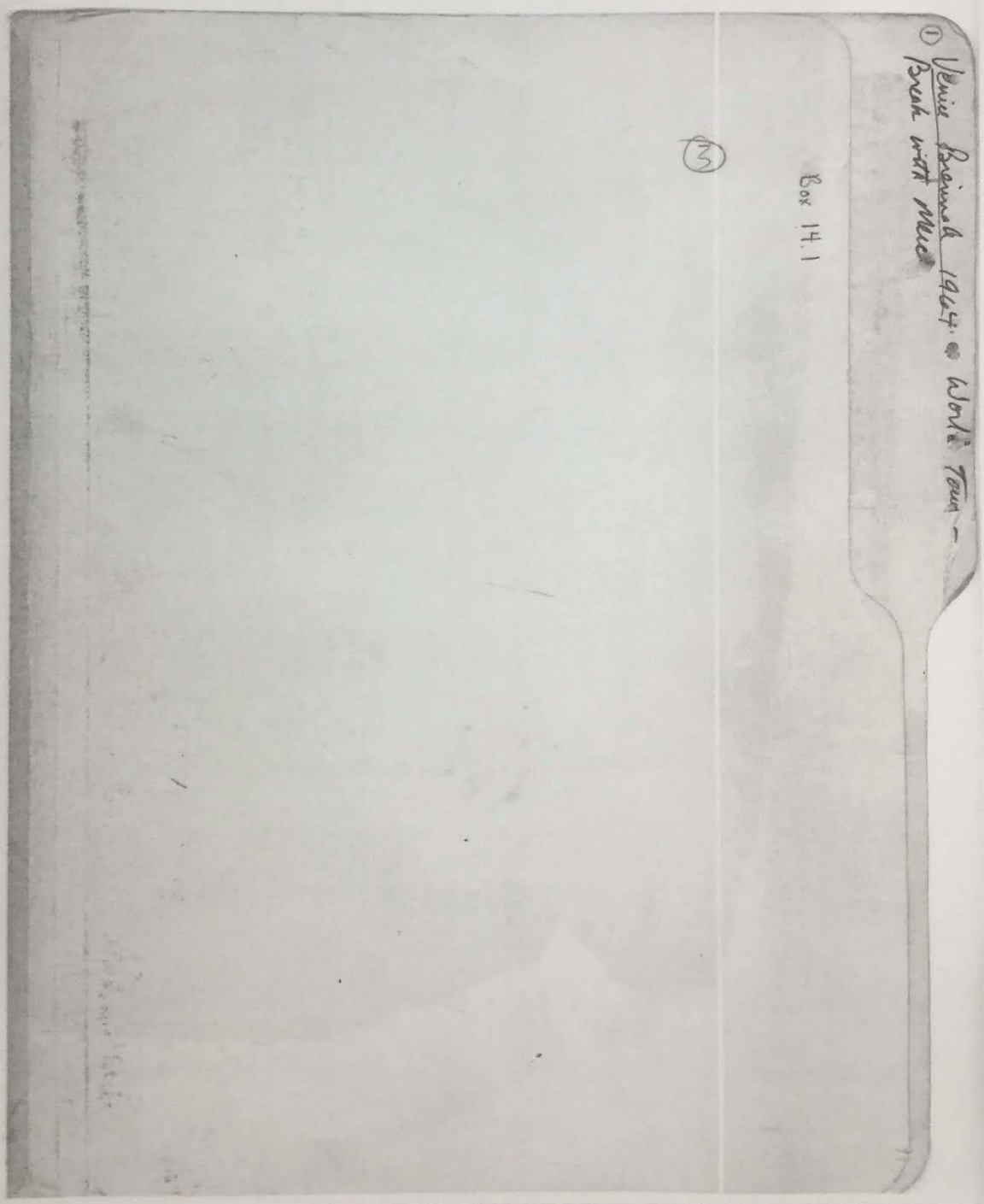


Dance

Adventures On a World Tour

By DAVID VAUGHAN

THE Merce Cunningham Dance Company recently returned to the United States from a six-month tour of Europe and the Far East. Over seventy performances were given in 29 cities in France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Holland, India, Thailand and Japan.

Of this total, 23 performances took place in London, where the originally-scheduled week at Sadler's Wells was extended by a further two and a half weeks at the Phoenix—an event without precedent, I think, in the history of modern dance.

After us, of course, came the deluge in London, in the shape of the Alvin Ailey and Paul Taylor companies.

Origin

The tour originated in a long-standing invitation from the Sarabhai family in Ahmedabad (of whom one member, Mrinalini, is a noted dancer) to visit India. To this was added last year an invitation to Japan from the Bogetsu Art Center in Tokyo. It seemed that there was enough interest in Europe to make a tour possible there as well, and since it costs little more to go around the world than to go to Japan and India and back, all we had to do was raise the air-fare and get enough dates to make it worthwhile.

This latter task I undertook, starting on the project about a year in advance; my method was simply to write letters to anyone that we or any of our friends could think of who might help to get us dates. The amount of letter-writing involved was prodigious, but it worked.

The transportation costs were covered by a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, but we needed still more funds because performance fees could not cover our expenses. All attempts to get financial help from the State Department were unavailing (though we did get assistance of other kinds from interested cultural attachés in various posts, notably Francis Mason in London). Fortunately, the JDR 3rd Fund came through with a generous grant to underwrite our Far Eastern tour, and we also were helped by various private patrons.

The cost of the six-month tour with a company of 16—ten dancers, two musicians, a designer and his assistant, and two managers—came to about $120,000, of which roughly one-third was covered by performance fees.

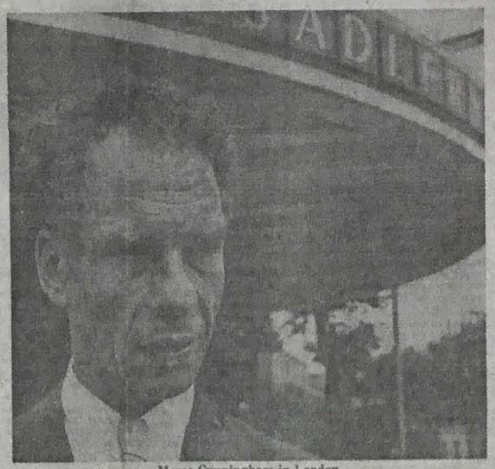
First Performance

On June 6 we gave our first European performance, in Strasbourg, France. There was polite applause from the audience in the orchestra seats; the upper reaches of the house were filled with young people whose response was vociferous. This was the pattern for the tour—wherever we performed for young people, the reaction seemed enthusiastic.

We had a generally enthusiastic response, too, from people who knew little about us: who did not know, that is, that we were representatives of the far-out, experimental, avant-garde.

In Paris, and Venice, however, there were what one feels to be the regulation catcalls and, at a matinee in Paris, a small barrage of eggs and tomatoes hastily purchased, it appeared, during intermission.

We may possibly have been considered subversive in Prague, where, apparently because of an offical edict, the names of John Cage (musical director) and Robert Rauschenberg (designer) were not printed on the poster. It carried instead the misleading description "Style of West Side Story." Instead of being disappointed when we proved to be nothing of the kind, the audience of more than 2,000 in a vast "Palace of Culture" gave us a standing ovation.



Merce Cunningham in London

". . . there was enough interest to make a tour possible"

In Chandigarh, India, we were advertised as "American Ballet by Artistes from New York." Nevertheless, we had capacity audiences there, and they were among the best of all—completely uninhibited, without preconceived ideas, immediately responsive.

London was another story, of course — with its very knowledgeable critics, a ready-made audience of Rauschenberg fans, even a few devotees of John Cage. Although such leaders of British ballet as Dame Marie Rambert, Dame Ninette de Valois and Sir Frederick Ashton seemed to like the dances (Kenneth Macmillan, on the other hand, left before the end), our best audience was not among the ballet public but among theater people.

Response

Directors and designers like Lindsay Anderson, Peter Brook, George Devine, William Gaskill, and Joselyn Herbert, and several actors, came to see the performances again and again. Indeed, it is possible that the Cunningham Dance Company will have an influence on the British theater second only to that of the Brecht company eight years ago.

It may be asked if our dances met with a more ready response in Eastern countries, where people might be supposed to be more in sympathy with the creative methods of Cunningham, Cage, and Rauschenberg (chance, indeterminacy, etc.). In Japan this was clearly the case, but not so much so, I think, in India.

As for Bangkok, where we gave a Royal Command Performance, it was hard to tell. The moment the curtain fell on "Antic Meet," a scratchy tape recording of the national anthem was played, and the audience rose, turned their backs on the stage, and faced King Phumiphon and Queen Sirikit. There was not a single curtain call! (Their Majesties then received the members of the company graciously and with evidently more than polite interest.)

Philosophy

One justification of company philosophy concerned a practical matter rather than art. Passing through East Berlin on the train from Poland to West Germany, we were horrified to see our theater luggage being left behind on the station platform. We protested and were told there was no through baggage car, that the trunks would follow on a later train. After arriving at our destination, we began calling the station every time a train came in, and every time got a negative answer.

Finally John Cage consulted the I Ching, the Chinese Book of Changes, and got the hexagram, "Waiting," which advised us not to worry, but to sit back and relax, to have a good meal, and that everything would be all right. So we went out and had an excellent dinner, and then called the station again. "Yes," we were told "your baggage has arrived."

David Vaughan, an actor who has appeared in "The Fantastiks," and a sometime dance critic, went on the Cunningham tour in an administrative capacity.

Dance Programs of the Week

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

NEW YORK STATE THEATER, Columbus Avenue at 64th Street: Tu. 7:30, Performance Monday—Evenings, 8:15 P.M.; matinees, 2:15. Today, 12:15 and 4:15—The Nutcracker.

Tuesday—Irish Fantasy; Dim Lustre; Ebony Concerto; Symphony in C.

Wednesday—La Sonnambula; Prodigal Son; Meditation; Fledermaus.

Thursday—Stravinsky Concerto; Meditations; Dim Lustre; Symphony in C.

Friday—Divertimento No. 15; Dim Lustre; Irish Fantasy; Fanfare.

Saturday (mat.)—Western Symphony; Swan Lake; Afternoon of a Faun; Firebird.

Saturday (eve.)—Divertimento No. 15; Prodigal Son; Interplay; Symphony in C.

Next Sunday (mat.)—Western Symphony; Swan Lake; Interplay; Fanfare.

Next Sunday (eve.)—Serenade; La Sonnambula; Afternoon of a Faun; Ballo della Regina.

OTHER EVENTS

Today

TWAS (choral performances), 519 Fifth Avenue, 8:30 P.M.

DANCE GUILD, The Music, 163 Second Avenue, 8:30 P.M. A Very Special Anniversary.

Saturday

MAKEDA NYORAH AND COMPANY, Ithaca College Auditorium School, 134 West 122nd Street, 7:30 P.M.

PAPER BAG PLAYERS, Henry Street Playhouse, 466 Grand Street, 2:00 P.M. Fortunately.

FOLK DANCING

TODAY—Educational Alliance, 197 East Broadway; 8:00 P.M. Balkan Center for the Folk Arts, 127 East Broadway; 8:00 P.M.

MONDAY—International, C. E. Hughes High School, 251 West 16th Street; 7:00 P.M. Israeli, Hebrew Arts School, 129 West 10th Street; 8:30 P.M. Ivria-on Center for the Folk Arts, 127 East Broadway; 8:00 P.M.

TUESDAY—Country Dance Society, Metropolitan Towers, Hall, 201 West 13th Street; 8:30 P.M. International Folk Arts Society, 125 West 70th Street; 8:30 P.M. Folk Dance House, 108 West 16th Street; 8:30 P.M. International Town of Arc High School, 144 West 63rd Street; 8:30 P.M. Folk Dance Center, 39-09 193rd Street, Flushing; 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY—International, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Avenue; 7:30 P.M. Israeli, M.M.A., 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue; 8:30 P.M. International, P.S. 199, 270 West 70th Street; 7:30 P.M. Folk Dance House, 108 West 16th Street; 8:30 P.M. Folk Dance Center, 39-30 193rd Street, Flushing; 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY—Cypress Country Dancing, Midtown, Y.M.C.A., 215 West 23rd Street; 8:00 P.M. Balkan Center for the Folk Arts, 127 East Broadway; 8:00 P.M. International, P.S. 41, 11th Street and 6th Avenue; 7:30 P.M. Balkan, International Folk Arts Society, 949 Broadway; 8:00 P.M. Folk Dance Society, 39-09 193rd Street, Flushing; 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY—New Year's Party, P.S. 41, 116 West 11th Street; 8:30 P.M. Square and Folk Dance, Teachers College, Columbia University; 8:30 P.M. Dance Party, International Folk Arts Society, 949 Broadway; 8:00 P.M. Folk Dance House, 108 West 16th Street; 8:30 P.M. Folk Dance Center, 39-09 193rd Street, Flushing; 8:30 P.M.

SATURDAY—International, Center for the Folk Arts, 127 East Broadway; 8:00 P.M. Twelfth Night Party, Metropolitan Dance Hall, 201 West 13th Street; 8:00 P.M. International, P.S. 22, 111 Columbia Street; 7:30 P.M. Folk Dance House, 108 West 16th Street; 8:30 P.M. International, Y.M.H.A., 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue; 8:00 P.M.

to Stay

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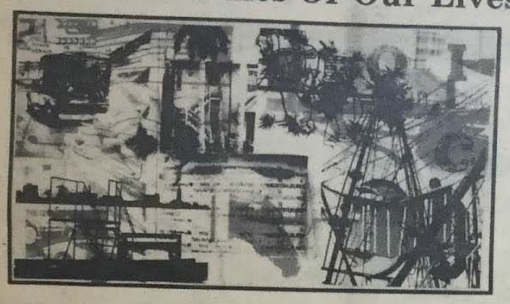
evening when Anne and I were taking curtain calls in a full house, I heard her say under her breath as she was bowing—"That's for me.

Dec. 30

A Special Issue About The Times Of Our Lives



The Cover

by Robert Rauschenberg

What you see on the front and back covers of today's magazine is not a mistake. It is, in fact, two pages out of art and publishing history. It is the first time an original work of art has been printed by a newspaper. Until today, newspapers and magazines have merely *reproduced* works of art. Today's cover is not a reproduction. It is the largest edition (about 650,000) of an original artwork ever printed. It was created for you by Robert Rauschenberg, considered by many the finest artist in the United States. For more about Rauschenberg and about how the cover was created, see the story by Calvin Tomkins on page 20.

Ten Years And Counting

by Charles Whited

10 On this last Sunday of the 1970s, The Herald's thoughtful columnist recalls the decade in a frank and unusual way. He tells how the events of the last 10 years have changed his life and the way he thinks. He wonders, among other things, about technology, energy, God, the changing faces of South Florida and "The Perfect Peace."

The Public's Private Views

by our readers

28 There is more to the previous decade than what was reported in the newspaper. Parents have died, children have been born, marriages have been made and broken. In brief, personal essays, our readers share the news of their life.

Florida Futures

by Al Burt

34 We can learn only so much about ourselves by looking back. We must look ahead, too. Our "In Florida" columnist makes some educated guesses about how the events of the last few years will affect our fortunes.

TROPIC

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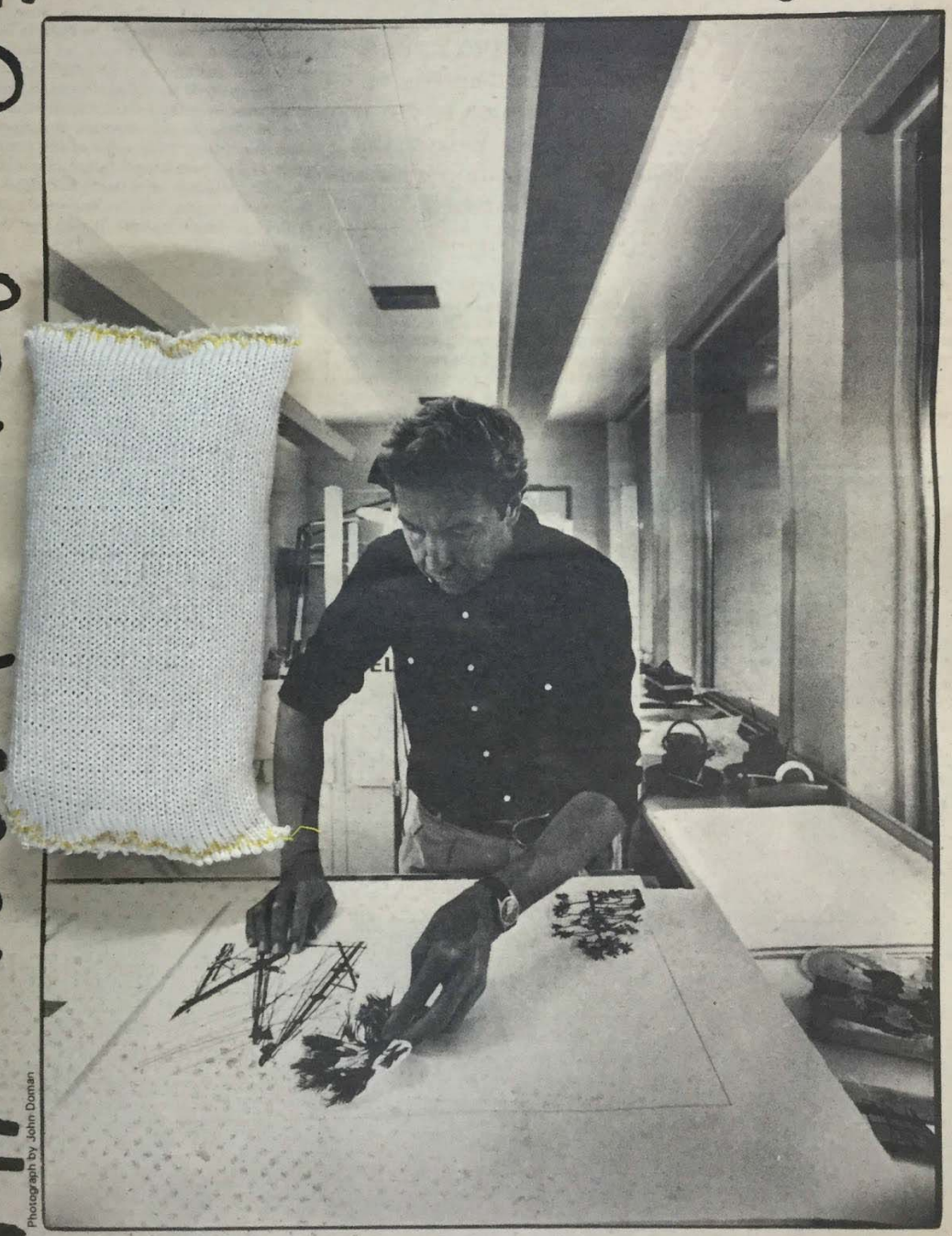
RAUSCHENBERG



Photograph by John Doman

The man who created the most public work of private art in history

By CALVIN TOMKINS

When you picked up the cover of today's magazine, you saw two pages out of history. It is the first time that an artist has ever made an original edition of lithographs for millions of people to see — on the same day. It is, in a sense, the biggest gallery opening in history. The cover was created by Robert Rauschenberg, the most influential living American artist.

Who is Robert Rauschenberg, and how can we make such claims about what we have done? We asked Calvin Tomkins, author of the best-selling Living Well Is the Best Revenge *and other books on contemporary culture — including a biographical study of Rauschenberg and his circle that will appear next spring — to introduce the artist and explain why he was the natural choice to work with us on this unprecedented journalistic project.*

Ten years after his first New York show in 1951, most critics and some of the older artists still dismissed Robert Rauschenberg's work as a joke. Paintings made out of dirt and growing grass? "Combines" that included flattened umbrellas, rusty license plates and flashing light bulbs? A sculpture whose central feature was a stuffed angora goat with an automobile tire around its middle? He had to be kidding, right? The younger artists knew better. They saw that in everything he did, Rauschenberg was asking a question: What is art? He was asking it more energetically than anyone else, with greater wit and persistence and imagination. Sooner or later he would have to be taken seriously.

Like a lot of Americans, Rauschenberg grew up in a place where such questions did not arise. As a boy in Port Arthur, Tex., it never occurred to him that his ability to draw accurate likenesses of people and animals was anything special. He never even realized that there was such a thing as being an artist until he was 19 and in the Navy; on a furlough he visited the Huntington Art Gallery in San Marino, Calif., where he saw original oil paintings for the first time. They impressed him enormously.

After the war he went to art school on the G.I. Bill. Went to Paris because he had heard that was the place to become an artist (it wasn't, not any more). He came back and studied under Josef Albers at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, then under Vaclav Vytlacil and Morris Kantor at the Art Students League in New York. One day he walked into a life class and heard a fellow student asking Kantor what possible justification there could be for what Rauschenberg was doing — instead of working from the model, he had painted a maze-like design in white, with numbers scratched into the pigment with a lead pencil. Rauschenberg never forgot Kantor's reply: "Kantor said it wasn't his sort of thing, but he didn't see any reason why I shouldn't be doing it. His attitude was, 'Well, why not?'"

Not many artists were as loose as Kantor in those days. Abstract Expressionism was fast becoming the dominant school. Soon art students all across the country would be imitating the agitated brushwork and the "spontaneous" dripped or spattered look of paintings by Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, the first American artists to achieve an internationally acclaimed new style. Rauschenberg took a lot from Pollock and de Kooning, but he rejected a lot more. The Abstract Expressionists wanted their paintings to evoke the powerful emotions they felt while painting them. Rauschenberg had no urge to make his emotions the subject of his pictures. "I felt they ought to be more interesting than that," he said.

Rauschenberg wanted his pictures to be part of the real world he saw around him. Not imitations of it, not representations or recreations, but real objects with a life of their own. "I think a painting is more like the real world if it's made out of the real world," he said. He was living on the Lower East Side of Manhattan at the time, and he had no money, so the "real world" that got into his pictures took the form of personal discards (a torn shirtsleeve or necktie; a family photograph) or things he picked up on the street (as everyone knows, you can find anything on a New York street). His motive was curiosity: to find out what made a picture. The Cubists had invented collage. If it was all right to put a fragment of printed oilcloth or newspaper into a painting, as they had, then why not an old sneaker? Why not the quilt from your bed, for that matter, as Rauschenberg did in his notorious *Bed* (it was spring, and he didn't need it for sleeping). Why not an angora goat bought from a junk dealer for $15 down, the rest on account? If his motive was curiosity, his basic theme was "multiplicity, variety, and inclusion," as he phrased it. Rauschenberg excluded nothing on principle. It was all part of his big question: What is art?

People used to know what art was, or to think they did. Art had two sides, public and private. Public art was educational. It taught you which gods to worship and why, or reminded you of leaders and battles and acts of state. Private art was a form of wealth. Rich patrons engaged artist-artisans to make beautiful objects (paintings, sculptures, chairs, gravy boats) that would embellish their households and make them feel even richer. Things got confused toward the end of the 19th Century, when so much wealth was redistributed and so many artists decided to work for themselves rather than for some beastly bourgeois. Public art went into a long decline. Private art became more and more private, i.e. more incomprehensible to everyone but artists and critics. The whole concept of beauty was out the window.

