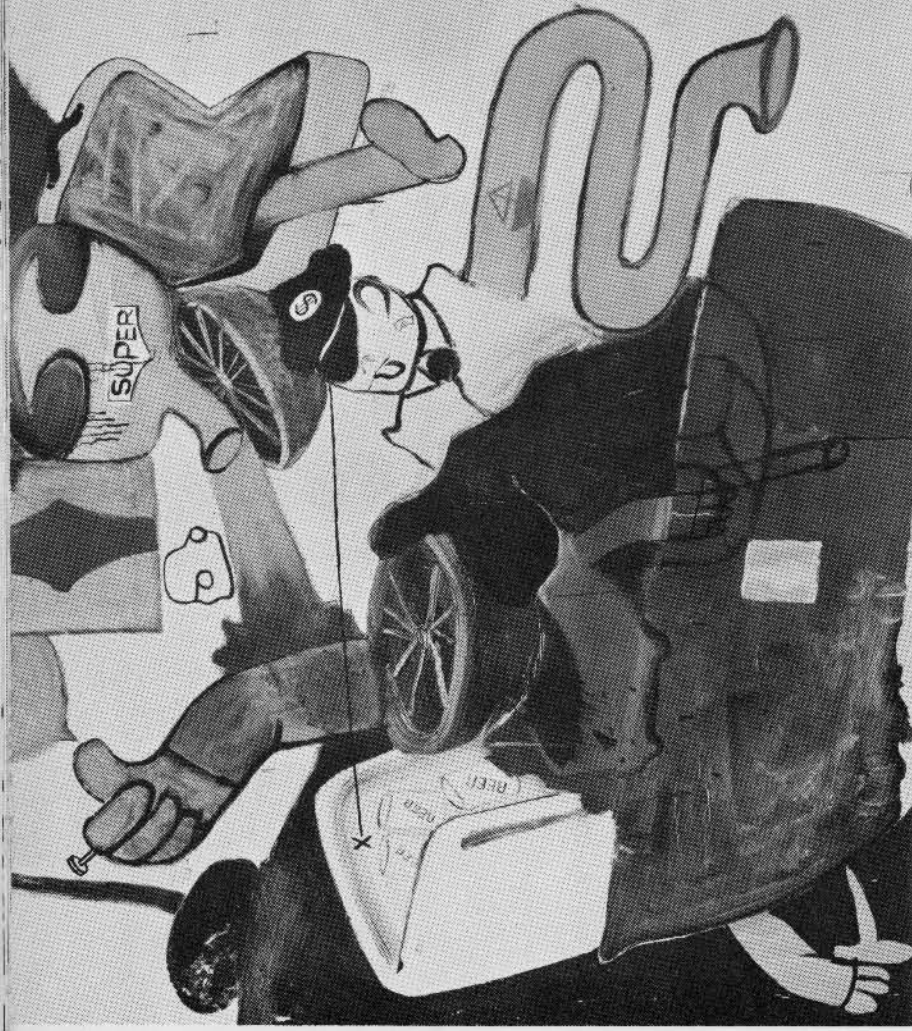
Richard Pettibone, *Pennzoil Eleven*, 1963
12 x 10, mixed media
Lent by the Rolfe Nelson Gallery, Los Angeles



Robert Rauschenberg, *Wooden Gallop*, 1962
52 x 50, mixed media on board
Lent by the Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles



