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CTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF
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Produced and published by the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi
Cover : Tagore, Rabindranath (1861-1941), Indian, *Bird*, Ink on paper, 17.8x22.8 cms.,
Acc. No.1224 (Detail)

The collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art essentially consists of paintings, sculptures and graphics, mainly by Indian and, to some extent, International modern artists. Historically, the earliest works of art in the collection belong to almost the beginning of the 19th century.

The evolution and development of modern art in India is unlike in the Occident. In the West the reaction against academic traditions was equally responsible for the experiments in art with Impressionism onward laid the foundation of Modern Art.¹ In India where the technique of oil painting and easel tradition were introduced in the 19th Century,² the break with the indigenous frescoes and miniature styles was felt when visiting British artists introduced European academic traditions.³ At that time, these were already losing ground in the countries of their origin. Intermingling of the traditional art with European influences was responsible for the emergence of various schools in India such as, Murshidabad, Lucknow, Patna, Delhi, Tanjore, Mysore etc.⁴ With the establishment of colleges of art at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta in the 1860s,⁵ Indian students of art were forced to copy plaster cast models of small scale replicas of Greeco-Roman statues in "realistic" styles. The techniques of oil painting and a sort of pseudo-realism, although short-lived, attracted the attention of several Indian artists, the leading one being Ravi Verma who specialised in painting portraits of kings and dignitaries and also "mythological pictures".⁶

With the national consciousness and under the impact of Swadeshi movement, organised attempts were made to derive inspiration from traditional Indian art of the past.⁷ This led to the emergence of the Bengal school which is usually credited with leading the movement of Indian modern art.⁸ However, the drawing, iconographical elements and, to a certain extent, the subject matter in the paintings of the Bengal school still clung to the traditional sources.⁹

The modern art in India in the real sense made its impact with the artistic creations of Rabindranath Tagore, who experimented with the various manifestations of art Nouveau, Symbolism and, essentially, Expressionism. His writings encouraged younger artists to experiment in various styles. He wrote: "When in the name of Indian art we cultivate with deliberate aggressiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our soul under idiosyncrasies unearthed from buried centuries.... I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation carefully to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art according to some old world mannerism." Elsewhere he emphasised: "All traditional structures of art must have a sufficient degree of elasticity.... There are traditions which in alliance with rigid prescriptions of rhetoric establish their slave dynasty, dethroning their master, the Life-urge, that revels in endless freedom of expression.... Let us take heart and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind, defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics..."¹⁰

The 34 examples included in this catalogue unfold some of the important developments of modern Indian art since the time of Rabindranath Tagore. Amrita Sher Gil's works of the early 1930s were essentially inspired by the artists belonging to the group of Pont-Aven (catalogue No. 5);¹¹ Jamini Roy preferred to look towards the Indian folk traditions specially Kalighat (catalogue No. 3);¹² the Cubist-Futurist elements became apparent in the works of Gaganendranath Tagore (catalogue No. 2);¹³ the Expressionist tendencies predominated in the paintings of M.F. Husain, and at one stage also those of Avinash Chandra and G.R. Santosh (catalogue Nos. 6, 16 & 13);¹⁴ J. Swaminathan and Satish Gujral (catalogue Nos. 12 & 8) passed through the influences of Surrealism;¹⁵ and artists such as, V.S. Gaitonde, Krishen Khanna, Biren De, Jeram Patel and Shanti Dave (catalogue Nos. 7, 9, 11, 14, & 15) experimented with various styles of Abstractionism.¹⁶

The ten sculptures by Indian sculptors reproduced demonstrate the various influences assimilated by them : Auguste Rodin and Antoine Bourdelle (catalogue No. 26),¹⁷ Expressionism (catalogue Nos. 25 & 30),¹⁸ Abstractionism (catalogue Nos. 28 & 34),¹⁹ Surrealism (catalogue No. 29),²⁰ and, finally, the technique of blow-torch and the use of wrought iron (catalogue No. 31).²¹

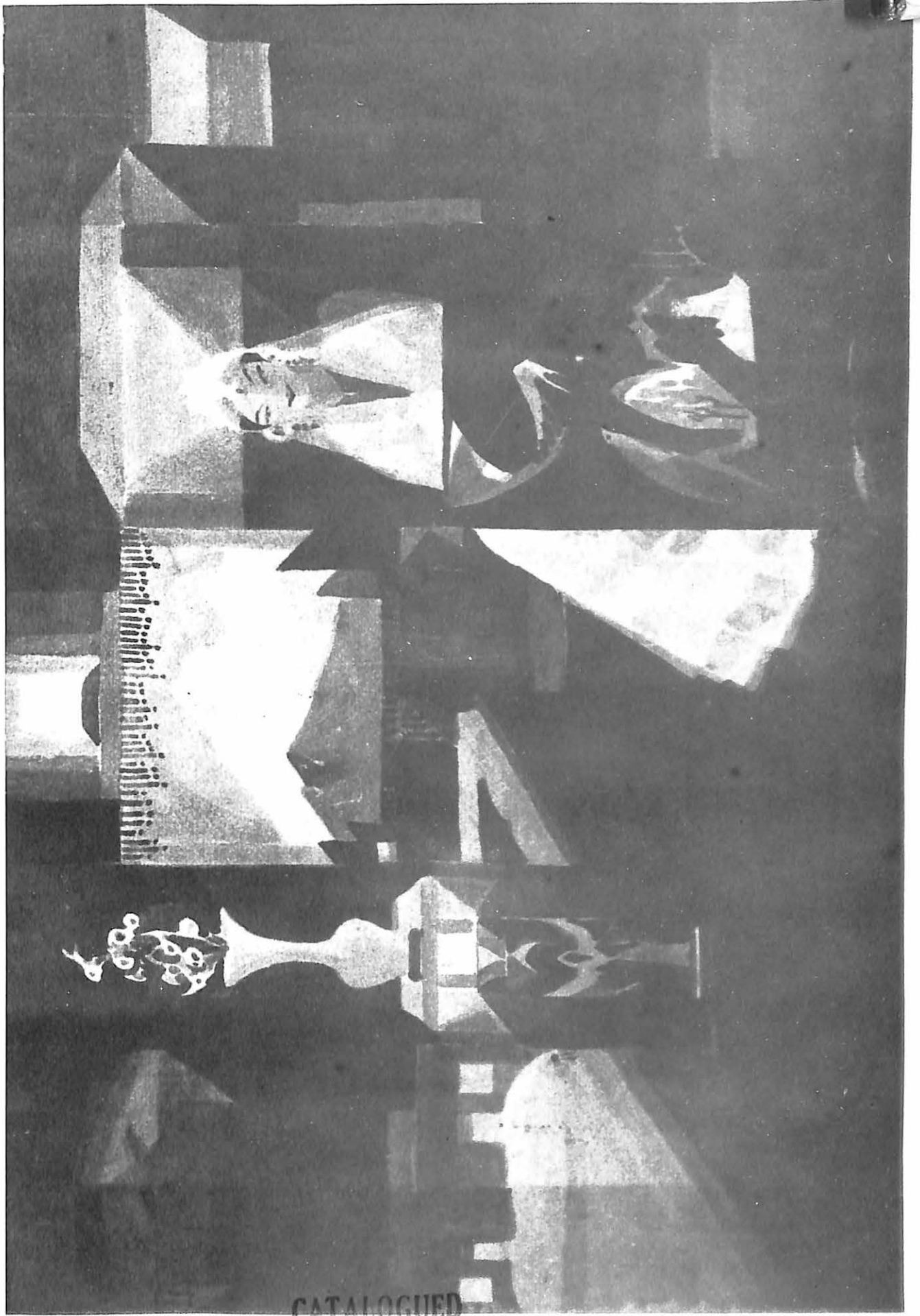
Although the collection of graphics by Indian artists is rich, only four are chosen for want of space (catalogue Nos. 19, 20, 21 & 22).

The selected examples of International modern art (catalogue Nos. 17, 18, 23 & 24) provide atleast some academic basis to study the relation between Indian and International modern art.²²

In this series other publications such as, *A Hand book of Paintings and Graphics*, and *A Hand book of Sculptures* will be published soon.