In our century the confusion vastly deepened. Public art ceased to educate, or even to reflect official attitudes; the notion of "interpreting" art became all but meaningless. Private art did not cease to be a form of wealth, of course, but embellishment was not what it had in mind. ("No, painting is not made to decorate apartments," said Pablo Picasso. "It is an instrument of war, for attack and defense against the enemy.") With Abstract Expressionism, the private struggle of the artist was what mattered; the painting was a record of that struggle, and the struggle often seemed more important to the artist than the painting did.

Rauschenberg's whole career has been in one sense a breaking down of the barriers between art and life, public and private, the self and the world. Instead of looking inward, into his own feelings and emotions, he looks out at the life around him, the noisy, immediate, tangible life of city streets and billboards and politicians and athletes and everyday supermarket rush-hour late 20th Century existence. For a period in the 1960s he more or less moved out of painting and into theater and dance, working with others to create stage activities that involved a lot of random movement, and therefore seemed to him closer to real life. He was one of the founders of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), an organization designed to bring artists together with engineers for the creation of works that made use of advanced technology. He also

Then and now: "Monogram," one of Rauschenberg's most famous sculptures, which features a goat and a tire; opposite, he works at The Herald, using photostats to prepare one of four overlays which make up today's cover.

RAUSCHENBERG

Photograph by Leon

For Rauschenberg, the first step in the creation of the cover was to make photographs of South Florida. Here, he searches for images of Cape Florida on Key Biscayne. He also visited parts of Miami, Coconut Grove, Coral Gables and Miami Beach.

started CHANGE, Inc., an emergency fund for artists to which his $1,000 fee for today's cover has been donated. His pictures were selling for anywhere between $20,000 and $100,000 by then, so he could afford to do other things.

He experimented with lithography in unheard-of ways, taking impressions of leaves and flowers and old lead type faces, pushing the medium to see how far he could take it. In 1968 he assembled a 54-foot-long collage drawing called *Currents*, made out of clippings from daily newspapers; it was an attempt to sum up in graphic form the legacy of the 1960s, that catastrophic decade that saw so many private worlds overwhelmed by the immediacy of public events. He had come to think of himself as an artist-reporter responding to the news from the Apollo moon landing to the death of Janis Joplin. It was with this in mind that the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C., decided to make its Bicentennial exhibition in 1976 a massive Rauschenberg retrospective. No other American artist could approach him as a witness to his time.

An artist who keeps in such close touch with the world around him could hardly help being interested in the technology of mass communications. Rauschenberg was immediately receptive, therefore, when Leon Rosenblatt, the art director of Tropic, got in touch with him recently at his Florida home, on Captiva Island, about designing the decade-end issue. Rosenblatt, a 31-year-old Miamian, is an artist himself. While working at freelance illustration in New York, he became fascinated by the idea of using large photostat cameras (designed for commercial reproduction) to make original works of art that could be produced in huge quantity: "Stat-Art." It took him two years to work out the complex process, which he did as a master's thesis project at the University of Miami. The Herald, meanwhile, was in the process of changing over from rotogravure to offset reproduction, and had already acquired the largest and most advanced photostat cameras made.

When Rosenblatt joined The Herald in 1978, he went to work on his boss, Lary Bloom, to give Stat-Art a tryout, with Rauschenberg as the pioneer artist-in-residence. The result is this week's cover: an original Rauschenberg, using images from photographs he made around South Florida, laid out by the artist, photostated to size in The Herald's editorial art department, supervised by him at every stage of the printing process, and distributed in an edition of more than 600,000 copies. Surely the most public work of private art in history.

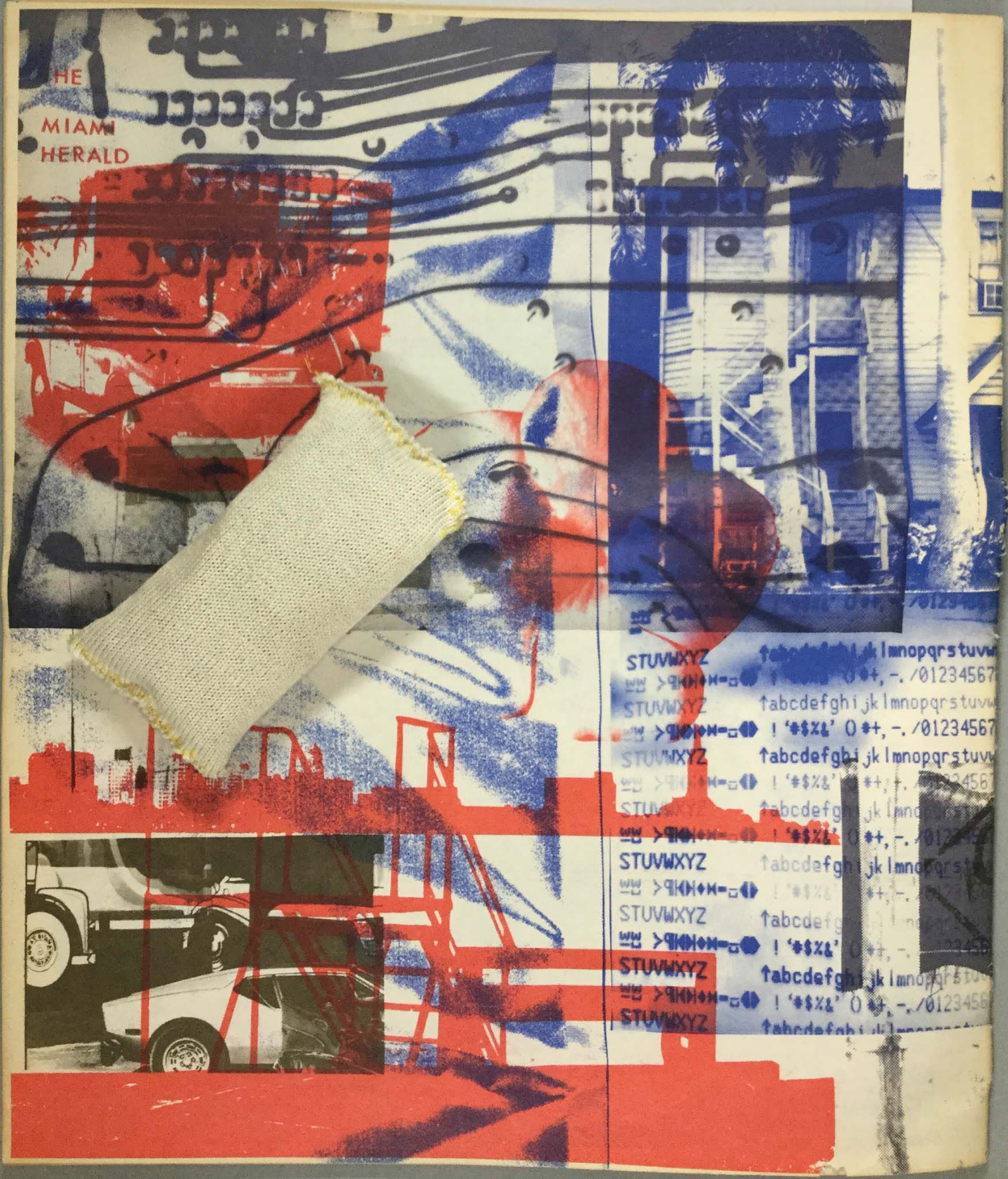
But can it really be art? The Sunday paper?

Can you think of any reason why not?

Look at it this way

Now that you have an original work of art in your house, what do you do with it? You could, of course, put it in the garbage. Or, you could frame it and put it over the fireplace.

How to frame it? Simple. Open the magazine, lay it flat against a piece of rag board (a backing available at frame shops) and frame the entire magazine under glass.



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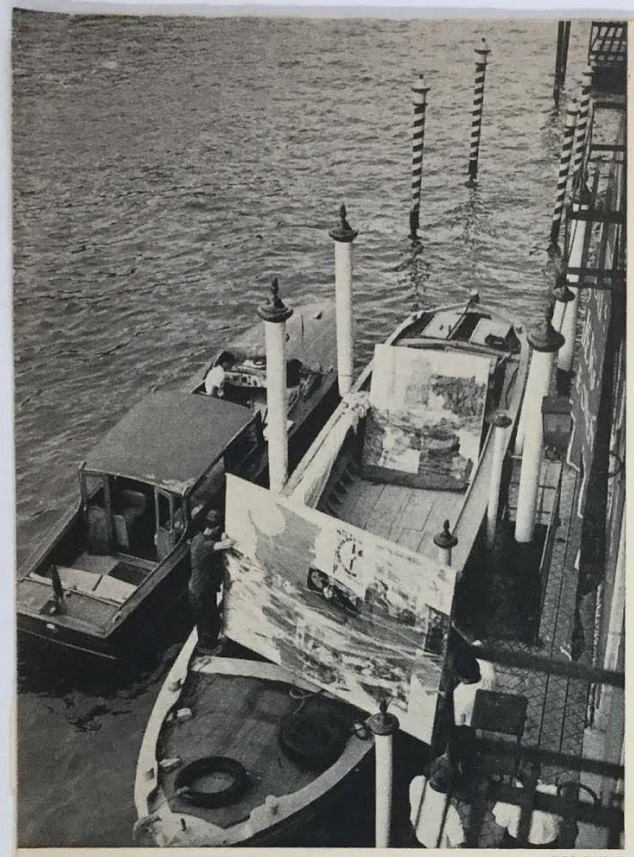


UGO MULAS

The Big Show in Venice

by Calvin Tomkins

How Americans learned to play a winning hand in the politics and intrigue of the international art world, at the Biennale competition.

For a good many years now, the general edginess of the U. S. government toward American avant-garde art has been an established fact. The beginning of a change in this attitude became apparent under the Kennedy Administration, but a great deal of the old suspicion remains. For this reason the recent American triumphs at international exhibitions have even more significance than might have appeared otherwise. At the São Paulo Bienal in 1963, one of the major awards went to Adolph Gottlieb, the New York abstract expressionist, while at the 1964 Venice Biennale the international grand prize for painting was awarded, for the first time in the history of that venerable institution, to an American artist, and an advanced one at that—the thirty-nine-year-old post-abstract expressionist Robert Rauschenberg. Moreover, since the U. S. exhibitions were sent abroad under the aegis of the United States Information Agency, the most intriguing aspect of the situation is that the government has shown itself to be more kindly disposed toward the new, the bold, and the "modern" in art than the Museum of Modern Art, which had formerly sponsored both undertakings.

The Venice Biennale can be taken as a case in point. When the Museum, for financial reasons, dropped its sponsorship of the Biennale exhibitions, it was generally supposed that the USIA, then headed by Edward R. Murrow, would simply foot the bill and ask the Museum's officials to put together the show as before. Instead, the agency made discreet inquiries around the art world, and then gave the job of assembling the Venice show to Dr. Alan R. Solomon, a highly gifted art scholar who had proved during his previous year as director of the Jewish Museum of New York to be one of the most active and influential champions of the new, post-abstract-expressionist currents in American art. The Jewish Museum granted Solomon a leave of absence and agreed to act as co-sponsor of the Venice exhibition.

I had lunch with Dr. Solomon shortly before he left for Venice to start installing the show, and he told me that, far from trying to impose a cautious conservatism, the USIA had given him virtually complete freedom to do what he wanted. "They asked me whether I wanted to take the responsibility all on myself, or whether I wanted to have a committee appointed to protect me," Solomon said. "I told them I wanted to take full responsibility. They said that's what they'd hoped I'd say, and that's the way it's been." Solomon attributed the agency's open-mindedness to several factors, notably the enlightened leadership of Murrow and the tact and intelligence of Lois

Bingham, who, as Chief of the Fine Arts Section, Exhibits Division, of the USIA, has been working for several years to develop greater respect within the government for the work of contemporary American artists. Most of all, though, he attributed it to the new cultural tone of the Kennedy Administration.

Shortly after his appointment as director of the exhibition, Solomon flew to Venice to confer with Biennale officials about enlarging the exhibition space for the American show. The American pavilion, an uninspired Georgian box put up in 1929 by Grand Central Art Galleries, which sponsored U. S. exhibits there until the Museum of Modern Art took over in 1954, is one of the smallest on the Biennale grounds. He arrived in Paris the day President Kennedy was shot. "I didn't know whether to turn around and go home right then and there," he told me. With everything suddenly uncertain, he went on to Venice. The project of enlarging the U. S. pavilion, for which the architect Philip Johnson had already volunteered his services, was obviously out of the question now; appropriations for the job would be in doubt, and with only five months until the Biennale opening, any delay would be fatal. The Biennale officials said No to Solomon's request for extra space in the large Italian pavilion—too many new countries were requesting space already.

Solomon then inquired about space outside the Biennale grounds, which are located toward the end of the main island at some distance from the center of the city. This was possible, he was told. He looked at several buildings, but nothing seemed at all suitable until he was shown the former U. S. Consulate building on the Grand Canal. Officially closed the month before as part of a State Department economy measure, the building was still U. S. property. Furthermore, it was located in the heart of town and, most important, the Consulate's series of cool, attractive salons and offices downstairs struck Solomon as being just about ideal for the paintings he wanted to exhibit. Before making a final decision, he had to make sure that any works hanging in the Consulate would be officially considered part of the U. S. Biennale exhibition. After receiving what he considered adequate assurances on this score, he took measurements of all the rooms, left further negotiations in the hands of our Embassy in Rome, and headed home feeling that the best possible solution had been found to the problem of space.

When I had lunch with Solomon last May, just before he returned to Venice, his feelings about the show went well beyond the merely personal and aesthetic; he obviously hoped that a major success at the Biennale might influence favorably the government's whole attitude toward contemporary art in America. Solomon is a slim, well-tailored young man with a neatly trimmed beard and a quiet, low-pitched voice that occasionally reveals a note of inner intensity. The USIA, he told me, had been 100 per cent cooperative during the months of preparation. There had been no change of heart under the new Administration, and no one had tried to interfere with his choice of artists or works. The exhibition would include more than ninety works representing eight of the most advanced artists of the present period: four "germinal" painters whose work had become the major sources of significant developments in U. S. art (Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland); and four younger artists whose work showed the proliferation of these ideas (Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, Frank Stella, and John Chamberlain).

Solomon disclosed that he had two major goals in mind for the Venice show. The first was that Rauschenberg should win the international grand prize for painting. "The idea hit me when I first took the job on," he said. "I suddenly said to myself, 'My God, America could win the Biennale this time with Rauschenberg.'" Of the two important international prizes at the Biennale, one usually goes to a painter and the other to a sculptor, and since the Biennale was inaugurated in 1895 only one American had ever taken one of these, Alexander Calder, for sculpture, in 1952. (In fact, the only two Americans to win *painting* prizes of any kind at Venice have been Mark Tobey in 1958 and James McNeill Whistler in 1895, the first year.) Since 1948, the grand prix for painting has gone almost without exception to School of Paris artists with impregnable reputations: Georges Braque in 1948, Henri Matisse in 1950, Raoul Dufy in 1952, Max Ernst in 1954, Jacques Villon in 1956, Jean Fautrier and Hans Hartung in 1960 (no sculpture prize that year), and Alfred Manessier in 1962. The spectacular rise of the School of New York, from Pollock and DeKooning to Rauschenberg and Johns, had not as yet received the slightest notice from the juries of the Venice Biennale.

Solomon's second major goal was to put on a

Calvin Tomkins will have two books published this spring: one, a collection of four profiles called "The Bride and the Bachelors"; the other, about the Lewis and Clark Trail. He is a staff writer for "The New Yorker" and was formerly a general editor of "Newsweek."

show that would convince Europeans of the strength and diversity of current American art. "I want this show to do for Europeans what the Armory Show did for us back in 1913," he said, with a flash of that inner intensity.

Gathering Chaos

It struck me at the time that this double-barreled assault might be overly ambitious. The usual Biennale practice, I had heard, when a country has someone it considers a candidate for one of the top prizes, is to place most of its emphasis on that artist and go all out in the behind-scene political struggles. Solomon was well aware of the political maelstrom in which he would soon be operating, but he seemed determined and reasonably confident. I wished him well, and immediately began making arrangements to go over and see how he made out.

By the time I arrived in Venice in mid-June, a week before the official opening, the rumor market was in full swing. A sizable number of artists, dealers, collectors, museum officials, art critics, and journalists had preceded me, and most of them could be found every day at noon, at 7:00 P.M., and again around midnight sitting on the terrace of the Caffè Florian at the Piazza San Marco, the headquarters of the Biennale crowd. One heard Rauschenberg mentioned again and again, but usually in an also-ran context. "He ought to get it," I kept hearing, "but he won't." The Dutch reportedly had given Karel Appel what amounted to a one-man show in their pavilion, and were bringing powerful pressure to bear on the judges. "The French will threaten to boycott the Biennale next time if they don't win, the way they always do," a New York critic said sourly. I saw Leo Castelli, Rauschenberg's New York dealer, and Ileana and Michael Sonnabend, whose Left Bank Paris gallery has specialized in showing the work of the American avant-garde, and joined them for a drink.

"At least we have an American judge now," Castelli said. "That's one thing in our favor." He explained to me that Sam Hunter, the art scholar and chairman of the art department of Brandeis University, had just the day before been chosen to serve on the panel of seven judges. The process of selecting judges, it appeared, was subject to intense pressures from all sides. Nominations were made by each of the Commissioners of thirty-four participating nations (Dr. Solomon being the American Commissioner), with the final decision left to the President of the Biennale, Professor Mario Marcazzan, who was expected to make his selections with such wisdom and finesse that no nation would feel its vital interests were being slighted. At the very last moment, wisdom and finesse had dictated the inclusion of an American judge, to serve on the panel with two Italians, a Brazilian, a Pole, a Dutchman, and a Swiss. A telegram had gone out to Hunter, who chanced to be passing through Milan at that moment, and his arrival was expected momentarily. In fact, Solomon had spent most of the day meeting incoming planes, because he had no idea which one Hunter was taking.

Neither then nor at any other time during the week did the art crowd at Florian's seem to be paying much attention to Venice, which looked properly magnificent that day, with the great square bathed in warm sunlight and the famous Venetian light playing its tricks with the foaming architecture. "You like Venice?" asked the young Torinese painter with whom I was chatting, and whose name, I had been overjoyed to discover, was Michelangelo Pistoletto. I nodded. "Italian Disneyland," he observed, with a shrug.

In the afternoon I took the *traghetto*, the gondola that plies back and forth across the Grand Canal, and found my way to the Consulate. A brief stroll through the whitewashed rooms downstairs convinced me that Alan Solomon had succeeded brilliantly in at least one of his major objectives. The show at the Consulate was not only stunning; it was a revelation. The large, colorful, infinitely complex canvases of Rauschenberg and Johns had never looked better to me than they did in those small, rather intimate rooms.

So many different things are going on in each one of these works—sensuous abstract brushwork, silk-screen reproductions of images from picture magazines, and free-swinging collage whose elements may include electric clocks, neon tubing, or even a stuffed eagle—that when several of them hang side by side in a gallery or museum the effect is sometimes overwhelming. In the Consulate, where they hung one to a wall and could thus be savored individually, pictures that I had seen many times before seemed to me entirely fresh and new. More than half the space was given over to Rauschenberg and Johns. Down the hall, one room apiece was devoted to the work of Dine (large canvases with real objects—bathroom fixtures and tools—affixed to them); Stella (geometrical abstractions); and Oldenburg (painted plaster replicas of food, limp plastic telephones, a twenty-times-life-size tube of tooth paste). In a pretty inner courtyard and garden, John Cham-

berlain's sculptures (made from smashed automobile fenders) lay rather forlornly on the ground; several parts were missing, and a frantic search was being made through the thousands of empty crates on the Biennale grounds. This bit of intelligence was confided to me by Mrs. Alice M. Denny, the assistant director of the U. S. exhibition, who was on leave from her position as Assistant Director of the Washington Gallery of Modern Art.

"That's the way it's been for three weeks," Mrs. Denny said cheerily. "Total chaos. We had everything clearly marked so that the pictures that belonged here would come here and the Noland and Louis pictures, which we're showing in the pavilion at the Biennale grounds, would go there. Then we were told everything had to go to the Biennale grounds for customs inspection. The bargemen went on strike at one point, and we couldn't move *anything* for two days." I had observed that in spite of everything, the show they had put on would be hard to beat. "I think so, too," Mrs. Denny said. "The problem is to make it official."

One Huge Master Image

The problem, as I learned later from Solomon and others, was a serious one. The Italian officials of the Biennale were now saying that Solomon had misunderstood them the previous fall and that they had never said that work hanging outside the Biennale grounds would be eligible for the Biennale awards. Solomon now found himself in a fairly excruciating position. Artistic sensitivities were involved, and a last-minute substitution of Rauschenberg for Noland in the Biennale pavilion, for example, might create schisms too hideous to contemplate. His solution had been to erect a temporary plywood structure in the courtyard of the U. S. pavilion at the Biennale, in which he had hung one work each by Rauschenberg, Johns, Stella, Dine, Chamberlain, and Oldenburg. It was hoped that this would qualify the six artists for official consideration by the judges. But there was no certainty as yet that the judges would even come to the Consulate to view the rest of their work and, to be frank, there was little hope that Rauschenberg could win the grand prize on the strength of one small painting on the grounds.

The next day, Monday, was a day of deepening intrigue and subsurface maneuverings. Sam Hunter had arrived the night before, and the rumor was that he had scored a major coup by persuading the judges to come to the Consulate. Outside of the pro-American group, though, I began to hear criticism of the way the U. S. campaign was being handled. Solomon was too aggressive, a Canadian curator complained. Demanding extra space in the Consulate had been a mistake—if other countries started taking space outside the Biennale grounds, the whole thing would get out of hand. To my surprise, I also learned that there was a group of Italian artists and sculptors who were tremendously enthusiastic about Rauschenberg's work, and passionately eager to see him win the prize. The smart bets, though, were on Karel Appel, winner of the 1959 São Paulo Bienal and the 1960 Guggenheim International show in New York. The international grand prix for sculpture was generally believed to be a tossup between Zoltan Kemeny, the Hungarian-born sculptor showing in the Swiss pavilion, and the Frenchman Jean Ipousteguy.

Tuesday was the day of the official vernissage, or press opening, of the Biennale. All morning, the *vaporetti* plying between San Marco and the Lido discharged groups of passengers at the Giardini, the fragrant green park in which the various pavilions are situated. Inside the grounds it was clear that other countries beside the U. S. had been having their difficulties. In the big maze-like Italian pavilion, most of the paintings were in place but nothing was marked. Part of the pavilion was devoted to group shows by several of the leading modern art museums of the world; another part offered work from Latin-American countries without pavilions of their own; the rest was given over to the Italians, who appear at this period to be much more gifted in the art of sculpture than in painting.

