

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

6

Filmed by the Archives of American Art,  
Smithsonian Institution. Lent for filming  
by Miss Nina Cullinan, Houston, Texas in  
March, 1979.

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

Contents in order of filming:

1. Correspondence
2. Scrapbook and Clippings
3. Photographs

Nina Cullinan

Clippings

1963



Chronicle Photo

ADMIRER ARTIST GEORGIA O'KEEFFE  
Discussing Olmec With Nina Cullinan

## Noted Woman Artist Visits Olmec Show

The most noted living woman artist, Georgia O'Keeffe, admired equally by the old school and the new, came from her remote adobe house in Abiquiu, N.M., Tuesday to see James Johnson Sweeney's Olmec show.

This weathered-looking woman, friend of the sands and the winds, is a lonely rider in today's art world.

Miss O'Keeffe, whose famed "Red Barn" picture is an American classic, is equally known for her bone dry paintings, realistically drafted, of cows heads blanched by the sun on a limitless desert.

### Above All Fads

"They called me a surrealist before I knew what the term meant," she remarked. Someone reminded her that she has been called "abstract" and "magic realist," too, and she merely smiled. She paints for herself, thousands of miles away from the phrase makers who devise categories in which to cage artists.

At 76, Miss O'Keeffe is an art figure above fads and turns of phrase. Tuesday she wore a simple black dress, pinned with a huge silver pin by Alexander Calder composed of her initials.

She expresses surprise at those around her who ask if she doesn't miss intellectual companionship in her austere desert abode.

"What do I need to talk to other people for, when I am free to think my own thoughts?" she asks.

She has a young girl who helps her with the house work "but she is just now learning that you don't make coffee in a teapot."

### Housework Is Chore

There are days when the

housework bothers even Georgia O'Keeffe, who admits that "it sometimes seems to take so much of my painting day, just getting things done before I start to paint."

Her art debut is many years behind her—1916—with a group of abstract watercolors, at Gallery 291 Alfred Stieglitz, the master photographic artist whom she latter married.

Born in Wisconsin, she went to school in Virginia and at the Chicago Art Institute. She taught school at Amarillo and at Canyon, Texas. But she has traveled widely and taken a significant role in major American art activity.

She is one of 12 important American artists selected by Sweeney for a show he is staging in Dublin in August.

## THE SPOTLIGHT

# First Olmec Show Hailed by Crowds

BY ANN HOLMES  
Fine Arts Editor

The latest art opening of the season focused Tuesday night paradoxically upon the earliest artists of ancient Mexico, the Olmecs.

It was a preview that drew a fashionable crowd of museum members and patrons. There were 983 persons inside the museum and hundreds more who stopped on the museum lawn to view two large megaliths—the Olmec head and a jaguar figure.

Where lesser museums may order their shows like washing machines—packed and ready to install — the Houston museum with this exhibition undertakes an ambitious venture. Two years in the planning and preparation, the "Olmec Tradition" show was finally unveiled Tuesday night. It drew praise from art and archeology experts who attended.

The show is the first major examination of the Olmec culture in art as the oldest stylistic expression from Middle America. It takes note of related works from other and later cultures.

### Simple Grandeur

Visitors may observe particularly the simple grandeur of the stone altar with its small jaguar figures supporting its table top, and the sophisticated oval shape of another sculpture, which, reveling in the egg-form, was an ancient precursor to Brancusi. His "Mademoiselle Pogany" stands on a pedestal in the adjoining gallery as a modern masterpiece.

There are rugged torsos and muscular Olmec bodies that suggest the Sumarian form, and fancy dolls that could be Alaskan if they weren't Olmec. Ferocious animal faces on one hand contrast with gay little Veracruz heads.

Some items in the cases are fascinating: A tiny clay baby, done how many millenia ago? Jade beads, worn by what beautiful women and still magnificently preserved. The time?



TOTONAC HEAD

A Smile From Old Veracruz

Long before Cleopatra, and probably before Greece's Golden Age.

### From Jungles

The 16-ton basalt head on the lawn was brought from the back jungles of Veracruz at the urging of Director James Johnson Sweeney, who went to Mexico seven times to see to its excavation. He was aided generously by the Mexican government and art experts in Mexico City and Jalapa, near the site where the head had lain, presumably for centuries.

Within the museum's Cullinan Hall, arranged upon stark white pedestals against white walls, were a selection of magnificent Olmec works of varying styles—torsoes, heads, crouched figures, jaguar faces, and cases with works related to the Olmec culture from Veracruz and elsewhere.

The 77 pieces inside the museum were lent by Mexico City's Institute of Anthropology and History and the University of Veracruz' anthropological Museum at Jalapa.

Among those at the preview Tuesday evening were Prof. Alfonso Medellin Zenil, director of the Veracruz Museum, who will lecture on the Olmec Tradition tonight at 8:30 at St. Thomas University; Mr. and Mrs. Miguel Guajardo and Guillermo Moreno of the Consejo de Turis-



"THE  
MAD  
CRITIC"

T. S. S.

14 Feb 63

# ART

By CAMPBELL GEESLIN

## Sign Posts

When Cullinan Hall was added to the Museum of Fine Arts building, it became clear that the old institution recognized that the time for a new era had come.

The uncompromisingly contemporary hall designed by Miss Van der Rohe is an important attraction in its own right and, as such, is a constant lure for visitors.

ANOTHER MAJOR step in shaping a new character for the museum came when James John Sweeney took over as director last summer.

His exhibitions have been provocative and rewarding; a study in depth (as they say on the television pages) of early Derain work, some incidental drawing exhibits, and the highly dramatic "Three Spaniards" show which was just completed.

These exhibits have been only the faintest indications of Mr Sweeney's range of interests and the variety of display that we have in store for us.

As Mr Sweeney has said, ever since he began to work with Cullinan Hall, "my vision has been expanding."

BUT MORE than its housing, more than the exhibits that move in and out — the thing that in the end gives a museum its shape and determines its importance is its permanent collection.

