

# ART NEWS

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## This month

George L. K. Morris was one of the first American painters to study Cubism at its source in Paris . . . John D. Cooney is curator of Egyptian Art at the Brooklyn Museum, was director of the American Research Center in Egypt two years ago. . . . Clement Greenberg, champion of the *avant-garde*, has recently returned from a European tour . . . Larry Rivers, promising young American artist, has a life-or-death interest in draftsmanship; he recently had his fourth New York exhibition . . . William M. Milliken, as director of the Cleveland Museum, has formed there one of the great collections of medieval works in this hemisphere . . . Robert Goldwater wrote an influential book on primitivism and modern art; he is a professor at Queens College . . . John Summerson is curator of Sir John Soane's Museum in London and one of England's most distinguished architectural historians . . . J. LeRoy Davidson, well-known Sinologist, has come back from an extended tour of India to Yale where he is a professor in art history . . . Benjamin Rowland, Jr. holds a chair in Oriental studies at Harvard; John F. Haskins is finishing his studies with Salmony at N. Y. U., and is a rare archeologist who keeps abreast of the latest Russian publications in his fields.

## Next month

Special emphasis on 1955 travel and coming art events in Europe and Mexico . . . Evaluation of the huge Burlington House 18th-century exhibition, by Cyril Connolly, British novelist and critic . . . New observations on Guido Reni by the contemporary Italian master Giorgio Morandi . . . Design Portfolio 4.

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# ART NEWS.

## Articles

<i>Dialogues with Delaunay</i>	16	George L. K. Morris
<i>Introducing the sculpture of Raoul Hague</i>	19	Thomas B. Hess
<i>Essays on the new books: Part II</i>		
<i>The Egyptians were painters, too</i>	22	John D. Cooney
<i>Color in Madrid and from Amsterdam</i>	24	Clement Greenberg
<i>Young draftsman on master draftsmen</i>	26	Larry Rivers
<i>The Gothic line across Europe</i>	28	William M. Milliken
<i>The not-so-primitive</i>	30	Robert Goldwater
<i>Victoriana and all that</i>	32	John Summerson
<i>Insights to India</i>	32	J. LeRoy Davidson
<i>When Greek met Asian</i>	34	Benjamin Rowland, Jr.
<i>Porter paints a picture</i>	38	Frank O'Hara
<i>Digging behind the Iron Curtain</i>	44	John F. Haskins

## Major illustrations

<i>The Poet Philippe Soupault</i>	16	Robert Delaunay
<i>Detail from the tomb of Sennedjem</i>	23	20th Dynasty, Egypt, colorplate
<i>The Garden of Delight</i>	24	Hieronymus Bosch, colorplate
<i>Battle with the Danes</i>	28	English twelfth-century manuscript
<i>Veiled and Masked Dancer</i>	33	Hellenistic bronze
<i>Portrait of Katharine, 1954</i>	41	Fairfield Porter, colorplate
<i>Piazza San Marco</i>	42	Francesco Guardi, colorplate

## Departments

<i>Editor's letters</i>	6	
<i>Art news of America</i>	7	
<i>Amateur standing</i>	9	
<i>The print collector</i>	10	Irvin Haas
<i>Coming auctions</i>	12	
<i>Editorial</i>	15	
<i>Reviews and previews</i>	46	
<i>Art news from London</i>	52	Lawrence Alloway
<i>Art news from Los Angeles</i>	53	Jules Langsner
<i>Art news from Chicago</i>	54	Marilyn Robb Trier
<i>New sources, new materials</i>	68	
<i>Where and when to exhibit</i>	69	
<i>Competitions, scholarships</i>	69	
<i>The exhibition calendar</i>	69	

