

ARTnews

October 1974

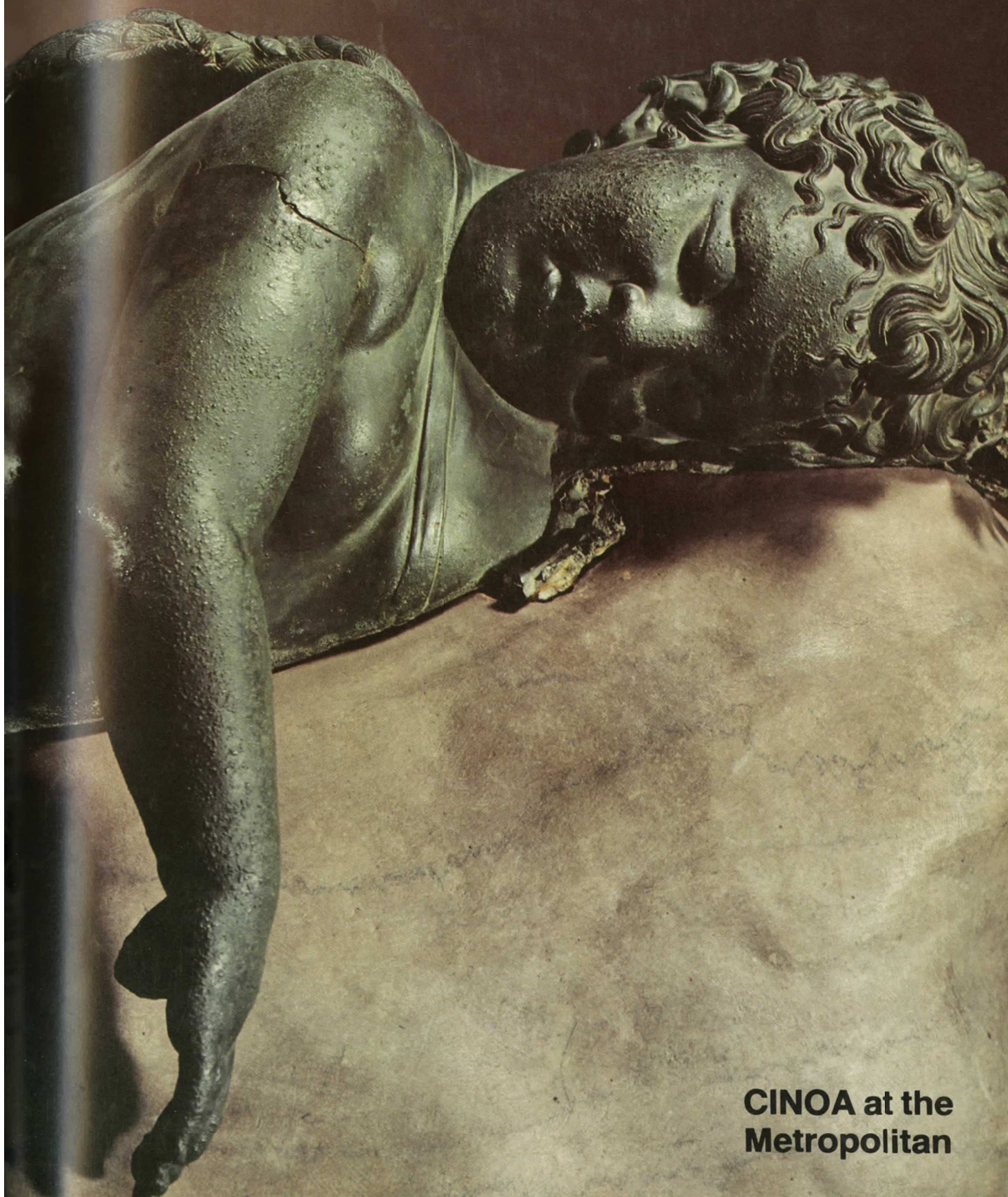
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The Hirshhorn Museum