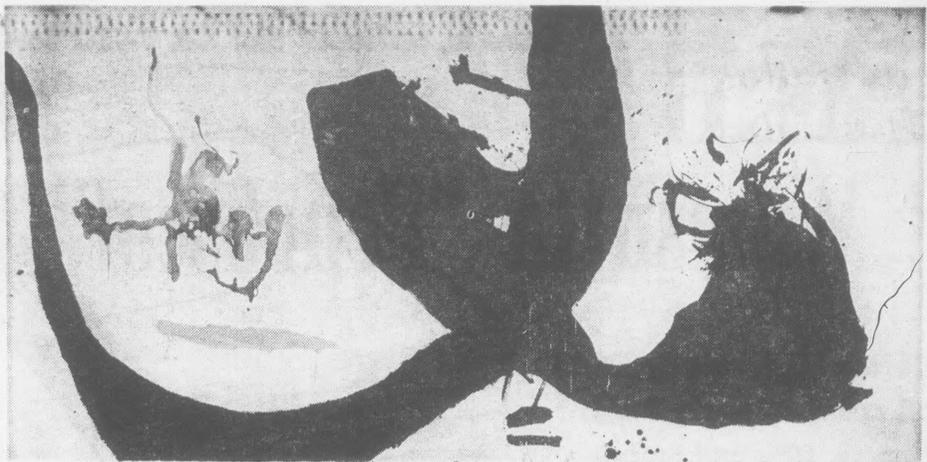
One painting or one piece of sculpture can sometimes make a museum. There are works so important that art lovers and the merely curious will make a pilgrimage to a museum simply to see one or two works. The Louvre has the Mona Lisa and Winged Victory and Venus de Milo — all so famous that any visitor to Paris feels an obligation to visit them in person. The Metropolitan Museum in New York now has an expensive and publicity-drenched Rembrandt that has caused its number of visitors to mount astonishingly. The Museum of Modern Art has Picasso's "Guernica," and a half-dozen other works that have become "classics" through the constant reproduction in art books and magazines and newspapers.

ANY MUSEUM director, naturally, would like to acquire a dozen or so of these important works. But they are rare and sometimes they are extremely expensive.

Mr Sweeney has put on display all the works the museum has acquired since he took over. He calls them "Recent Accessions."

It's difficult to imagine a more oddly assorted group of things. But Mr Sweeney is operating in the art market with limited funds and he is taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. "Quality" must be the only determining factor, he says over and over again in explaining these additions to the museum's permanent collection.

IN MOST OF them the quality is quite obvious. There are three pre-Columbian objects and three primitive wooden objects; a Nottingham 15th century alabaster madonna and child; an Egyptian head and torso in black granite; a 15th century French primitive altar piece with lots of gold; a painting by Rouault and the big 1½-ton wooden structure by Chillida which was part of



NEW PAINTING BY ROBERT MOTHERWELL NOW IN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS COLLECTION  
Big Smears of Black Paint Dominate a Recent Canvas by Noted American Artist



IN DALLAS MUSEUM—"La Coiffe Enlevée," an oil and tempera painting by French artist Paul Serusier, is among the 40 post-impressionist paintings in the exhibition, "The Outline and the Dot," on view in the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts through March 25.



VASE—This alabaster vase, intended to contain unguent, will be included in the "Tutankhamun Treasures" show opening Friday in the Fine Arts.

the "Three Spaniards" exhibits.

But where Mr Sweeney shows his real courage and conviction and brilliance is in his choice of contemporary paintings.

He has bought a 14-foot long abstraction by Robert Motherwell which is a departure from earlier, more familiar Motherwell works. It has what Mr Sweeney describes as "organized looseness." The director found the painting when he was in Sao Paulo last year. This Motherwell painting alone is worth a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts.

The Franz Kline, "Sun Carrier," was painted last year and since he did some last year with color, I had hoped that the museum might get one with color. But this one is as uncompromising as all the familiar Kline paintings—just broad black brush strokes on white canvas. Perhaps this one has a bit more going on in it, is less pointed, than some of his other works.

John K. Koenig is an American working in Paris. Mr Sweeney says that his canvas, "Peter's Dream," is "oriental in influence." Most of

the painting is a warm brown shade with red smears over the black at bottom.

THERE IS also another large canvas, "22 Aout 61" by Pierre Soulages. It is mostly black. Mr Sweeney says that it is the best of all the Soulages paintings that the director saw in Paris last summer. Mr Sweeney said, "I don't think there's a better man of his age painting in Paris, today." The painting, along with the Chillida sculpture, will go to Seattle to be included in a World's Fair exhibit after this brief exposure.

Mr Sweeney also bought an untitled abstraction by a young Spanish painter, Felto, and an expressionist canvas, "Le Tombeau d'Ensor" by Pierre Alechinsky, a young Belgian who has received quite a bit of critical attention recently.

But it is impossible to avoid selecting one of these works as an especially favorite and mine is the highly polished brass "Mademoiselle Fogany" by Constantin Brancusi. This curiously off-balanced work is simply a delight to stand before, to walk around and look and look and look at.

Perhaps she will turn out to be the Mona Lisa of the year, 2000.

## YOUNG U. S. ARTIST TO BENEFIT IN WILL

WASHINGTON — (P) — The House last week passed a bill to enable the United States—and, eventually, a young American artist—to receive bequests from an American-born duchess who died in Biarritz.

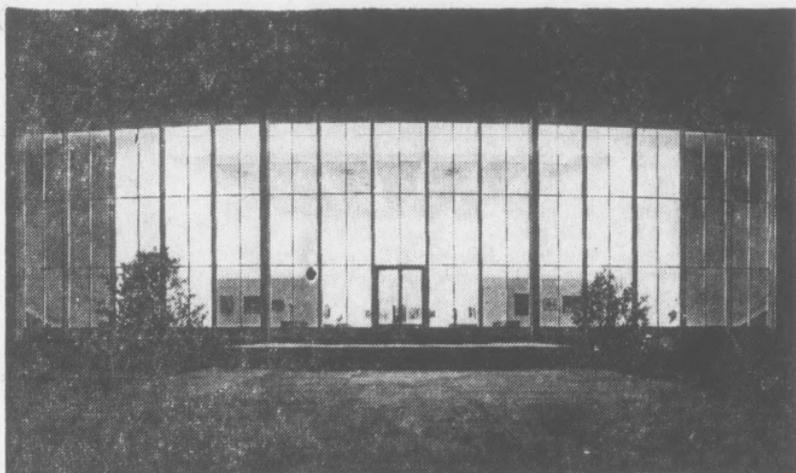
Esther Cattell Schmitt, widow of Albert-Felix Schmitt, Duke de la Torre Alta, died in the French resort town in 1955. Her will named the United States her "general and universal legatee" for her property in this country. About \$400,000 is involved, the House Judiciary Committee reported.