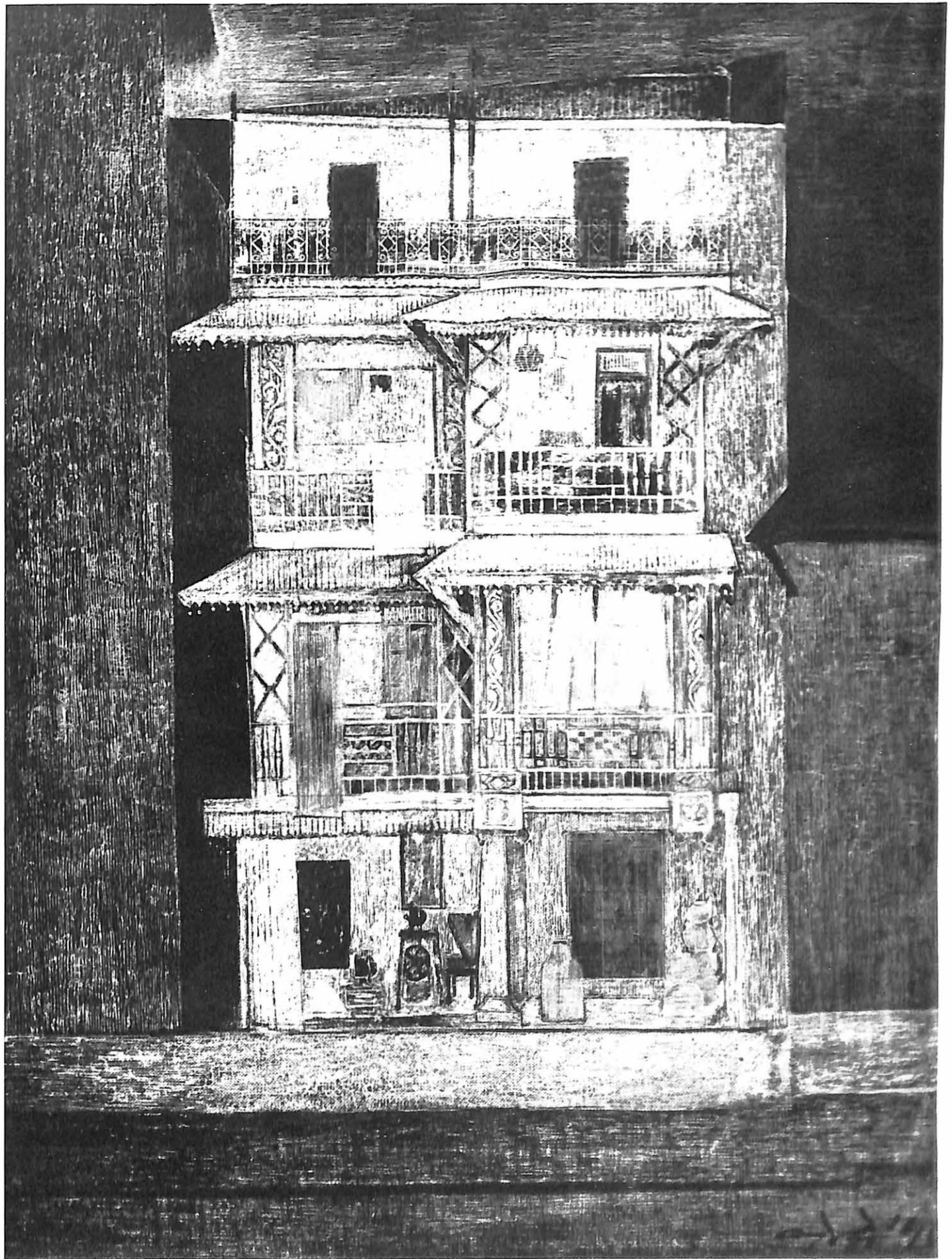
Laxmi P. Sihare

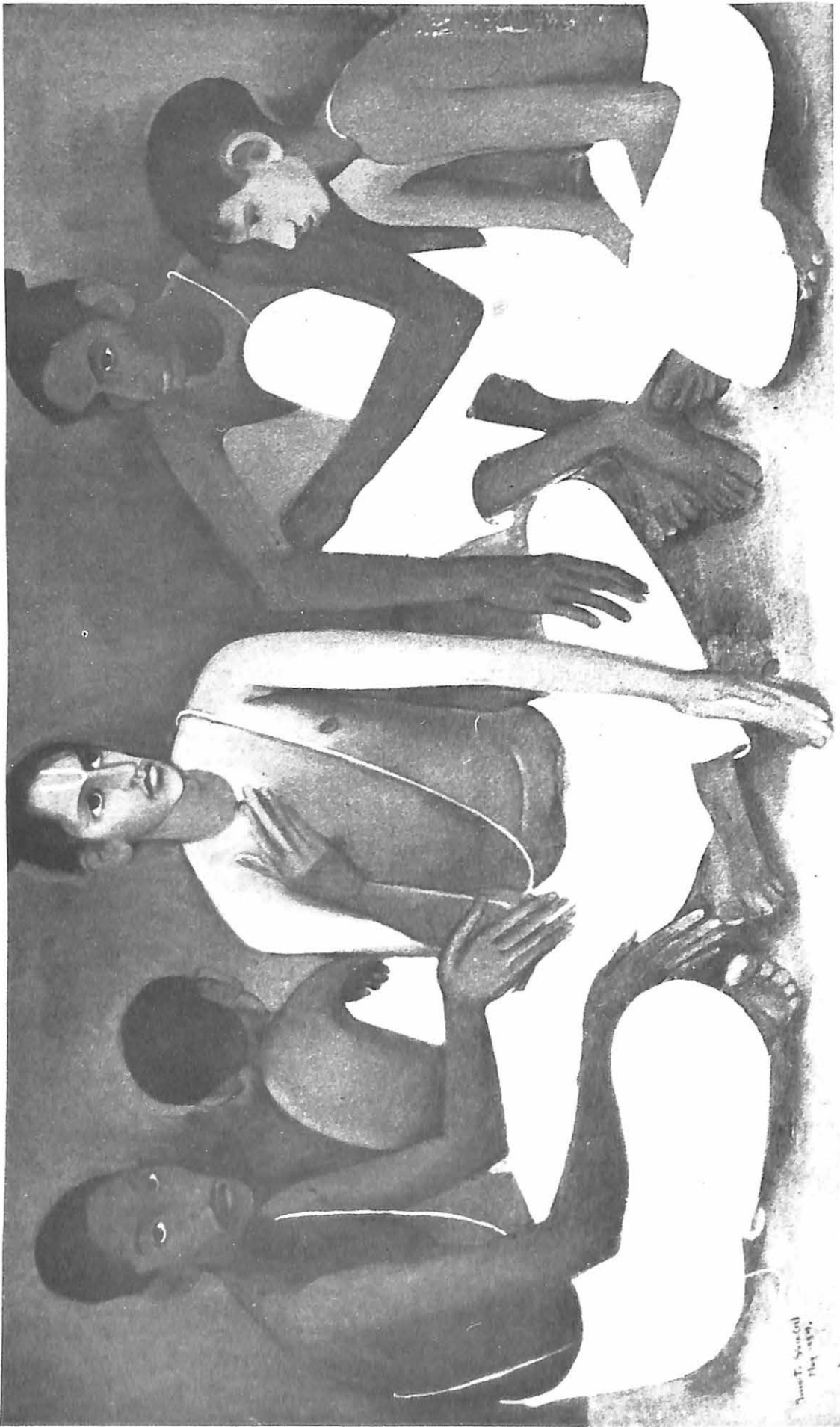
1. For an excellent study of reaction against academic traditions, see Rewald, John: *The History of Impressionism*, New York, The Museum of modern Art, 1961, pp. 19-34; and for the reaction against Impressionism, see Rewald, John: *Post Impressionism, From Van Gogh to Gauguin*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1956, pp. 271-310.
2. For an account of the beginning of oil painting and easel tradition in India see Archer, W. G. and Mildred: *Indian Painting for the British 1770-1880*, London, Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. 17-18.
3. Ibid. pp. 7-19.
4. Ibid. pp. 20-72.
5. See Gladstone Solomon, W.E. : *Essays on Mogul Art*, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1932, pp.68-69.
6. For the art of Ravi Verma see Chaitanya, Krishna: *Ravi Verma*, New Delhi, Lalit Kala Akademi, 1960; and also Ramachandra Rao, P. R. : *Modern Indian Painting*, Madras, Rachana, 1953, p. 9.
7. See Appasamy, Jaya : *Abanindranath Tagore and the art of His Times*, New Delhi, Lalit Kala Akademi, 1968, pp. 15-32.
8. Ibid. pp 108-110.
9. See Archer, W. G. : *India and Modern Art*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959, pp. 34-35.
10. Originally from Tagore, Rabindranath : *The Meaning of Art*, and *Art And Tradition*. For ready reference see Archer, Ibid. p. 54.
11. For a study of the works of artists belonging to the Group of Pont-Aven, see Rewald, John: *Post Impressionism*, Op. Cit. pp. 271-310. For their mature artistic theories, see Rookmaaker, H.R. : *Synthetist Art Theories*, Amsterdam, Swets and Zeitlinger, 1959, pp. 153-165. For a detailed early study on Sher Gil see Khandalavala, Karl : *Amrita Sher Gil*, Bombay, New Book Co. Ltd., 1944.
12. See Archer, W. G. : *India and Modern Art*, Op. Cit. pp. 100-115.
13. For the historical development of Cubism and Futurism see Barr, Alfred H. Jr. : *Cubism and Abstract Art*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1936; see Rosenblum, Robert : *Cubism and Twentieth Century Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1960; also see Taylor, Joshua C. : *Futurism*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1961.
14. For a study of Expressionism see Selz, Peter : *German Expressionist Painting*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1957; also see Ritchie, Andrew Carnduff (Editor) : *German Art of the 20th Century*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1957.
15. For a study of Surrealism see Rubin, William S. : *Dada, Surrealism and their Heritage*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1968.
16. For a study of Abstract painting see Seuphor, Michel : *Abstract Painting—50 years of Accomplishment from Kandinsky to the Present*, New York, Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1961.
17. For a study of Auguste Rodin's bronze sculpture see *Rodin*, London, Phaidon Press, 1951. For Antoine Bourdelle see Read, Herbert : *A Concise History of Modern Sculpture*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1964, pp. 20-21; also see Das Gupta, Prodosh : *My Sculpture*, Calcutta, Oxford Book and Stationery Co., 1955, p. 20.
18. For a study of Expressionist sculpture see Read, Herbert : *A Concise History of Modern Sculpture*, Op. Cit. pp. 25-42. For influences of Jacob Epstein on Ramkinker compare plates 23 and 25 of this publication.
19. See Rickey, George : *Constructivism Origins and Evolution*, New York, George Braziller, 1967, pp.17-67.
20. See Rubin, Op. Cit. pp. 114-124.
21. For iron sculptures based on blow-torch technique see Hammacher, A.M. (Editor) : *Leon Degand Gonzalez*, London, A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1958.
22. Although an authoritative detailed study of the inter-relation of Indian and International modern art has yet to be undertaken, some traces of this are found in Ramachandra Rao, P.R. : *Contemporary Indian Art*, Hyderabad (Published by the Author), 1969, pp. 9-27.