Belgium's exhibition looked intriguing—large assemblages of displaced piano parts by Vic Gentils, and Pol Bury's constructions in which something was always in mysterious motion. The Dutch pavilion was dominated by a handsome display of Appel's thickly painted abstractions. Nothing at all hung as yet in the brand-new pavilion of Brazil, begun only a few months before, in which workmen were pouring the cement floor while a lady in a blue smock stood anxiously by. Poland, Hungary, and Romania had little to show for the thaw in Iron Curtain cultural policy, but Czechoslovakia did—large, bold paintings in the abstract expressionist manner by Jan Kotik. The pavilions of France, Britain, and Germany, which gave the impression of trying to outface one another with their marble columns and raised porticoes, were crowded and stiflingly hot inside. The ceiling of the British pavilion had collapsed a few

days before, and visitors had to peer at the paintings of Roger Hilton through the supports of a temporary scaffolding. In the French pavilion, Roger Bissière looked impressive, but Ipousteguy's sculptures were somewhat overshadowed by a memorial exhibition of Julio Gonzalez, in another room.

With a few exceptions, the art of many nations began to seem discouragingly similar to me, tending to merge into one huge, slightly viscid, master image that was interchangeable and freely convertible—the European Common Painting. "The Biennale made some sense in 1900 but not anymore," a European dealer had said to me the night before. "It's utterly stupid, all these national shows—art is international now." I saw his point. Even Japan, whose raised pavilion looked so inviting from the outside, offered the interchangeable abstraction within.

What's "American"?

There was a big crowd in the outside courtyard of the United States pavilion, where the qualifying single works by Rauschenberg and his confreres hung in bright daylight on the unpainted, raw-looking plywood partitions. In one of the pavilion's two rooms—identical in size and shape and both sweltering—were the targets, chevrons, and broad stripe paintings of Kenneth Noland; in the other, the melting, swimming colors and horizontal stripe paintings of the late Morris Louis, who died two years ago at the age of fifty. Together they constitute what Solomon considers the second major development in contemporary American painting (the first being the work of Rauschenberg and Johns)—the new chromatic abstraction in which bands of pure color interact and vibrate against one another in vast areas of empty canvas. Spying Mrs. Sonnabend in the crowd, I asked her how things were going.

"It's a little confusing," she said. "Everybody is asking, 'Where are the Rauschenbergs?'"

We were interrupted by the apparition of a stalk-thin young man carrying an open umbrella, on which were painted a series of neat small abstractions and the highly legible signature, "Gian Luigi Fini"—a novel bit of self-promotion that appeared in most of the Italian papers the next day.

The Consulate had its own vernissage that afternoon, with a cocktail party for the press to which four hundred invitations were sent out and about twice that number came. More and more young American artists had been turning up in Venice, and most of them appeared at the party. (The Biennale, among other things, is a great meeting ground and marketplace, and many sales are made there of paintings that never come to Venice.) In the crush I noted Marisol, the lovely, unsmiling sculptress, in deep conversation with Sidney Janis; James Rosenquist, a leader of what is known in Italy as *"La Popparte"*; and Dimitri Hadzi, a Rome-based American sculptor who was one of the four United States entrants in the last Biennale.

I asked Hadzi whether the 1962 affair had been any different from this one, and he said it had—"More fun, more parties, and not so commercial. All you hear this time is, 'Are you selling?'"

Claes Oldenburg, who is large and genial, was posing for pictures with his molded foodstuffs while his petite, pretty wife looked on. John Chamberlain had pulled in that afternoon, despite the loss of his passport; Kenneth Noland was also on hand but Dine and Stella had stayed home and Johns was in Kyoto, Japan. Rauschenberg would arrive the following day, with the modern dance company of Merce Cunningham in which he was then acting as costume and set designer, lighting director, and stage manager, and which was scheduled, with admirable timing, to perform in Venice on Thursday night. The crowd at the press party was so dense that nobody could see the paintings, but I did observe the effect of the new realism on one young Englishwoman, who drew her escort into the Dine exhibit, pointed to a work that included real bathroom fixtures, and exclaimed in triumph, "There! Now *that's* American toilet paper!"

Later that evening, at Florian's, the word was that the judges had come to the Consulate, but that they had decided to judge Rauschenberg only on the basis of the one small canvas on the Biennale grounds. Throughout most of the next day, Wednesday, there was deepening anxiety in the Rauschenberg camp. "Some of the judges are making difficulties about the split show," Leo Castelli told me when I saw him briefly on the Piazza San Marco, "and they want to disqualify Rauschenberg." Castelli also reported a new development: In recognition of the superiority of American painting in general, the award might go to another American—to Noland. Solomon, however, had announced that if Rauschenberg were disqualified, he would remove all the Americans from contention.

Feeling a sudden need for aesthetic certainties, I went to look at the Giorgiones in the Accademia, and then at the Picassos, Ernsts, and Pollocks at Peggy Guggenheim's large, modern palazzo ad-

jacent to the Consulate building. It was one of three afternoons a week when her collection is open to the public, and Miss Guggenheim herself was present. I asked her what she thought of the Biennale. "I have nothing to do with the Biennale," she replied, rather tartly. "I detest pop art. The painters are no good, and so the Biennale is no good, either." That seemed to be the end of that conversation. Later, several people told me it was a great shame Peggy didn't keep up with current trends.

The Cardinal Was Displeased

The Biennale grounds were crowded on the last day of the vernissage. The Russian pavilion, which had been closed tight all week, finally opened its doors at 5:00 P.M. Although no hint of the abstract virus could be detected in its enormous, socially realistic paintings of peasant girls in wheat fields and athletes earnestly competing, the pastel, slightly fuzzy tones of some of the pictures suggested that Soviet painting may have inched a trifle closer to the twentieth century; not so far as Impressionism, perhaps, but somewhere on the outskirts of the Barbizon School.

Rauschenberg made his first appearance that evening at a Consulate party given by Frederick Reinhardt, the American Ambassador to Rome. The painter looked fit and relaxed in spite of having worked all day at the theater and having had little sleep for the past forty-eight hours. After he left for the theater with Merce Cunningham and with John Cage, the composer and musical director of the company, Alan Solomon pulled me aside and said in a tight voice, "The judges have just voted four to three for Rauschenberg on the basis of the one painting at the Biennale grounds. But the president of the jury has threatened to resign in protest, and they're going to try to work out something tomorrow." This electrifying news got around in no time at all and helped to make the Cunningham troupe's performance that evening at La Fenice an event of considerable tension and excitement. Booing, loud whistling, and passionate counter-cheering swept the exquisite, gilded theater during and after each dance, and it was difficult not to feel that the cultural pride of nations was at issue.

Friday morning dawned hot and humid. The Biennale grounds were closed, and a large part of the art crowd went out to swim at the Lido, which was where Rauschenberg was headed when I ran into him in town about noon. By then a compromise had been arrived at by the jury; Solomon would transfer three big Rauschenbergs from the Consulate to the Biennale pavilion, and this would satisfy the president of the jury, who had threatened to resign rather than award the prize to work hanging elsewhere. A major scandal was thus averted. There seemed no remaining doubt about the outcome now. Rauschenberg, who had done his best to stay out of the complex struggles on his behalf, seemed a little humbled by the events of the past few hours. "I honestly don't feel much of anything," he told me.

There were a few surprises still to come. During the day, it became known that the Patriarch of Venice, Giovanni Cardinal Urbani, was so deeply displeased with some of the art at the Biennale—specifically, with some paintings in the Italian section in which miters, crucifixes and other sacred symbols were commingled with grotesquely deformed female nudes—that he had issued an order forbidding Catholic monks, nuns, and clergymen from attending any part of the exhibition. At about the same time, it was also learned that President Antonio Segni had notified

UGO MULAS

the Biennale authorities that neither he nor his Minister of Defense would be able to attend the opening ceremonies as planned. Few Venetians failed to make the obvious connection between these two developments. By nightfall, three written petitions were going the rounds at Florian's, Angelo's, and other Biennale haunts. The first voiced the displeasure of all true artists at the intervention of the church hierarchy in artistic affairs; the second protested President Segni's decision to boycott the Biennale; the third, on a more parochial level, castigated the jury's award of the two major "Italian" prizes of the Biennale to two sculptors—Andrea Cascella and Arnaldo Pomodoro—instead of to one sculptor and one painter in the traditional fashion.

Is It a Conspiracy?

The final, official word on the international grand prizes had gone out, though—Rauschenberg for painting, Kemeny for sculpture—and nothing could dampen the enthusiasm of those who had been pulling for Rauschenberg from the start. There was no doubt that this was an immensely popular decision among the group of Italian artists such as Santomaso and Cascella, who saw the award to such a young and daringly original artist as an important break with tradition and a declaration of independence from the School of Paris. Santomaso and several others collected a host of Rauschenberg's supporters for the traditional victory party at Angelo's that night, but Rauschenberg, having been invited with a few members of the Cunningham company to dine at the palazzo of a reigning Venetian aristocrat, did not show up for it. At about 11:00 P.M., the victory party left Angelo's and went over to the Piazza San Marco. When Rauschenberg finally appeared there an hour or so later, the whole group surged forward with a great shout. Seven or eight Italian artists reached him first, embracing him and shaking his hand and lifting him on their shoulders, and the young American was so surprised and so moved that for a moment he looked to be in some distress.

"I hadn't expected that," he said afterward. "Butterflies in the stomach and a big lump in the throat. It really did mean something after all."

Everyone went back to Angelo's and kept the celebration going until dawn with vodka provided by the Polish juror and champagne on the house.

Saturday was anticlimax. The ceremony went off smoothly enough, with Minister of Public Education Luigi Gui filling in for the absent President Segni. Rauschenberg was first seated far back in the audience because he did not have the right invitation card, then reseated in the front row in time to receive the grand prize. Afterward, when asked by a local reporter whether he had ever been in Venice before, he said he had, for one day, in the winter of 1953; he had stayed just long enough to see a German movie about the Amazon jungle, and nothing else. It was the kind of answer that further endeared him to most of the young Italian artists, who tend to share Pistoletto's view of the city as a sort of archaic Disneyland.

Although it is now the fashion in certain art circles to dismiss the Biennale as a vulgar political circus, aesthetically meaningless and historically inane, the repercussions of Rauschenberg's Venetian conquest have been enormous. Several well-known European artists, after seeing the show in the Consulate, confided to Alan Solomon that it had altered their whole angle of vision and made their own future course uncertain. Many more reacted with profound shock and anger. In Paris, where a declining art market and an absence of exciting young painters have contributed to the closing of several important galleries in the last year, the post-Biennale mood has been close to panic. Paris art dealers and critics tend to interpret the success of Rauschenberg, and of American pop art in general, as the result of a dark international conspiracy against the School of Paris—a conspiracy, moreover, in which the United States government has assuredly played its part.

As for the government, *its* reactions to the American success are even more perplexing. In its annual budget request to Congress last February, the USIA made clear that it would withdraw from sponsoring international art shows after this year's São Paulo Bienal, in September. Such presentations, the agency stated, were "properly the concern of the art community." At the same time, there were strong indications that the government's fine-arts program might very well be transferred, instead, to an agency that was less subject than the USIA to politics, propaganda requirements, and the fear of stirring up Congressional ire. Solomon himself has heard nothing officially from Washington since the Biennale closed last fall, and he has no idea how the government really feels about the Rauschenberg victory.

"I think this has done more for America in Europe, culturally speaking, than anything that's happened in years," he said recently. "I'd like to think so, anyway. But what happens now is anybody's guess."

MILTON GENDEL Art News
"Hugger-Mugger IN the Giardini"
Sept 1964 pp32-37, 53

his kind of esthetics was illustrated by some living vignettes embracing critics and artfully combined objects. One critic pushed another under a showerbath exhibited by Dine, and the second critic resisted as if he were about to get a dousing. Oldenburg's limp plastic typewriter had to be moved from the yard in front of the pavilion to the Consulate because it had begun to melt in the sun. A fat, sagging spectator stood in front of it and said, "It doesn't look so soft to me." A dealer reassured a visitor about the damage done to a Rauschenberg in transit. One of the Coca-Cola bottles in it had been broken. He said, "Michelangelo recommended taking a sculpture up on a hill and rolling it down; when it gets to the bottom everything extraneous has been planed away." A woman looking at an Oldenburg composition of a stove with a roast in it, which glinted with the nasty synthetic succulence of a Palissy plate, said: "I wouldn't want to eat anything like that."

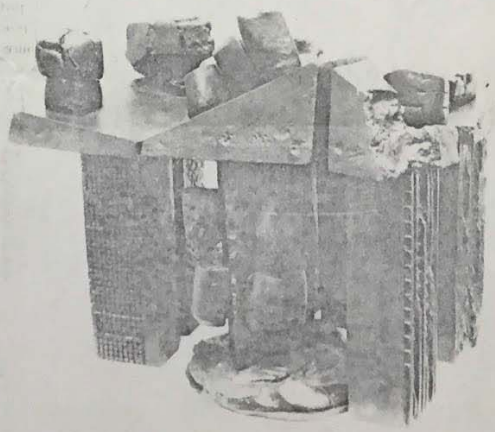
Rauschenberg, whose eligibility for the international painting prize was contested because his work was displayed outside of Giardini territory, was saved for world celebrity by the presence of one combine at the American pavilion and the hasty importation of four from the Consulate. He was the star of the occasion and probably unaware that the Cardinal Urbani who put the wholesale ban on his entire field of glory—the Biennale—has the same name as the Dottore who put a retail ban on his *Bed* at the Spoleto Festival six years ago.

Meanwhile the exhibition was haunted by two marginal figures, a man holding an open umbrella overhead painted with self-advertising slogans, and carrying a satchel full of photographs of his work; and a French dealer with a boatload of minor Neo-Dada, Pop and so-called *art informel*, which dogged the public from the Dogana to the Giardini, up-anchoring and following whenever the crowds moved on. The boat originally carried some Fontanas, on loan from another dealer who quickly reclaimed them when it was found that the wind was enlarging the holes, and it was presumably unacceptable to offer the larger holes at the same price. As a running gag the umbrella man and the boat lady appeared to stand to the Biennale as para-Pop and pre-Pop to traditional art exhibitions.

The more or less merry permissiveness of the rags, junk, plastic and old newsprint men was counterpointed by the solemn commitments and rigid exercises of the artists dedicated to programming. This vein has an introduction in a brilliant sculptor who doesn't belong to it. Kemeny, the Swiss national who emigrated from Hungary, makes pictorial brass and copper sculptures that imply movement as if they were ready and waiting for programming or were programmed sculpture broken open to reveal the circuits. He is one of the strongest personalities at the Biennale. Another, more fantastic, is the Belgian Pol Bury, whose automata of wood and metal have fascinating movements recalling plants germinating and the deliberate gestures of creatures like stick insects, although one looks much like a railroad-station ticket-rack undergoing slow spasms of self-expulsion. The cabinetry workmanship and emphasis on somber richness of material in the wood sculptures relates them to traditional esthetic values. More in line with the feeling of scientific equipment and industrial design productions are the works of the visual puzzlers and the kinetists, prominently represented this time at the exhibition, and indeed one of the most interesting avenues of development. They range from the immaculate abstract anamorphs and eye-dazzlers of the Venezuelan Jesus Raphael Soto to the work of "Group N" of Padua in studies of optic and spatial phenomena executed in plastic, wood and plexiglass, and of "Group T" of Milan in programmed electromechanical constructions. From under the cloak of collective responsibility so congenial to the prophetic visions of Prof. Argan, personalities emerge, the most engaging being that of Davide Boriani, Milanese, whose *Magnetic Surface* is a pair of big conjoined plexiglass disks containing an anthill life of iron filings that busily swarm to get into ingroups which keep shrugging off latecomers and disintegrating. (Works like these appear in the [Continued on page 53]

Switzerland: Hungarian-born Zoltan Kemeny, working in brass and copper, won first prize for sculpture.

France: young sculptor Jean Ipousteguy showed heavy pieces such as this "table," *St. Jean d'Acre*, 1960.



exist—as a showcase for Italian art. The largest pavilion, a rabbit warren of galleries, is given over to about eighty native artists. Every kind of excess and brashness is to be seen; more dismaying, rubbish is given equal space with excellence. This part of the Biennale only emphasizes that an international exhibition, if its pretensions are great enough, can only hope to run on hokum if it is given as often as every two years.

But was this always the way of it? Was the purpose ever to lure the tourists and sell the pictures? I suppose that idealism *and* practicality must have animated the founders.

In theory, the great international art exhibition is a fine idea. We will bring together the best of contemporary art; we will provide a forum for the discussion of art; we will recognize and reward excellence. Only it turns out that the best of contemporary art is often not good enough. The forum does not dwell upon the problems of art, but upon the problems of the market place. The artists whose work is genuinely new are bypassed until that work becomes comfortingly familiar. Vested interests are brought into play; nations no less than dealers maneuver for favor to their candidates. The artists are persuaded that they are in competition (they are finally only a challenge to themselves). Then too, what is best gives way to what is available, or to what has had public success elsewhere.

But probably the most reprehensible effect of the international award is in the public mind. Simply, these awards are taken too seriously (almost always they are taken too seriously by the committee that confers them). The act of judgment itself carries the presumption of something judged truly, of a significant validation. The circumstances and limitations of judgment are forgotten: only the prize is remembered. But a prize-giving is always an arbitrary action done in special conditions. In the case of the Biennale prizes, the arbitrariness, indeed the irrelevance, is compounded by the prizes being distributed among those already distinguished by election—election in a two- context.

Two French entries out of five were honored this Jean Ipoustéguy received one of the veritable award his sculpture, and Roger Bissière received a commen tion from the jury for his long service in art. But wh these distinctions mean when Jean Dubuffet, wh never appeared at the Biennale, is showing about a dred of his paintings, drawings and collag in an ex independent exhibition at the Palazzo G (this provided one of the highlights of the ale though it was not of the Biennale itse The French offering only demonstrated the n of a great tradition.

Would Rauschenberg have won the t painting if the British had put forward Francis Bacon inste emphasizing the tasteful but minor accomplishmen Roger Hilton? For that matter, Britain had the ma of a first-rate exhibition this year—that is, the cha generate some real interest in valid contemporary de ments. But forward-looking young artists like J King, Bernard Cohen, William Tucker and Robyn D were bypassed in favor of a mere decorator like Joe T

The American showing was certainly the strong the Biennale, the most serious, the most dialectical. I pavilion at the Giardini, Morris Louis and Ke Noland were on view. In the American ex-consula Venice itself (scene of the important American co parties), Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns were supp by a younger generation, Frank Stella, Jim Dine, C Oldenburg and John Chamberlain. Alan R. Solomon shaped the American contribution, achieved a gr visual dialogue.

Then the requirements of strategy came to the fo Rauschenberg was going to be a contender for th prize, he would have to be shown on the Biennale gr

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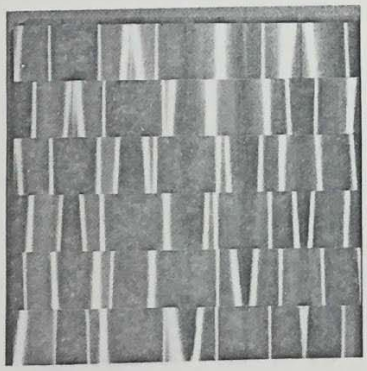
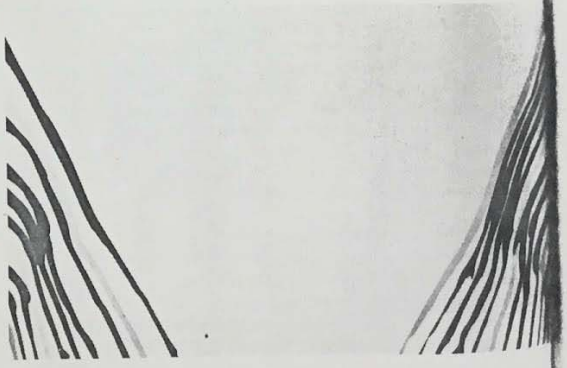
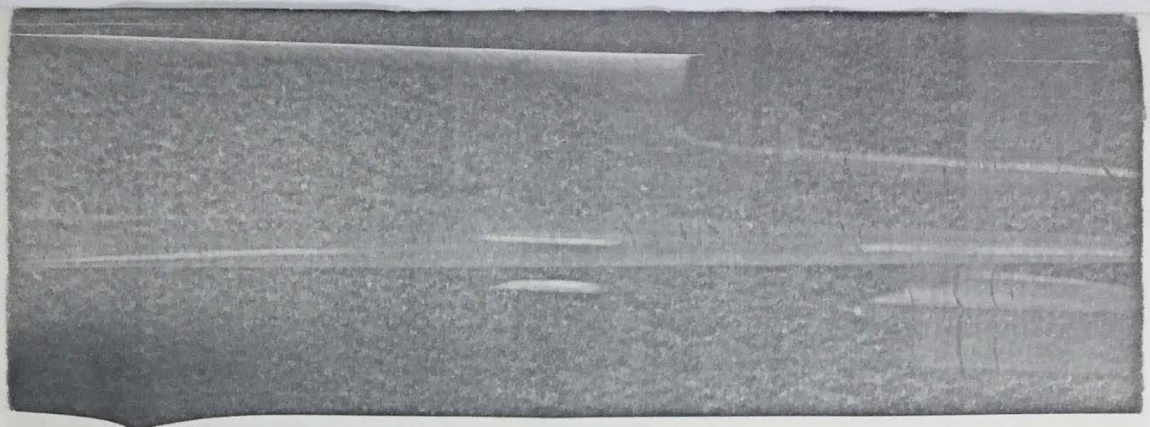


Getulio Alviani,
I vis-11 81 q 14 x 14 inv (1964).



Morris Louis, *Sigma* (1961);
lent by Galerie Lawrence, Paris, and André Emmerich, New York.

Gene Baro



ntrance court of the American pavilion was hastily ed with a little gallery of its own, and there Rausch- g and his contingent met the technical requirements nnale "residence."

hort, the American push was considerable, and it elmed the opposition and carried the timid and ial. Rauschenberg's recent appeal to the European e, to whom he appears as a liberating force, the y and verve of his achievements, his essential con- ism despite his technical flair and flash, the vigor of blicity (the Merce Cunningham Dance Troup for Rauschenberg designs happened to open at Venice's e Theatre the night of the final jury)—all these were s in his triumph. But a factor, too, must have been devotion of the American administrators who, being a winner, at least seemed to choose Rauschenberg selves. Noland, a far more mature and important t, although a more difficult one for Europeans to rstand, was allowed, along with the late Morris s, to seem more enshrined than exhibited. His work d by itself in all its austerity.