Rockefeller's Rothko

Nevelson at 75

The Homer Caper



**CINOA at the
Metropolitan**

Dealers and museums: the relationship is no longer

anonymous 34
Once described as a "discreet presence, often unacknowledged and frequently even denied," the art dealer is increasingly being recognized in a variety of ways by many institutions. Dramatic evidence of the shift is the exhibition of dealers' treasures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, sponsored by C.I.N.O.A., Confédération Internationale des Négociants en Oeuvres d'Art.
by Rita Reif

Remembrance of dealers past 35
The print curator emeritus at the Metropolitan Museum reminisces about dealers he has known, enjoyed and admired.
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A grand 'Grand Gallery' 37
Antiques and sculpture in the C.I.N.O.A. exhibition comprise a spectacular selection of objects from the ancient to the modern.
by Marvin D. Schwartz

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by Colin Eisler

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As part of the C.I.N.O.A. exhibition, the Metropolitan is presenting selections from the 400 objects acquired by the museum through dealers Joseph and Ernest Brummer from the 1920s to the 1940s. "Without the taste, selectivity and sound judgment of such dealers," says the author of this memoir, "the public and private collections of this country would not have achieved their present level of excellence."
by William H. Forsyth

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All in all, the Hirshhorn is off to an auspicious beginning, but the guns of battle that accompanied its birth and building probably will not fall silent for still another decade.
by Benjamin Forgey

Case for the defense 44
The Mark Rothko trial continued in New York's Surrogate's Court. There was testimony about 'prudent' executors, the vagaries of the art market and how Marlborough bought a Rothko from Nelson Rockefeller and sold it to Paul Mellon and made \$25,000.

Louise Nevelson at 75 48
'Being Jewish and coming from Maine was no picnic,' says Nevelson. 'I suppose I've never yet stopped digging daily for what life is all about.' And she hasn't stopped digging artistically.
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With Soyer's death in September, the world lost a painter for whom art was a passion and a social commitment.
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A professor in Harvard University's fine arts department, Freedberg is a dedicated scholar, a sensitive art historian and a man of many parts.
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COVER The Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Figure of Eros Sleeping*, bronze, Greek, Hellenistic period (250-150 B.C.), said to have come from the Island of Rhodes. The *Eros* is one of the works in the Metropolitan's exhibition sponsored by C.I.N.O.A. Articles on the C.I.N.O.A. exhibition begin on page 34.

All ARTnews subscription orders, payments, inquiries, changes of address and undelivered copies (form 3579) should be sent to ARTnews Subscription Service, 121 Garden Street, Marion, Ohio 43302. **Subscription rates: \$15 per year (foreign \$2 additional).**

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reviews

Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg (Castelli, downtown): Two old friends share the gallery space, showing works they made last spring in Florida. Rauschenberg's "drawings" are framed, off-white sheets of paper, almost devoid of incident. In one series, the paper is given only the slightest relief pattern by pieces of cardboard partially or completely concealed beneath its surface. In the other, torn lengths of cheesecloth dangle below framed rectangles of blank paper, and form barely visible embossed triangles where they are tucked under the paper's lower edge. The plexiglass boxes that enclose the papers in this series look untypical of Rauschenberg in their slick commodity perfection. But, instead of allowing the frames to isolate art from life, Rauschenberg has wittily incorporated them as an integral part of the picture. The plexi-box's reflective surface mediates between the uneventful stillness of the "art" behind the glass and the "real" activity of people in the gallery. Plexiglass provides a counterpoint to tattered cheesecloth in terms of texture, shape and associative meaning.

With a subtlety verging on preciousness, this group of drawings contrasts levels of transparency ranging from opaque paper to semi-transparent gauze to clear plastic. The drawings are so laconic they are almost mute.