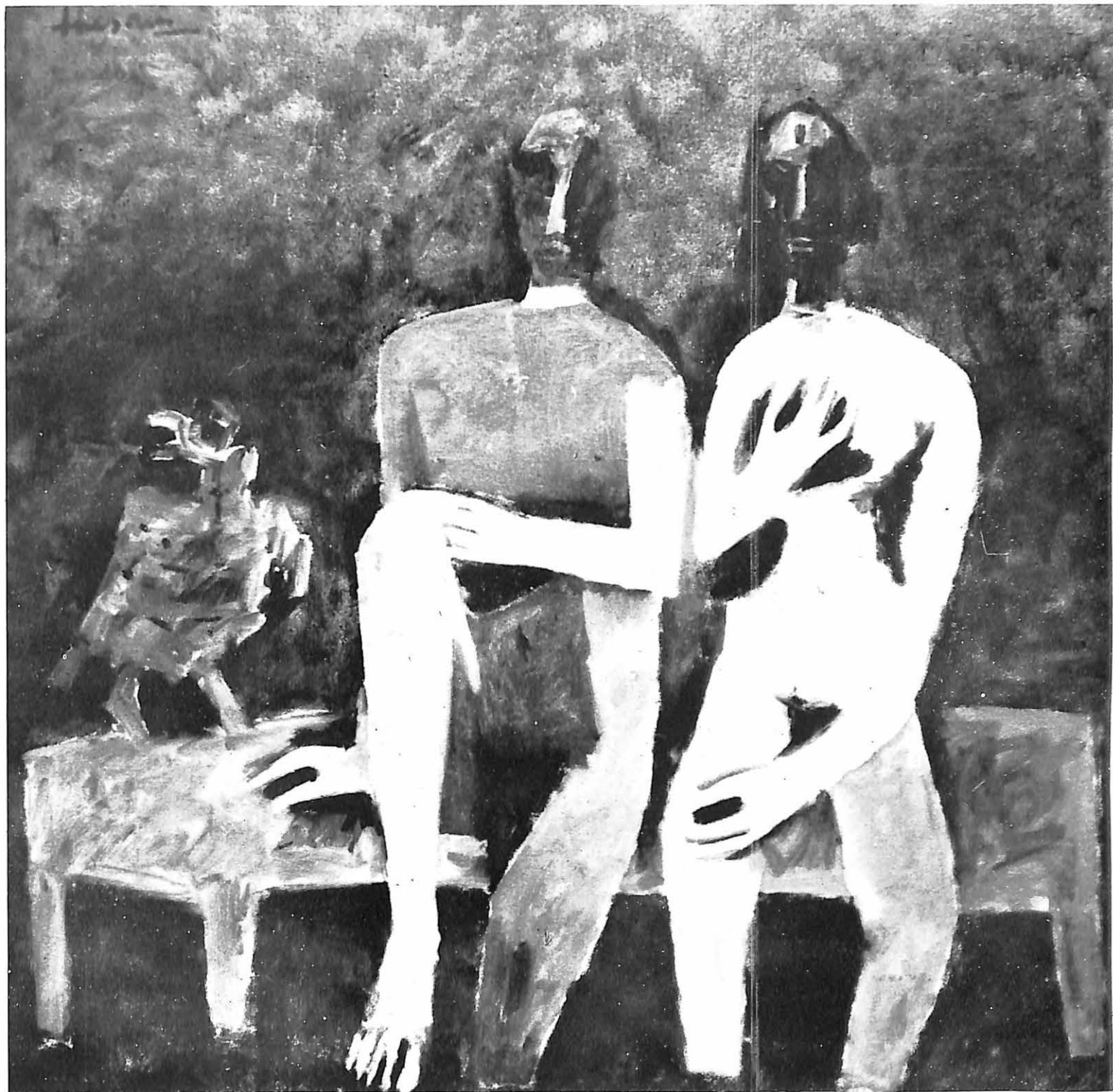


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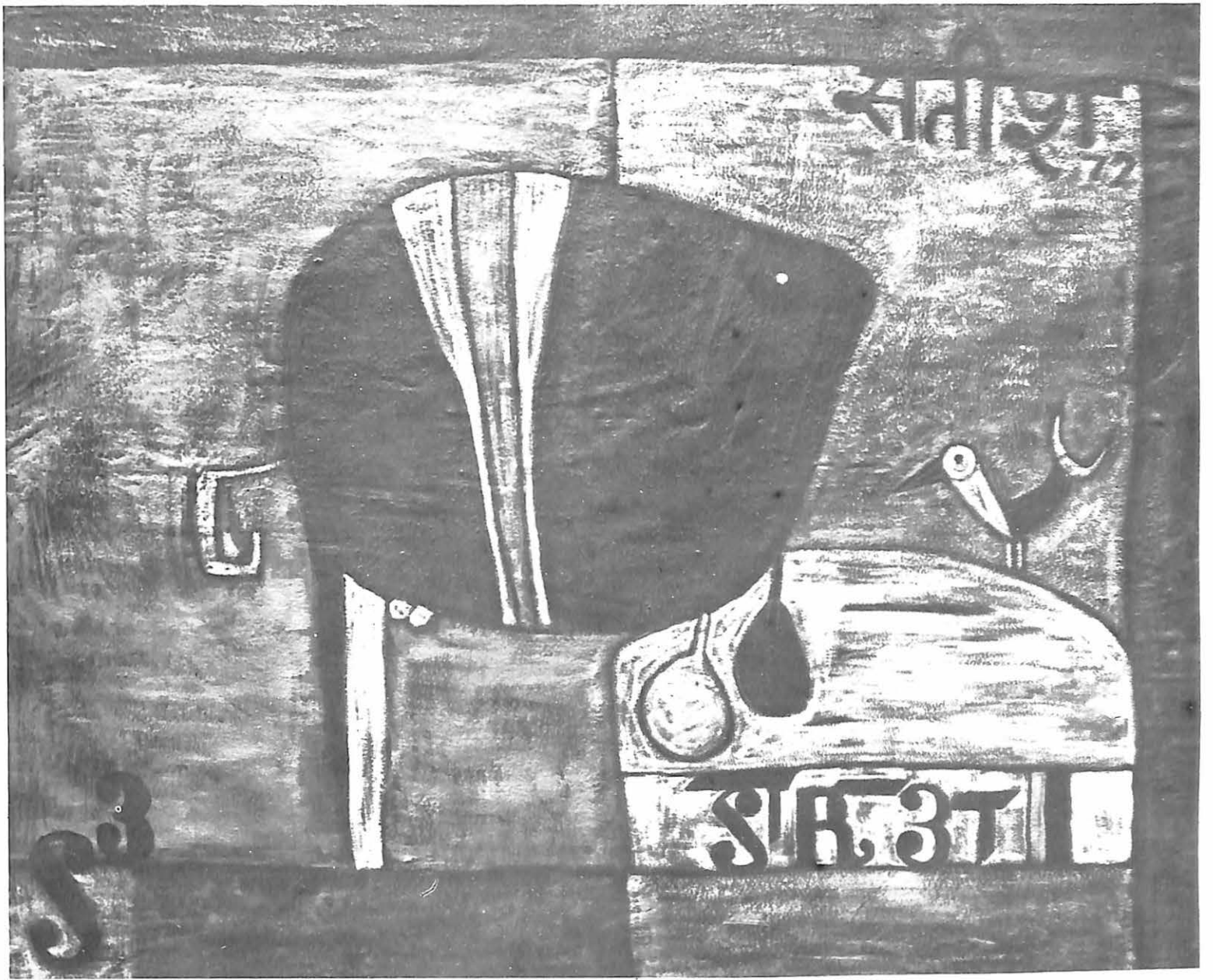