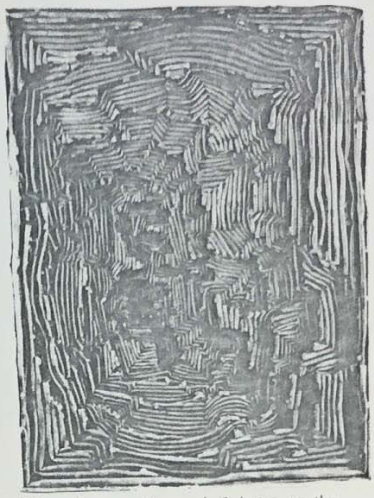
nother winner who did not lack for managers was Zol- Kemeny, the Swiss sculptor, whose biomorphic pat- s in metal show a formidable technical equipment, but conceptual brilliance. His fellow countryman, the tor Luginbühl, his equal for interest, faded as the gues began to wag. This is the pattern of Biennale ics.

The Biennale was at its most effective in the years just the Second World War, when the conditions of pean life gave it a vital reason for being. Then it was important agency for the healing and re-establishment e traditions of Western art, mauled, like everything in the conflict. The Biennale helped cement the frag- ts the war had made. But apart from this, its commit- must have been the opposite of the apparent present inquiry and not exploitation must have been the e of those days, a curiosity for what was new rather a promotion of what one had. The exportation of cul- as a commodity, and as an expression of national y and will, was not so universal then as now.

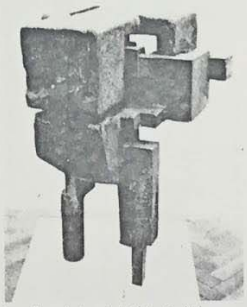
oday, the Biennale seems to have lost every artistic e. This is not to deny the merit of much to be seen e. But the effect, taken from several angles, is divisive, shial or chaotic. Except as an international clearing se, the Biennale lacks a unified function. It is signifi- that a special exhibition should have been devoted to nt purchases by important museums—another guide e shopper.

nd the prizes make no pattern. Rauschenberg and meny, Cascella and Pomodoro, Ipoustéguy and Ruzig, sbender and Soto, with Bissière thrown in. What does ean? No coherent viewpoint is expressed; no critical sistency is discernible.

To a greater or less degree all international exhibitions rt suffer from *folie de grandeur*, are involved in ques- able judgments and promote dubious values. Not ugh of them are merely descriptive, genuinely histori- (this is not to cover a slice of years) or intelligently matic. But perhaps some of the monsters can be ormed. Is it too much to ask?

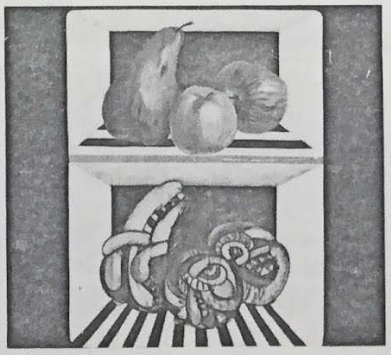


Zoltan Kemeny, *Research Relative to the Essential* (1962); collection Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg.



Bernhard Luginbühl, *Bulldog* (1963); collection Winterthur Art Museum.

Lucebert, *The Return of Longlegs*



Pozzati, *For an Impossible Modification* (1964).

Post-Biennale Feelings (Chp. 1)

Getting out of painting was not a conscious decision, "but that certainly is what happened. You see all that success tends to -- it's almost a poison/ to my attitude, which is to be involved in group work, to be anti-ego-serving. There is a kind of terror in working with that kind of pressure (ie success). Of doing something that is simply 'a Rauschenberg.' So far, thank God, I've still been able to do lousy Rauschenbergs -- and they're recognized as such, The better known you get the harder it is, because the public gets larger and larger and the work gets more precious, politically, socially, ~~econ~~ economically.

"I imposed that sort of discipline on myself originally -- that at the time I found I could do something very well I'd go on and do something else.

"It was frightening because I felt isolated. It was the first indication I'd had that I could be isolated. If your work is more or less all you're doing, if you don't have an established social life outside the work, you could get really lonely there."

Ever worry about success being undeserved? "I don't think that occurred to me. My reaction was kind of shock that it had happened. And for a few months to follow I wished that some other American had won. Also, seeing Art News and the Times -- I'd thought that at least America would be pleased. But even today it still remains true that people think Leo engineered it somehow...

was through, and they were all terribly depressed.

Back home, Jasper took her to lunch (like Viola) to find out what had happened. It was the first time she remembers him being really personal.

Biennale - reactions

1964 Biennale - RR interview on NET

"...it all seemed somewhat unreal... actually it was just the opposite from what it was reported to be. I was feeling quite patriotic about it... (and) to find that the most hostile criticism to my having won it here in this country was just personally disgusting. An extraordinary amount of hostility was created [redacted]..."

European press vitriolic. Paris Combat said giving RR the prize was "an offense to the dignity of artistic creation." Rome's pro-Communist Paese Sera called it "a grotesque Biennale," and the Vatican's L'Osservatore Romano referred to "the total and general defeat of culture."

- Time, 7/3/64

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Back home, Jasper took her to lunch (like Viola) to find out what had happened. It was the first time she remembers him being really personal.

World Tour (1964) – Carolyn Brown

It was a bad period for Merce personally, C. thinks because of certain physical or health problems that he never revealed. Merce was withdrawn and unhappy from the start -- although he danced better than ever before or since; it was really the first time he or they had been able to dance all the time, performance after performance. But his personal state was a large factor in the misfortunes that occurred.

Then in Venice, after Bob won the prize, the problems mounted. People flocking around Bob, etc. Time running a story saying he choreographed for Merce. The fact that he was helping pay for the trip -- Bob was paying for Alex as his assistant, and C. thinks also for Debbie who was not formally in the company until Shareen left in London. Merce was not nice to Shareen -- something about her rubbed him the wrong way. Once when they were doing "Story" in England, she was still doing her business when he came on to do his solo; he simply picked her up and carried her offstage. Finally Shareen asked herself why she had to put up with this. A rich admirer had been sending huge sheafs of roses to every theater, bombarding her with proposals; rather on the spur of the moment she decided to get married and leave the company. She got married in London, and Cage gave her away. Then Debbie Hay, who had been in Merce's classes for some time and was fully ready, took over as a full member.

Story was another bone of contention. In Dartington (England), Bob and Alex ironed laundry at the rear of the state as the "set" one night. It was great, but somewhat upstaging. At the Saddler's Wells in London, Bob painted a picture on stage for the three nights of the piece. He hadn't painted in some time and was probably itching to do so. She thinks he worked on it in the daytime too. At any rate it was an eyecatching decor, and Leo C. is supposed to have rushed over as soon as he heard about, and made a sale.

In Stockholm, Bob did a piece of his own (Elgin Tie) at the museum, that Carolyn says was marvelous. It involved his being lowered somehow onto a cart being pulled by a gigantic cow (led by farmer); getting into boots that were fixed to the floor of the cart. C. thinks maybe his best piece. David Tudor also did something there, and this did not sit too well with Merce and John.

Carolyn makes the point that John's way of living is totally at odds with his philosophy. He hates change, and often says so. Both he and Merce are incredibly disciplined. Bob is wholly undisciplined, of course. The only two dances in Merce's career that allow any real freedom are Story and Field Dances, and Merce kept making Story more and more fixed and structured.

Also, when Merce is not well, or disturbed, John reacts in ways he never would otherwise. He gets angry, says things he shouldn't. Anyway, tensions built and built, and they came to a head in India. Carolyn remembers one day at the Sarabhai's -- between the time they went to the theater to fe-hearse in the morning and the time they left that afternoon, something bad had happened, words had been said that couldn't be unsaid. They went on to Japan, and the company really broke up there. Bob and Steve left. Merce called a company meeting of the rest, and asked each to come and tell him privately what his or her plans were for the following year. Bill Davis quit. Debbie and Alex quit. Viola wanted to quit, but Merce (or John) talked her into staying through the next spring -- Viola had been dancing in great pain throughout the tour, from an injured foot and also a bad sciatic nerve; Bill Davis was so shocked by seeing her dance in such pain that he decided dancing was not for him. Carolyn went home to Massachussetts and thought about what to do. "I went home and sulked." Her mother told her she thought they had all been terribly insensitive to Merce (who, as even he agreed, was no good as a company manager -- and Lew Lloyd being inexperien- didn't help too much). Carolyn and all of them really thought the company was through, and they were all terribly depressed.

Back home, Jasper took her to lunch (like Viola) to find out what had happened. It was the first time she remembers him being really personal.

(Cunningham Notes)

European Tours 1958 & 1960

Fall of 1958, John and David Tudor invited to perform at Darmstadt. Merce and Carolyn went too, more or less at last moment. Flew to Stockholm, where they ~~xxxx~~ found they were to give a perf at the opera house in 3 days; MC made Night Wandering duet, to music by Bo Nilsson. Surprised to find opera house filled. Afterwards they were supposed to perform at the Brussels World's Fair, but the death of Pope John intervened; they performed for Belgian TV instead. Nick Cernovich was with them, doing the lighting. Danced solos, duet from Suite for Five and Springweather, other works. ~~(At Stockholm they were told it was the first time in 100 yrs that there had been booing at the opera house).~~

In 1960 the same four of them went to Venice, Berlin, and Cologne. Danced at the Fenice theater, where the audience was in a continual uproar. During intermission, MC in his dressing room heard a voice in the hall say, "Are you John Cage?" Cage said yes. Then, "I am Sir Arthur Bliss. I do hope you will continue -- there are only a few malcontents in the audience."

Early Audience Reaction on US Tours

At first, the audiences in small colleges etc were "mostly dumbfounded. They didn't yell or scream, but there was a good deal of nervous giggling. And of course a great many people were offended, and walked out." (in Europe, there was yelling and screaming). If they happened to know anything about modern dance -- Graham and Limon and people like that -- they didn't like us at all."

Once in Columbus, Ohio, ~~xxxx~~ where Merce had to dance on a stage so small that his head disappeared behind the proscenium every time he jumped, they went to a party afterward where the local people proceded to insult them, asking what they thought they were doing anyway..."We left."

MC did not become discouraged. "My whole tendency was just to continue. I find that provoking an audience is interesting in theatrical terms, ~~xxx~~ to work simply in terms of pleasing someone -- I don't think that's very interesting, Besides, I didn't make these pieces for an audience. I made them because I was interested in movement."

At some places, though, the response was highly encouraging. Black Mtn., for example. "There were always enough places where the audience seemed to be curious, to make me want to continue. New York wasn't interested, of course. My audiences there were limited ~~xxxx~~ for a long time to painters and contemporary composers -- not theater people.

World Tour 1964 (six months) - see also Vaughn article, Appendix B Foundation pamphlet

MC and Cage had long wanted to go to Japan, and the Sarabhai family had invited them to India. They began to get a few invitations in Europe (music fest) and the idea took shape of putting it all together. Complete financial backing never secured (get details from Lew Lloyd) ~~xx~~ MC used to worry abt finances, but now doesn't listen. "If I listen I tend to get nervous."
Stockholm: Performed again in opera house. "We were told that they hadn't heard booing there ~~xxx~~ in a hundred years."

Paris: Performed at TNP, and MC found the audience interesting -- not chic, ~~xxx~~ a lot of people from neighborhood. There was a good deal of hostility, though, and after MC and Viola did Paired there was an egg and a tomato thrown at the stage -- with bad aim.

London: Went there rather by accident. Hadn't planned to at all, assuming

Reuben Gorewitz - 1/11/78

Started working for Bob ten years ago, now represents a great many artists. Has had to "use imagination to solve problems," just as they do.

World Tour
Was financied originally by Jasper's Foundation For Performance Arts, the benefit that raised $35,000. Reuben was in touch with them - they would call and he would make deposits and payments. Cage called from Helsinki to say they were in trouble, because Shareen Blair had left to get married and this cancelled the group fare. Their tickets had been taken away until they paid the additional amount. What to do? "I consulted the I Ching. Then I went over to Jasper's and sold a Johns painting so they would get out of Helsinki."

World Tour facts - Lew Lloyd

Before leaving, they had received $17,130.75 from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts (this was raised by the 1962 art sale benefit at Allan Stone, for the purpose of a Bway season that didn't come off; was applied instead to air fares for trip); also, $20,000 from Rockefeller Fund for salaries and expenses in the Far East, and $3,650 additional grants from private sources. Their projected bookings would bring in about $39,000. This still left them about $20,000 short of the projected (estimated) costs; this was made up eventually by the sale of Lippold's "Seven Variations within a Sphere" to Mary Sisler, plus a Rauschenberg painting sold for $7500.

Confusion over expenses lasted throughout the trip. Air France had promised them a group rate, then said they forfeited it by changing their itinerary.

Also union problems. The dancers were paid salaries ranging from $115-150 a week on tour -- the first time they had ever received a regular salary; AGMA informed them it was preferring charges, however, because the salaries were below minimum. The charges were later dropped, and a union contract was signed upon their return. It expired last August, and in exploring proposals for a new contract that would reflect the special situation of the small modern dance companies, the dancers themselves evidenced such hostility to AGMA that negotiations collapsed. In January 1967, the companies of Alvin Ailey, Erick Hawkins, Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor, Murray Louis and Merce C. signed a statement declaring that they did not wish to be represented by AGMA, and there the matter now rests.

Tour lasted 6 months; 70 performances in 13 countries, incl Czechoslovakia and Poland. Total loss on whole operation was $85,000 (Barnes in NYT, 6/21/66).

the English wouldn't like them at all. But just before leaving US, a young English producer named Michael White came to studio and invited the company for a week. "If you're willing, so are we," said Merce. Booked into Saddlers Wells theater. Marvellous audience of theater people, who responded so enthusiastically that when the week was up White booked them into another ~~theater~~ for two more weeks -- sold out. Rave reviews.

(Phoenix)

Venice, Czechoslovakia, etc (get details). Then on to Far East. The Indian part of the trip was "the most unreal, the most astonishing." Stayed with the Sarabhais in what could only be called "Oriental splendor." In Bombay, the audience was non-plussed, puzzled, almost no reaction at all (MC was later told it was ~~almost~~ 80% Parsee dowager -- i.e. western-oriented). In Ahmedebad, the orchestra seats were quiet and puzzled but the gallery showed wild excitement -- Gita Sarabhai told them she always made a point of selling gallerys seats very cheap, one ruppee. Then on to Chandrigarh, city built by Le Corbusier, where the whole audience gave vent to their noisy astonishment at the goings-on; they had poor accomodations there, and were told on leaving that "if we'd known you were so good we would have treated you better."

Performed for the King and Queen of Thailand in Bangkok (the King asked a good many questions), then on to Japan.

"The company held up wonderfully, in spite of all the problems and difficulties. Everyone got sick at one time or another." Viola hurt her foot,* ~~Sandra~~ Shareen Blair got married in London and left the company, and there were inevitable clashes of personality. The most serious of these, of course, was between MC and RR.

MC says now that, apart from the personal unpleasantness, "I always felt that Bob would not stay with us, that his own life would forbid it. The ~~touring~~ business of being on tour kept him from his own work, and I felt that for this reason the relationship could not last. But I still think that Bob's ideas about lighting and theater in general were the most interesting around. He has a marvellous sense of objects -- the same thing you see in his paintings, and at the same time he was always agreeable to discussing his ideas with me so as to be sure they would work with the dance. We had a real understanding on that. In Noctures, for example, he said he wanted to have the costumes all white, so I made sure to have no falls in the dance. When I was making Antic Meet, I wrote to Bob from New London, where we were at the time, and described the piece as I saw it; I said I wanted to come out at one point with a chair on my back, and so he devised that door I could come through; he thought of the sunglasses, and the parachutes for the girls, and the fur coat, and somehow the whole piece seemed to come together around his ideas and mine working independently. With Summerspace, all I told him was that the piece didn't have any center. He figured it all out, and the result was that beautiful backdrop and costumes.

* at the demonstration class in Paris - it got worse & worse, because she kept on dancing.

The world tour was a sort of watershed. MC feels it was primarily the success in London and the English reviews. "The English took it seriously, they wrote about it seriously (and they wrote volumes!), they even took the music seriously. I guess people over here just got the idea that maybe something was going on after all." Invitations for European bookings increased tremendously, and the major universities in US took more notice. As a result, "we have more to do." The 1966 summer tour was one direct result.

The Cunningham School had been doing well before -- among dancers the company's reputation had long been high. What really increased the number of students was the move to the new studio.

Old Studio - MC got it through friendship with the Becks, who held half of top floor for him. He was there for five years, and there was almost always some sort of crisis going on. "Every time we left on tour, it seemed, we were in the middle of a catastrophe." When the government closed the building on the Becks, for example, Cunningham was about to go on tour. That morning, he came to studio to pack costumes and was told he couldn't get in. Finally talked his way past guards, by letting them come up and look at his files to make sure he really worked there; they watched him pack, followed him out and locked door afterwards, "and I had no idea what would be there when we got back." There was only cold water in the building, and sometimes not even that. When the toilet wasn't working, the girls had to go across the street to the bar. "But it was a nice space, a beautiful working space."

The Future - Merce would like to enlarge the company -- "not a lot. Two more girls, maybe one more boy. If we begin to tour a great deal, we'll have to have a number of pieces that everybody is not in, and there will be some shifting around. Of course some pieces are flexible enough for that anyway. When Peter was hurt doing Place on our last tour, and couldn't continue, we got together during the intermission and parcelled out his part -- Gus did a little, Al did some, even Yseult took over certain things. The next day we rehearsed it some more and put Yseult in and announced her -- we couldn't say she was replacing Peter Sauls, so we didn't say anything.

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World Tour (Paxton)

"Our doing work outside the Cunningham company was never a problem until the world tour.

Just prior to the tour they had done a season at Hartford, working on a tiny stage, doing almost the entire repertory. It was tiring and somehow dispiriting. Then, for the tour, they got a manager class -- Lew and David. "I gathered that things were getting a little sticky." The annoyance over press reports about Bob doing choreography. The financial problems. Alex was going to be sent home from Sweden because they couldn't afford his salary; Bob took it over. Bob and David doing pieces in Sweden bothered both Merce and John. The cow piece: A relative of Pontus had a farm, and consented to come in leading his cow. "Bob had a way with atmosphere and objects."

Steve doesn't know why it all fell apart in India. Remembers an argument between one of the Sarabhais and Merce -- why, if everything is permissable, are there no fat dancers? Why is everyone so well trained? Trouble was "we were being represented according to Cage's conception, which was not the same as Cunningham's practice." Merce wanted highly trained dancers, and his work was a good deal more formally interesting than Cage's. And then, Merce was up against the difficult logistics of running a touring company.

"I really regretted leaving the company. But I felt Bob had been dealt with badly. I felt it was a difference in personality that could have been dealt with. We had become a dance company, whereas before we had felt like cohorts. On those cross-country tours in the bus you felt that everybody was helping out. Nothing could ever take the place of that group spirit. I felt I had become part of a heirarchy, and that, although things were obviously going to get better financially, the whole thing was going to get heavier in other ways."

Bob's Fame

It's not true that Bob suddenly became a rich artist. He'd had money for five years before Venice, had a Jaguar when Steve met him.

"He was made very anxious by celebrity. At times he was extremely happy. Then I remember one time, he was in such a state of shock after an experiemce that his body was just not there -- he was almost paralyzed.

"I sense in all his work an incredible loyalty - to people, to ideas."

[illegible] and they're willing to leave that up to me. They asked me at the beginning how I wanted to handle it -- whether I wanted to take the responsibility all on myself, or have a committee appointed that would protect me. I said that's easy, I want to take the responsibility. They said that's what they'd hoped I'd say. And that's the way it's been." Solomon attributes new attitude partly to Murrow, partly to Lois Bingham*, woman who's been working quietly for years within USIA to develop esthetic attitudes toward fine arts, but mainly to Kennedy influence.

Week of parties and private openings precedes official opening on June 20. ~~Concierge at Griffi gets you invited to whatever party.~~

* Chief, Fine Arts Section, Exhibits Division of USIA.

World Tour (Case - Cunningham)

Bob was becoming famous. Bob was "trying to take the company away from Merce." He would take the dancers out and buy them [redacted] meals in fancy restaurants, and everybody wanted to be with him because he was such fun. "Bob was financing a large part of the tour." And when their money ran out in Finland -- airline took away their tickets because one member of the group had left -- Shareen Blair -- and new higher fare was charged -- John thinks Bob paid the extra (Reuben remembers he was called, and sold a painting of Jasper's).

John was also enraged by an interview Bob gave (where?) in which he said that the stage was [redacted] for him a canvas, that he treated it like the largest canvas he'd ever had to work with." It sounded as though the company was his, not Merce's.

John's friendship with Bob ended on this tour. Now the break is patched, but John is not interested in reinstating the friendship. He feels that Bob has gone steadily downhill since he and Jap broke up. "But his imagination has held up" -- the late work is still very interesting.

Neither John nor Merce remember any specific moment of rupture. Communication between them had almost ended by the time they got to India. In Japan, Bob did a performance at the Sogetsu Art Center, and neither Merce nor John went to it. They say they were too exhausted by then -- Merce told of a rehearsal when Barbara Lloyd fell down and just lay there, too tired to get up (Rune).

Feelings about Bob's theater pieces? Interesting visually, but there was no dance in them, and therefore no future for dancers. John feels they were not nearly as interesting as his work in painting. Yvonne Rainer was the real force in the whole non-dance idea. Must talk to her and to Bob Dunn.

Consulate is a relatively new bldg, with advantage of being right next to Peggy Guggenheim's and near center of town. Will be the only exhibition of Biennale open at night.

Absolutely no interference with choice of artists and works. Solomon had to bring photos of everything he picked down to Washington, but this was purely to make sure there would be nothing obscene or political. No problem here -- current crop of artists are absolutely a-political, and by no means obscene. "There's been a great change since the McCarthy period. ~~Everything~~ These things can be judged only on esthetic grounds now, and they're willing to leave that up to me. They asked me at the beginning how I wanted to handle it -- whether I wanted to take the responsibility all on myself, or have a committee appointed that would protect me. I said that's easy, I want to ~~dxxxk akk~~ take the responsibility. They said that's what they'd hoped I'd say. And that's the way it's been." Solomon attributes new attitude partly to Murrow, ~~xxxxxxx~~ partly to Lois Bingham*, woman who's been working quietly for years within USIA to develop esthetic attitudes toward fine arts, but mainly to Kennedy influence.

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Alan Solomon - Biennale

US for years was only country whose exhibition not govt supported. Cheesy little pavilion, Monticello type, next to ~~Swed~~ Scandinavian Pavilion which is most beautiful there (all the great powers have lousy pavilions). In past, Museum of Modern Art had either done exhibition itself or farmed it out, and quality depended on whom it was farmed out to. Great show in 1950 (ck. date), with Pollock, de Kooning, Rico Lebrun, others/ 1952 was one-man De Kooning. Last Biennale, ~~xxx~~ US exhibit was exceptionally bad, by general agreement (Nevelson, Hadzi, Loren MacIver, Jan Muller)). MMA decided to drop its sponsorship -- Solomon says in ~~hopes~~ expectation that USIA would then shoulder financial burden and hand job over to MMA. Instead of which, USIA made inquiries around the art world, and settled on Solomon. Everybody ~~xxxx~~ had assumed that, now that the govt was running things, it would be ultra conservative. USIA set out to disprove this. Made an excellent showing in Sao Paolo Biennale, the first organized by USIA: Adolf Gottlieb took a grand prix.