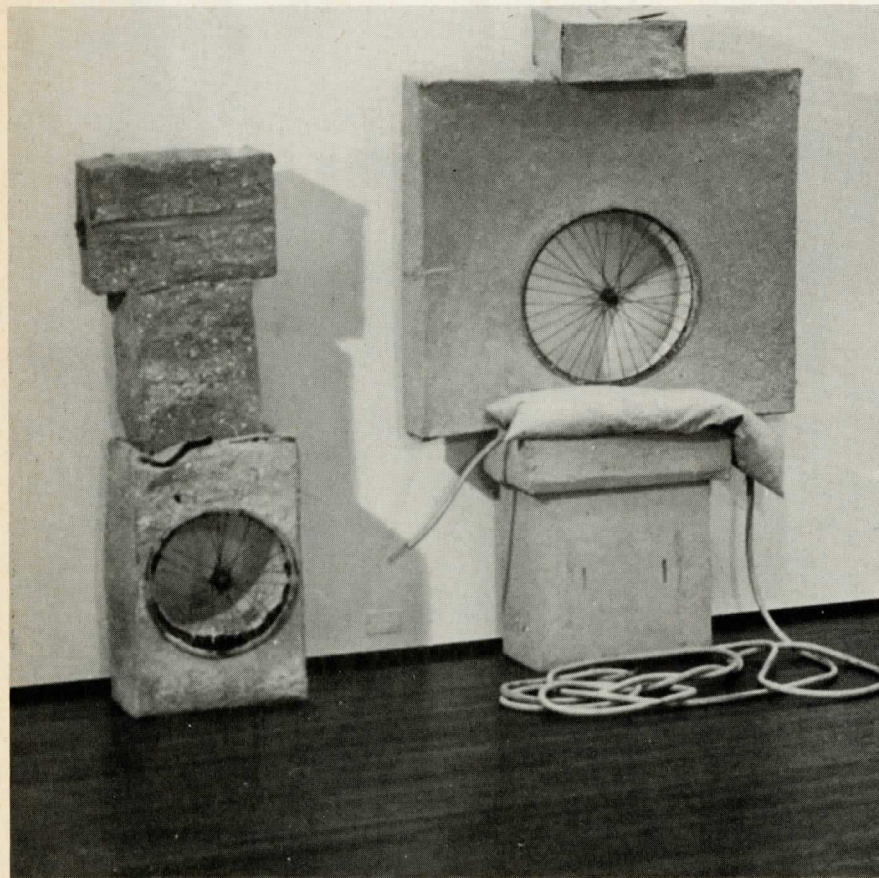
More accessible are Rauschenberg's large unframed collages. Each consists of a sheet of white paper, which is folded down the middle, unfolded, imprinted with newspaper transfers, scarred by tearing previously glued elements away and collaged with paper bags or cardboard. Then all is partially veiled beneath cheesecloth. Rauschenberg has printed these veils with ghostly newspaper images, so pale they seem at first to be only the newspaper transfers showing through from the paper underneath. A delicate interplay occurs between the cheesecloth and the images on the paper behind it. In these collages, the throwaways of daily life become a game of concealment and visibility as sly, seductive and mysterious as Salome's dance of the seven veils.

Rauschenberg's recent sculptures are made of stacked cardboard boxes. With their sand-coated surfaces, they recall

Picasso's *Object with a Glove* (1930). Despite their emery-board surface, they are more elegant than abrasive; they carry reticence to the point of eloquence. One of them (four identical boxes placed equidistant from and parallel to each other) seems to parody minimal sculpture. Another (a pair of totems, each containing a bicycle wheel) pays tribute to Duchamp. Attached to the top of a third sculpture is a pink nylon curtain and a rope which holds up a twigless branch leaning precariously in the opposite direction from the curtain. As in all Rauschenberg's work, a variety of meanings might be implied: this could be a drama of sexual conflict (curtain versus stick), or some abstruse dialectic between the man-made and the natural, between artifice and reality. Rauschenberg's sculptures look sober, but they have a certain deadpan humor.

Cy Twombly's drawings combine collaged graph paper in pastel shades with crayon and pencil scribbles, clumsy images, unfathomable mathematical formulas, sloppy erasures and words both legible and illegible that would earn F for penmanship in any schoolroom. Ennui, daydreaming and occasional fits of peevishness seem to have given rise to these doodlings and smudgings. Yet Twombly's drawings have something of the intensity and the varied tempo of the discursive line in Gorky's late drawings as it sweeps or meanders around crayon marks. Twombly's marks are distributed over the paper's surface with an unerring sense of placement. He disperses crayoned ellipses to evoke a sense of charged void akin to that in the famous Sung dynasty painting *Six Persimmons*.