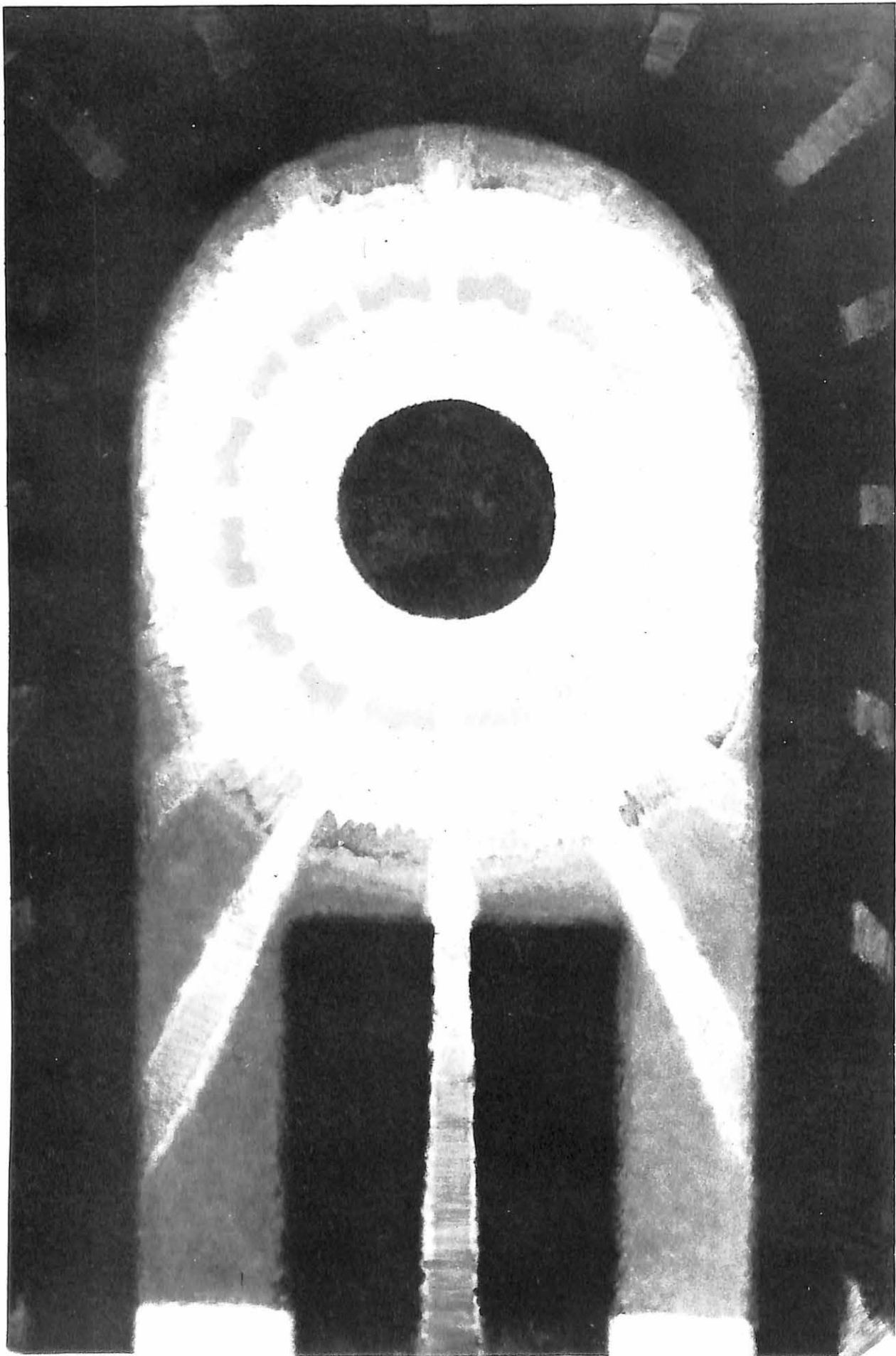


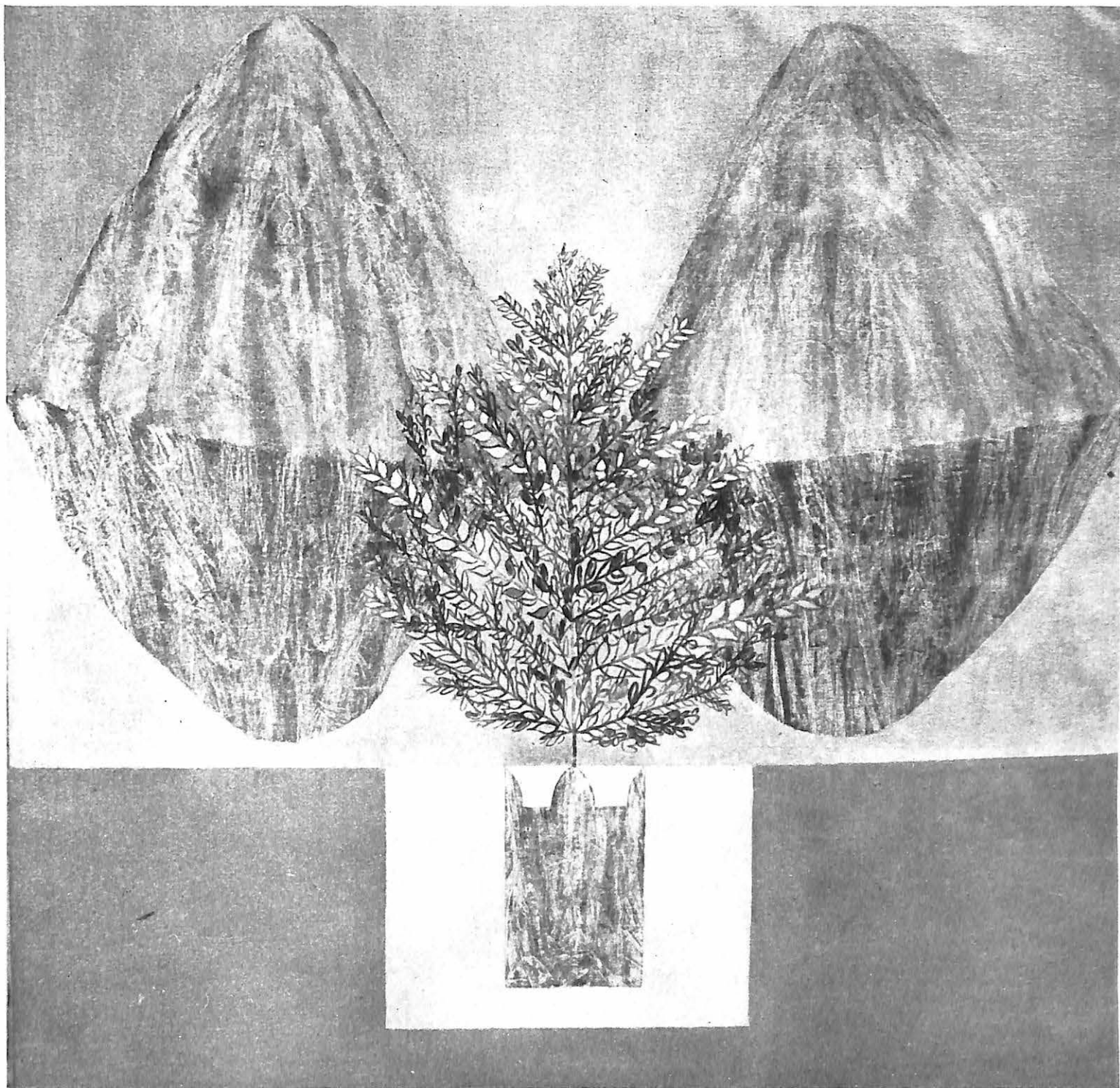




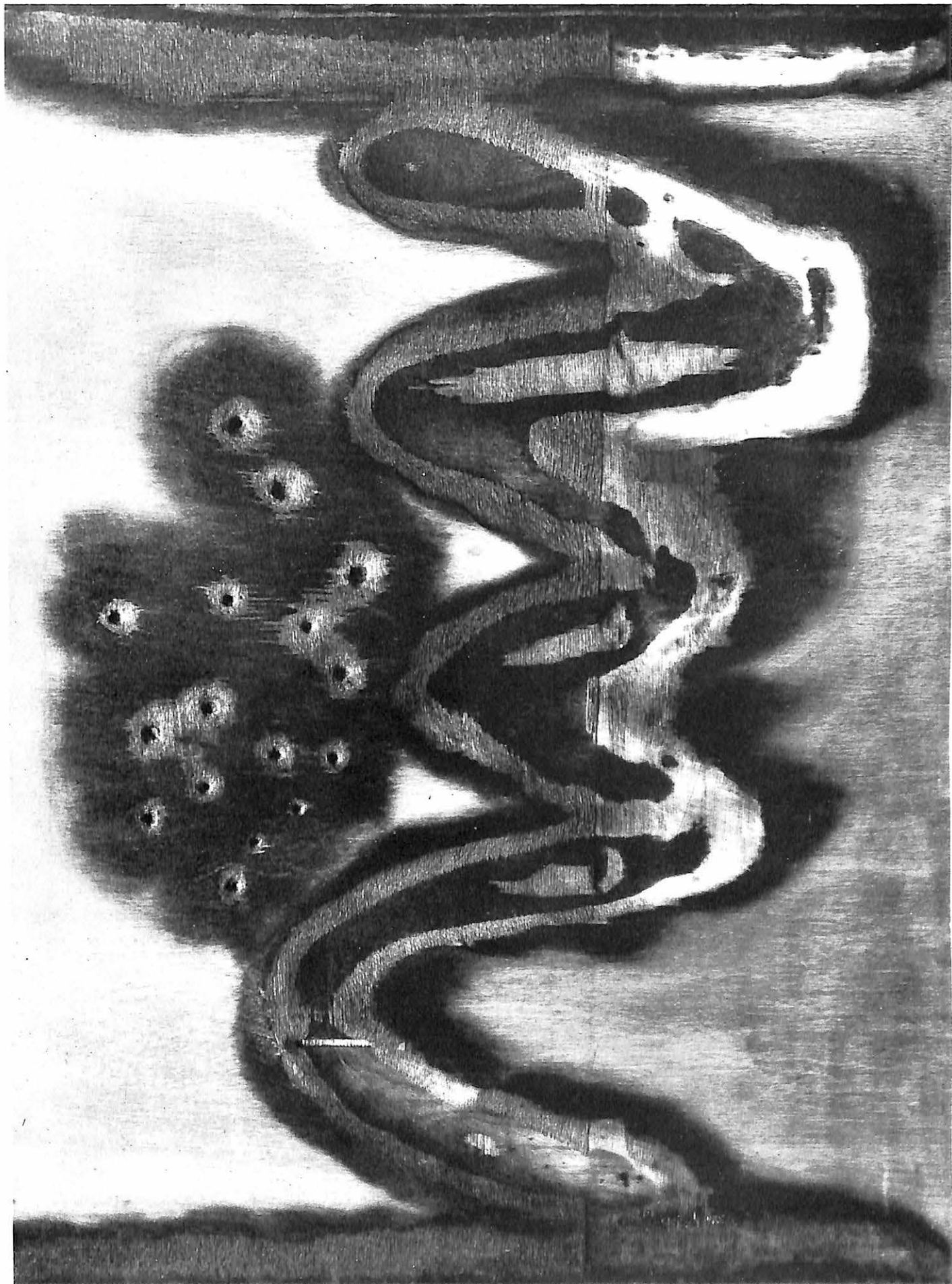