Solomon says he's had an absolutely free hand. Went down to Washington and explained what he was going to do and why. Went to Venice last fall, arriving just after assassination, and had conferences with Biennale officials and USIA people from Trieste on space. Wanted more space. Biennale worried because so many new countries now demanding space they feared charges of submitting to American imperialism. The solution was to put American exhibit in the American Consulate, which had recently been closed down -- part of general economy move in ~~foreign~~ State Dept; Venice Consulate transferred to Trieste, much to discomfiture of Venice Tourist Bureau which will now have to cope with 200,000 American tourists who come to Venice every summer and lose passports, money, or lives. Consulate is a relatively new bldg, with advantage of being right next to Peggy Guggenheim's and near center of town. Will be the only exhibition of Biennale open at night.

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The New York Times.

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1966.

Dance: Trouble With Going Abroad

Limited Funds Hamper U.S. Representations

By CLIVE BARNES

IN the great days of Pax Britannica the classic solution to any difficulty was to send a gunboat. Times have changed. The Soviet Union, for example, is far more likely to send a dance company than a gunboat, and, indeed, the Red Army Dance Ensemble is one of the most active and arguably the most effective unit in the Russian army.

How does the United States come into this picture? The answer is half-heartedly. The State Department has an allocation of only $2-million a year for a performing arts program overseas that can show the flag to nations both uncommitted and committed. And $2-million does not buy much image-making.

●

The trials and tribulations of a dance troupe trying to get to Europe are well illustrated by the story of the Merce Cunningham Company.

For five or six years, the Cunningham Company has been sought by various European interests—theaters and festivals and the like. Unfortunately it was impossible to take up the invitations because funds were just not available. However, in the Spring of 1964, the company, assisted by private patrons, decided to risk a world tour. Over a period of six months it gave 70 performances in 13 countries, including a four-week season in London. On this tour, the company not only played Asia (with visits to India, Japan and a command performance in Thailand) but also penetrated the Iron Curtain to play in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The company took $40,000 in booking fees—but every dollar made abroad needed to be matched with two at home, and the total loss on the operation was $85,000. If the Government had paid that amount, the wonderful publicity the United States received would have been cheap at the price. But it was free.

●

This year the company also received a number of foreign invitations, among them were a festival at Sitges, Spain, another in the south of France, a film-date in Hamburg and the very prestigious Berlin Festival. Hopefully, two of the company's directors, Judith Blinken and Howard Adams, went to Washington to talk to the Office of Cultural Presentations of the State Department. No luck.

This office works, very understandably, first on the advice of an advisory committee that plans out the needs and sets the policy. Once these needs have been determined, a dance panel, made up of people professionally engaged in the dance world, "evaluates" such applications as have been made and "nominates" the most suitable group to meet the specific need. It seems that the Cunningham Company was "evaluated" but not "nominated," which might be thought strange since it has already had a tremendous success in Europe. But the basic State Department difficulty here is insufficient funds.

Case in Point: Trials of Cunningham Troupe

However, the story has a happy, or fairly happy ending. The great Spanish painter Joan Miró, who had seen the Cunningham group in Paris, was so interested in getting the company to Spain that he donated one of his paintings to pay the company's fares to Europe and back, and the troupe will be able to carry out a restricted European tour, but not, unfortunately, to Berlin. Lucky old State Department—being subsidized by European painters.

●

The story does not end quite there. This November the Cunningham Company has been invited to appear at the Paris Dance Festival—the greatest international festival. If it goes, it will need State Department backing. Ironically, a dance company that has already accepted is the very generously subsidized National Ballet of Cuba. Is this to be another case of "Cuba sí! Yanquis no!"?

World Tour (RR)

"I really enjoyed the whole company. I didn't like what seemed to me like the heirarchy, with the three stars. Merce kept the company together thru intimidation."

The Venice Biennale became such a scandal internationally that matters became very difficult for everyone. "I didn't see any way of handling it. I'd show up for a press conference, and all the questions would be thrown at me; if I didn't show up, Merce and John would say we all had to support each other and where was I?"

"I didn't know until I got to Venice that it was some kind of contest. I just supposed it was another group show. I was there solely to work for Merce."

"In Stockholm, there were posters all over about me and Debbie Hay and Alex and Steve doing an extra museum concert. We all went to Merce and asked how he felt about it, and he said OK as long as it didn't interfere with rehearsals. In retrospect it appears that Merce's tongue is separate from his feelings..."

Elgin Tie - reviewed as "Cowkunst" on front page of ~~leading~~ conservative paper. Bob was looking for a cow, and Pontus said his brother-in-law was a farmer and could supply one. "I'd just been in London, and had fallen madly in love with the Elgin Marbles - that combination of men and animals. The idea was that I'd be carrying a bag of flour, and the flour would join me and the cow together. Being from Texas I didn't expect problems from cows, I always thought of cows as pretty docile. But it seems that Swedish cows are more like bulls. We rehearsed out in a field, in the rain. The cow was wet, I was wet, and in a matter of moments we were both covered with flour. David Tudor did a wonderful thing with the lights. There were fluorescent lights, and he put contact mikes on them to pick up the sound they make when the come on, that little ping-ping-ping. John was afraid that if David got a taste of composing the entire avant-garde music world would collapse -- everyone had pieces that nobody else could play. Anyway we started off with Shotput, which I did in the dark with a flashlight attached to one foot. Then I would run around back, in the dark, go up a ladder, and open a little slot in the skylight and grab the rope (I had bags of props tied to the rope, nonsense activities like changing a sock while hanging there on the rope, there were loops I could put my feet in, but it was scared of heights and that's why there was no rehearsal for that part). The end of the rope was in a barrel of water on a farm wagon. I descended into the barrel, then got out and into a pair of shoes nailed to the front end of the wagon. I also had a tie, called Elgin Tie. I got into the shoes and leaned out as far as I could, tying my white tie which was a signal for the cow to come in. The farmer tied the cow to the wagon, and the cow pulled it off while I tied and untied and retied the tie. The cow shit was not programmed. There was not one rehearsal! I was too scared of heights. That's also where I met Oyvind Fahlstrom."

U.S. DANCERS WIN | cracking wit, and in a ballet such as "Antic Meet," Mr. Cun-

Newsom, Head of Prentice-Hall, Stresses Its Educational Role

New President Anticipates Close Cooperation With Teachers at All Levels

By HARRY GILROY

Dr. Carroll V. Newsom, former president of New York University, began to preside over Prentice-Hall, Inc., yesterday by declaring in a statement that the publishing concern had an important role to play in educational leadership.

The educator and administrator, who joined Prentice-Hall as a vice president in 1962, was elected Tuesday by the board of

JERSEY CITIES HIT BY NEW VIOLENCE

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

Negro.

Policemen, part of a force of 210 called into duty to handle the anticipated trouble, were firm with the residents of the Negro neighborhood. One of them almost arrested a Republican candidate for Alderman, a Negro who was in the neighborhood trying to restore peace.

There was obvious bitterness on the part of several policemen. A desk lieutenant, asked where the trouble had

U.S. DANCERS WIN HEARTS IN LONDON

Merce Cunningham Troupe Conquers Conservatism

By CLIVE BARNES

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Aug. 1—London is fast losing a once jealously preserved reputation. For years this was the home of ultra-conservatism in dance, and our minds were always as open as clams.

However, after the shattering capitulation to Martha Graham last year, a permanent taste for American modern dance seems to have developed here.

Last Monday, Merce Cunningham and his company, on a European tour, opened at the Sadler's Wells Theater. They were scheduled for a week, but their success has been such that Wednesday they are opening at another West End theater, the Phoenix, for two and one-half weeks more.

Mr. Cunningham is having a popular success with music students, art students and the general public. For the future of British ballet, this is tremendously heartening.

Mr. Cunningham has produced 15 ballets, one of them a world premiere, especially for London. Mr. Cunningham is an iconoclast, and is welcome in an art that has always suffered from a surfeit of icons and a deficiency of iconoclasts.

In performances, night after night for a week, it becomes clear that, as with John Cage and even Robert Rauschenberg, Mr. Cunningham's importance may primarily be as a propagandist and stimulant.

He is a superlative dancer, and his company is excellent. As a creative artist, he is perhaps at his best.

His choreography, to European eyes, seems to have a certain loping inventiveness and a great deal of imagination. He excels in variations of speed, weight and direction.

Naturally, his art, more even than Martha Graham's, which is its progenitor, tends toward the classical. He is poet of balance, and it can be no surprise to him if occasionally his work is reminiscent of Balanchine.

His major works, "Rune" "Aeon" and the rest suffer some what from amorphousness and an arbitrariness that strikes deep at the esence of conscious art. (After all, if the artist relinquishes his power of selection, he has dangerously little left.) Yet always, Mr. Cunningham's works are fresh and stimulating.

His new ballet, "Cross Currents," is among the simplest of his works. A pas de trois for Mr. Cunningham and his two eloquent principal female dancers, Carolyn Brown and Viola Farber, had economy, grace and beauty.

The contribution of the music has proved controversial.

Mr. Cage's technological excursions into naturalism, where noises sound only too domestic and familiar, provide a startling basis for a ballet.

Mr. Rauschenberg's share, dazzingly colored lectards and extravagantly offbeat lighting has been widely and justifiably applauded. The two ballets, "Summerspace" and "Nocturnes," that have actual décors, have been enthusiastically received, but equally intriguing is what Mr. Rauschenberg can do with a nondecor.

So far this season, however, it has been the smiling Mr. Cunningham who has dominated. His wry wit and sensitivity and his very considerable charm and gentle imagination have impressed themselves upon the season and upon the dance scene here.

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Sunday, June 14th

San Marco at 7:30 – Pistoletto, Boris Crist & wife in Mo... Alan Power etc. ...ischhorn, David ...no #250 price ...ns. Dealers, dealers ... minute. Abrams ...US party uncovered

... on to Iris Clert's ...0 ketch "Bella ...a De Sc Dogana), ...enson & Klaus ... & wife. Iris ...olguin blacks, ...st dealer in Paris, ...an in camouflage ...ders.

...ll suddenly – Tourists ...like pigeons in Square ...t Cornelia, Ill school ... Pieces of several ... – may be in any ...rounds. Pieces of ... coke bottle, sandbag? ...es of tourists and ...ore dealers, collectors. ...ank Lloyd, partner ... who has very bright ... Peter Jovre. "I've ...nd I have I even ..." Lloyd suspected ...e one of him ...ode "Opera Buffa." ...of interntl. art. ...sense in 1900 ...no sense at all. ...because it's been Paris.

...apter who was at ...s between Rauschen... French). "And after ...e contenders." ...Rainer at the Cinema in the rain (Everyone

Sadler's Wells

THE FINANCIAL TIMES TUESDAY JULY 28 1964

MERCE CUNNINGHAM—1

by ANDREW PORTER

Merce Cunningham and Viola Farber

Systems repugnant to the intellect and to common-sense can produce art which delights senses and soul. Twelve-note . . . or Christianity, for that matter? I find the theoretical basis of random composition at worst revolting, at best only valid for small claims: "ear-stretching," or making the listener question his usual assumptions. For John Cage to lay transparent music-paper over the pages of a celestial atlas, and then dot in the stars as notes, strikes me as absurd; but that Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis* makes a piece of music well worth hearing I cannot deny.

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EXPRESS THURSDAY AUGUST 6 1964

's foolish

nd it's fun

... Merce Cunningham

...TRE : Phoenix

...ONES

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Cage's *Music for Piano* 4-84 has one listening intently to single notes, and then probing the relationship between two single notes when the second one follows. Listen hard enough, and one is pondering one of the basic mysteries of musical communication. (But I can't listen hard enough when I am looking at Cunningham's *Suite for Five* at the same time.) Does it need a Cage to give me this experience? And if not, how was it that nobody with an experienced ear got taken in by Piotr Zak's *Mobile*, the BBC's spoof piece based on Stockhausen's *Zyklus* (played in any order, pages any way up)? Stockhausen was admired, Zak deemed worthless ...

... than O.K.—a genuinely creative mind. But I can't say why (any more than about *Zyklus*), just report that I liked a lot of it a lot.

Interpenetration is the fancy word for the fortuitous juxtaposition of music and dance. Sometimes, they say, note and gesture gel, and then that stays in. But several of Cunningham's pieces can't, because of the way they are made, be the same twice running. The interaction of chance and choice is old-hat to music critics, but we haven't seen it working in dance before. Much depends on the performers. Can be awfully boring. Cunningham's performers are fine ones, each with a distinct artistic personality. The "Encounters" in the finale of *Suite for Five* are tremendously exhilarating.

At the least, the dances set you thinking about the relationship between music and movement—and questioning basic assumptions. But as I said above (or will it come below?) that's a small claim. Does it need a Cunningham? What is the something more that makes me think him a creator, not just a poser of questions? Who is the Piotr Zak of ...

... AND DANCERS E TIMES

Painters arrive – 01 ... Holly.

* Tooth Gallery's — arrives at Grand, ... by bears Jasper Johns has it curled up. He demurs, ... Rauschenberg ... Cinema in the rain (Everyone

THE TIMES THURSDAY JULY 30 1964

Welcome Dance Images

Sadler's Wells Theatre: *Merce Cunningham and Dance Company*

The journey into the interior of Mr. Merce Cunningham's dance landscape proceeds apace. Last night at the Sadler's Wells Theatre Mr. Cunningham and his Dance Company offered London a completely new programme of four ballets, all of them by Mr. Cunningham himself. They confirmed rather than amplified the impression the American company made on its debut.

Rune, distinguished in part by Mr. Robert Rauschenberg's wild variety of brown leotards, is another of Mr. Cunningham's "chance" works. We are informed by the programme that "the continuity of the dance is so arranged that it can change from performance to performance", and the composer, Mr. Christian Wolff, has also permitted a certain "freedom of choice" to his musicians.

One wonders why. Perhaps something is gained in spontaneity, perhaps chance occasionally throws up juxtapositions of startling significance, but it is presumably something of a gamble. The choreography for *Rune* is, apparently, like Mr. Cunningham's work, extremely interesting.

Its shimmering variations in speed, weight and direction, together with the dissociation of one step with the next, usually gives these dances a sense of dislocation rather than fluency. There is possibly some similarity here with Balanchine's *Episodes*, a work created just a few weeks before *Rune*, but whereas Balanchine's ballet is moulded by its Webern music, Mr. Cunningham's choreography is purposely kept apart from the musical structure.

This is generally Mr. Cunningham's method, but in *Septet*, set to *Satie's Three Pieces in the Form of a Pear*, the choreographer uses the score quite conventionally, and this seems no disadvantage. The sharply fragmented dance images, characteristic of Mr. Cunningham, are still very evident and welcome, as is his wit. Seven episodes, each given vaguely ambiguous titles, follow one another with charm, and occasionally a mordant touch of bitterness.

Night Wandering, a duet for Miss Carolyn Brown and Mr. Cunningham, seemed unusual in this repertory in its consistency of mood and atmosphere. With music by the Swedish composer, Mr. Bo Nilsson, Mr. Cunningham has set his sights at evoking timeless desolation, and achieves a chilly success, a victory automatically pyrrhic in its lack of emotional appeal.

The zany comedy *Antic Meet* proved far more popular. With its simple *Helfzappopin* humours and amusing music by Mr. John Cage which sounded like a brass band desultorily rehearsing during a particularly nasty air raid, it could hardly fail. Mr. Cunningham is an engaging performer, and whether conducting a *pas de deux* with a chair or facing up to the awful problem posed by a sweater with four arms, he was pure gold. The subtly splashing lighting of Mr. Rauschenberg is providing a constant joy throughout this stimulating season which continues only until Saturday.

THE TIMES PAST

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12 1964

The Arts

Ballet Music's New Sound

Mr. Merce Cunningham and his Dance Company are now safely installed at the Phoenix Theatre and continuing cheerfully with the demolition work they started during their season at Sadler's Wells. To walk in on the company performing its antic rituals after being used to a diet consisting primarily of, say, *Swan Lake*, must surely prove a traumatic experience. It would be like a Rip Van Winkle, asleep for 70 years, coming down from the mountains and discovering the latest and most extravagant in modern painting and sculpture.

Mr. Cunningham's programmes at the Phoenix are the same as at Sadler's Wells with the solitary addition of one new ballet, *Field Dances*, given last night. Created a year ago it is unique in the present Cunningham canon in that Mr. Cunningham himself does not appear in it.

The days when Ruskin could insult Whistler by suggesting that he "was flinging a pot of paint in the public's face" are long since past, as the metaphor has become the reality of an accepted artistic method. Dancing is only now catching up with the random harvest reaped by painters and musicians, but in a zanily agreeable work like *Field Dances*, Mr. Cunningham is making up for lost corn.

It is accompanied by music by Mr. John Cage. Here Mr. Cage's score is a taped collage, with live interventions

THE TIMES PAST

MONDAY AUGUST 3 1964

The Arts

American Choreographer's Strangest Ballet

Sadler's Wells: *Merce Cunningham and Dance Company*

Unquestionably the most remarkable aspect of Mr. Merce Cunningham's splendid London season has been its success. No gratuitous insult is intended, but Mr. Cunningham and his Dance Company are among the avant-garde pacemakers in the United States, while for years past London has been regarded as a timid, conservative city where theatrical dance was concerned. Only the brave or the foolish would have prophesied much popular success for Mr. Cunningham, yet now, having completed his scheduled week at Sadler's Wells, he is transferring to the Phoenix Theatre for a further two-and-a-half weeks. The London public is happily more adventurous than was thought. Certainly Mr. Cunningham has never played so long in New York.

On Saturday Mr. Cunningham celebrated the conclusion of his Sadler's Wells foray by giving another three ballets, new to London, bringing his week's tally up to 15. *Summerspace*, a gentle lyric ballet with the dancers bounding around one another like fauns on a hot summer's day, has pointillist designs by Mr. Robert Rauschenberg and tinkling music by Mr. Morton Feldman, partly improvisatory and frequently agreeable.

Winterbranch, one of this year's creations, is the strangest thing even Mr. Cunningham has given us. For the most part it takes place in a blessed silence, but at the end music by Mr. LaMonte Young takes over, which sounds like a stampede of elephants being hotly chased by railway engines. *Winterbranch* is a disturbing work, in which Mr. Rauschenberg's lighting and Mr. Cunningham's production combine to present a picture of bizarre horror, only momentarily lightened when the bizarre over-lopplies into unintentional comedy. The dancers, dressed in all-over black like wartime commandos, writhe and grope their way through gloom. Things go bump and nameless monsters shudder in the darkness. It is a genuinely powerful work but of only limited choreographic interest.

Mr. Cunningham is not perhaps a great inventor of steps but the qualities he has, both as producer and iconoclast, he employs with deft economy. His work asks marvellous questions, such as why music, dance and music be combined? or what must choreography be fluent? He is a great innovator and a born humorist, and also knows a great deal about the trap doors of social insecurity, and the fears of our western society. His work would probably be seen to better advantage in a programme that included work by other choreographers, for his leaping and lacelanguage is a little too limited (for an entire evening.

Yet both Mr. Cunningham and his company are beautiful movers, and even at their very worst Mr. Cunningham is always entertaining and surprising. And at his best he has a dotty grace that will win him a place among ballet's immortal eccentrics. On Saturday he gave us *Paired*, a delightful charming *pas de deux* for himself and Viola Farber. With its happiness, its nature and inconsequential wit, it is Cunningham gem.

Sadler's Wells THE FINANCIAL TIMES TUESDAY JULY 28 1964

MERCE CUNNINGHAM—1

by ANDREW PORTER

Merce Cunningham and Viola Farber

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Critics trust to intuition

Intuition (plus, I hope, an experienced eye) tells me that Cunningham is O.K. And more to ugly sounds. (Beautiful= graceful; shapely, etc. Ugly sounds, noises=grating, harsh, etc.) Can dancers with bodies as well trained as those of Cunningham's group make ugly movements? Nobody did last night. Would a Cunningham movement ugly by intention prove pleasing to the spectators by reason of virtuoso execution? Cage can certainly make ugly sounds.

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Interpenetration is the fancy word for the fortuitous juxtaposition of music and dance. Sometimes, they say, note and gesture gel, and then that stays in. But several of Cunningham's pieces can't, because of the way they are made, be the same twice running. The interaction of chance and choice is old-hat to music critics, but we haven't seen it working in dance before. Much depends on the performers. Can be awfully boring. Cunningham's performers are fine ones, each with a distinct artistic personality. The "Encounters" in the finale of *Suite for Five* are tremendously exhilarating.

At the least, the dances set you thinking about the relationship between music and movement—and questioning basic assumptions. But as I said above (or will it come below?) that's a small claim. Does it need a Cunningham? What is the something more that makes me think him a creator, not just a poser of questions? Who is the Piotr Zak of modern dance?

Rauschenberg's contribution to the first bill seems the least significant. But fine costumes—I remember them in detail. So presumably more to them than meets the eye at first.

So much has been rejected—all facial expression, letting the music "harmonise" with the dance, any narrative element—that the effect is austere, sometimes even puritan. Cunningham does not always avoid the attempt to communicate emotions: "The atmosphere is harsh and erotic . . . mood is violent and disturbing." With less rigorous "purity" of means he could communicate far more easily. But hom much would the particular experience his work gives us be weakened then? It isn't easy—not for him nor for us.

Would we accept Cunningham ... ion if he had proved ... ood. ... llet? ... ty to ... fine ... ue").

DAILY EXPRESS THURSDAY AUGUST 6 1964

It's foolish and it's fun

SHOW: Merce Cunningham
THEATRE: Phoenix

By CLIVE BARNES

FAR-OUT mad and dottily entertaining—that's the summing up on Merce Cunningham's dance company opening last night at the Phoenix Theatre.

American Cunningham looks like a choreographic Buster Keaton, is a delight in comedy, and a completely bonkers Carolyn Brown the loveliest dancers in the world's loveliest company. Zany, often screen, sometimes serious, music by John Cage sounds as if a demolition gang had got at the recordings, and offers an experience not to be missed.

31 JULY 1964

and the tug of desire. This they achieve ough their lack of relationship to Cage's usic, which is even more devoid of progress- on or motor-rhythm than is Japanese temple usic. The softly reverberative sounds of the epared piano – occurring at chronometric nts dictated by chance operations, and arated by immense silences – really do se one to listen anew: while Rauschen- 's almost-blank costumes and decor help to see the actions with unblinkered eyes, ises, as the title suggests, is less abstract, dramatic, though the erotic implications ese actions between a man and four n evade climax. The music is Conlon rrow's celebrated studies for three pianos. The fantastic complexity of yrhythms, which machines can negoen human beings couldn't, transmutes and nostalgic flavour of jazz and loony hysteria. Yet the sounds pre- their mechanisation, a disembodied nt, and this communicates itself to e. For all the sleaziness of the at- and the violence of the gestures, we d from our more inchoate appe- ply accepting them. Even they can face with 'the permanent emotions radition'; and Merce Cunning- to Christian Wolff's pianistic ex- still further, for it induces a lm from the neurotic twitch and that fat least since *West Side* come to recognise as gestures world and time.

background noises derived le universe by Toshi Ichiyan- abstract of these ballets. Here omes into his own, for there television studio), and the one another to variously ivities, bring in an assort- nbergian 'objects'. The bal- ppenings', executed, how- great technical skill. While ically hilarious, it's by no The pathos of the clown e of Satie's *Parade*, for could and should do a aphy. It's a pity that the le enthusiastic audience at this piece was to be though it's only fair ained rapt during the ces of *Suite for Five*.