The legacy was subject to various bequests, including life incomes for Mrs Schmitt's housekeeper, doctor and other friends, and sums for charities. Part of the remaining income was to be used "by the American government to recompense a young American painter, the most deserving."

The Justice Department wrote Congress that the government may not, without special legislation, accept bequests subject to conditions. It asked authority to accept the legacy for the government and to carry out the terms of the will, and that the board of trustees of the National Gallery of Art be authorized to name the artist to receive financial help. So far, there has been insufficient income to carry out this part of the will.

The House passed by voice vote and sent to the Senate a bill to carry out the attorney general's recommendations.

## Editorial Page



Mies van der Rohe designed Cullinan Hall's sparkling facade.

### Sweeney's Art Makes No Sense? Learn the Language; Then Argue

SPREADING handsomely on its island of green lawn and trees, Houston's Museum of Fine Arts is surrounded by the 20th century roaring by in high-powered cars.

The museum itself may seem timelessly to span the centuries, from its Greek-inspired back door at the south to its pure-modern front door on Bissonnet.

What goes on in there, anyway?

What is the philosophy of a museum of art that it may seem to repose there in good conscience on an expensive piece of real estate while motors thunder past going, surely, somewhere?

Since the opening of Cullinan Hall a few years ago, Mies van der Rohe's great wall of glass has opened up to the world passing by something of the excitement generated inside this museum right now.

#### Museum Director's Heart and Mind

In something of the same way, James Johnson Sweeney, director there for almost two years, last week exposed a museum director's heart

Sweeney wants it to provide a stimulant, an enjoyment. "It must always be provocative," he insisted.

While the museum should strive to encourage fresh responses to beauty in those works which are known and familiar, he urges humility toward those works which are not familiar.

"An artist is not a charlatan just because we do not understand his work," Sweeney declared. "Art is a language of communication. An artist speaks always to someone, even if only to himself. But he speaks to those who try to understand him."

Without humility, Mr. Sweeney stressed, there is no chance to understand.

"We do not scoff at Chinese just because we do not understand it. Chinese makes sense to those who understand it."

The museum director explained that there is a grammar of quality—the integral order or form which must be there in a work of art if it is to be successful.

"Some works are failures and these are often used to condemn other works which are not failures," he said.

There is lively national interest in

In something of the same way, James Johnson Sweeney, director there for almost two years, last week exposed a museum director's heart and mind in an impassioned speech before the Rotary Club at the Rice Hotel.

Mr. Sweeney is conceded to be one of the powerful figures in the international art world.

Sometimes his decisions as juror of art shows have raised the very devil.

People have complained about the modern works he has acquired for the museums where he has been: Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim Museum and now the Houston museum.

What, then, is he doing at or to or for this museum? What does he hope to accomplish? Ah, how many have asked the question!

What Sweeney told the Rotarians Thursday was a documentation of a great museum man's philosophy of art and museums in a time when there is confusion aplenty about art and quality and what a museum should be.

"I envision a museum not as an island, not as a continent, not as a stamp collection with spaces to be filled up, no line of masterpieces," he said in a full resonant voice with a comfortable touch of Irish in it.

Today we are not in a position to accumulate, he pointed out.

"I see a museum collection as an archipelago of mountain peaks rising out of the sea—peaks of quality which we relate to one another."

Whatever else a museum does



At the Museum of Fine Arts: "Ephebus." School of Polycletus. Bronze; gift from Dominique and John de Menil in memory of Conrad Schlumberger.

"Some works are failures and these are often used to condemn other works which are not failures," he said.

There is lively national interest in what he is doing in Houston and what the museum here is buying under his direction. Proof of this interest came with the decision of the Museum of Modern Art's International Council to hold its annual meeting in Houston May 3 and 4. Last year it was in Washington, D.C.

Sweeney is proud that he'll have some major works to show them, many of which New York has never seen:

The huge wooden abstract sculpture by Spaniard Eduard Chillida which was a success at Seattle's World Fair, has never been to New York; Calder's marvelous airy mobile has never been seen in New York; Calder's giant stabile "The Crab" the toast of art critics who saw it on loan from Houston at London's Tate Gallery last summer; a magnificent Hellenistic figure, large male torso, one of the truly great Greek figures.

### Museum Itself Is A Work of Art

Not only accessions interest Sweeney. He values Cullinan Hall itself, he says, as one of the superior works by a great artist, Mies van der Rohe. "It is beautiful and functional, probably the greatest work of art in Houston."

"We must build the collection," Mr. Sweeney urges. "It may be regarded as the tree trunk. But we must also cultivate the soil around it—the smaller or seedling collections." It is known that this is important as a continuing source for the museum's own collection.

As for the spirit behind collecting — "do it only for pleasure," Mr. Sweeney advises. "Never for snobbery or as a reach for culture."

This is the kind of courage, the good sense, the sound planning, the feeling for healthy enjoyment of art which an inspired museum man ought to have—but very few actually possess.

The Chronicle finds these qualities abounding in James Johnson Sweeney.

So go to Mr. Sweeney's — to our museum. The basic language of art is like the basic language of people: Glibberish when you hear but do not understand; noble when the sound is clothed with meaning.

Mr. Sweeney learned what art has to say, just as later he learned what his museum has to say. The trip is challenging, but worth it.

Argue if you will. But first, understand the grammar.