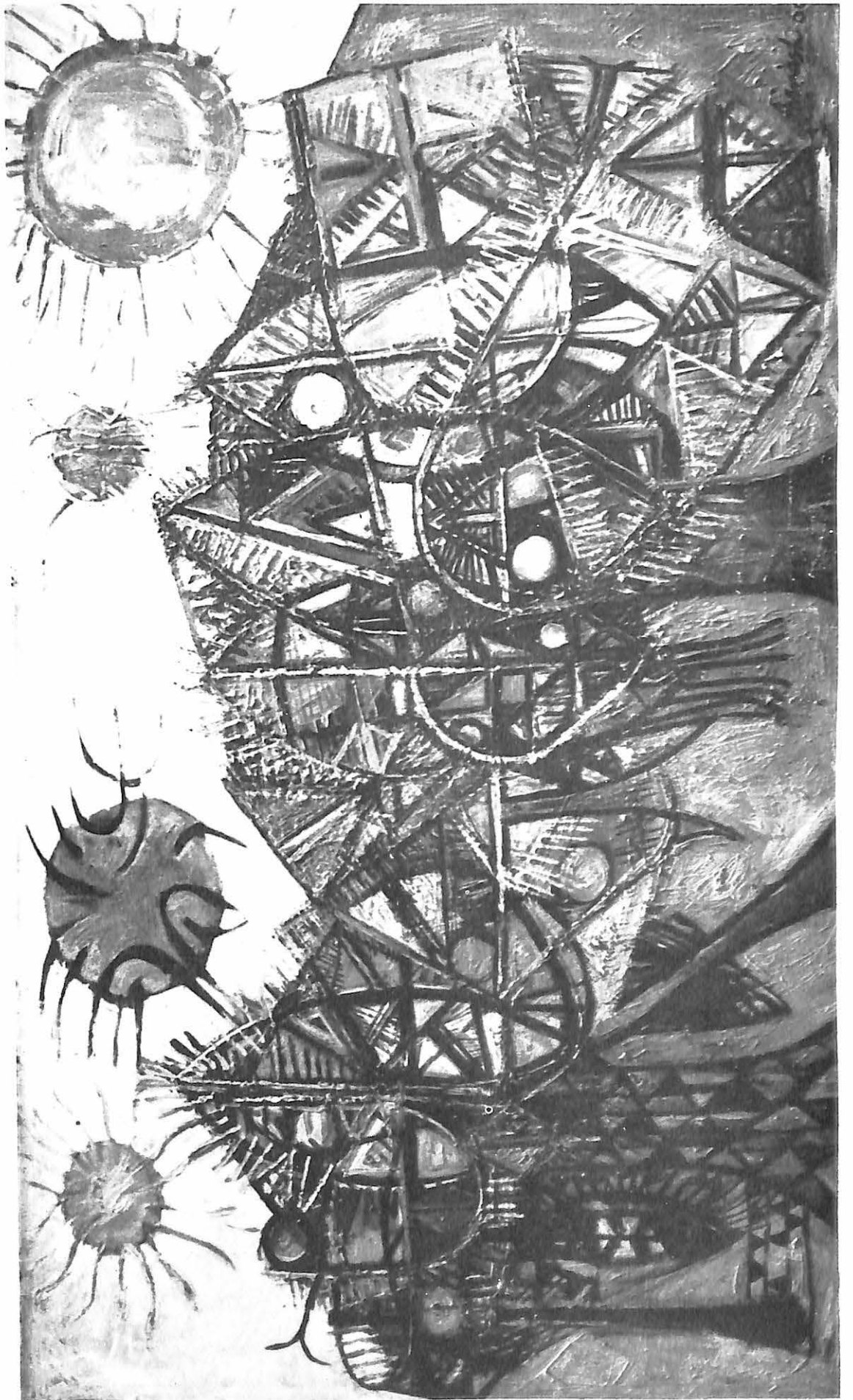


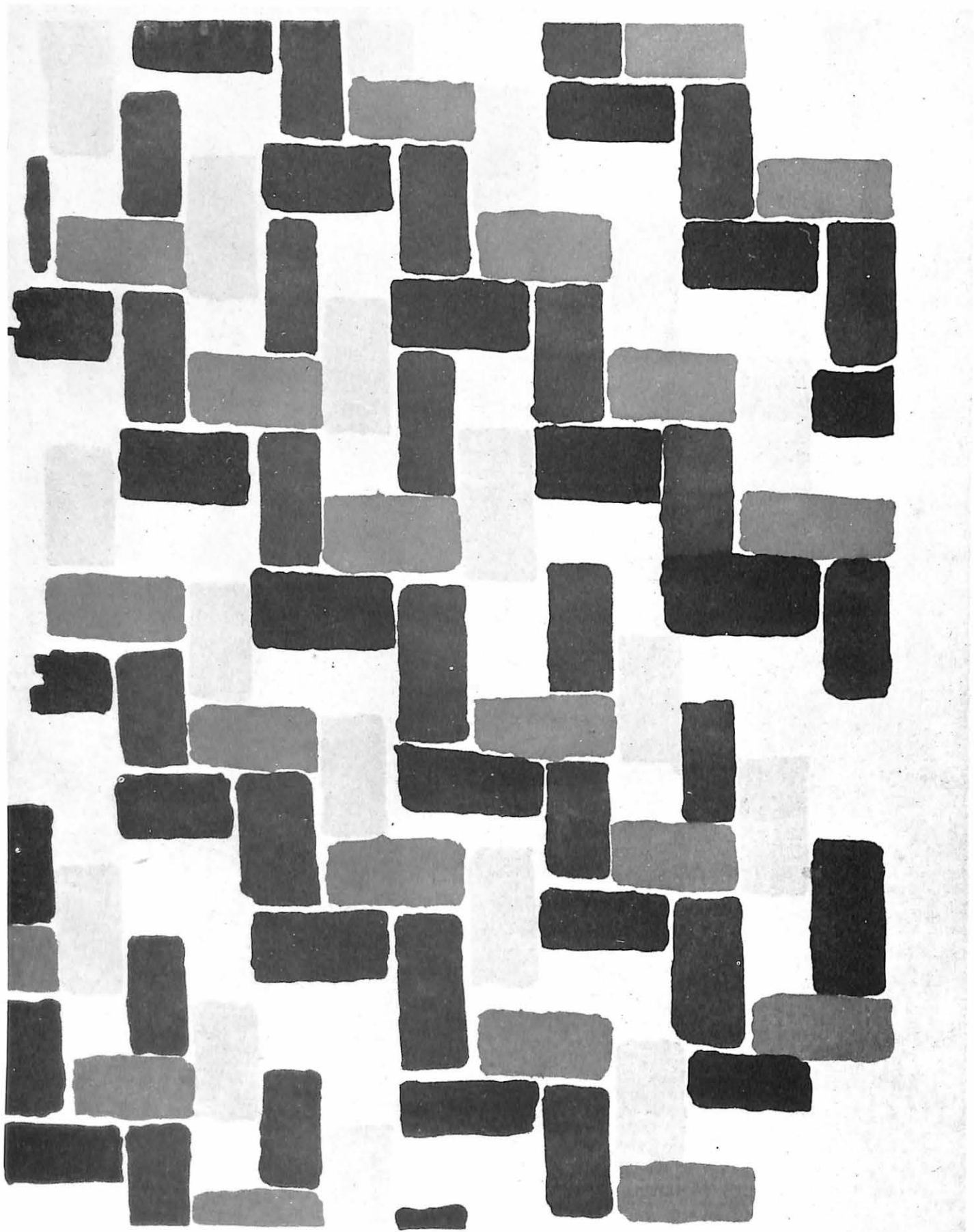