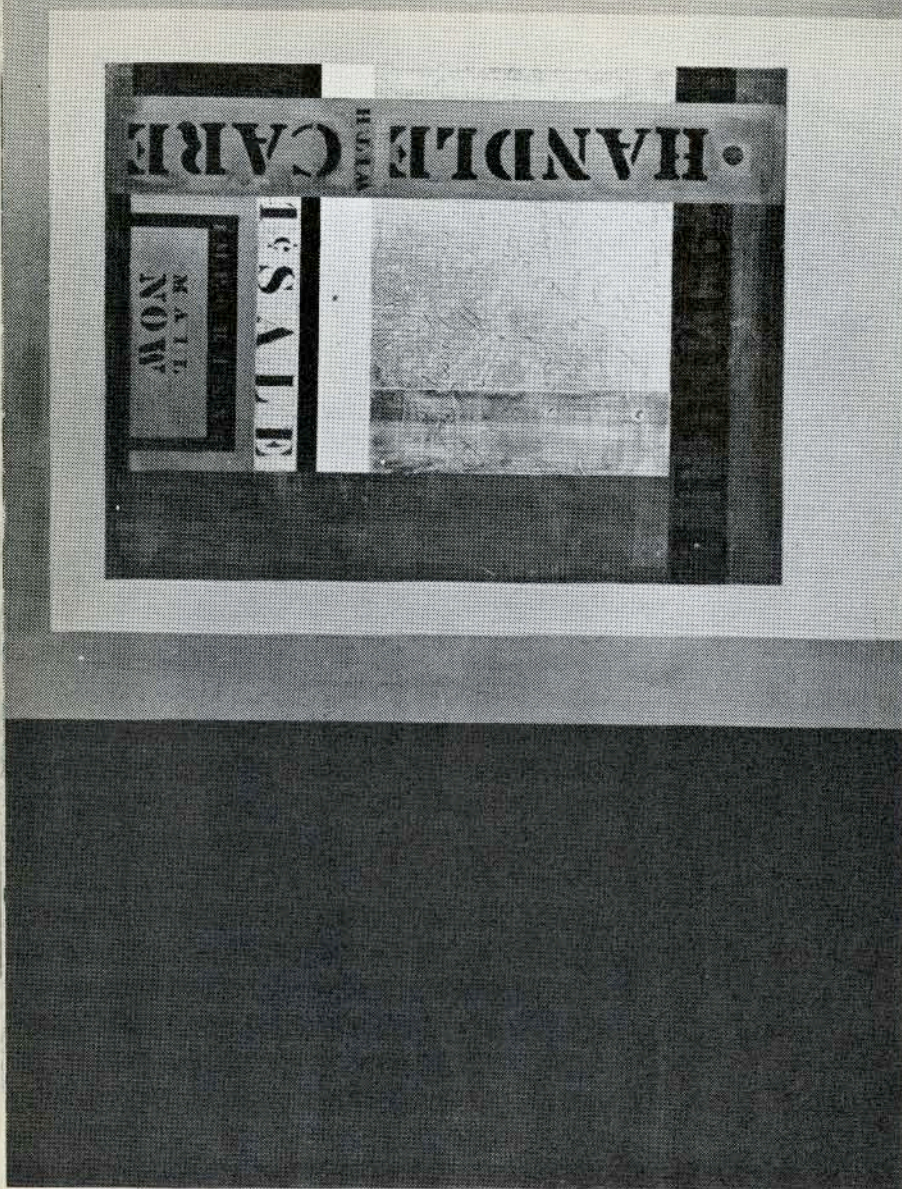
Larry Rivers, *Cedar Bar Menu*, 1960
48 x 36, oil on canvas
Lent by the Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles



Peter Saul, *Beer*, 1962
 51 x 59, oil on canvas
 Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Blankfort,
 Los Angeles



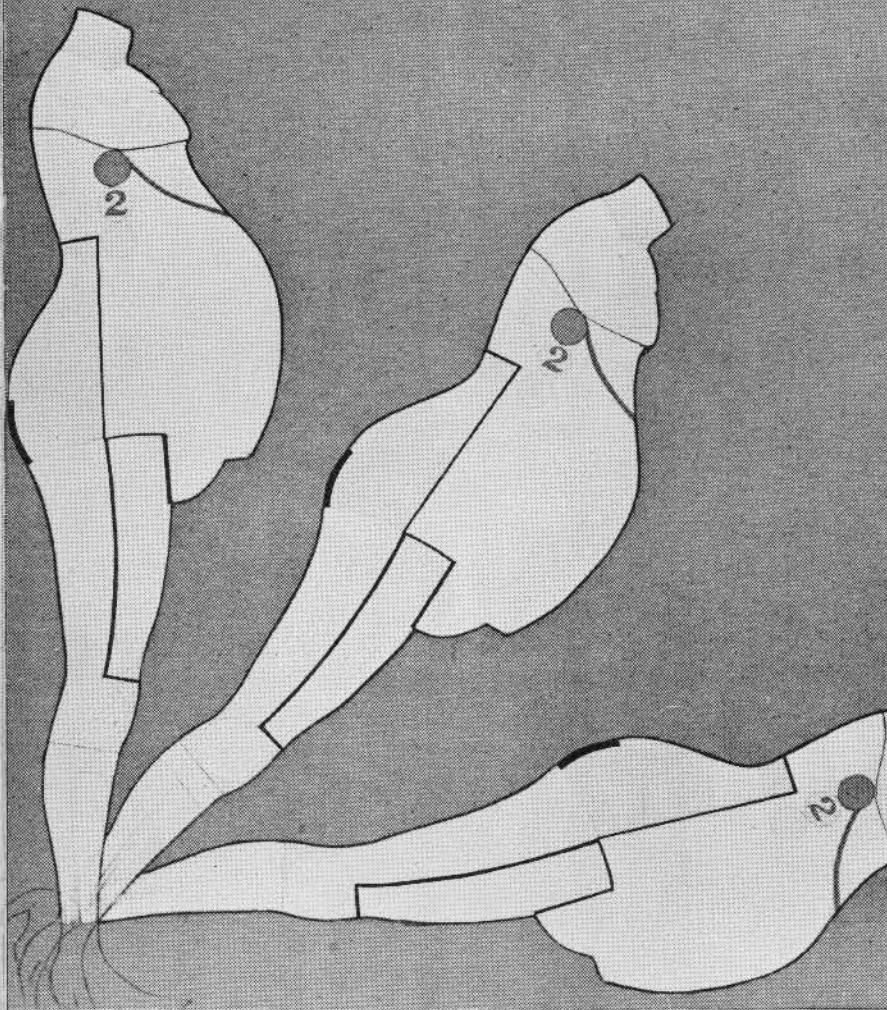
Jack Stuck, *Self Portrait*, 1962
 50 x 50, oil on canvas
 Lent by the Comara Gallery, Los Angeles