The Sculptural Choreography of Mr. Cunningham

Sadler's Wells Theatre: *Merce Cunningham and Dance Company*

It seems almost to have become the custom for American modern dance companies visiting London to vouchsafe us a world première. Martha Graham has paid us this honour on two occasions, and last night at Sadler's Wells Mr. Merce Cunningham maintained the tradition by giving the first performance of *Cross Currents*.

The person conditioned by classical ballet and Martha Graham probably must pass through a number of conflicting phases before arriving at peace with Mr. Cunningham. After first finding his work startlingly agreeable, he may then discover himself moving through a phase where one ballet looks much like another before arriving at a more considered assessment. *Cross Currents*, itself, is a slight, pleasant work, for Mr. Cunningham, Miss Carolyn Brown and Miss Viola Farber, danced to a score devised by Mr. John Cage. Mr. Cage has taken Mr. Conlon Nancarrow's pianoroll music for *Crises* and made it into what he describes as a collage. It sounds no more, and for the most part a little less antimusical than the rest of the season's accompaniments.

Mr. Cage's music for *Aeon*, like the remainder new to London, is extraordinary in that it sounds like sound effects. Crunching, banging, clanging, sawing and clunking, this domestic but neurotic symphony unfortunately provides mental associations that sit comically upon the mood of the dances. Even if this is intentional, it does not prevent Mr. Cage's inventions from being irritatingly noisy.

The choreography for *Aeon*, which lasts almost as long as its name forebodes, shows Mr. Cunningham at his eccentric best. He stimulates by rejecting the most solemn precepts about the art of dancing, and still producing something to enjoy. Such constructive iconoclasm is its own reward. In *Aeon*, humorous, quirky and once in a while naughtily shocking, Mr. Cunningham's sculptural choreography, coming in two flavours, slow-paced and fast-moving, offers a tranquilly idyllic moving picture. One gazes on it peacefully, as if one were watching a peculiarly beautiful mobile—with a demolition gang working outside.

Mr. Cunningham's solo dance *Changeling* was a demonstration of his powers of a dancer and actor, and proved pungently effective. More ambitious was *Nocturnes*, a remarkable ballet using Satie music and boasting a genuine décor—the first of the season so far—by Mr. Robert Rauschenberg.

The atmosphere of *Nocturnes* is oddly arresting. The dancers are all dressed in white, and most of them have half of their faces made up either blue or red. To one side of the stage is a transparent screen, through which the dancers may be occasionally glimpsed. They seem like pierrots of the night, strange mysterious. Cunningham's choreography, softly bouncing, looks wry, quizzical and sad.

THE TIMES PAST

SATURDAY AUGUST 1 1964

BALLET TO TRANSFER

The Merce Cunningham Dance Company, which is just concluding a successful week at Sadler's Wells, is to give a further season of two and a half weeks at the Phoenix Theatre, beginning next Wednes-

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sadler's Wells

MERCE CUNNINGHAM—2

by ANDREW PORTER

London is privileged to witness the widest spectrum of Merce Cunningham's work that has so far been shown in Europe. The second bill (repeated tonight) is far more varied, and far more entertaining, than the opening one.

First impressions of Cunningham's work suggested that it was an art based largely on rejection. Ballet in itself rejects the most precise communicative means of all, voice and word. Cunningham went on to reject scenery, facial expression, shoes (which increase the range of possible movements); to reject sexual appeal (remember how potently sexual Martha Graham's ballets were—even when nobly and tragically so, as Greek tragedies are sexual); to reject the aid of music in communication; to reject communication itself except what the spectators chose to discover, or not discover, for themselves.

And this raised one's doubts and suspicions, rather in the way that—to use a homely parallel—a composer who rejects the element of melody in his music makes one wonder whether he can write melodies. To bring together a sequence of objects, or events, or happenings, and invite the spectator to make of them whatever he chooses is creation on a low level. Does not art rather consist in communicating an experience as precisely as possible? Chance interaction of music and dance, like that of noise and noise, can produce interesting results. The mind can relate irrelevances. But, as I said before, only small claims can be made for this kind of creation: that is ear-, eye- and mind-stretching; interesting; stimulating.

Merce Cunningham and Carolyn Brown in "Night Wandering"

In *Rune*, the first piece of this second bill, the connection between Christian Wolff's music and Cunningham's choreography seems fortuitous. In fact, both elements, we read, can be changed from performance to performance. To the listener and spectator it makes no difference, of course, whether the performers are exercising freedom of choice or executing precise instructions; in fact he has no way of distinguishing. But the (small) claim is valid that the work may gain vividness, freshness, what you will, if such freedoms are "built in."

Septet, to Satie's *Trois morceaux en forme de poire*, showed a new Cunningham. Some passages were certainly "playful and surprising"; but were others really "profound, sad and noble"? Such qualities are hard to communicate in this austere and deliberately limited language. *Night Wandering* is frankly a mood piece. Cunningham and Carolyn Brown, fur-clad, advance slowly across a bare stage lit ice-blue; and though there is less actual dancing in "" work than in any of the "" I suddenly found "" surprise—the "" experi"" from raw material offered, non-specifically, for the purpose?

Antic Meet, the finale, is highly entertaining. It contains parody, and satire, and a kind of dottiness and fancy that are genuinely poetic. Rauschenberg's costumes are brilliant in their wit and economy. Cage's Piano Concerto is sent up in the process. The piece was a great, and well-deserved, success.

The company is well worth a visit, several visits, for a variety of reasons. Its "mad, wild, way-out" side is concerned more with form and use of music than with the actual movements. It is interesting, stimulating, etc., all of those things. It can be, as this second bill amply proved, very amusing. It poses question after basic question about the nature of dance-communication, and about Art itself. And the dancers are superb: all the girls, and especially the ballerina Carolyn Brown; Steve Paxton as a virtuoso of body-control among the boys. One finds oneself wishing—a little guiltily—that one could see them in a "real" expressive ballet!

The future bursts in

BALLET

by ALEXANDER BLAND

Our ballet critic discusses the controversial American dance company which this week moves to the Phoenix Theatre.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM and his company have burst on the British scene like a bomb, for a simple reason. At a blow, ballet has been brought right up in line with the front-rank experimenters in the other arts—something which has hardly happened since the days of Diaghilev. Here is heart-warming proof that it is an art with a future, opening up ranges of possibilities which stretch out of sight; it ought to be celebrated with champagne in every dancing academy in the land.

Diaghilev would have loved Cunningham. Besides admiring him as an artist he would have respected the seriousness and discipline of his company, the spare wit and style of Rauschenberg's costumes and lighting, the consistent invention of the choreography and the provocative strangeness of John Cage's musical accompaniments. Above all, his acute artistic antennae would have tingled at the sense that Cunningham was talking in the language of today.

It is a voice which comes to us borne on that mysterious stream of thought which seems (whatever Sir Charles Snow says) so often to penetrate artists and scientists simultaneously—in this case an interest in the fact that within the apparent orderliness of the material world lurks a fifth column of indeterminacy, of which random chance is ruler.

This opens up again one of the oldest of man's problems, round which all his social and artistic manifestations revolve — the struggle between freedom and order. It has stimulated new approaches in every art. The doodling pencil, dribbling paint-can, and wobbly, hand-held camera, William Burroughs's chance-assembled books, improvised stage dialogue, far-out jazz cadenzas, sculptural collections of random-chosen objects—all these follow the same trend towards some mystically unobtainable target and away from strait-laced mechanisation. There is an affinity with Oriental thinking, and a worship of the act of creation: fresh and unrepeatable—as opposed to the thing created. The movement's motto might be the two words of Rauschenberg's answer to a question whether he always improvised the lighting. "Never always," he replied.

Now, with tremendous effect, ballet joins the field. Through its link with music, ballet has developed since the Renaissance a classical framework capable of a wide range of subtle variety. Cunningham has jettisoned this structure altogether. He has substituted a much looser system based on the rhythms of human movement itself—the rhythm which makes us swing our arms as we walk. Instead of a steady beat he uses a sense of time. Like experienced runners completing a track-circuit his dancers (who rehearse with a stopwatch) can perform a sequence to split-second accuracy.

He extends this limited freedom to the individual dancers, who cue each other as they move, and to whole episodes in a ballet, which he may present in a different sequence on different nights. The whole thing adds up less to a blueprint than to a programme in the scientific or industrial sense. It is like getting up in the morning; the order in which you put on your clothes may vary, but the result and the time remain constant.

Emancipation

The relationship of the dancing and the accompanying music (much the most formidable element in the whole affair, consisting frequently of spasmodic squeaks, drones, thumps or wails which somehow intrigue without obtruding) is of the same order. While each individual player has considerable latitude as to what he does, the conductor ensures that the sound and the visual events coexist, though with no attempt at synchronisation. Dance and music, too, must be allowed to keep their own identity. We have very nearly reached that goal so ardently preached by Marie Rambert—the total emancipation of dancing as an independent art.

Counteracting these liberties are extraordinary restraints. We are in a taut and cagey world very similar to that of much modern painting and writing and music. The dancing is agitated but unemotional, interacting but uninvolved; like the widely spaced notes of the music or the scattered shapes on one of those huge American pictures, the bo girls retain intact their im individuality. There is a or-leave-it attitude. There passion, far less a story. extraordinary flow of movement (derived from Graham, but less pos "ugly") the figures run or curl up, jump, pass, interlo briefly skip in unison like pa a giant mobile moved by the

We are not so far here fro world of Petipa and Balan and the total effect has the conviction of the best cla dance. The element of ritua vital to a theatrical performan strong and the dancers thems exude a powerful stage pres Cunningham himself is one o most gifted dancers to come o America, a natural mover wi subtle sense of timing and fla of wit as quick as they're sur ing in such a serious type. Car Brown is gorgeously lean supple, with a line both eloq and elegant; Steve Paxton ha quick, virile precision; and whole company is trained to form technical prodigies of balan slow control and logical muscu progressions.

Shrewd points

The cloud of theory in wh the company moves may lo alarming, and the programm notes are not aimed at temptin the timid (though they make som shrewd points—Debussy's inabili to detect any shape in one of t two amiable pieces of norm music employed, Satie's "Thr Pieces in the Form of a Pear," an a quote from Ivan Karamazo "Let me tell you that the absur is only too necessary on earth"

The apologia are often, in fac strangely remote from what w actually see. Art is no respecter o ends and means. What counts i the soup not the recipe, and the dishes served up by these dancers are as nourishing and lovingly concocted as a finely rendered *consommé*. They vary from the faintly solemn to a high-altitude comedy-belt unattainable by more conventional methods.

They are austere to the point of *monotony*—bagfuls of babies have gone down the plughole with the bathwater of classical ballet—but they are so full of invention that they will be a mine for imitators for years. And they are beautiful in the disturbing way which makes you feel your angle of vision has been permanently shifted, which is a kind of beauty you don't get often.

BALLET: BY RICHARD BUCKLE

SUNDAY TIMES Aug 9

The smell of peaches

IF Merce Cunningham's *Summerspace*, which is one of the works being performed in his Dance Company's season at the Phoenix, was married to music more conventional than it would arouse few squeals from the cosy audience of a traditional ballet company.

As it is, the originality and invention of Cunningham's choreography combined with the score specially composed by its "weight" on graph paper by Morton Feldman (and in the interpretation of which on piano John Cage and David Tudor are allowed freedom to make the notes but not their within the time of a ... carried ... into ... and "L'Après-midi-d'un faune." That is to say, the piece is about summer: as the title implies, and probably about little girls, too, for nooh when boys go ranging the parks after girls, but it is not such a sultry or sexy afternoon as the faun's. I guess it is also the smell of peaches.

Cunningham has choreographed for six human bodies.

There are formal and irregular patterns: classical jumps and poses interspersed with wilder, freer ones. I remember Merce Cunningham leaping, darting and ninsham leaping, three girls; glancing around, nymphs with panic flight; Carolyn Brown milling arms; Cunningham kneeling with her austere pose on the floor, and Cunningham wheeling, turns in swallow-dive wheeling; and watching her, through the door, and watching her, through the and Viola Farber marking time on the floor as an imaginary seeing Cunningham signalling back on the floor Cunningham stopping and Steve Paxton hopping and alone; Steve Paxton hopping and posing in diagonal, then after exiting sideways in attitude with arms en bar (this was remark weaving hands;

U.S. DANCERS WIN HEARTS IN LONDON

Merce Cunningham Troupe Conquers Conservatism

By CLIVE BARNES

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Aug. 1—London is fast losing a once jealously preserved reputation. For years this was the home of ultra-conservatism in dance, and our minds were always as open as our claims.

However, after the shattering capitulation to Martha Graham last year, a permanent taste for American modern here.

Last Monday, Merce Cunningham and his company, on a European tour, Theater. They were scheduled for a week, but their success has been such that Wednesday West End theater, the Phoenix, for two and one-half weeks more.

Mr. Cunningham is having a popular success and the gendents, art students and the eral public. For the future British ballet, this is tremendously heartening.

Mr. Cunningham has produced 15 ballets, one of them a Premiere, especially for London. Mr. Cunningham is an iconoclast and is welcome in an art that has always suffered from a surfeit of iconsand a deficiency of iconoclasts.

In performances, night after night for a week, it becomes clear that, as with John Cage and even Robert Rauschenberg, Mr. Cunningham's importance may primarily be as a propagandist and stimulant.

He is a superlative dancer, and his company is excellent. As a creative artist, he is perhaps at his strongest in wry humor. That deadpan face and fluently elegant body are ideal for a dry crackling wit, and in a ballet such as "Antic Meet," Mr. Cunningham is at his best.

His choreography, to European eyes, seems to have a certain loping inventiveness and a great deal of imagination. He excels in variations of speed, weight and direction.

Naturally, his art, more even than Martha Graham's, which is its progenitor, tends toward the classical. He is poet of balance, and it can be no surprise to him if occasionally his work is reminiscent of Balanchine.

His major works, "Rune" "Aeon" and the new suffer some what from amorphousness and an arbitrariness that strikes deep at the essence of conscious art. (After all, if the artist relinquishes his power of selection, he has dangerously little left.) Yet always, Mr. Cunningham's works are fresh and stimulating.

His new ballet, "Cross Currents," is among the simplest of his works. A pas de trois for Mr. Cunningham and his two eloquent principal female dancers, Carolyn Brown and Viola Farber, had economy, grace and beauty.

The contribution of the music has proved controversial.

Mr. Cage's technological excursions into naturalism, noises sound only too do and familiar, provide a ting basis for a ballet.

Mr. Rauschenberg's dazzlingly colored leotards extravagantly offbeat lighting has been widely and justifiably applauded. The two ballets, "Summerspace" and "Noocturnes," that have actual decors, have been enthusiastically received, but equally intriguing is what Mr. Rauschenberg can do with a nondecor.

So far this season, however, it has been the smiling Mr. Cunningham who has dominated. His wry wit and sensitivity and his very considerable charm and gentle imagination have impressed themselves upon the season and upon the dance scene here.

THE GUARDIAN

London Saturday August 1, 1964

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY at Sadler's Wells

by Nesta Roberts

"THE orchestral music (Atlas Eclipticalis) is a transcription from a book of maps of those stars in the great circle round the sun." So the programme note on John Cage's score for Aeon, with which Merce Cunningham and his Dance Company opened their third programme at Sadler's Wells Theatre last night. It seems as good a rationalisation as any other of the pinging and slithering and jarring and grinding sounds, the whang and clonk and bash and scutter emitted from the orchestra pit as one "event" succeeds or entwines with another.

Aeon feels like it—well, actually, it lasts fifty minutes, but these things are relative, and, for fifty minutes, fortuitousness is not enough. There are occasional entrancing patterns involved in what appear to be cold Beach games in the polar morning of the world, there are ravishing attitudes, and the dyeing of the tights and leotards "noticeably bluish" by which Rauschenberg seeks to give the impression that the bodies are coloured but not covered does just that. In a null sort of way it looks rather nice and reinforces one's conviction that woad must have been profoundly unprovocative.

After this, Cunningham's solo, "Changeling," with scarlet costume and hopeless Pierrot face, was exhilarating because of pure dance, and "Cross Currents," done by Cunningham with Carolyn Brown and Viola Farber, in black and white practice costume, was more welcome still. Also Conlon Nancarrow's piano music sounded like Clementi after Cage.

The final "Nocturnes," to Satie, is unalloyed enchantment, and, like the rest of the "happenings," superbly danced. The steely legs and ankles of the women dancers and their impeccable line in attitude witness to the formidable technique underlying all this barefoot inconsequentiality.

NEW STATESMAN

A musician of exquisite aural sensitivity, John Cage has become gradually less concerned to compose sounds into 'significant' order, more concerned to effect composure within the mind by accepting sounds for what they are, in the silence that surrounds them. At the furthest swing of the pendulum from Europe's post-Renaissance obsession with the will, he would free us from past and future, inviting us to enter an autonomous Now. Similarly, Robert Rauschenberg at one time painted completely white or completely black canvases, invoking the space, the nothingness within which we may perceive afresh the astonishingly disparate objects (introduced bodily into his later work) of the visible world. For Cage learning-to-hear, for Rauschenberg learning-to-see, are separate from action but not independent of it, since life must be lived in time. This is why 'any relevant action is theatrical'; and is also why Cage and Rauschenberg have collaborated with the dancer Merce Cunningham to complement their aural and visual images with movement in time and space.

This movement, however, like hearing and seeing, has no before and after. There is no expressionist purpose, only a 'purposeful purposelessness', in the relationship between movement, sound and image. Thus in *Suite for Five* the actions — now gay, now anguished, now grotesque — are as diverse as nature herself; yet in being purged of causation they are purged too of the nag of mem-

Sunday, June 14th

Caffe' Florian 12:30. Rome crowd, Paris crowd ('Cafe Flore' at Florian). Talk of politics. "I hate the game, but if we're going to play it let's play it right" (Ileana, the manofino). Invitation to American party. Sam Hunter, American genius, signed at last minute with much finagling, on copy from Milan, no one knows how. The Belgians have their whole gout behind Appel - one man show, promises of shows other museums. The French are riven by discord - crisis in Paris art market caused by artificially high prices for Dubuffet & Fautrier, loss of confidence on part of collectors, panic among dealers. Daniel Cordier left three days ago announcing closing of his Paris gallery (fermeture definitive) because Paris had lost out to NY (where govt supports art indirectly thru tax laws!) — made Cordier the villain to all Paris dealers. Dubuffet, having got Cordier to put up $1,000 for his one-man show in Venice opening tonight at the Palazzo Grassi Venezia, then left gallery - for Cordier to close maybe.

Lunch at Aldo's ("Not Angelo's, the whole Biennale will be there"). Proprietor a collector, walls hung with moderns he's bought. More talk of politics - at last Biennale, Rivera was told he had won, everyone congratulated him, then word came that Alfred Manessier had won. Can't count on anything. Everyone working on the 7 judges.*

To Consulate (officially closed Oct. 11, 1963) where Solomons & Alice Denny in state of exhaustion after 2 weeks struggle with Italians, lack of support at home, mis-sent pictures, and calls from stranded Americans who refuse to believe Consulate closed. Count Panza & pretty blond wife come to see installation - one of their R's badly damaged in transit. Hanging superb - small rooms, big canvases. Sure to be best show in Venice - last problem is to make it official. Only time Solomons get to sit down is on boat. Hunter arrives - at Cornaro Hotel.

* Tooth Gallery's — arrives at Grand, says by tears Jasper Johns has it sewed up. He demurs.

San Marco at 7:30 - Pistoletto, Boris Cristo & wife in Morris Louis stripes, Alan Power etc. Collectors arriving in force - Hirschhorn, David Bright from Chicago (who gives $250 prize + $2000 party). Harry Abrams. Dealers, dealers. Top working smoothly every minute. Abrams has agreed to foot bill for US party uncovered by Jewish Museum.

Dinner at Malamocco, then on to Iris Clert's 'Biennale Flottante' on board ketch "Bella Laura" at Salute (Fondamenta De Le Zogana). Works by Fontana, Klein, Stevenson & Klaus — on boat and shore. Musicians & wine. Iris Clert in cerise pants and harlequin blouse, with masses of black hair. Best dealer in Paris, but artistic eye not so hot. Man in camouflage suit and green-painted shoes.

Monday, June 15

Cloudy - rain later. City full suddenly - Tourists speaking German, large groups. Like pigeons in Square. Ileana & Leo fully occupied at Consulate, & usual tourists keep coming in droves. Pieces of several Chamberlain sculptures missing - may be in any of 1,000 crates on Biennale grounds. Pieces of Rauschenberg combine broken: coke bottle, sandbag?

By 7:30 San Marco nearly clear of tourists and commandeered by Biennale. More dealers, collectors. John Borgzinner, Time. Frank Lloyd, partner in Marlborough international, who has very bright eyes, a chimney accent like Peter Sevone. "I've seen 200 people already and I haven't even been to a cocktail party!" Lloyd suspected of buying the Grand Prix for one of his artists - he scoffs at whole "Opera Buffa." Nationism so silly in this age of international art. "The Biennale made some sense in 1900 maybe, but now it makes no sense at all." Lloyd says Pop is dying because it's been overpriced - same thing in Paris.

Arnaldo Pomodoro, Rome sculptor who won at last Sao Paulo, says it's now between Rauschenberg and Kemeny (Zoltan - French). "And Appel and Poussegny - they are also contenders."

Dinner at La Colomba in the rain. Everyone

goes either there or Angeloto, which is indoors).

Beverly Pepper story abt Mimo Rotella, the Italian affichiste, who is in jail for growing his own marijuana. His work is hanging at Biennale, and now the police are bringing morals charge against him for that - lawyer had to explain to them at length why it was art.

Back at San Marco, Florian's, Ileana looks spent, Leo has collapsed. Major triumph for Sam Hunter, who has got judges to come to Consulate tomorrow, considerable doubt whether they would, & resentment against American use of Consulate.

Lloyd's crack about "that little Italian dealer Castelli - he really is trying to win!"

Tuesday 16 June - Vernissage (see other side)

Out to Giardini, where confusion hath made his masterpiece. Press office inside has press cards, so everyone has to argue way in [Oldenburg distracted official & got in yesterday]. Clamour like at press office in Italian pavillion. Nothing finished, corbusiers on ladders, foaming cement etc. Beautiful clear day - trad. is that it rains once during Biennale - last night.

Stripes & more stripes at American pav., a poor man's Monticello (get details on bldg.) Leo & Ileana very much on hand, Solomon at Consulate. Feeling of disappointment, main show elsewhere. People asking "Where are the Rauschenbergs?" Hirschhorn, in pink shirt, asked how he likes show, replies "I'd like to have a bow and arrow."