Twombly's subject matter is as unfocused and rambling as his line. Drawings on an Egyptian theme show awkward lotus flowers defying the punctilious precision of graph paper. The word "Sesostris II," that sad-faced pharaoh who lost confidence in divine kingship, is scrawled across the pictures' surfaces. The airy, transient and random effect of these drawings is at the opposite pole from the associations usually attached to Egyptian subject matter. They are deliberately inattentive to hierarchies of form and content. Unpredictable, insouciant and haphazard, yet finally exquisitely ordered, Twombly's drawings invite us to



Robert Rauschenberg, untitled, mixed media, 1974. Castelli, downtown.



Tom Wesselmann, *Smoker # 8*, oil on canvas, 108¼ by 163¾ inches, 1973. Sidney Janis.

a voyage of untethered physical freedom and fantasy unmoored.

Tom Wesselmann (Sidney Janis): A woman's tanned fingers with perfectly polished nails gracefully hold a cigarette. Smoke curls upward from parted ruby lips. The shaped canvas accommodates itself to the smoke's luscious swirls and whirls. This is the image in *Smoker # 8*—and also (sometimes without the fingers) in *Smoker # 9*, *Smoker # 10*, *Smoker # 11* . . . Repetition turns Wesselmann's huge exhaling mouths into a euphoric paean in which the image loses specific meaning. Each of the seven smokers is a menthol-fresh icon of sex and smoke. These are not the twinkly bohemians of the Frans Hals-Manet smoker tradition. They are just perfect mouths—the languorous bliss, the 1930s drama, of a woman smoking.

The rest of the world falls away. The edge of the lips becomes the edge of the canvas. The open mouth is as riveting as a hearth. What seems to excite the artist is the challenge of making art out of a banal commercial image by treating a hot item in cool pictorial terms. He explores the formal possibilities offered by the variables of smoke's behavior as it is breathed out of the mouth to encounter fingers and currents of air. To make a firm composition out of the amorphous motion of smoke, Wesselmann gives *Smoker # 13* two straight sides and one curvy one. Fingers and cigarette point

in the opposite direction from the flow of the smoke, creating a stasis over which the mouth is suspended. Like an inflated inner tube, it seems to float on top of the cascading smoke, but it is as fixed and frontal as an emblazoned shield, and it not only creates the composition and the shape of the canvas (by exhaling), but also holds the composition securely in place.

The immense scale of the mouth does not imply intimacy so much as commercialization. The effect is like being cheek to cheek with a billboard. Wesselmann further neutralizes sexuality by cropping the mouth from the context of a particular face in a particular situation. He treats sex with the vacant passivity one feels towards an overly familiar TV commercial. The mouth is flagrant, but so public that it is remote and unpossessable. Although the *Smoker* series may appeal to our regressive tastes, it has an intense physical impact. Unabashedly to take an erotic subject, to inflate and de-sex it with Madison Avenue anonymity and yet to create palatable, even powerful, art is a tour de force.

Still Life # 60, the only non-smoking painting in the exhibition, is six shaped canvases propped on the gallery floor. A tube of lipstick, nail polish, matches, beads and a ring, all presided over by a pair of dark glasses, are lined up like the cut-outs in a children's "pop-up" book. Their overwhelming scale makes the

spectator feel like a Lilliputian on a dressing table. Yet this is no casual confrontation; the personal effects are assembled with the formality of an old-fashioned portrait group. *Still Life # 60* denotes a female presence, but reveals nothing of her personality. The equipment with which women privately prepare themselves to face the world is observed with the naive fascination and the almost compulsive detachment of a child with a magnifying glass, as Wesselmann searches for the true totems of our time.

Bob Duran (Bykert, uptown): Duran's recent paintings are delicate, intricate and tender. They brave loveliness without becoming sweet. His large, luminous canvases are divided into jigsaw patterns of interlocking shapes. Liquitex is applied freely in transparent veils of pastel colors. Sometimes paint is applied over wet paint, allowing one color to bleed into another. Most often, the shapes do not quite touch, and the lighter ground shines in the sliver of space between them. Besides creating an active interplay between figure and ground, these cracks make the transparent shapes seem to be lit from behind. The activity in the spaces between shapes becomes as interesting as the shapes themselves. The effect of the bleeding, spreading and modulation of color is to link the surface of the painting into one bright flux—luminosity changing like an evening sky.