Tania, Santini Bro., 1963
Oil on canvas, 36 x 49
Lent by the Bertha Schaeffer
Gallery, New York



Billy Al Bengston, Skinny's 21, 1961
42 x 40, oil on canvas
Lent by the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles



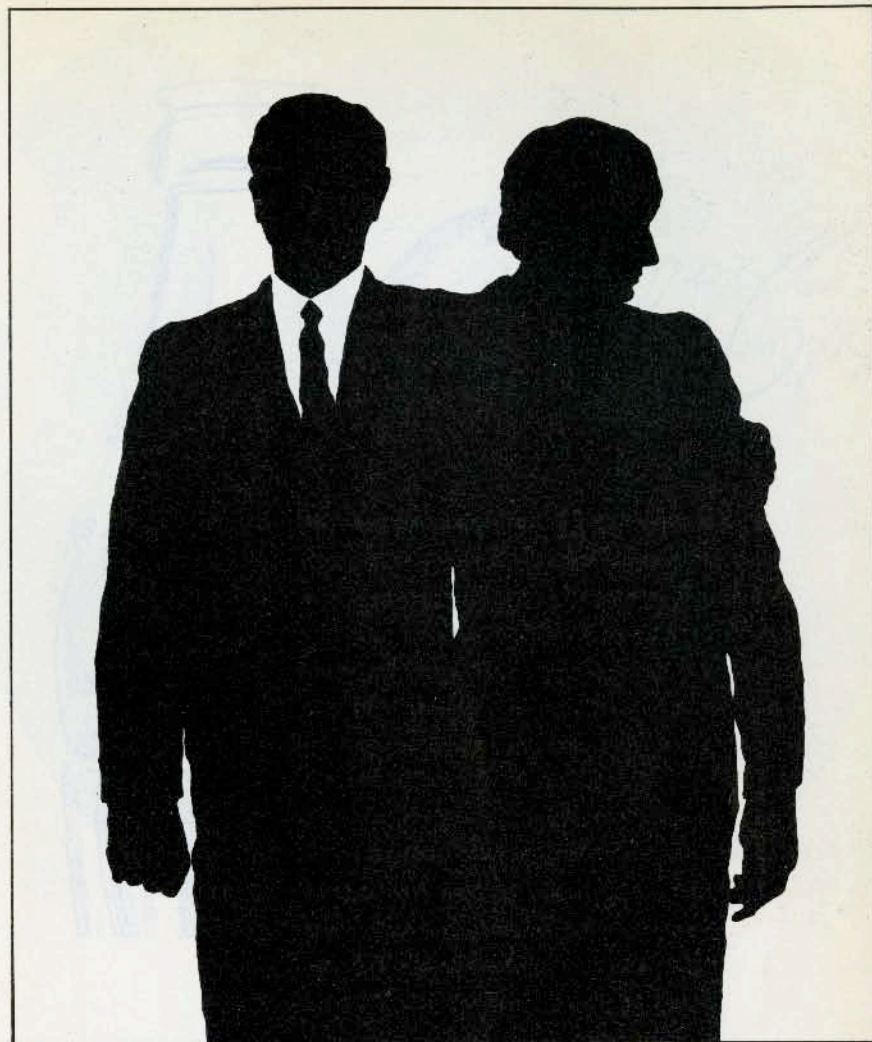
Ernest Trova, *Falling Man*, 1963
50 x 37, latex on canvas
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Solomon, New York