## ART

## Big head in town

By CAMPBELL GEESLIN

The interest in native art has been growing steadily ever since the sophisticated French artists, just after the turn of the century, discovered African masks and other primitive carvings and artifacts.

Until artists became involved with native art, these primitive objects were the main concern of anthropologists. Now the natural history museums and the art museums are in direct competition for much of this material.

I SUSPECT THAT one reason the sophisticated taste-maker enjoys primitive art so much is because it has many of the qualities that are most lacking in contemporary art:

It is executed by anonymous artists, while the most successful contemporary art is clearly stamped by the highly personal style of the artist. The primitive object is never created as art for art's sake alone—it is either a mask or a weapon or utensil or an amulet or an idol to be worshiped. Quite often the primitive object has survived hundreds of thousands of years. There is serious concern on the part of museum conservators because so much of the contemporary collage, assemblage and carelessly-painted art start into decay almost immediately. Many artists apparently are unconcerned about whether or not their work is permanent.

One of the earliest exhibits in Cullinan Hall was an exhaustive collection of hundreds of items of African, Pacific cultures, Northern Indian and pre-Columbian objects. It was called "Totems Not Taboo."

PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURES are included in many Houstonians' collections. The Houston Museum has one gallery with a permanent installation of a small group of clay sculptures.

Next Wednesday, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts will open an exhibit called "The Olmec Tradition."

The much-publicized basalt stone head is already on the lawn in front of Cullinan Hall. There will be 80 objects of Olmec culture inside. These smaller pieces, made of anesite, jade and clay have been loaned by the National Museum of Anthropology of Mexico and by the Museum of the University of Veracruz.

Unlike the African and New Guinea art which comes from wide areas with a confusion of names and from a variety of cultures, the Olmec relics are much



AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC JAGUAR FROM LAS CHOAPAS STANDS ON A PEDESTAL OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

It is 4 feet 4½ inches high by 4 feet 3 inches wide and rests on a base 22 inches high

—Post Photo by Roy Covel

easier to get familiar with—mostly because less is known.

YOU CAN become an expert by studying one fascinating chapter in Miguel Covarrubias' "Indian Art of Mexico and Central America" (Knopf, \$17.50).

"The Olmec artists were mainly concerned with the representation of a peculiar type of human being made up of solid, ample masses, powerful and squat quite in accord with the physical build of some Indians of southern Mexico. They handled those forms with architectural discipline and sensitivity. They delighted in the

smooth, highly polished surfaces of their jades, broken occasionally by fine incised lines to indicate such supplementary elements as tattooing, details of dress, ornaments, and glyphs. These lines are sharp and precise, soft curves and angular shapes with rounded corner, curiously reminiscent, all at the same time, of the decorative style of Maya glyphs, of the lines of early Chinese art, of the Peruvian Chavin culture, and of the art of the Indians of the American Northwest coast . . ."

"So advanced a lapidary technique em-

ployed all imaginable methods: cutting the stone, abrading, crumbling by percussion, drilling with solid and tubular drills, and an unknown manner of obtaining the splendid polishes . . ."

"Besides jaguars, the Olmec lapidaries and sculptors represented almost exclusively human beings — themselves, or, rather, a curious aesthetic ideal — plump men (very seldom women) with elongated, pear-shaped heads artificially deformed and completely shaved, sometimes wearing headbands or a helmet with a chin strap. The heads have short

noses with perforated septums, fleshy necks, heavy jowls, and prominent stubborn chins. Their eyes are decidedly Mongoloid, almond-shaped or narrow slits between puffed eyelids. But their most characteristic feature is a large trapezoid mouth, known about archeologist as the Olmec or jaguar mouth, with the corners drawn downward and a thick, flaring upper lip that gives them a despondent, fierce expression like that of a snarling jaguar . . ."

The exhibit will remain on view through August 25.

*The Board of Trustees and the Director of*

*The Museum of Fine Arts of Houston*

*cordially invite you to a preview*

## **THE OLMEC TRADITION**

*Tuesday, June 18, 1963      Cullinan Hall, 9:00 to 11:00 P. M.*

Professor Alfonso Medellín Zenil, Director of  
The University of Veracruz Museum at Jalapa,  
Veracruz, will speak on "The Olmec Culture"  
in Jones Lecture Hall of The University of  
St. Thomas at 8:30 pm on June 19, 1963

"Post"

# ART

## A trio of museums

By CAMPBELL GEESLIN

What direction does the museum take today?

Cities much smaller than Houston have museums. What should such museums exhibit? What kind of art should they collect? Is every museum's main responsibility to its community's artists? Should it try to be a Metropolitan (although it can never have the quality and depth and financial resources of that institution)? Or should a museum try to be some kind of regional institution that reflects the art and historical life of the area around it?

**MANY MUSEUMS** today try to do all these things. Their success is directly in proportion to their age and resources.

I have recently visited three museums in the East: Ogunquit, Maine; the Athenaeum at Hartford, Conn., and the Philadelphia Art Museum.

The museum in Ogunquit sits on a ledge of rocks overlooking a dramatic Atlantic rocky-coast scene. The ends of the building are windowed, and the art (including some fine paintings by American artists such as Graves, Burchfield and Kunioshi) has to compete with a view that is apt to consume the visitor. The Guggenheim Museum building in New York distracts the first-time visitor completely, making it almost impossible for him to see the exhibits. There, Architect Frank Lloyd Wright's original, arbitrary control and domination of the interior distracts. In the Ogunquit museum, the architecture is undistinguished, but Mother Nature has provided a setting so beautiful that few of the art objects in the museum can compete.

A couple of weeks ago, the Maine museum had devoted one gallery to an exhibit that can be explained only by the fact that the artist was a long-time resident of Ogunquit. And yet his paintings had no regional flavor. His paintings, traditional 1930-style nudes and landscapes and still lifes, were dismal. Only the museum's setting makes a lasting impression.

**THE WADSWORTH ATHEANEUM** in Hartford is one of the U.S.'s most highly regarded "smaller" museums. It has some splendid works by major artists in its collections; some groups of Early American furniture and craft-art that are top quality. But the effect of the museum as a whole is disappointing.