The jagged meanderings of Duran's color areas, together with the softly modulated color changes within the contours of the shapes, break down the integrity of separate shapes. A tension is set up between the slow spreading movement of moist color and the more geometrical architecture of shapes. Pink blurring into yellow, for example, may be abruptly cut off by a serrated edge or a right-angle turn. The spectator's eye can either slide across the surface of luminous close-valued color, or it can read the canvas piece by piece like the states on a map. Duran's paintings divulge their pleasures slowly to a lingering eye.

Thomas Addison Richards (Washburn): English-born. Richards (1820-1900) pursued his career primarily in New York City. He was an accomplished painter and a member of the National Academy of Design. His pencil drawings, presented here for the first time, are full of zest. They were made in the 1850s, when Richards traveled, often with fellow artists, in genteel search of "charming views" and humorous anecdotes, which he combined in articles about various regions of the United States illustrated with steel engravings that were published by *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, *Knickerbocker* and other magazines of the day. They were the equivalent of today's TV travelogue—views of rivers and waterfalls, towns tidily snuggled into valleys and houses with ample verandas and women strolling on sweeping lawns.

The small drawings are sensitive and deft in their evocation of space, light and texture. Richards' stroke varies from broad soft hatching for shadows to pale feathery touches where sunlight dissolves form. He was masterful at making blank paper stand for space, air and light, and at distributing tones to create a feeling of vast, but always measurable, space within a very small format.

Richards' view of nature is informed by curiosity and affection. Whether in panorama or close up, nature is neither a remote wilderness nor a transcendental manifestation of divinity. Rather, it is a place where man can divert himself and where "many nicely composed pictures may be got." Landscape becomes a series of vistas suitable for capturing as mementos. Richards' text describes the exact vantage points for his drawings (and the quality of the local cuisine). To him, the artist's job was onlv to scent "the beautiful by instinct, as

infallibly as the bee detects the fragrant flower and settles, and is content." This "hunter of the picturesque" would go anywhere, anytime, to "get" a good picture, and this fine exhibition shows how well he succeeded. ● HAYDEN HERRERA

New York City Public Sculpture (Metropolitan Museum of Art): As curator Lewis I. Sharp stated in his catalogue introduction, "Changes in artistic taste, the diminishing interest in representational arts during the 20th century, and our familiarity with this sculpture to the point of taking it for granted has left it largely ignored today." "New York City Public Sculpture" was successful on one count at least.

No one who saw the show will again be able to ignore Karl Bitter's grandiose Pulitzer Fountain (1916) at 59th Street and Fifth Avenue or Augustus Saint-Gaudens' staunchly beaux-arts Admiral Farragut Memorial (1881). As an exercise in 19th-century public sculpture consciousness-raising, the exhibition was flawless; intelligent conception and ingenious execution had much to do with its interest. Divided into four geographic areas—Brooklyn, downtown and midtown Manhattan, Central Park and the Upper West Side—blown-up photos of the locations of the sculptures around the time of their unveiling were supplemented with original sketch

models or reductions of the finished pieces, these placed in front of their photo-likenesses. The effect was of historical theater in miniature, complete with baroque lighting and factual program cards—gimmicky but compelling. Among other locations "visited" were Frederick William MacMonnies' *The Horse Tamers* (1899) in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, Daniel Chester French's *Alma Mater* (1903) at Columbia University (last in view during the 1968 student revolt) and John Quincy Adams Ward's *George Washington* (1883), who stands gesturing beneficently in front of Wall Street's Federal Hall, the archetypal capitalist deity. By accident or design, there were patriotic overtones: the tiny silhouette cast by Ward's *Washington* statuette onto an adjacent wall of the gallery was an exquisite visual homage to our hero-worshipping past.

As fascinating a show as "Public Sculpture" was, though, the quality of the works on view posed a problem. By traditional and contemporary "representational" standards, this sculpture was pallid, often pompous stuff. At times, it seems that the conservators of our artistic heritage are as stricken with "gold fever" as the innovators, sifting wildly through the rubble for something of value, and just as likely to label fool's gold the real thing. To take an instance from "New York City Public Sculpture": Sharp is unnecessarily



Michael Todd, *Iksolit*, varnished steel, height 104 inches, 1974. Zabriskie.