Well known American museum man (McAgy) says much feeling against Castelli's activity; other dealers do it, but never so blatant; impression that Solomon is Leo's tool. Also, resentment over use of Consulate - if everyone took space in town, Biennale would just become unmanageable.

Banner over Consulate reads RAUSCHENBERG - JONES etc (corrected later).

America party at Consulate a brawl. 400 invited, 2000 came. Clue Denny horrified. But later the jury comes back for second visit that day. Sidney Janis makes first appearance (stays at Ala - Excelsior) as does Rosenquist, Marisol (for Rosenquist in Polka dot tie. Also Emmerich. Sweeney - big shots. [Italian painter: "The Americans have eaten up everything!"]

Ekstrom at Danieli.

Overheard in Dine room: "Jooks - now that's American toilet paper!"

Oldenburg posing for pix by stone. Patti in tinsel blue dress. Ileana's first trip to Europe (Rosenquist too). Everyone to Harry's Bar after.

This must be the climax of publicity.

McAgy says Rauschenberg is out because jury will judge only on his one picture at Biennale grounds. Rumors back & forth.

Fight on San Marco last at night - Italian section.

Chamberlain + Dick Bellamy arrive, Bellamy without passport.

Wednesday, 17 June

Biennale am (see other notes).

Two big cruise ships in, tours clogging streets. One British (Iberia), one Dutch (N)

Swiss cocktail party at Ciutti [illegible].

1st gallery opening at Sala Grollinde of Venice Theater (G Grollinaire, Milan; Galerie Europe, Paris; G. Del Leone, Venice) – Klein, Fautrier, Wols, Fontana, Rayssa – big French push. Hot.

Cunningham & Co. arrive & go to bed, except for 3 of girls who cause hearts to flutter on San Marco (Sharers Blair).

Leo very downcast. "We have a lot of troubles just now. Some of the judges are making trouble about a split show, which is ridiculous because it was all agreed with the President 5 months ago. If Rausch. were in the Biennale grounds there would be no question at all on."

[Note: Hunter a last resort. Was offered to Seitz, who refused, & maybe others too. Hunter is Chairman of Art Dept. at Brooklyn Univ., and a noted art scholar].

Thursday, 18 June

Italian fleet appears in lagoon: 5 ships. "I thought it was the Americans who were putting on the pressure!"

Alan Solomon on phone – "We're in the middle of a terrific battle right now. They want to disqualify Rauschenberg." Solomon has said if they do so he will remove all Americans from contention.

(V) There seems to be feeling that some american must win – admission of supremacy of Am. art. Nothing settled yet. Struggle will go down to wire. (It was supposed to be settled last night).

Cage & Rauschenberg at Venice backstage. Bob picking up enough Italian to get along as usual. Cage entranced with attitude of workmen – so helpful.

Rauschenberg says he got 2 phone calls from Venice while in Paris, decided then & there to stay out of the politics. Was supposed to come several days earlier, appear on radio – refused. Staying out of whole mess – with company in Serenissima Hotel. Likes Alberts installation – "the pictures have the intimate feeling they used to have in the studio. The early ones look like kids – they just who won't ever grow up."

Biennale crowded on last day of Vernissage. Several opening parties. Workmen crash them and get their lunch, glass of wine. More people going out to Lido.

Dimitri Hadzi says being in last Biennale didn't help him at all. Big emphasis on Nevelson, very little on him, McIver, and Jan Muller. Hadzi doesn't like new American stuff. Getting lots of architectural commissions – Lincoln Center. Both Hadzi & Zajac say last Biennales were more fun – more parties, less business ("Are you selling?")

2nd Amer. party at Consulate, much less crowded. Talked with Dino Buzzati, who said the Biennale was really free this year – emphasis on ind. artists, not on concepts or schools, thus different. Big change since war, becoming more & more place where new art can be seen, new artist discovered – thus important. At the same time, the Biennale is corrupt – both politics and commercialization (dealers). Di Lazzio & colleague made comparative study of Biennale winners & important artists & they found they didn't coincide at all.

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Thursday (cont'd)

Solomon takes me aside suddenly: "The judges have just voted 4-3 for Rauschenberg, on the basis of the one picture at the Biennale. But Hammacher (President) has threatened to resign in protest, so they're going to stop on it and try to avoid a scandal." Rumor spreads rapidly...

Jan Kotik, Czech. painter, & wife at party. (Address: Prag 2, Bělehradská 130, Czechoslovakia). Abstract. Said it was not easy for him to work this way as now, but still possible. Had been told to come to Biennale and steer a course avoiding politics. Likes work of Rauschenberg, which he had seen first in Switzerland a few years ago. Invited me to Prague.

Everyone on to Venice, where confusion over tickets was of crescendo (too bad grand afternoon in box office). Theater even more beautiful than expected. Round, with gilt boxes, delicate lamps, painted ceiling, lush seats, attendants in gold ~~pants~~ breeches, white socks, blue guardsman's tunics. 18th cent. setting for some of 20th cent's most advanced music. Cheers, boos, whistles. Big emphasis on costumes & sets of RR. Merce makes use of raised platforms. RR gets workmen to come out with brooms during dance.

Dinner at Columba later for company. Solomon says RR's majority of 4 so rock solid (even Valsecchi, whom we were so worried about"). If Pres. resigns they'll get another (more first waltz & Knight of Sighs).

Hardy ones go on to small Rauschenberg party at Martini nightclub (no big Rauschenberg party this year; ditto Bright, Guggenheim).

Friday, 19 June

Another hot, humid day (thunderstorm in late afternoon).

Biennale closed. Compromise reached: Solomon will transfer 3 RR's from Consulate to Biennale (outside), and RR will get prize. Pres. will not resign. Leo & Solomon working all day on the change; RR going to Lido.

At lunch, Bob says he doesn't feel anything about the prize, seriously. "Just the same as I felt before I heard." $3,000 for it. More concerned abt boat suitcase with wash clothes in it. He feels the ballet-perf. clinched the award — idea of a artist really working, doing something in Italy, while others politicking.

At Peggy Guggenheim's: "The Biennale is just awful. I have nothing to do with it." Why? "None of the painters are any good, and so the B is no good." Her house full of tourists; worst time.

Leo & Allen take 3 RR's to Biennale grounds, 2 of recent vintage and one (red bag) earlier.

Late PM - Everyone waiting for Bob at Angelos, word out; Bob at pittoresco Palazzo. He finally appears in San Marco at midnight, and seven or eight Italian artists run out to throw their arms around him, Pierre Restany's blond girl lifts him up, very emotional & "real" - Bob really touched. "I hadn't expected this," he said later. "Butterflies in my stomach and a big lump in the throat. It really did mean something." All go back to Angelos for victory celebration, with vodka or Polish Commissioner's champagne on the house.

Friday (cont.)

3 Petitions circulating after PM. First on protest Patriarch's intervention as artistic affairs; second protests decision of Segni not to come; third protests decision to give Italian prizes to 2 sculptors, none to painter (Guili or Cagli had been expected to win). American artists, asked to sign, politely refused because they were guests of Republic, felt it impolite to criticize (so advised).

RR and others up until dawn.

Saturday, 20 June

Revellers all up early and pushing into Biennale grounds from 9 AM. Carpet out, motorboats unloading bigwigs, military brass; Carabinieri on guard at exhibitions.

Newspapers have pix of prizewinners; RR, Kemeny, Cascella, Pomodoro, ~~Sacc~~, Savelli. Also headlines of darker import: the Patriarch of Venezia, Cardinal Giovanni Urbani, has prohibited all 'religious' from going to the Biennale, because of an exhibit at the Italian pav. by Vacchi (deformed nudes with crucifix, nitre etc. - ugly gold black & silver paintings). As a result, the Pres. of the Republic (Segni) is not coming, nor is the Minister of Defense, Min. of Education, Gui, coming in their place (a Leo?). Navy ships there for nothing, no 21 gun salutes.

Bad feeling about award of 2 sculpture prizes, none for painting in Ital. section — Cagli was expected to win painting prize.

Report that Roberto Crippa had covered paintings in protest/later, more false.

Awards made - photographers focus on RR. "I really feel very touched," Bob says after. "As this I'd slipped into ~~the wrong shoes~~ skin for a moment."

[Lohse asked on Ital. radio whether he'd been to Venice before, Bob said he had, for one day (during ~~the~~ Naples typ). Saw a German movie abt the Amazon, and left.].

Saw JJ Sweeney. "I haven't seen anything very exciting. The last Biennale was very bad and this one is bad too." No real surprises.

~~Winners of Grand Prize won~~
~~BAT (better mirrors, macrame art,~~
~~uniforms); and~~

In Ital. Pav., sign up beside Castellani painting: ~~Not~~ ACQUISTATO
Mr. H. Hirshhorn

Movement Section: Gruppo Enne of Padua, Gruppo T of Milan, and Julio Le Parc. (Also Pol Bury in Belgian Pav.)

Lunch at Burano with RR, Solomon etc. Olivia Denny tells of stories, says lots of people very offended by Americans. Biennale an old inst., which we tried to change. Henry harsh & aggressive tactics, spent too much $, made many enemies, don't want to pull out now. If we had been more conservative, tactful, US wld have won 3 prizes [Johns, Nolan], No written agreement w Consulate show - vague verbal one. Solomon insisted we must be aggressive.

Dinner with Santomaso and abt 60 others near Rialto. Not a success. Everyone too tired, too many people.

Sunday, 21 June

met at Peggy G's exhibition of art glass. Leo & Ileana confab about number people with hurt feelings because uninvited to Amer. parties etc. Plan last minute cocktail at Consulate 1:00 pm.

hide. Everyone leaving town: Janis, other dealers.

Solomon PM. Explained in detail reasoning behind award. Came over last fall, annun. Pass day Kennedy shot. Realized not possible enlarge pavillion, began scouting other pavs, including prison. Saw Consulate, decided perfect. Committee gave official approval. Solomon went back, leaving all in hands of Embassy people in Rome, who didn't tell him later when trouble began brewing.

Marcozzan, a prof. of Ital. literature and a good Catholic who has been much disturbed by trend of last Biennale, gave out that Americans had "misunderstood." Letter had been written to French that one picture a Biennale grounds old quality an artist - Solomon proceeded on that assumption; then found it would not necessarily qualify artist for prize.

Way back last fall, when this started, Solomon had suddenly realized that the time America could win Biennale with Rauschenberg. Solomon wanted Bob to win. He also wanted to put on a stunning show that would impress Europe with the strength and diversity of America art - "do for Europe what the Armory Show did for America." So he planned space very carefully, put Noland & Louis in grounds so as not to offend their feelings, and because that space was better esthetically for them (as Consulate space better for Bob) - All the time believing there was no technical problems when technical problems arose, it was too late to change - would have offended Noland &c.

Hunter was not too cooperative; spoke favorably of Johns & Noland. Marchiori and Santomaso, working together, really swung it. Don't say I said this, tho', Can say that both the Italian jurors were strong for RR from beginning, and that there was great enthusiasm for RR among Italian artists such as Vedova, Santomaso, Naveli, and Cascella.

Really a great thing for Europe. RR a new Rico. Excitement of a young artist winning, rather than older man already well known will do more for Amer. culturally in Europe than anything - years and should help to make Europe more aware of importance of such things.

Alan Solomon (send tearsheets)
Ex-Consulato DEGLI STATI UNITI
699 DORSODORO
Venezia

The last Biennale? Duchamp's rumor from Abrams & Louis Carré.

Seen at Biennale

Man with open umbrella, on which are samples of his work and name: Jan Luigi Fini. Walking exhibition. No one knows him.

The reception of Sweeney, in for Int'l Art Critics Meeting on Monday.

The scent smell of flowers & fresh watered grass in the Giardini park.

Journalists with bulging armloads of catalogues.

Workmen plastering, cementing, carpenting, laying paths, sanding floors, white pictures being hung.

French Pav. – Hommage à Julio Gonzalez 1876–1942

Apollinaire – sculpture

Hirschhorn, Basilea, Abt, ~~Jacob~~ shaking hands, suggesting drinks. Introducing his friends of 3 weeks. ("Oh, he's seen someone else!")

~~Jacqueline~~ in ~~Academy~~ Hope & Mr Talk that Rauschenberg won't win.

Italian Pav. (Fontana brought in to add zest – no go)

~~Gli Nuovissimi~~ represented

Rotella – torn posters of Mailer, Omo, Cream, Movies &c

Santomaso, Pomodoro &c.

Russian opening Wednesday 17 at 5 PM. Caviar & vodka gone by 5:07. Nobody looking at pix of peasants, athletes. Leave as soon as refreshments out

Ital. Pav (cont)

Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Moderna, (Rome)

Modern Museet (Stockholm)

Kunsthaus Zurich

Museum Des 20 Jahrhunderts (Vienna)

Guggenheim

Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti – Zagreb

Salvatore (Venetian sculptor)

Pomodoro, Arnaldo

Santomaso (grey paintings, Lyrical – like Tapies)

Casiella (heavy marble sculp) (from Milan)

"Who is woman. I hear Bissière")

Jack Zajac

Felix + Mitja Tondon

PROF.

SCARPA PALLES

DORIGO

Alfred Manessier

~~Lefevre Joinet (Jacques Lefevre)~~
~~(Montparnasse - Raspail)~~

THE VERNISSAGE - Tuesday 11e June

Belgium - Vic Gentils (piano pcs),
Pol Bury (movement)

Holland - Appel (15 paintings) - also Lucebert
+ Jaap Mol
space + air, cool marble floor, greenery
outside. (Appel born 1921, lives in Paris,
won 1959 Sao Paolo Biennale and 1960 Guggenheim
Hungary - small pix - cautious
Austria - one painter (Herbert Boeckl),
one sculptor (Alfred Hrdlicka)
U.A.R. - not here
Brazil - growing cement
Poland - huge + brilliant small + minor
prints, small sculptures. Where is Jan
Lebenstein? 2 artists. Cautious work
Romania - figurative work
Greece - big jagged sculpture
Israel - lovely pavilion with ~~spiral~~ two
staircases, one a spiral, large upper floor
showing black Tumarkin pix + sculptures
Bright sea blues downstairs

Czechoslovakia - pretty and glasses for
party - dreary handed abstractions (Kolibal)
inside, and some light deft figurations
by Zrzavy.

Letter from the Biennale

Calvin Tomkins

For a good many years now, the suspicion and general edginess shown by representatives of the U.S. Government toward American avant-garde art has been an established fact in political life. The beginnings of a change in this attitude became apparent under the Kennedy Administration, of course, but a great deal of the old suspicion remains, and for this reason the recent triumphs of the most advanced American art in international expositiions, achieved with the fullY cooperation and official support of the Government, have been even more significant than they might have appeared otherwise. The U.S. exhibitions that travelled abroad to the Sao Paolo Biennale last year and to the Venice Biennale this summer were sent under the aegis of the United States Information Agency, which assumed responsibilitybfor both undertakings when the Museum of Modern Art, which had sponsored them since 1954, announced in 1962 that it could afford to sponsor them no longer. At Sao Paolo, one of the major awards of the Biennale went to Adolph Gottlieb, the New York abstract expressionist; at Venice, the international grand prize for painting has just been awarded, for the first time in the history of that venerable institution, to an American artist, and a young one at that -- the thirty-nine year old Robert Rauschenberg. Whatever these successes auger in respect to future relations between the government and the avant-garde, they have certainly come as a surprise to that ultra-individualistic, or

Goldwater, fringe of the art world that has always regarded governmental involvement in the arts as a direct threat to artistic freedom.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the situation is that the Government has recently shown itself to be more kindly disposed toward the new, the bold, and the far-out in art than the Museum of Modern Art itself -- a statement for which the current Venice Biennale, which will run through October, can be taken as the case in point. When the museum dropped its sponsorship of the Biennale exhibitions in 1962, it was generally supposed that the U.S.I.A., which was then being run by Edward R. Murrow, would simply shoulder the financial burden and ask the museum's officials to put together the show as before. Instead, the agency made discreet inquiries around the art world, and then gave the job of assembling the Venice show to Dr. Alan R. Solomon, a highly gifted art scholar with a genius for installation, who had proved during his previous year as director of the Jewish Museum of New York (which agreed to give Solomon a leave of absence and to act as co-sponsor of the exhibition), to be one of the most active and influential champions of the new, post-abstract expressionist currents in American art. I had lunch with Dr. Solomon in New York one day last May, shortly before he went over to start installing the show in Venice, and he told me then that, far from trying to impose a cautious conservatism on this year's Biennale participation, the U.S.I.A. had given him virtually complete freedom to do what he wanted. "They asked me at the beginning, way back last fall, whether I wanted to take the responsibility all on myself or whether I wanted to have a committee appointed to protect me," Solomon said. "I told them that was easy -- I wanted to take full responsibility. They said that's what they'd hoped I'd say, and that's the way it's been." Solomon attributed the agency's open mindedness to several factors, notably the

enlightened leadership of Murrow and the tact and intelligence of Lois Bingham, who, as Chief of the Fine Arts Section, Exhibits Division of the U.S.I.A., has been working quietly but effectively for several years to develop greater respect within the Government for the work of contemporary American artists. Most of all, though, he attributed it to the new cultural tone of the Kennedy Administration.

Last November, Solomon flew to Europe to confer with Italian officials of the Biennale and to see what could be done about enlarging the exhibition space for the American show (the American pavilion in Venice, an uninspired Georgian box put up in 1925 by Grand Central Art Galleries, which sponsored U.S. exhibits there until the Museum of Modern Art took over in 1954, is one of the smallest on the Biennale grounds). He arrived in Paris the day President Kennedy was shot. "I didn't know whether to turn around and go home right then and there," he told me. With everything suddenly uncertain, he went on to Venice. The idea of enlarging the U.S. pavilion, for which the architect Philip Johnson had already volunteered his services, was obviously out of the question now; appropriations for the job would be in doubt, and with only five months until the Biennale opening any delay would be fatal. Convinced that the U.S. pavilion was hopelessly inadequate, though, Solomon asked the Biennale officials whether they could let him have extra space in the large Italian pavilion, as they had done for other countries at past Biennales. The officials said no -- too many new countries were requesting space already. Solomon then inquired about space outside the Biennale grounds, which are out toward the end of the main island at some distance from the center of the city. This was possible, he was told. He looked at several buildings, including the ancient and unused prison adjoining the Doges' Palace, but nothing seemed at all suitable until he was shown the former U.S. Consulate building on

the Grand Canal. Officially closed the month before, as part of a State Department economy measure that has effected closings and transferrals of consular activity in several areas of the world (the functions of the Venice Consulate were transferred to Trieste), the building was still the property of the U.S. Government. Furthermore, it was located conveniently in the heart of town, directly across the Canal from the Gritti Palace Hotel, the favorite of many Americans, and adjacent to the large modern palazzo of Peggy Guggenheim. Finally, and most important, the Consulate's series of cool, attractive salons and offices downstairs struck Solomon as being just about ideal for the paintings he wanted to exhibit. Before making a final decision, he had to make sure that any works hanging in the Consulate would be officially considered part of the U.S. Biennale exhibition. After receiving assurances that convinced him there would be no difficulty on this score, he took careful measurements of all the rooms, left further negotiations in the hands of the U.S. Embassy in Rome, and headed home feeling that the best possible solution had been found to the problem of space.

When I had lunch with Solomon last May, just before he returned to Venice, his feelings about the show went well beyond the merely personal and aesthetic; he obviously hoped that a major success at the Biennale might influence favorably the Government's whole attitude toward contemporary art in America. Solomon is a slim, well-tailored young man of strong convictions and great drive, with a neatly trimmed beard and a quiet, low-pitched voice that occasionally reveals a note of inner intensity. The U.S.I.A., he told me, had been one hundred percent cooperative during the months of preparation. There had been no change of heart under the new Administration, and no one had tried to interfere with his choice of artists or works. The exhibition, which he had evolved

after a great deal of careful planning for the space allotted, would include more than ninty works by eight of the most advanced artists of the present period, four "germinal" painters whose work had become the major sources of significant developments in U.S. art (Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland), and four younger artists whose work showed the proliferation of these ideas (Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, Frank Stella, and John Chamberlain). In presenting this year's Biennale exhibition, Solomon disclosed that he had two major goals in mind. The first was that Rauschenberg should win the international grand prize for painting. "The idea hit me last fall," he said, "when I first took the job on. I suddenly said to myself, 'My God, America could win the Biennale this time with Rauschenberg.'" It should be explained here that there are two ~~major~~ big international prizes at the Biennale, one of which usually goes to a painter and the other to a sculptor. The City of Venice also awards major prizes to the ~~leading~~ outstanding Italian artists, and there are a number of minor awards as well, but the two international prizes are the important ones, and ~~since the Biennale was inaugurated in 1895,~~ only one American had ever taken one of these -- Alexander Calder, for sculpture, in 1952. In fact, the only two Americans to win <u>painting</u> prizes of any kind at the Venice Biennale have been Mark Tobey in 1958 and James McNeil Whistler in 1895, ~~the first year.~~ the year the Biennale was inaugurated. Since 1948, the grand prix for painting has gone almost without exception to School of Paris artists with impregnable reputations -- Georges Braque in 1948, Henri Matisse in 1950, Raoul Dufy in 1952, Max Ernst in 1954, Jacques Villon in 1956, Jean Fautrier and Hans Hartung in 1960 (no sculpture prize that year), and Alfred Manessier in 1962. The spectacular rise of the School of New York, from Pollock and DeKooning to Rauschenberg and Johns, had not as yet received the slightest notice from the juries of the Venice Biennale.

Solomon's second major goal was to put on a show that would convince

Europeans once and for all of the strength and diversity of current American art. "I want this show to do for Europeans what the Armory Show did for us back in 1915," he said, with a flash of that inner intensity. It struck me at the time that this double-barrelled assault might be overly ambitious. The usual Biennale practice, I had heard, when a country has someone it considers a candidate for one of the top prizes, is to place most of its emphasis on that artist and go all out in the behind-scenes political struggles. Solomon was well aware of the political maelstrom in which he would soon be operating, but he seemed determined and reasonably confident. I wished him well, and immediately began making arrangements to go over and see how he made out.

By the time I arrived in Venice, a week before the official opening of the Biennale, the rumor market was in full swing. A sizeable number of artists, dealers, collectors, museum officials, art critics and journalists had preceded me, and most of them could be found (every day) at noon, at seven P.M., and again around midnight sitting on the terrace of the Caffe' Florian at the Piazza San Marco, the headquarters of the Biennale crowd this year. One heard Rauschenberg's mentioned again and again, but usually in an also-ran context. "He ought to get it," I kept hearing, "but he won't." The Dutch reportedly had given Karel Appel what amounted to a one-man show in their pavilion, and were bringing powerful pressure to bear on the judges. "The French will threaten to boycott the Biennale next time if they don't win, the way they always do," a New York critic said sourly. I saw Leo Castelli, Rauschenberg's New York dealer, and Ileana and Michael Sonnabend, whose left bank Paris gallery has specialized in showing the work of the American avant-garde, and joined them for a drink. "Ileana is what the Venetians call a manofino," he husband told me jokingly. "She is

exquisitely polite to everyone, but you can tell by the quality of her smile just which way the wind is blowing." Mrs. Sonnabend gave a rather wistful smile. "I hate this game of politics that goes on here," she said. "But I think if we're going to play it at all we should play it right."