Boston and New York museums are easily accessible to the people of Hartford today. These cities offer both more quantity and quality than the Athenaeum can. The Hartford museum needs to find a special area of its own, to create displays in a realm that is unique.

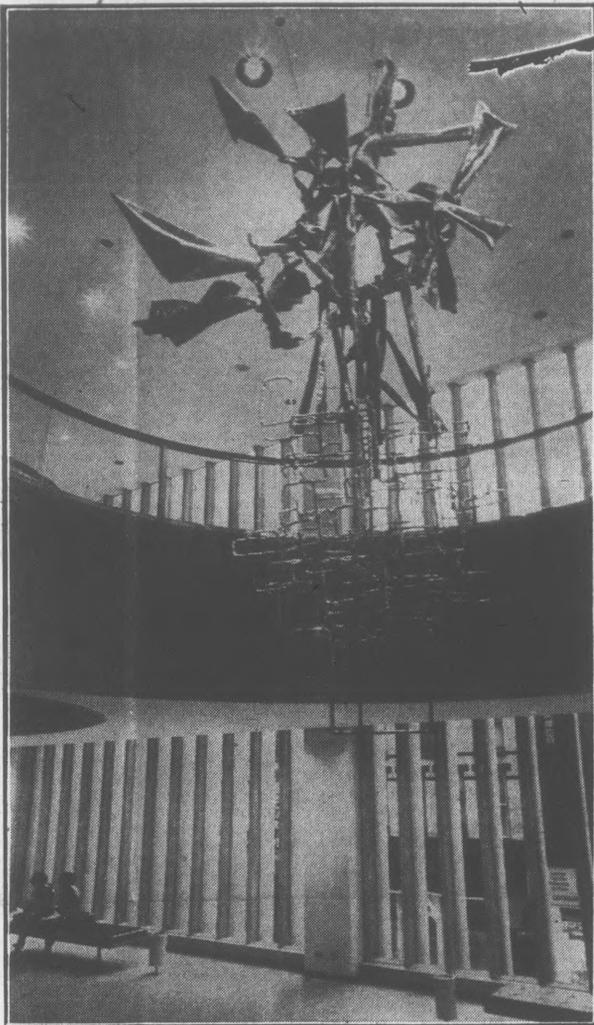
The best exhibit in the Athenaeum was a special exhibit of sculpture by New England sculptors, displayed in the lower courtyard entrance to the museum. Work by noted artists such as Calder and Gabo were included, but most of the sculpture was by younger men. "The Pregnant Princess" by Mike Nevelson, which was displayed in Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum last year, was included along with several works by Westerman—a kind of wood-working genius who constructs elaborate jokes—and who has also been shown in Houston.

The Calder constructions, two stables that looked like space-age rocket toys, were awful, but his watercolors were bright and cheerful. (A new bank building in downtown Hartford had a large white mobile that seems heavy, somehow, to one who has admired the Calder mobile Houston's museum acquired last year.)

**THERE WERE THREE** constructed-sculptures in wood and metal by David Von Schlegel, a painter, who has turned to sculpture during the last year. His work, in thin wood that has been bent and twisted and joined into boxes and flying shapes looks unusually light. His sculpture is abstract and original.

The biggest treat of all my summer museum-going was the visit to the Phila-

1 Sept. 1963



**ART IN ARCHITECTURE**—"Elysian Fields," by Ibram Lassaw, is one of the major pieces of sculpture commissioned for the lobby of the New York Hilton Hotel. The Lassaw work, a fused metal abstraction 15 feet high, is suspended in an open well between the hotel's second and third floor promenades. It is in a variety of metals and colors.

delphia Art Museum. I knew, of course, that the Philadelphia Museum had many important paintings and sculptures. Many of its French moderns are reproduced in every art book.

But I think I liked first the fact that the building itself sits on a hill and looks important—it looks as if the city is proud of it. The city provided the funds for the building, and "the chief support of the Philadelphia Museum of Art comes from the City of Philadelphia through appropriations for maintenance and operation." All major museums have a kind of support from the city that Houston-museums have never had.

**PHILADELPHIA HAS A** Van Gogh sunflower painting that lights one wall of a gallery as if it were a whole galaxy of suns. There is a Gauguin painting of two native women with a placid, eternal beauty I have never seen in any other painting.

The display of prints is most impressive. In addition to the hanging of framed prints on the walls, the museum's display designers have lined five or six galleries with counter-high cases. Under the glass tops, prints and books are arranged. The prints range from ancient to contemporary and include a splendid assortment of every kind of graphic work by every major graphic artist.

When the Museum of Modern Art finished with its Japanese tea house, the Philadelphia Museum took it indoors into its oriental wing. The Philadelphia Museum is noted for its room after room

of carefully collected and arranged period galleries—all beautifully underdone rather than jammed and cluttered.

The visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art was a memorable event—as every visit to every museum should be. I want to go back—again and again because there was much too much for one visit.

**A VISIT TO MUSEUMS** other than one's own makes one come back to re-evaluate the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. It suffers not one whit. Cullinan Hall is a distinguished piece of architecture of which any museum would be proud. Its concessions to regionalism are slight. I think the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston indicates to a visitor that it is dominated by a strong, forceful taste—that it is James Johnson Sweeney's museum. Houston cannot have a Metropolitan or a Philadelphia museum. We started much too late and the city proper has never offered a real support. Houston should be spared the shallow indignities of regionalism that have crippled the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts for years.

Museums like Hartford's need to re-evaluate their programs and come up with some original contributions.

I'm convinced that Houston is on the right foot, that the acquisitions that Mr Sweeney has made since he came here are the best possible works this museum can acquire today and that his determination to create an original institution makes the Houston Museum of Fine Arts stimulating and vital.

# Come, Let Us Go Into the City of the Gods

## Mexico's Greatest Archeological Effort in History... To Enrich the Future With the Past

### DEAR PRESS READERS:

Mexico is taking a new look at one of her ancient cities and over the shoulder of a noted archeologist my daughter Judy and I were privileged to glimpse some of her fabulous treasures in temples and palaces of long ago.