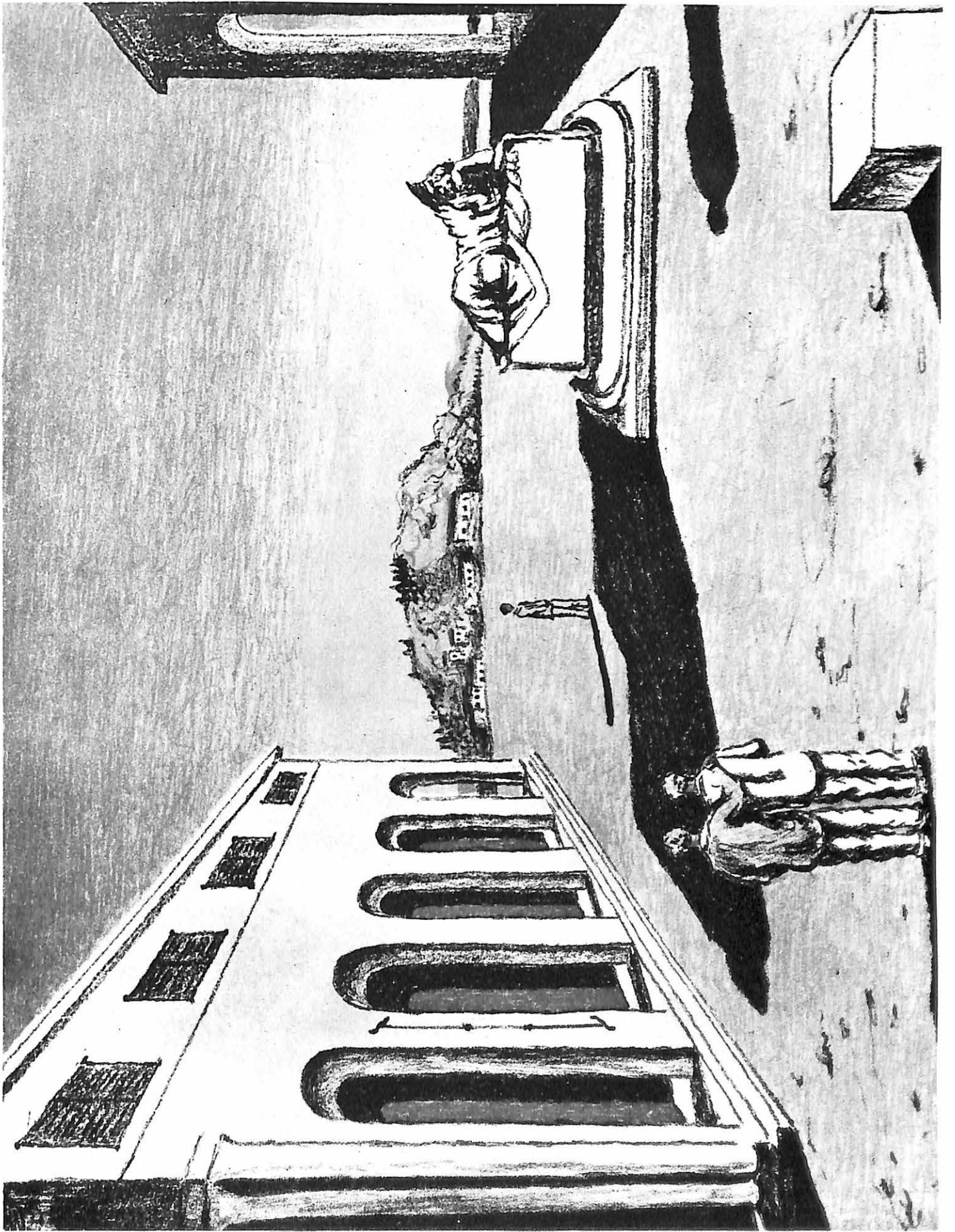








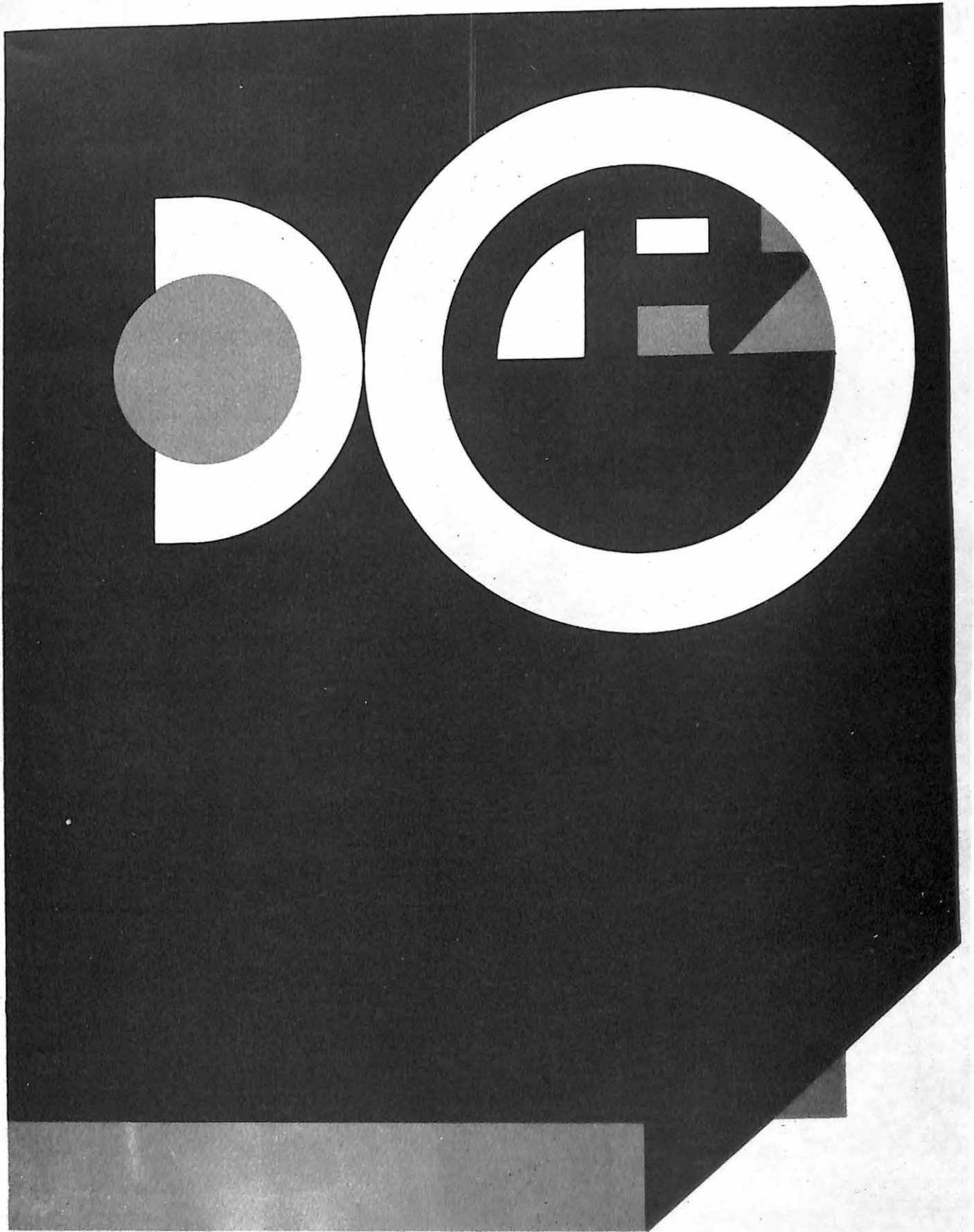
Sonia Delaunay

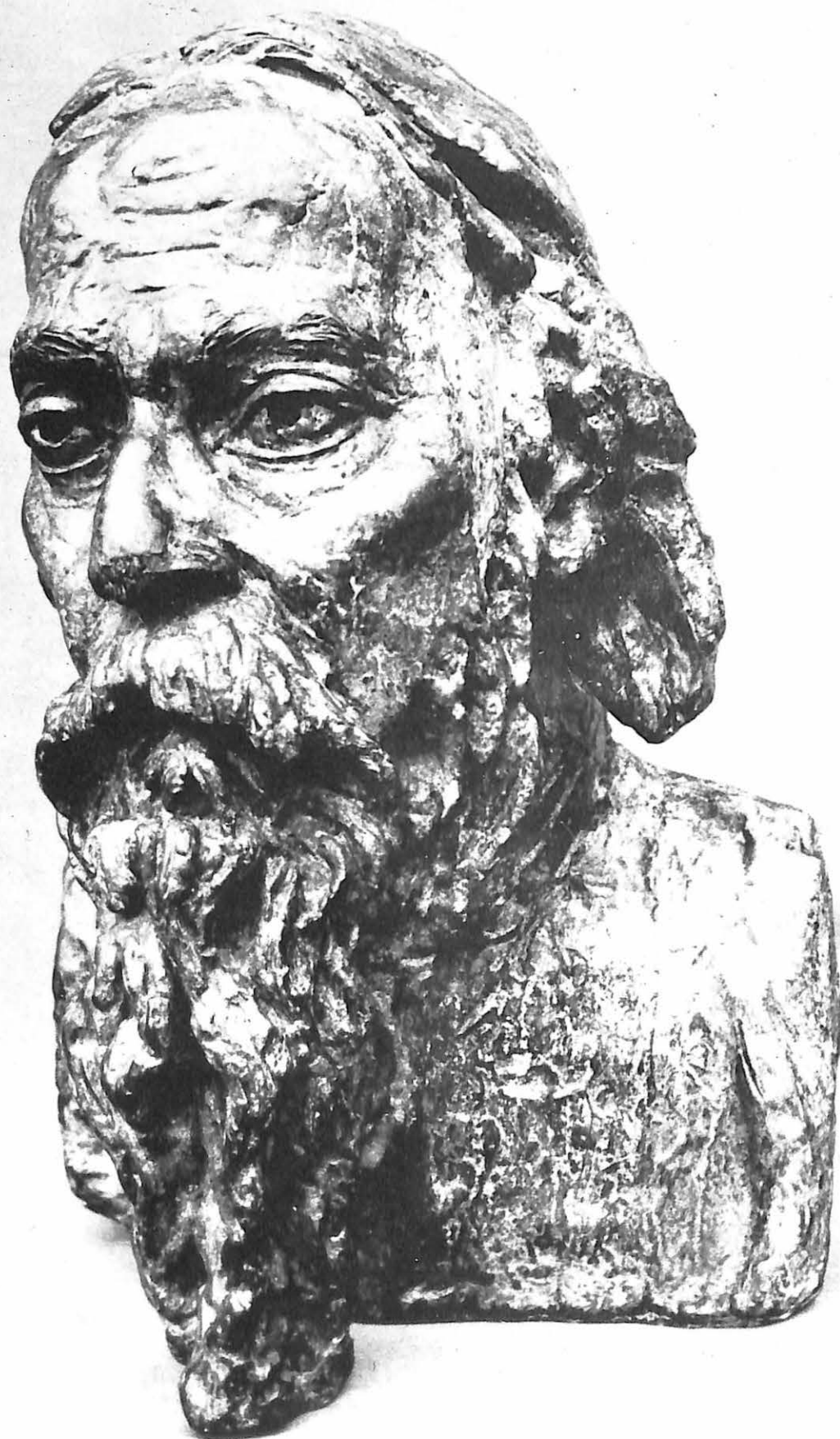