"At least we have an American judge now," Castelli said. "That's one thing in our favor." He explained to me that Sam Hunter, the art scholar and chairman of the Art Department of Brandeis University, had just the day before been chosen to serve on the seven-man panel of judges who would spend the next few days viewing the various exhibitions, before announcing the ~~winn~~ prizewinners at the end of the week. The process ~~machinat~~ of selecting Biennale judges, it appeared, was subject to intense pressures from all sides. Nominations were made by each of the Commissioners of the twenty-three participating nations (Dr. Solomon being the American Commissioner), but the final decision as to who would serve on the jury was the function of the President of the Biennale, Prof. Mario Marcazzan, who was expected to make his selections with such wisdom and finesse that no nation would feel its vital interests were being slighted. At the very last moment, wisdom and finesse had dictated the inclusion of an American judge, to serve on the panel with two Italians, a Brazilian, a Pole, a Dutchman, and a Swiss. A telegram had gone out to Hunter, who chanced to be passing through Milan at that moment. Hunter had accepted and his arrival was expected momentarily. In fact, Solomon had spent most of the day meeting incoming planes, because he had no idea which one Hunter was taking.

Neither then nor at any other time during the week did the art crowd at Florian's seem to be paying much attention to Venice, which looked properly magnificent that day. I learned later that the week before, a sudden, violent storm had lashed the city with such force that windows broke, gondolas were swamped, and the Piazza San Marco lay for hours under

three inches of water -- the eighth acqua alta of the year, and a modern record. Today, though, a warm sun bathed the great square, and the famous Venetian light played its tricks with the incredible architecture. "You like Venice?" asked the young Torinese painter with whom I was chatting, and whose name, I had been overjoyed to discover, was Michaelangelo Pistoletto. I nodded. "Italian Disneyland," he observed, with a shrug. Across the square at the Caffe' Quadri, the band was playing Viennese waltzes in honor of the German tourists, who were out in force. At Florian's, the band played selections from "West Side Story" and the art crowd kept its eye peeled for important collectors.

In the afternoon I took the traghetto, the gondola that plies back and forth across the Grand Canal, and found my way to the Consulate, where Alan Solomon greeted me on his way out to meet another incoming plane. A brief stroll through the whitewashed rooms downstairs convinced me that he had succeeded brilliantly in at least one of his major objectives. The show at the Consulate was not only stunning; it was a revelation. The large, colorful, infinitely complex canvases of Rauschenberg and Johns had never looked better to me than they did in those small, rather intimate rooms. So many different things are going on in each one of these works that when several of them hang side by side in a gallery or museum the effect is sometimes overwhelming. In the Consulate, where they hung one to a wall, and could thus be savored individually, pictures that I had seen many times before seemed to me entirely fresh and new. More than half the wall space was given over to Rauschenberg and Johns. Down the hall, one room apiece was devoted to the work of Dine (large canvases with real objects -- bathroom fixtures and tools -- affixed to them); Stella (geometrical abstractions); and Oldenburg (painted plaster replicas of food, limp plastic telephones, a twenty-times life size tube of tooth

paste). In a pretty inner courtyard and garden, John Chamberlain's sculptures (made from smashed automobile fenders) lay rather forlornly on the ground; they had not been mounted because several parts were missing, and a frantic search was being made through the thousands of empty crates on the Biennale grounds. This bit of intelligence was confided to me by Mrs. Alice M. Denny, the Assistant Director of the U.S. exhibition, who was on leave from her position as Assistant Director of the Washington Gallery of Modern Art. "That's the way it's been for three weeks," Mrs. Denny said cheerily. "Total chaos. We had everything clearly marked so that the pictures that belonged here could come here and the Noland and Louis pictures for the pavilion ~~xxxx~~ at the Biennale grounds would go there. Then we were told everything had to go to the Biennale grounds for customs inspection. At which point the bargemen went on strike, ~~at one point,~~ and we couldn't move anything for two days. And on top of which, the tourists keep coming in or calling us on the 'phone to ask for directions, or help, or God knows what -- people just refuse to believe the Consulate has moved to Trieste!" I observed that in spite of everything, the show they had put on would be hard to beat. "I think so too," Mrs. Denny said. "The problem now is to make it official."

The problem, as I learned later from Solomon and others, was a serious one. It seemed that a misunderstanding had taken place. At least, the Italian officials of the Biennale were now saying that Solomon had misunderstood them the previous fall, ~~when~~ and that they had never said that work hanging outside the Biennale grounds would be considered part of the Biennale, or that it would be eligable for consideration by the jury. Having planned and installed the show at the Consulate before he had any inkling of such a procedural difficulty, Solomon ~~xxx~~ now found himself in a fairly excrutiating position. Artistic sensitivities were

involved, and a last-minute substitution of Rauschenberg for Noland in the Biennale pavilion, for example, might create schisms too hideous to contemplate. His solution had been to erect a temporary plywood structure in the courtyard of the U.S. pavilion at the Biennale, in which he had hung one work each by Rauschenberg, Johns, Stella, Dine, Chamberlain and Oldenburg. It was hoped that this would qualify the six artists for official consideration by the judges. But there was no certainty as yet that the judges would even come to the Consulate to view the rest of their work, and, to be frank, there was little hope that Rauschenberg could win the grand prize on the strength of one small painting on the grounds. Solomon was looking fairly grim when I saw him, and he did now show up in the evening for the first big party of the week, on board the yacht that Iris Clert, the most glamorous of the Paris dealers, had fitted out as a "Biennale Flotante" on the Grand Canal with paintings strung from the rigging, sculptural objects mounted fore and aft, and a precarious gangplank leading to the Fondamenta de la Dogana, a few steps from the vaporetto stop at Santa Maria del Salute. The Biennale Flotante art was presumably ineligable for jury consideration, too, but there were no serious candidates on board and no one seemed to mind.

The next day, Monday, was a day of deepening intrigue and subsurface maneuverings. Sam Hunter had arrived the night before, but he did not appear at Florian's or at Angelo's, the restaurant favored by the art crowd, and from what I heard he was trying to avoid all pressure groups. The rumor that night was that Hunter had scored a major coup, by persuading the judges to come to the Consulate. Outside of the pro-American group, though, I began to hear criticism of the way the U.S. campaign was being handled. Solomon was too aggressive, a Canadian curator complained. Demanding extra space in the Consulate had been a

mistake — if other countries started taking space outside the Biennale grounds, the whole thing would get out of hand. There was criticism, too, of the prominent role being played by Castelli and the Sonnabends, Rauschenberg's dealers, although it was readily conceded that other dealers were working just as actively behind the scenes for their artists. To my surprise, I also learned that there was a group of Italian artists and sculptors who were tremendously enthusiastic about Rauschenberg's work, and passionately eager to see him win the prize. No one really gave him much of a chance, though; the smart bets were on Roger Bissiere, an older School of Paris painter, and Karel Appel, winner of the 1959 Sao Paolo Biennale and the 1960 Guggenheim International show in New York. The international grand prix for sculpture was generally believed to be a tossup between Zoltan Kemeny, the Hungarian-born sculptor showing in the Swiss pavilion, and the Frenchman Jean Ipousteguy. Kemeny's chances were so good, I heard, that every one of his sculptures in the pavilion had been sold in anticipation of his victory.

Tuesday was the day of the official vernissage, or press opening, of the Biennale. All morning, the vaporetti plying between San Marco and the Lido discharged groups of passengers at the Giardini, the fragrant green park in which the various pavilions are situated. It turned out to be a trying morning for the foreign journalists and critics, some two hundred of whom had been accredited to the Biennale. A price of 10,000 lire (about $16) had been set on tickets to the vernissage, mainly to discourage the curiosity of the general public. Passes were available to journalists, as well as to museum officials and other art lords, but the press passes were inside the grounds, at the press office in the main Italian pavilion, and the guards at the front gate would let no one through without a certain amount of vigorous argument in broken or non-existent

Italian. Once inside the grounds, it was clear that other countries beside the U.S. had been having their difficulties. In the big, maze-like Italian pavilion, most of the paintings were in place but nothing was marked. Part of the pavilion was devoted to group shows put on by several of the leading modern art museums of Europe; another part offered work from Latin American countries without pavilions of their own; the rest was given over to the Italians, who appear at this period to be much more gifted in the art of sculpture than in painting. Most of the comments I overheard on modern Italian painting that morning, in fact, had to do with the misfortune of Mimmo Rotella, a leader of the torn-poster school, who was recently clapped into jail when the authorities found that the ripening crop in the field outside his house was marijauna.

I set off on a leisurely tour of the grounds, making mental notes to come back to the more interesting exhibitions. Belgium's looked intriguing -- large assemblages of displaced piano parts by Vic Gentils, and Pol Bury's constructions in which something was always in mysterious motion. The Dutch pavilion, as reported, was dominated by a handsome display of Appel's thickly painted abstractions. Nothing at all hung as yet in the brand new pavilion of Brazil, begun only a few months before, in which workmen were pouring the cement floor while a lady in a blue smock stood anxiously by. Poland, Hungary and Romania had little to show for the thaw in Iron Curtain cultural policy, but Czechoslovakia did -- large, bold paintings in the abstract expressionist manner by Jan Kotik. The pavilions of France, Britain, and Germany, which give the impression of trying to out-face one another with their marble columns and raised porticoes, were crowded and stiflingly hot inside. The ceiling of the British pavilion had collapsed a few days before, and visitors had to peer at the paintings of Roger Hilton through the supports of a temporary scaffolding. In the

French pavilion, Bissiere looked impressive but Ipousteguy's sculptures were somewhat overshadowed by a memorial exhibition of Julio Gonzalez, in another room. With a few exceptions, though, the art of many nations began to seem discouragingly similar to me -- the acres of paint, dark and sepulchral or garishly brilliant, tended to merge into one huge, slightly viscid, master image that was interchangeable and freely convertible, the European Common Painting. "The Biennale made some sense in 1900 but not any more," a European dealer had said to me the night before. "It's utterly stupid, all these national shows -- art is international now." I saw his point. Even Japan, whose raised pavilion looked so inviting from the outside, offered the interchangeable abstraction within.

Having completed my circuit, I found myself in front of the United States pavilion, which looks, I'm afraid, every bit as dinky as I had been lead to expect, and which has the great misfortune to stand next to the spacious, airy, glass-walled modern pavilion of the three Scandinavian countries. There was a big crowd in the outside courtyard, where the qualifying single works of Rauschenberg and his confreres hung in bright daylight on the unpainted, raw-looking plywood partitions. I waved to Castelli and Alice Denny and pushed my way inside. The building has two rooms, of identical size and shape, and both were sweltering. In one were the targets, chevrons, and broad stripe paintings of Kenneth Noland; in the other, the melting, swimming colors and horizontal stripe paintings of the late Morris Louis, who died two years ago at the age of fifty. Together they constitute what Solomon considers the second major development in contemporary American painting (the first being the work of Rauschenberg and Johns) --the new chromatic abstraction in which bands of pure color interact and vibrate against one another in vast areas of empty canvas. Spying Mrs. Sonnabend in the crowd, I asked her how things were going.

"It's a little confusing," she said. "Everybody is asking, 'Where are the Rauschenbergs?'" We were interrupted by the apparition of a stalk-thin young man carrying an open umbrella, on which were painted a series of neat small abstractions and the highly legible signature, "Gian Luigi Fini,"— a novel bit of self promotion that appeared in most of the Italian papers the next day. He looked at each painting and went out, expressionless under his umbrella. Joseph Hirshhorn, the most energetic of American collectors, burst in with an entourage of friends and a clutch of dealers. I heard one of them ask him what he thought of the Nolands. "I'll tell you," said Hirshhorn, "I'd like to have a bow and arrow..."

The Consulate had its own vernissage that afternoon, with a cocktail party for the press to which four hundred invitations were sent out and about twice that number came. More and more young American artists had been turning up in Venice, and most of them appeared at the party. (The Biennale, among other things, is a great meeting ground and market place, and many sales are made there of paintings that never come to Venice). In the crush I noted Marisol, the lovely and unsmiling sculptress, in deep conversation with Sidney Janis; James Rosenquist, a leader of what is known in Italy as La Popparte; and Dimitri Hadzi, a Rome-based American sculptor who was one of the four U.S. entrants in the last Biennale. I asked Hadzi whether the 1962 affair had been any different from this one, and he said it had — "More fun, more parties, and not so commercial. All you hear this time is, 'Are you selling?'" Claes Oldenburg, who is large and genial, was posing for pictures with his moulded foodstuffs while his petite, pretty wife looked on; they were in Europe for the first time, and hed been touring Italy for three weeks. John Chamberlain had pulled in that afternoon, despite the loss

of his passport. Kenneth Noland was also on hand, but Dine and Stella had stayed home and Johns had managed to be as far away as he could -- in Kyoto, Japan. Rauschenberg would arrive the following day, with the modern dance company of Merce Cunningham in which he serves as lighting director, costume and set designer, and stage manager, and which was scheduled, with admirable timing, to perform in Venice on Thursday night in the beautiful 18th century theater called La Fenice. The crowd at the press party was so dense that nobody could see the paintings, but I did observe the effect of the new realism on one young Englishwoman, who drew her escort into the Dine exhibit, pointed to a work that included real bathroom fixtures, and exclaimed in triumph, "There! Now that's American toilet paper!"

Later that evening, at Florian's, the word was that the judges had come to the Consulate but that they had decided to judge Rauschenberg only on the basis of the one small canvas on the Biennale grounds. Much later, after the cafes had closed, two Italian journalists got into a fight on the Piazza and were taken off by the carabinieri. Tempers were obviously wearing thin.

Throughout most of the next day, Wednesday, there was deepening anxiety in the Rauschenberg camp. "We have a lot of troubles just now," Castelli told me when I saw him briefly on the Piazza San Marco. "Some of the judges are making difficulties about the split show, and they want to disqualify Rauschenberg." Castelli also reported a new development: In recognition of the superiority of American painting in general, the award might go to another American -- to Noland. ~~But now~~ Solomon, however, had announced that if Rauschenberg were disqualified, he would remove all the Americans from contention. Two of the judges, the two Italians,

were said to be holding strong for Rauschenberg. Anything was possible, but nothing would be decided until the last moment. Feeing a sudden need for aesthetic certainties, I went to look at the Georgiones in the Academia and then at the Picassos, Ernsts, and Pollocks at Peggy Guggenheim's, it being one of the three afternoons a week when her collection is open to the public. Miss Guggenheim herself was present, and I asked her what she thought of the Biennale. "I have nothing to do with the Biennale," she replied, rather tartly. "I detest Pop art. The painters are no good, and so the Biennale is no good, either." That seemed to be the end of that conversation. Later, several people told me it was a great shame Peggy didn't keep up with current trends.

During the night, the Italian fleet made its appearance in the lagoon -- seven sleek warships, with colors flying and guns pointed in what appeared to be the direction of the Biennale grounds. They were there to salute the President of the Republic, Antonio Segni, who was expected on Saturday for the opening day ceremonies, but their sudden appearance gave rise to a spate of waggish comments about attempts to influence the jury. Rauschenberg had also arrived the night before, but he spent most of the day in rehearsal with the Cunningham dancers.

The Biennale grounds were crowded on the last day of the vernissage. Several of the participating countries gave parties in their pavilions, to the immense satisfaction of the workmen on the grounds who turned up in large numbers at each party and made off with most of the sandwiches and a good deal of the free wine. To get any sort of refreshment it was necessary to arrive early. The Russian pavilion, which had been closed tight all week, finally opened its doors at five P.M.; seven minutes later, the caviar and vodka were gone and latecomers had only the

paintings to look at — enormous, socially realistic ~~scenes of peasant~~ athletes and ~~girls in wheatfields and athletes earnestly competing~~ realistically social pleasant girls. Although no hint of the abstract virus could here be detected, the pastel, slightly fuzzy tones of some of the pictures suggested that Soviet painting may have inched a trifle closer to the twentieth century; not so far as Impression-ism, perhaps, but somewhere on the outskirts of the Barbizon School. I passed a British dealer going in as I came out. "What do you hear?" he asked, and added, "I'm told Bissiere has it..."

At the Consulate that evening, the American Ambassador to Rome, Mr. Reinhardt, newly arrived in Venice, was host to a somewhat smaller, dressier, and better behaved group than the one that attended the first party there. Rauschenberg made his first appearance, looking fit and relaxed in spite of having worked all day at the theater and getting little sleep for the past forty-eight hours. He left early, with Merce Cunningham and John Cage, the composer and musical director of the company, to go to the theater and get ready for the evening's performance. Minutes after he had gone, Alan Solomon pulled me aside and said in a tight voice, "The judges have just voted four to three for Rauschenberg on the basis of the one painting at the Biennale grounds. But the president of the jury has threatened to resign in protest, and they're going to sleep on it and try to work out something tomorrow." This electrifying news got around in no time at all, and it helped to make the dance performance at La Fenice, in which Rauschenberg's sets and costumes received equal billing with the Cunningham dancers and the Cage music, an event of considerable tension and excitement. Booing, loud whistling, and passionate counter-cheering swept the exquisite, gilded theater during and after each dance, and it was difficult not to feel

that the cultural pride of nations was at issue.

Friday morning dawned hot and humid. The Biennale grounds were closed, and a large part of the art crowd went out to swim at the Lido, which was where Rauschenberg was headed when I ran into him in town about noon. By then a compromise had been arrived at by the jury: Solomon would transfer three big Rauschenbergs from the Consulate to the Biennale pavilion, and this would satisfy the president of the jury, who had threatened to resign rather than award the prize to work hanging elsewhere. A major scandal was thus averted. There seemed to be no remaining doubt about the outcome now, although it was recalled that at about this point in the 1962 Biennale, the Canadian painter Jean-Paul Riopelle had been on his way to a victory party in his honor when the official announcement came that the prize had gone to France's Alfred Manessier. Rauschenberg, who had done his best to stay out of the complex struggles on his behalf, seemed a little numbed by the events of the past few hours, "I honestly don't feel much of anything," he told me.

There were in any case a few surprises still to come. During the day, it became known that the Patriarch of Venice, Giovanni Cardinal Urbani, was deeply displeased with some of the art at the Biennale; specifically, with the paintings of Vacchi, in the Italian section, in which mitres, crucifixes, and other sacred symbols were commingled with grotesquely deformed female nudes. So displeased was Cardinal Urbani that he had issued an order forbidding Catholic monks, nuns, and clergymen from attending any part of the Biennale exhibition. (Oddly enough, a similar problem had come up at the very first Biennale in 1895. The Patriarch at that time, Giuseppe Cardinal Sarto, the man who later became Pope Pius X, took exception to a painting by the Torinese artist Giacomo Grosso entitled "Supremo convegno", in which ~~the lustful demise of a Don Juan is~~ a terrified Don Juan

meets his death in a scene of wild debauchery, surrounded by naked maidens and casks of wine. The painting remained in the Biennale over the Patriarch's objections, and won a prize as the most popular work on view. So great was its fame, in fact, that it was scheduled to be sent on a tour of the United States, but unfortunately the building in which it was stored prior to shipment caught fire and the painting was destroyed).

At about the same time, it was also learned that President Antonio Segni had notified the Biennale authorities that neither he nor his Minister of Defense, Giulio Andreotti, would be able to attend the opening day ceremonies as planned. Few Venetians failed to make the obvious connection between these two developments. By nightfall, three written petitions were going the rounds at Florian's, Angelo's, and other Biennale haunts. The first voiced the displeasure of all true artists at the intervention of the church (hierarchy) in artistic affairs; the second protested President Segni's decision to boycott the Biennale; the third, on a more parochial level, castigated the jury's award of the two major "Italian" prizes of the Biennale to two sculptors -- Andrea Cascella and Arnaldo Pomodoro -- instead of to one sculptor and one painter in the traditional fashion.

The final, official word on the international grand prizes had gone out, though -- Rauschenberg for painting, Kemeny for sculpture -- and nothing could dampen the enthusiasm of those who had been pulling for Rauschenberg from the start. There was no doubt about this being an immensely popular decision, particularly among the group of Italian artists such as Santomaso and Cascella, who saw the award to such a young and daringly original artist as an important break with tradition, and a declaration of independence from the School of Paris, Santomaso and several others collected a host of Rauschenberg's supporters for the traditional victory party at Angelo's that night, but Rauschenberg did not show up for it. He had been invited with a few members of the Cunningham company to dinner at

the palazzo of a reigning Venetian aristocrat, and did not know what was being prepared for him. At about eleven P.M., the victory party left Angelo's and went over to the Piazza San Marco. When Rauschenberg finally appeared there an hour or so later, the whole group surged forward with a great shout. Seven or eight Italian artists reached him first, embracing him and shaking his hand and lifting him on their shoulders, and the young American was so surprised and so moved that for a moment he looked to be in some distress. "I hadn't expected that," he said afterward. "Butterflies in the stomach and a big lump in the throat. It really did mean something, after all." Everyone went back to Angelo's, where the waiters were hopefully preparing to go home, and kept the celebration going until dawn with vodka provided by the Polish juror and champagne on the house.

Saturday was anti-climax. The ceremony went off smoothly enough, with Minister of Public Eduucation Luigi Gui filling in for the absent President Segni. Rauschenberg was first seated far back in the audience because he did not have the right invitation card, then re-seated in the front row in time to receive the grand prize. Afterward, when asked by a local reporter whether he had ever been in Venice before, he said he had, for one day, in the winter of 1953; he had stayed just long enough to see a German movie about the Amazon jungle, and nothing else. It was the kind of answer that further endeared him to most of the young Italian artists, who tend to share Pistoletto's view of the city as a sort of archaic Disneyland.

By the middle of the afternoon, about half the art crowd had left Venice and the rest had gone to the Lido. I took the opportunity to pay a call on Solomon at the Consulate, where I found him stretched out in a deck chair, smoking a cigar and looking like a man who planned to do a

good deal of sitting in deck chairs for some time to come. We talked for a while about what the prize would mean for Rauschenberg -- higher and firmer prices, of course, and a kind of official seal and confirmation on his reputation. The Venice Biennale is often accused these days of being no more than a political circus, but the major prizes still carry more weight than any other international art awards.

"I honestly think this has been a great thing for Europe," Solomon said, after a longish pause. "Bob is a new kind of hero here, and the response to him has been something to watch. There's the excitement of a young artist winning, rather than an older man who's already done all his best work. I don't know how the Johnson Administration feels on this score, but I really think this will do more for America in Europe, culturally speaking, than anything that's happened in years. I'd like to think so, anyway."

I asked him if he had heard the rumor going around that there would be no more Biennales in Venice, that this one was the last. "Oh, sure," he said, puffing his cigar. "They say that after all of them."

- Calvin Tomkins