It was—paradoxically—a preview of the past. The new areas being excavated and restored near the great Pyramid of the Sun and the lesser of the Moon are not yet open to the public. For almost half a century gringo feet have been wearing away at the stone steps of the Sun pyramid, greatest monument of San Juan Teotihuacan, pre-Cortez, even pre-Aztec ruins near the Mexican capital.

Here in the zone of the pyramids so well known to most travellers to Mexico, our neighbor republic is making the greatest archeological effort in her history in terms of science, men, money. Almost every archeologist of the National Institute of Anthropology is, in one way or another, concerned with the work, according to the Institute's chief, Dr. Ignacio Bernal. Students and technicians are on the job and between 500 and 700 manual laborers. The cost for the two-year project will total 18½ million pesos.



BONNIE CARMACK

*This week I'd like to step aside and let my wife, Bonnie, write my Saturday Letter to you. Last week in Mexico, Bonnie had an unusual opportunity and a never-to-be forgotten experience—a visit to the largest archeological project in Mexico's history—a project not yet opened to visitors. I am very proud of the fact that Bonnie was once a newspaperwoman—she was once a reporter on The Houston Press. I think you will enjoy her report on her Mexican visit.—THE EDITOR.*

Institute of Anthropology came by our hotel for us. Or it may really have begun when I met the sparkling and dynamic Amalia Cardos de Mendez, a ranking Mexican archeologist, on her visit to Houston for the opening of the Olmec show at our Museum of Fine Arts. Mrs. Mendez arranged the trip behind the scenes at Teotihuacan for us.

The road follows an ancient causeway, skirts the dry lake of Texcoco, winds through Indian villages and then in the austere valley of Teotihuacan there are the monumental pyramids under—rainy season or no rainy season—a brilliant Mexican sky.

Near the Moon Pyramid at the headquarters for the work in this section, the archeologist in charge, Ponciano Salazar Ortega, short and stocky of build, amiable of manner, met us and we began our tour of newly-restored temples and palaces.

### The City of the Gods Unfolds

From the pale, sandy soil, bits of night-black obsidian—fragments of knives, scrapers and points—winked back the sun. They may have been flash-

ioned a thousand years ago. This city, which many archeologists believe to have been Mexico's most important in ancient times, was a ruin, abandoned before the Aztecs came to the Valley of Mexico to found Tenochtilan, which the Spaniards would come to destroy to build Mexico City.

It was the City of the Gods, or the City of the Place in which Men Change Themselves Into Gods. The major structures have been known for years. Now mounds of earth, the dust of centuries, is being moved back, and stone replaced on stone so that the city of the Tehuacanos may be known as it was.

But not, of course, all of it. The cost would be fantastic. And, besides, in the philosophical words of Sr. Salazar something must be left for the archeologists of tomorrow.

### Five Levels of Palaces

Yet the goal of this great archeological effort is to restore enough of the old city at the height of its glory so that all may see and stand in wonder as we did on this fine day in the Palace of the Butterflies.

Here, indeed, is to be seen the "layered look" fashion advocates for fall. On this one site were five levels of palaces—living quarters for priests, artists and nobles. The serene, graciously proportioned courtyards are surrounded by small, dark sleeping rooms. Once the courts were brilliant with murals, frescoes or bas reliefs on columns. Some remain, sending down the ages word that these men were artists as well as great builders.

### The Highway of the Dead

Why so many palaces one atop the other? Sr. Salazar explained the belief of these people that at the end of every 52-year cycle all must be destroyed and rebuilt. So then these layers of living.

Along the wide Highway of the Dead the symmetrical temples and palaces are being reconstructed and here and there fragments of murals hint of the brilliance of color which once marked them. One presents a sacred jaguar blowing a shell trumpet. Everywhere, and reasonably enough in this arid valley, the symbol of Tlaloc, god of rain, appears in paint or carved in stone.

This great highway, so named because various burials were found along the length of it, once was the scene of ceremonial processions. Beginning at the Temple of the Moon, said to be the Teotihuacanos' oldest construction, it linked all the major temples and pyramids.

Restoration of this majestic avenue is one of the principal objects of the present work at Teotihuacan. While it goes forward, machinery and road crews of a different sort are building a road as modern as tomorrow—the new autopista linking the capital with Puebla. On it a tourist can drive from Mexico City to the pyramids in about 20 minutes.

### Evidence of Their Humanness

It is an awesome place, this ancient city, as many Press readers know—pyramids that make pygmies of us, fierce serpent heads, monstrous masks of Tlaloc and altars on which many died as sacrifices to gods so venerated that the whole heart of the city was devoted to their worship.

Great builders and great artists they were without doubt, but Judy and I always will be grateful that the wise and friendly archeologist who was our guide let us see evidence of their humanness as well.

We stepped into a small stone building which commanded a view of the ceremonial highway. Here men kept watch long yesterdays ago. Sr. Salazar pointed to a crisscross of scratches on the stone floor—a patterned design for a game that may have been something like Chinese checkers, he explained. The guard had willed away the tedium of the watch at this game and on the wall nearby were scratched the scores.

### New Museum of Anthropology

All of these new areas will be opened to the public within a year, and on Mexico's Independence Day, Sept. 16, 1964, President Adolfo Lopez Mateos will inaugurate the new Museum of Anthropology, one of the world's largest, now in the building in Chapultepec Park.

It will be the new home of the great stone head which drew record summer attendance to the Houston Museum of Fine Arts as the masterpiece of the Olmec show.

Again it will have the place of honor—in the wide entry court of the new museum in Mexico City. It should be familiar to all Mexico because the face stared from every newstand on the cover of the Spanish edition of Life for Sept. 2. The new home is worthy of its size, but the giant idol of the Rain God Tlaloc of Coatlincan triples his weight.

### Careful Thought Goes Into It

Great museum that it is, careful thought has been taken by its planners for the small comforts of visitors. If Jackie Kennedy should come back, she wouldn't get wet as she did when she visited the old museum on Moneda Street, nor will school children. There is a covered entrance for VIPs and one for buses.