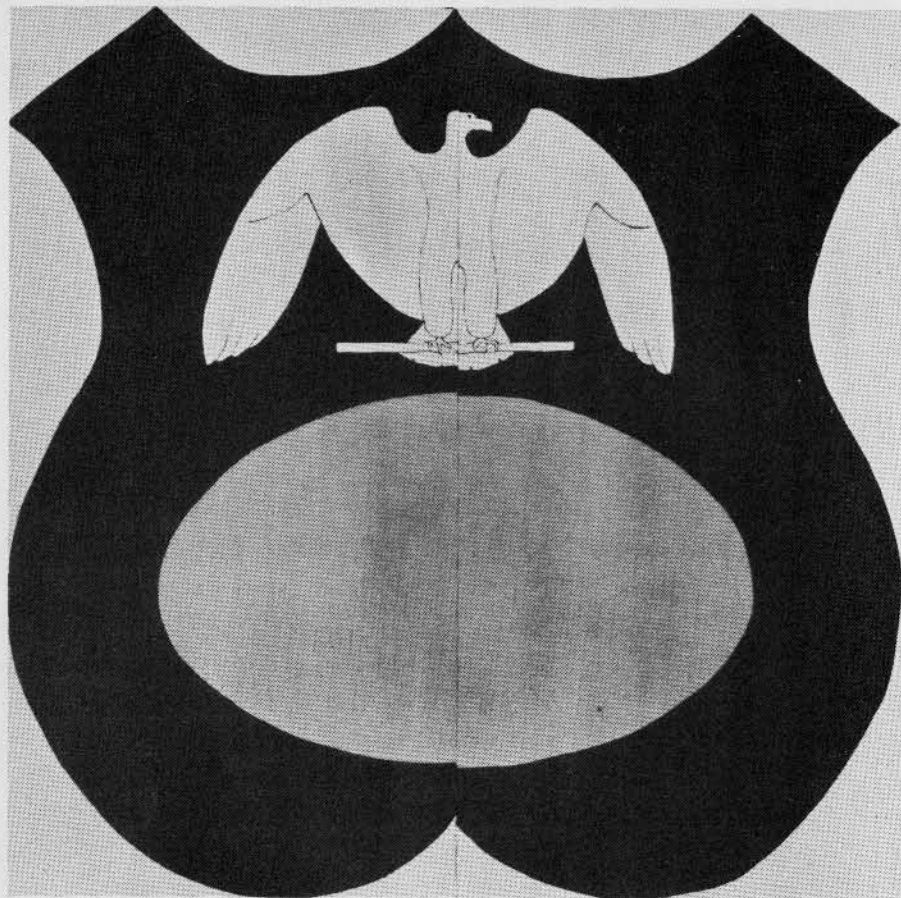
Andy Warhol, *Coca-Cola*, 1962
72 x 54, oil on canvas
Lent by Mrs. Melvin Hirsch, Los Angeles