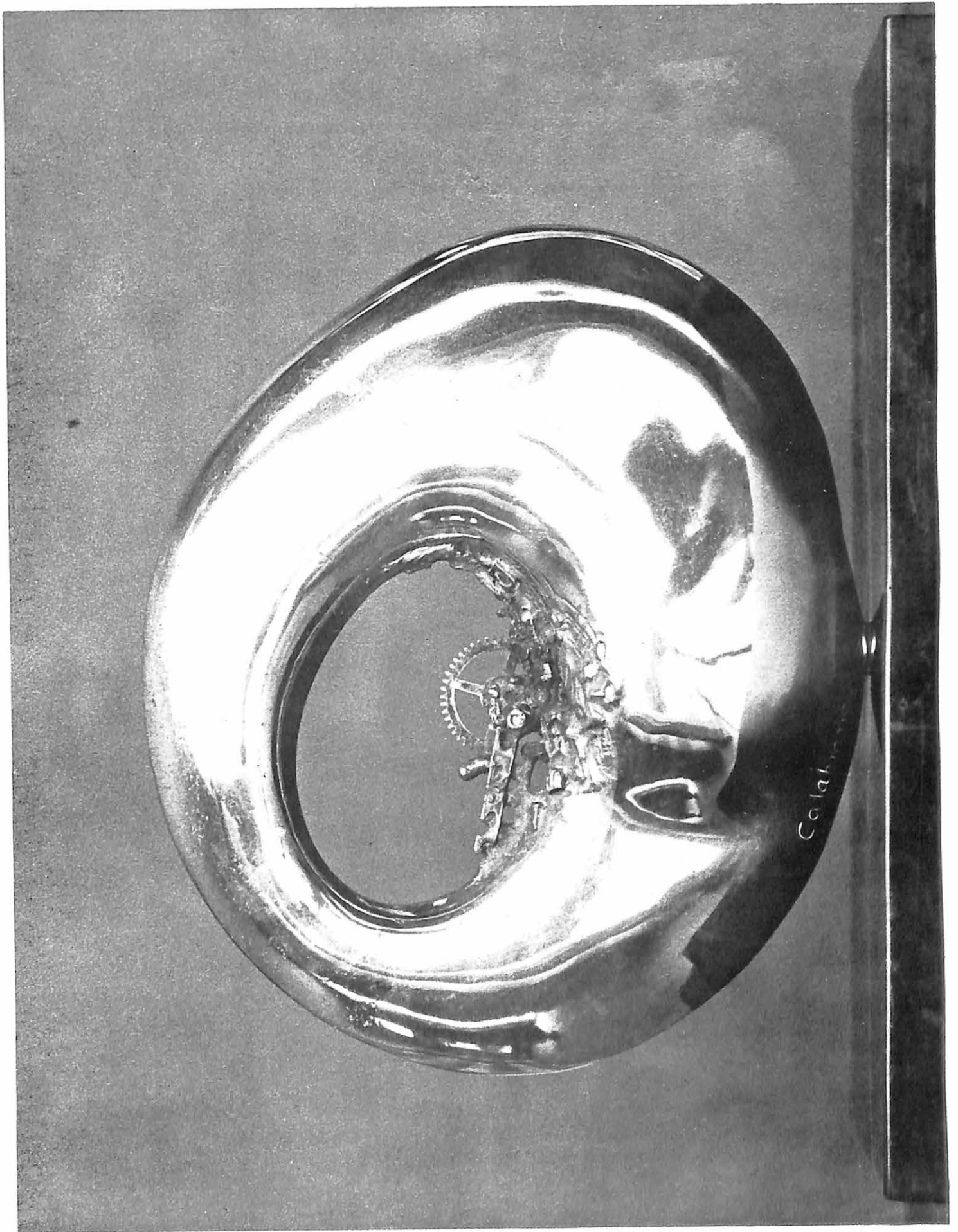






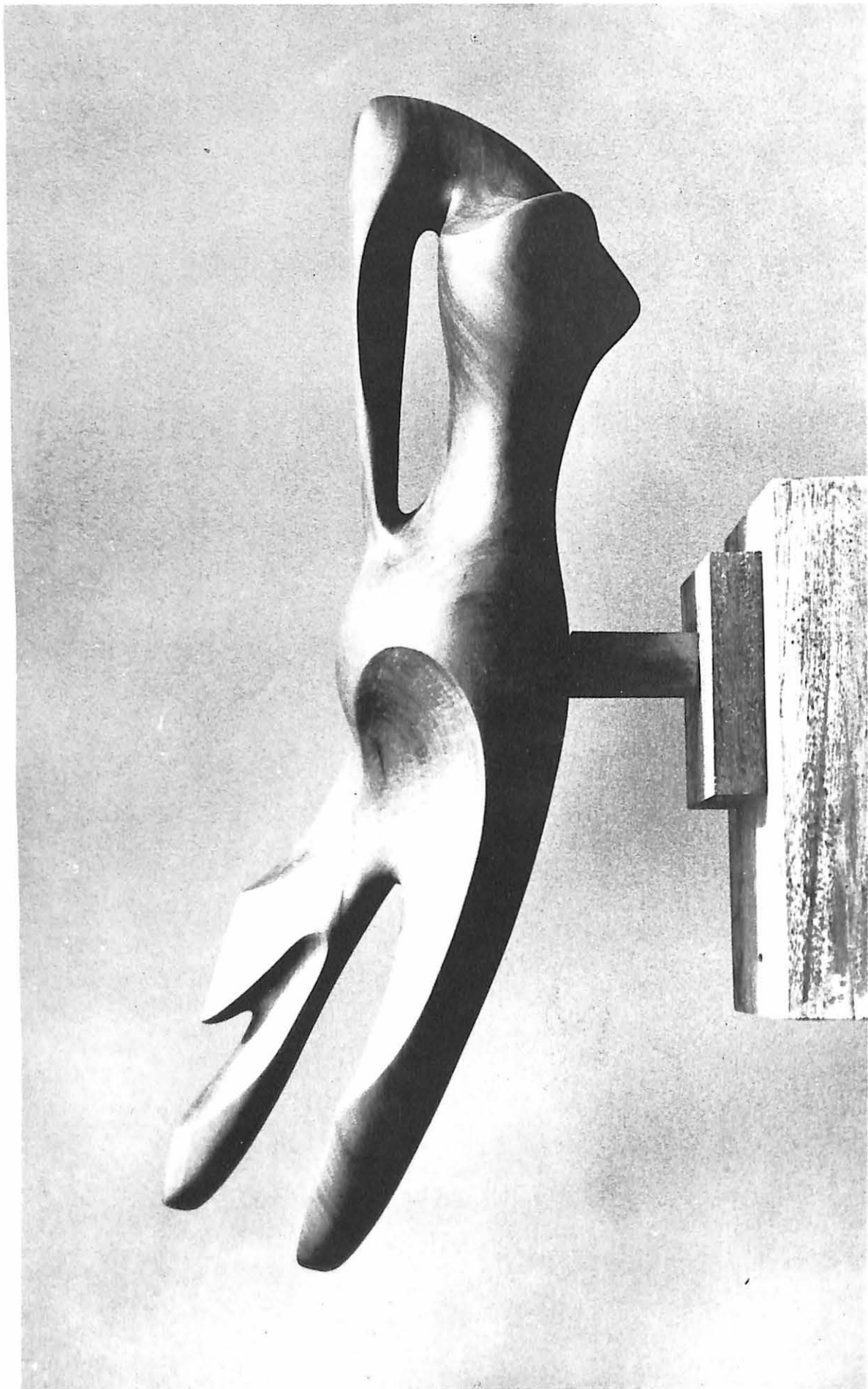