There will be lounges, a cafeteria, vast courtyards—one covered by a roof said to be the largest in the world supported by a single column. Again this was a special preview for Judy and me—jeeping around the rough site of the museum and down into the huge basement area where a wealth of Mexico's pre-Columbian treasures will be stored because not even a museum of this size could show them all. Jorge Campuzano Fernandez, enthusiastic member of the team of Mexico's best architects headed by Pedro Ramirez Vasquez, drove the jeep and led the way up construction ramps.

### Hand-Done Mosaics for Walls

Heaps of rough-hewn marble plaques were ready to face the brick walls in a multi-colored mosaic. They were hand-done in villages not far from the capital. President Lopez Mateos wanted the money to go into many pockets instead of to the few mill owners, we were told.

Much construction work is being done by hand because machinery is expensive, then again this spreads money to more pockets. But there is nothing manana about this job. Begun last March, the museum will be finished in February.

Technicians and artists in studios on the site are as busy as construction crews working out the interior design for the museum, and at the old museum on Moneda Street, Sr. Mendez heads her cataloging corps, listing, evaluating artifacts by the tons.

Nothing short of a major disaster will keep this museum from being inaugurated next September.

In the United States, we were reminded, it isn't unusual to start a project under Truman and finish it under Kennedy, but Mexican presidents don't feel that way about things. They want the projects they start dedicated during their term of office.

Judy and I will be going back... If not for the inauguration, then later to see how some of the hemisphere's oldest art looks in one of her most modern museums and to walk again on the ceremonial highway of the great city of Teotihuacan.

It is a good bet that millions of others will, too.

Bonnie Carmack

### Into the Austere Valley

But our part of the old story began to unfold on a morning in late August when a camioneta from the



## The Houston Press

A SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER

GEORGE CARMACK, Editor      RAY L. POWERS, Business Manager

Rusk and Chartres      Phone Fairfax 3-1111

Published every weekday afternoon by Houston Press Co. Full reports of United Press International, NEA Service, Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Second-class postage paid at Houston, Texas. By carrier daily in Houston or any point in Texas \$10 per week, \$1.45 per month or \$17.40 per year. By mail daily in Texas, 3 months \$2.60, 6 months \$5.20 or \$10.40 per year. States beyond Texas Reg. U. S. Pat. Office 6 months \$7.50 or \$15.00 a year. Foreign rates on request. Mail subscriptions in advance.

*"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way"*

Delivered to Your Home 35c Weekly—\$1.45 Per Month

# LIFE

EN ESPAÑOL



EL ACUERDO DEL CHAMIZAL: Quiénes Son y qué Dicen Los que Viven en la Zona

LLEGA A HOUSTON UNA CABEZA OLMECA

2 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1963

UNITED BY BONDS OF BLOOD AND CULTURE

### Burgess-MacLean

"He came to the Soviet Union with some idealism which many people have not understood. He is dead now. He can not defend himself."

This is the epitaph for British spy Guy Burgess spoken by his colleague and fellow-defector Donald MacLean in Moscow. Burgess died last week of heart disease.

It is true a dead man can not defend himself, but Donald MacLean is still alive and we've never seen an acceptable defense of his own for stealing his country's and NATO's secrets and fleeing with Burgess to Russia a dozen years ago.

Idealism is one thing, but treachery is quite another. Among honorable and conscientious people, there is no way of linking them.

### Sweet Music to Texas

Boom! Boom! Boom! Just like that, three more big shots were fired this week in Texas' battle for new industries.

They were the report here by the Texas Industrial Commission that the state last year added a net gain of 12,000 new industrial jobs, second only to New York in the nation—that NASA headquarters plant on Clear Lake is now 75 per cent completed and soon to go into greater action expected to bring even more industry—that the Chamber of Commerce has released a new 1963-64 Manufacturers' Directory showing 164 more firms for a total now of 2071 industries in the eight-county Houston-Gulf Coast industrial complex.

In their own way, each of these puts Texas where it wants to be—right at or near the top.

And even more wonderful is that the old saw, "Nothing succeeds like success," applies very definitely here.

Chairman Gene Germany of the Industrial Commission pointed out that one big factor in influencing the location of many plants in Texas is the state's constantly expanding market for the products of those plants. In other words, new payrolls for new people attract newer payrolls for newer people.

Those "booms" are sweet music to Texas ears.

### Danger Not by Numbers

Whether he works with three other miners or 300, a coal miner can be just as dead if he is trapped by a gas blast or a cave-in.

In the old Pennsylvania mine from which two men were saved by a rescue effort which thrilled the whole country, while a third man was lost, there were only four miners.

Neither federal nor state law enforced any safety regulations on this mine. State law governs mines employing five or more, federal law starts with mines employing 14 or more.

In Congress this year there are no fewer than 22 bills to apply federal law to all mines. Yet there has been no action on any of them.

The small mines exempt from federal regulation produce about 12 per cent of the national coal tonnage. But 34 per cent of the underground deaths in mine disasters have occurred in these holes.

As a result of the wide interest in the rescue near Hazleton, Pa., underlined by the tragedy for the third miner, backers of the bills pending so long in Congress now think they may get some action.

Congress has two jobs on this score, and it should follow the advice of the United Mine Workers in tackling them. First, pass a bill giving all miners protection from hazardous operations. There is no need for delay, debate or hearings. The necessity is obvious.

Then go to work on all mine safety laws. Let's have a complete review. The result should be the tightest, most rigorous standards and inspection possible. A man has a right to work for a living at the occupation of his choice, or which circumstances impose on him—but he has an equal right to life.

### SUN AND SHADE

A NEW FREEDOM — FROM RENT  
My landlord must quit demanding his rent.  
I need all my money—every cent.  
For things I require  
And things I desire.  
When my pay check comes it is already spent.  
—Hester Hunt.

### DAILY BIBLE VERSE

*Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.—PSALMS 145:13.*

Houston's Museum of Fine Arts—and a current visitor to Houston—are on the cover of LIFE... in Spanish, that is.