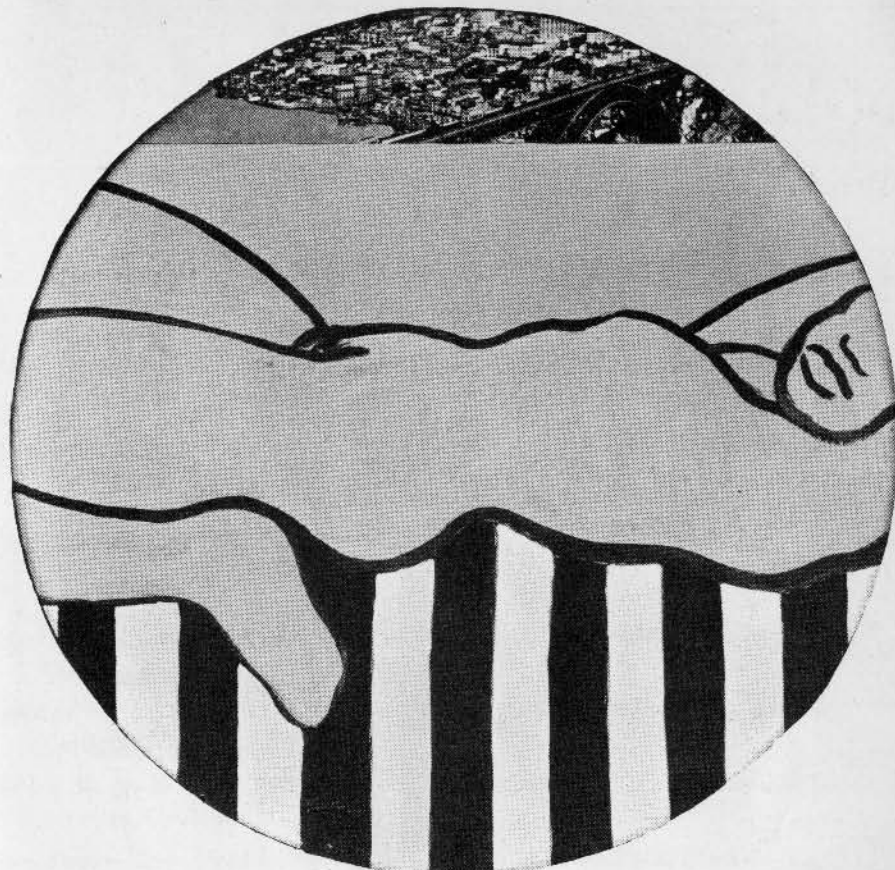
Edward Ruschá, *Smash*, 1963
72 x 67, oil on canvas
Lent by the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles



Idelle Weber, *Portrait*, 1962
50 x 40, acrylic on linen
Lent by the Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York



John Wesley, *American Eagle Badge*,
24 x 24, oil on canvas
Lent by the Robert Elkon Gallery, New York City



Tom Wesselman, *Great American Nude #10*, 1961
47 1/2" diam., oil on masonite
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rowan, Pasadena

Wally Hedrick. Born 1928 in Pasadena, California. Now resides in San Francisco, California.

Phillip Hefferton. Born 1933 in Detroit, Michigan. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Von Dutch Holland.

Robert Indiana (Robert Clark). Born 1928 in New Castle, Indiana. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Jasper Johns. Born 1930 in Allendale, South Carolina. Now resides in New York City.

Ray Johnson. Born in "Idaho, Potato." Now resides in New York City.

Leslie Kerr. Born 1934 in Michigan. Now resides in San Francisco, California.

Roger Kuntz. Born 1926 in San Antonio, Texas. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Al Leslie.

Roy Lichtenstein. Born 1923 in New York state. Now resides in New York state.

Mara McAfee. Born 1931 in Los Angeles, California. Now resides in New York state.

Robert Moskowitz. Born 1935 in Brooklyn, New York. Now resides in New York state.

Gerald Murphy. Born 1888.

Robert O'Dowd. Born 1934 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Now resides in New York City.

Jack Ogden. Born 1933 in French Camp, California. Now resides in Sacramento, California.

Claes Oldenburg. Born 1929 in Stockholm, Sweden. Now resides in New York City.

Michael Olodort. Born 1942 in Los Angeles, California. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Richard Pettibone. Born 1938 in Alhambra, California. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Mel Ramos. Born 1935 in Sacramento, California. Now resides in Sacramento, California.

Robert Rauschenberg. Born 1925 in Port Arthur, Texas. Now resides in New York City.

Larry Rivers. Born 1923 in New York City. Now resides in Southampton, New York.

James Rosenquist. Born 1933 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Now resides in New York state.

Edward Ruschá. Born 1937 in Omaha, Nebraska. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Peter Saul. Born 1934 in San Francisco, California. Now resides in France.

Jack Stuck. Born 1925 in Fairmont, West Virginia. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Tania. Born 1924 in Poland. Now resides in New York state.

Wayne Theibaud. Born 1920 in Mesa, Arizona. Now resides in Sacramento, California.

Ernest Trova. Born 1927 in St. Louis, Missouri. Now resides in St. Louis, Missouri.

Andy Warhol. Born 1930 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Now resides in New York state.

Idelle Weber. Born 1932 in Chicago, Illinois. Now resides in Los Angeles, California.

John Wesley. Born 1928 in Los Angeles, California. Now resides in New York City.

Tom Wesselman. Born 1931 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Now resides in New York state.

H. C. Westerman. Born 1922 in Los Angeles, California. Now resides in Chicago, Illinois.



USA



POP ART USA



POP ART USA



POP ART USA



POP ART USA



POP