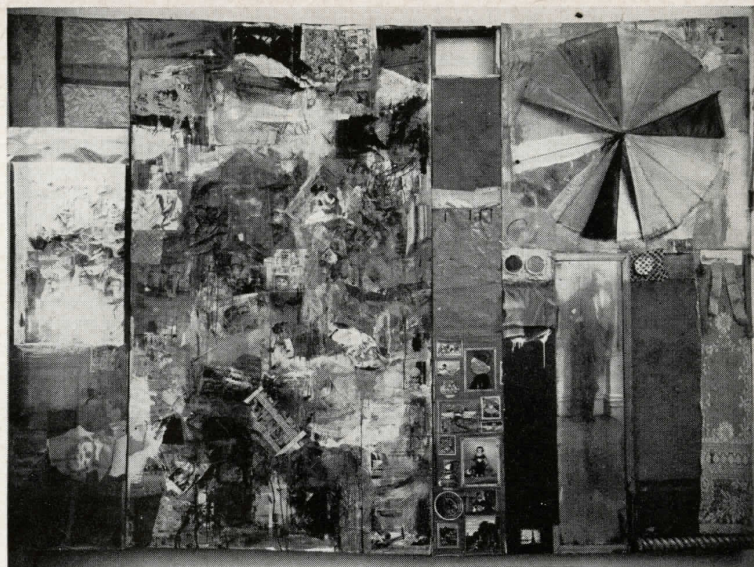
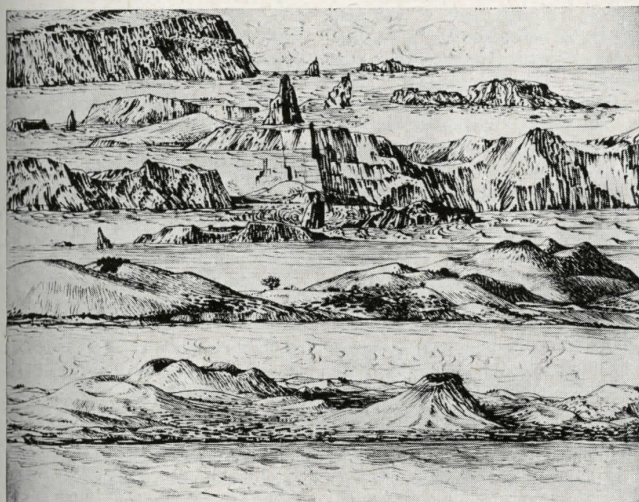
## Cover



*Head of Apsaras*, one of the celestial dancers in India's heaven, is a detail of the fresco on rock in the veranda of the monastery (cave xvii) in Ajanta. The colorplate was made by the State of Hyderabad, where Ajanta is, and appears in *The Art of India* by Stella Kramrisch, Phaidon and Garden City, N. Y. [see p. 32].



Peter Blume's pen and ink *Easter Island II*:  
"rising, many-tiered bulk"



Bob Rauschenberg's untitled collage:  
"blistering and poignant"

and make a background on the walls behind them. Part of the exhibition, called *Ancient Games and Ancient Places*, best of all illustrates that art is for her a possibility that she sees in everything, as a child playing does not distinguish his crayons and toys from the grown-up furniture. \$18-\$1,200. F.P.

**Jean Dubuffet's** [Matisse] style is gradually pulverizing. The obscene stones and hair and thick impasto are no longer to be seen, and the color, taking the place of former relief, has become bright, rich and complex. An almost foolproof way toward art is to be anti-artistic, likewise a way toward order is through deliberate disorder, and it is this second way that seems now to have taken possession of him, as if in the process of painting he became lost in consideration of the details of what he was doing. These new paintings have a quality found in the art of schizophrenics—weakness of the whole form and fantastically monotonous detail. A face is an accumulation of fleshy details extending on either side beyond reasonable boundaries. It would be impossible to imagine painting farther removed from classical Florentine fresco painting. Dubuffet, growing out of his little-boy rebelliousness, is approaching the all-over abstraction of the New York school. Only the very wavering horizon line dividing *Pink Desert* into ground and black sky keeps this painting pictorial. Prices unquoted. F.P.

**Bob Rauschenberg** [Egan; to Jan. 18], *enfant terrible* of the New York School, is back again to even more brilliant effect—what he did to all-white and all-black in his last show and to nature painting with his controversial moss-dirt-and-ivy picture in the last Stable Annual, he tops in this show of blistering and at the same time poignant collages. Some of them seem practically room-size, and have various illuminations within them apart from their technical luminosity: bulbs flicker on and off, lights cast shadows, and lifting up a bit of pink gauze you stare out of the picture into your own magnified eye.

He provides a means by which you, as well as he, can get "in" the painting. Doors open to reveal clearer images, or you can turn a huge wheel to change the effect at will. Many of the pieces are extrovert, reminiscent of his structure in the Merce Cunningham ballet, *Minutiae*, but not all are so wildly ingenious: other pieces, including two sex organs (male and female) made from old red silk umbrellas, have a gentle and just passion for moving people. When you look back at the more ecstatic works they, too, have this quality not at all overshadowed by their brio. For all the baroque exuberance of the show, quieter pictures evidence a serious lyrical talent; simultaneously, in the big inventive pieces there is a big talent at play, creating its own occasions as a stage does. Prices unquoted. F.O.H.