In a feature entitled, "Treasure on Loan," the magazine tells of the Olmec Head and its journey from San Lorenzo Tenochtilan in Southern Mexico to the lawn in front of Cullinan Hall.

The magazine was distributed throughout Latin America. It was one of the finest pieces of publicity that Houston has ever received in the Latin countries.

And as Bonnie Carmack points out in an accompanying article, this head will have an honored place in the new Museum of Anthropology now under construction in Mexico City.

The article especially praises the work of Museum director James Johnson Sweeney, who became interested in the head while on a trip to Mexico and brought it to Houston.

The article tells of the difficulty in extracting the 16-ton Head from its jungle grave of 30 centuries, and the cooperation between the U. S. and Mexico in arranging the "loan." It tells of the care with which the head was removed, of the building of a special road through the jungle, of the precautions taken in transporting the massive piece of ancient sculpture by ship to Houston.

Houston is described in the article as a "city united to Mexico by bonds of blood and culture."

**THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS**

1001 BISBONNET HOUSTON 77005 TEXAS

RETURN REQUESTED

Miss Nina J. Cullinan  
3694 Willowick  
Houston 19, Texas

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE.

PAID

HOUSTON, TEXAS  
PERMIT No. 214



FRANCESCO GUARDI, 1712-1793. "Guardi House at Mastellina".



GIAN BATTISTA, 1696-1770. "Four Female Nudes".



ALBERTO BURRI at Cullinan Hall.

Photograph by Ezra Stoller

# THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1001 BISSONNET HOUSTON 77005 JA 6-1361

## NEWSLETTER

## DECEMBER 1963

### EXHIBITIONS

December 4 to January 1

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Junior Gallery

December 7 to January 5

XVIIIth CENTURY DRAWINGS FROM  
THE CORRER MUSEUM, VENICE

Jones Gallery

December 13 to February 2

SCULPTURE FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK Cullinan Hall

### ACTIVITIES

December 1, 4 pm

Tuesday Musical Club Concert

Jones Lecture Hall

December 7 and 8, 3 pm

"The Nativity", presented by the Junior League Puppeteers

Jones Lecture Hall

December 11, 8 pm

Two Films: "United States" and "Brazil"

Jones Lecture Hall

December 14, 3 pm

Christmas Carols, performed by Jack Yates  
Senior High School Chorus, directed by Mrs. Hazel Anderson

South Garden Gallery

December 15, 3 pm

Christmas Carols, performed by James D. Ryan  
Junior High School Chorus, directed by Mrs. Gloria Duke

South Garden Gallery

December 21 and 22, 3 pm

Children's Films: "Munro", "The King and the Lion",  
"The Santa Claus Suit"

Jones Lecture Hall

December 18 to January 2

Museum School Recess for the Holidays—  
No Classes

*THE JUNIOR LEAGUE PUPPETEERS* will present a Christmas puppet show with hymns and with the Biblical narrative of the Nativity as their gift to children on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, December 7 and 8 at 3 pm in Jones Lecture Hall.

*FILM SERIES ON ARCHITECTURE* continues with the showing of "United States: A is for Architecture" and "Suburban Living: Six Solutions" and "Brazil: Brasilia" on Wednesday evening, December 11 at 8 pm in Jones Lecture Hall. The first two films document the changing concept of American architecture and present solutions to the problem of suburban living. In the third feature, Brazil's new capital is shown from Lucio Costa's master city plan to the architect Oscar Niemeyer's structures in reinforced concrete and glass.

*MEMBERS' PREVIEWS* for the month of December will be given on Friday evening, December 6, from 7 to 9 pm for the XVIIIth Century Drawings from the Correr Museum, Venice, in the Jones Gallery. The preview for members of Sculpture from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, will be given from 9 to 11 pm in Cullinan Hall on Thursday evening, December 12.

*EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VENETIAN DRAWINGS FROM THE CORRER MUSEUM.* 120 drawings by forty-two artists are represented in this exhibition, among them Canaletto, Francesco Guardi, Pietro Longhi and Tiepolo. The drawings reflect the atmosphere of Venice in the eighteenth century, when Venetian draftsmanship reached its height.

*SCULPTURE FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.* Twenty five pieces of sculpture will be loaned to the Museum for showing in Cullinan Hall through February 2nd. Among the important works to be shown are Lipchitz "Mother and Child", Henry Moore's "Reclining Figure, II" and Renoir's "Washerwoman", Matisse's series of bronze reliefs "The Back".

*CHILDREN'S FILMS* for December will include "Munro", by artist Jules Feiffer; "The King and the Lion", based on the fable of "Androcles and the Lion" and "The Santa Claus Suit", illustrating the spirit of the Christmas season. These animated cartoon and puppet films, in color, will be shown on Saturday and Sunday, December 21 and 22, in Jones Lecture Hall at 3 pm. They are open to the public without charge.

*MUSEUM NEWS NOTES...*The Museum of Fine Arts will be open from 12 to 6 pm on Wednesday, January 1...There will be no Coffee and Guided Tour of the Museum's Collections this month, but the program, sponsored by the Membership Committee, will be resumed in January...Museum School faculty members Ruth Laird and Stella Sullivan will join with Charles Pebworth in a three-man show to be held at Gallery 75 in Conroe, Texas, opening Sunday, December 8...Antoine Houdon's terracotta bust of "Anne-Ange Houdon", circa 1790, is being loaned to the Art Museum of Worcester, Massachusetts, from January 16 to February 23, 1964, for their "Houdon Exhibition"...Remember Museum Memberships for Christmas gifts this year. Your gift membership will be remembered when your friends use their Membership Cards to attend special programs at the Museum...The Burri show, which closes on December 1, will be shown in Buffalo, Minneapolis and San Francisco. It is scheduled to open on January 6 at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Walker Institute of Art in Minneapolis on February 17 and the San Francisco Museum of Art during the month of May, 1964...

**MUSEUM HOURS**

Tuesday-Saturday, 9:30 am-5:00 pm

Wednesday 9:30 am-5:00 pm and 7:00-10:00 pm

Sunday noon to 6:00 pm

Closed Mondays      Closed Christmas Day