**Dwight Ripley** [Tibor de Nagy; Jan. 11-30] was first shown by Peggy Guggenheim in the 'forties and has since had several exhibitions of drawings which spoof the conventions of the vanguard. This season Ripley, who also does research into the microscopics of botany, fixes his eye on an apocalyptic vision: "The Bomb." This is how the world explodes: first comes an invasion of wiggly clouds; they are the spores from the Mushroom. Behind them rises the flood, but it is a wishy-washy flood which has gingerly extracted skyscrapers and billboards from a recently horizontal metropolis. When Venice blows up it does so in a green squirt. Hagia Sophia withstands the blast; so does the unutterable Word of Peking; but off the Marshall Islands, fishy spines and sea monsters are drenched by a waterspout, and the whale is sore afflicted. Prices unquoted. E.C.M.

**Peter Blume** [Durlacher], who has recently circled the globe, discovered in such exotic spots as Ceylon, Peru and Singapore, precisely the forms that have fascinated his imagination all along, and set them down in a remarkable series of pen and ink drawings. These have, perhaps, the same relationship to Renaissance

drawings and maps as his seven paintings in the show have to Renaissance painting (if the calligraphic lines sometimes look oriental, so do Botticelli's). The rising, many-tiered bulk which we recall from *The Rock* and other pictures, turns up in a number of the drawings and one bizarre painting of Bali. Where island seacoasts provided less stratifications than he desired, he ingeniously invented his own layers by drawing one strip of land above another, in one case slicing them arbitrarily, as in a collage. His pen excels in a surprisingly fluid, racing line and he has handled tiny figures with a soft understatement that is a drastic departure from his usually brittle style. Spontaneity gives way to his meticulous manner in the paintings. An allegorical Italian tableau contributes an image as compelling as a Piero di Cosimo. A similar approach seems to miscarry in his two religious pictures. These may have been conceived in Mexico since the native "santos" seem to have been the source for his caricatured heads of Christ and garishly colored trappings of the Cross. But this idea remains literary and misses the wonder that Blume can sometimes evoke. Prices unquoted. D.G.S.

**Robert Courtright** [New Gallery; to Jan. 8] is having his second show this year of collages executed in Italy, mostly of Italian buildings. He uses newspapers and the pages of an old dictionary which he mounts upside down (to give a mottled, eroded impression if viewed from a distance) over which he pens, washes and glues sculpture details, arched windows and balconies. His simplifications, his liberty with perspective and placement of details place him in the abstractionist camp. Where he reduces shadows to prominent brown or black strips and where the crisp, scissored edges emerge from an undefined mass of the paper, one is reminded of the nostalgic glare of a de Chirico. \$125-\$200. G.T.M.

**Ronnie Cutler, Richard Roberts** [Karnig; Jan. 4-29] exhibit together: the latter is a young Philadelphian who composes landscapes and figures

en masse in a distinctive personal style that has already won him a number of outstanding prizes. He has arrived at a mosaic-like patterning of the surface by constantly compressing shadow until it is forced into narrow strips of dark, like *cloisons*, around each color spot. There is wit and breadth in his handling. Ronnie Cutler, also making her New York debut, maintains a painterly reserve as she presides over the meeting of wide, luminously textured skies and dark, lattice-like structures—skyscrapers or castles—adding only a banner here or a recession there to adjust their intercourse. The same simple duality of land and sky marks her softer watercolor landscapes in reticent colors and sweeping rhythms. Prices unquoted. D.G.S.

**Paul-Emile Borduas** [Passedoit; Jan. 10-29], a Canadian who has been here hardly more than a year, in his second exhibition presents blotted and delicately splashed abstract watercolors in black on the white paper with a little red and blue, or in varied browns. Though there is no subject and perhaps because they are not calligraphic, they look like landscape or as a representational watercolor gets to look after it has been on the wall a long time, and one sees it as a thing in itself referring to the room, and the life of its presence adds to the wall. When the subject vanishes one becomes annoyed by textures no longer justified: these, having no subject, mostly have none of these defects. Borduas has given them concrete and pretty titles that guide your imagination and reveal the mind of a Surrealist: *An Equivalence with Red Added, Lost Kisses, Little Membranes*. \$45-\$150. F.P.

**Third annual** [Tanager; to Jan. 30] invitation show of eighty-one painters and sculptors is the best of these exhibitions so far held by this gallery. Because of the small size of the exhibition space, the exhibits are necessarily themselves small, but as these shows are hung with taste, they do not look crowded. The exhibition invites comparison with the annual