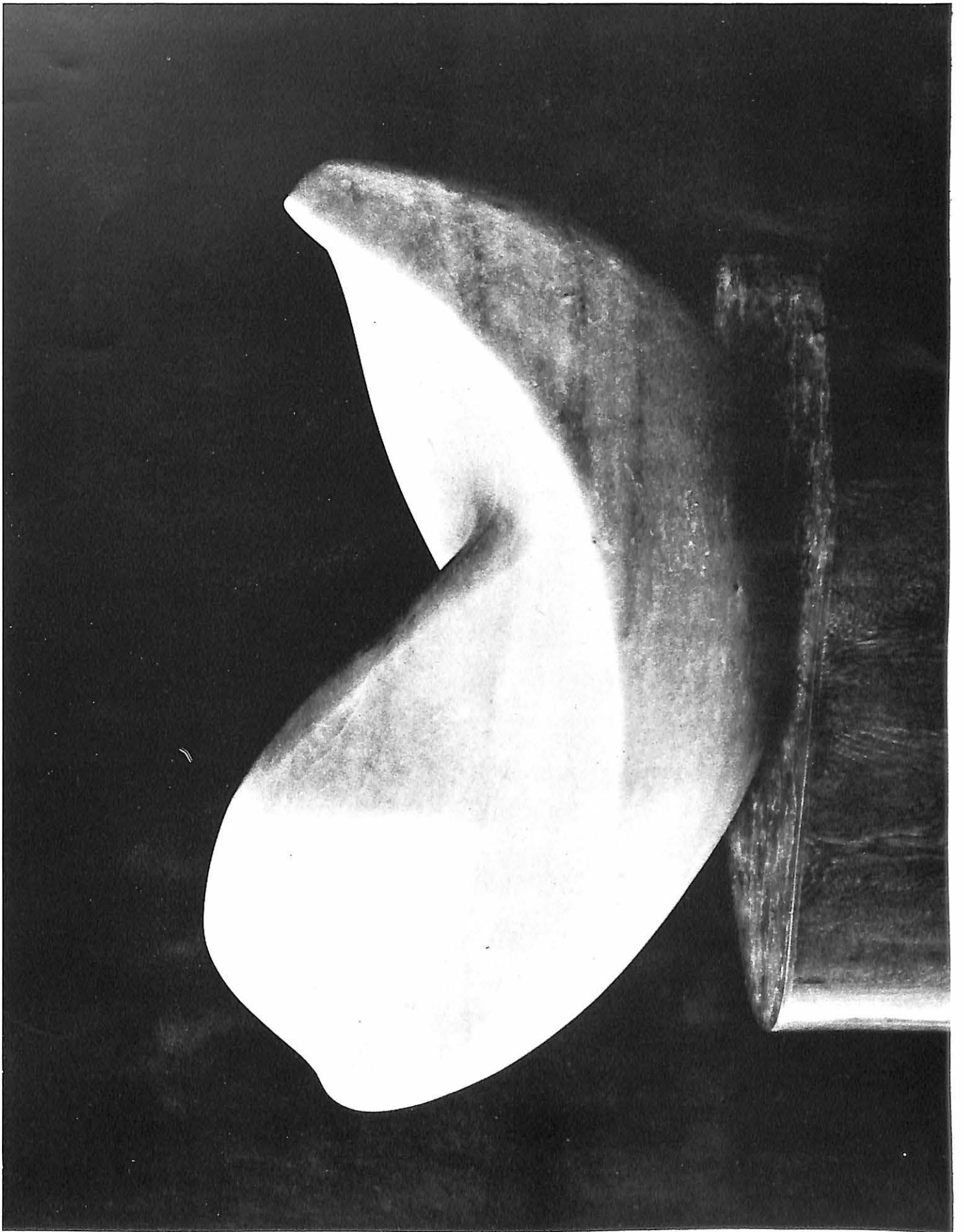






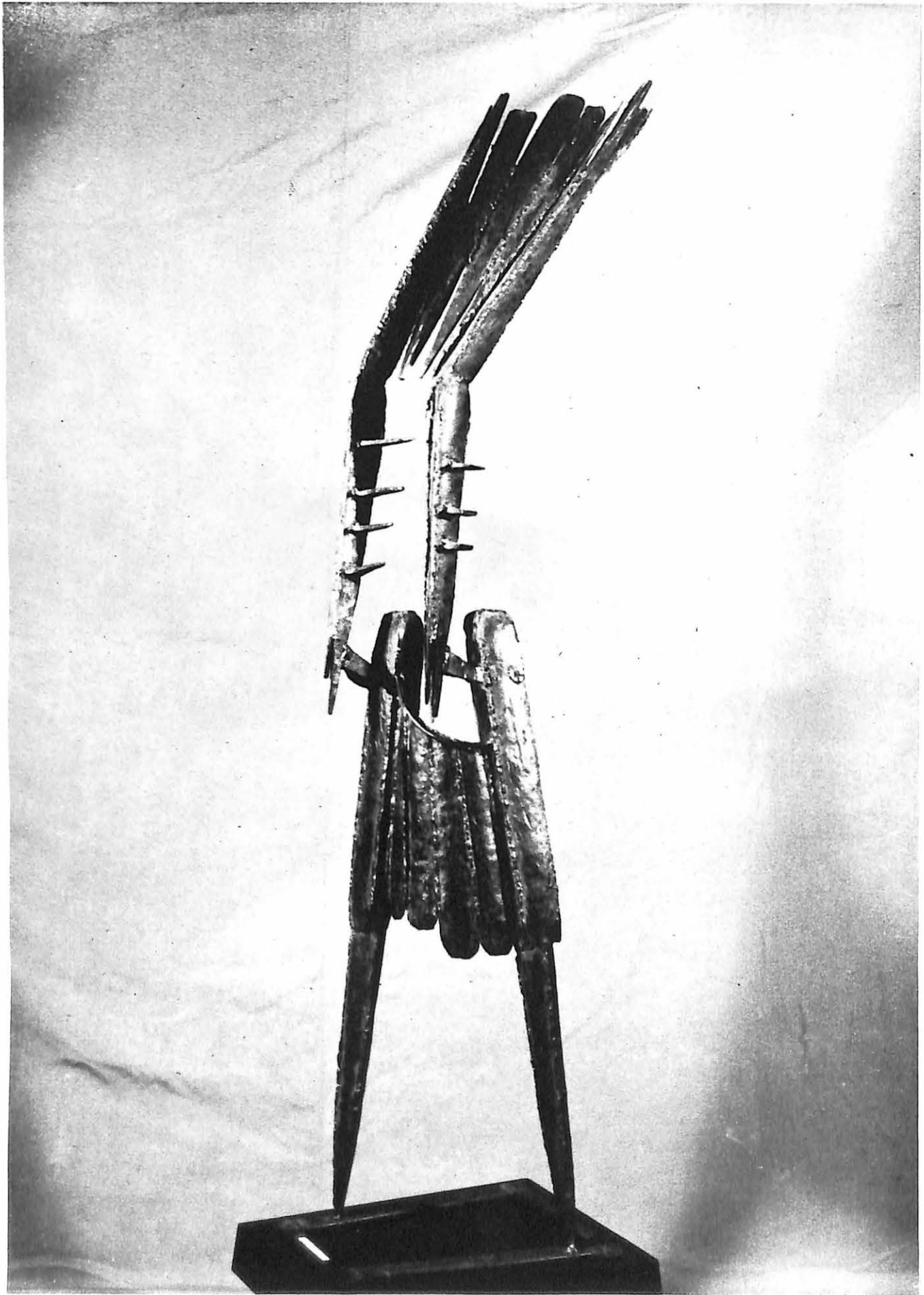


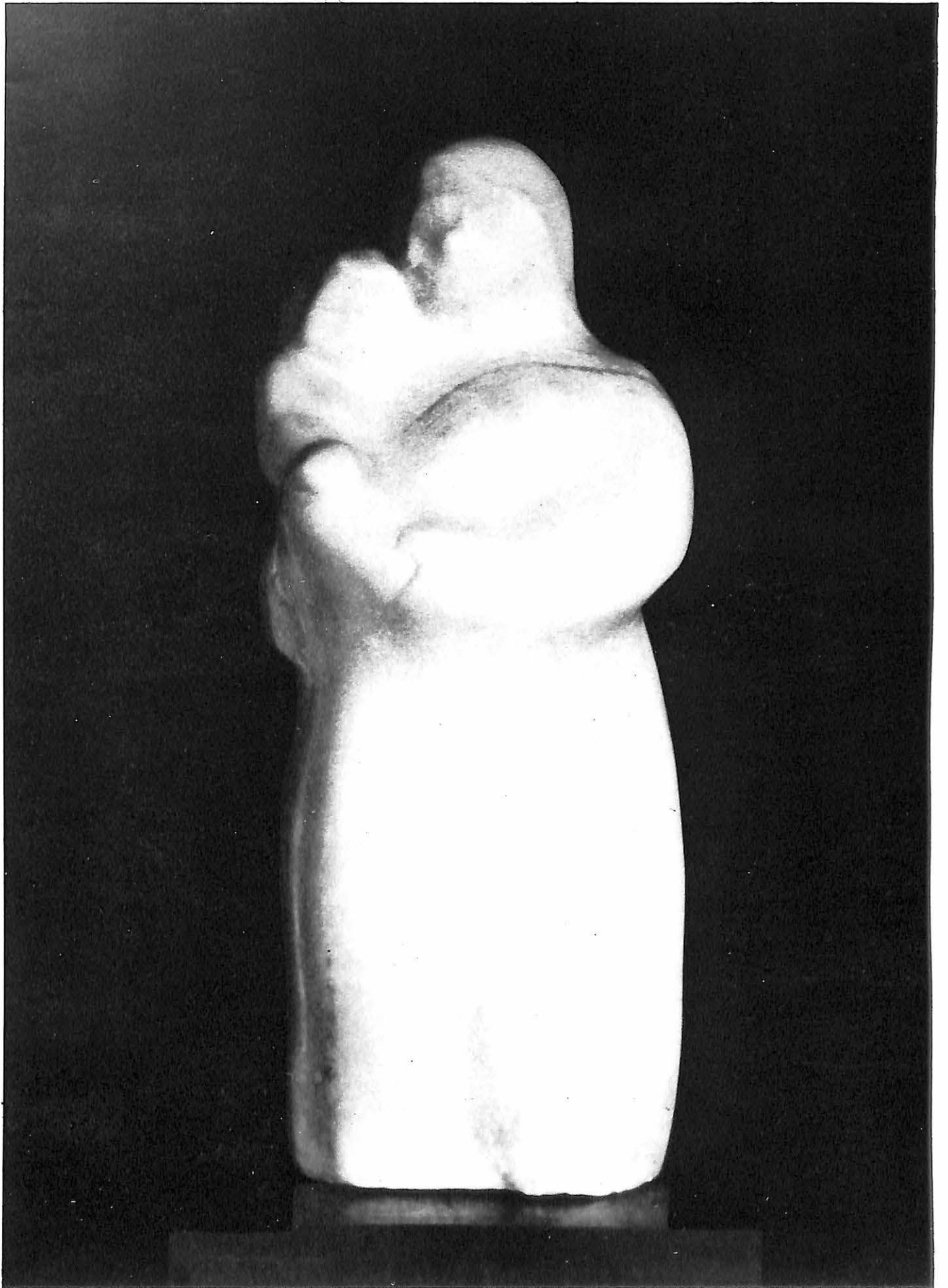


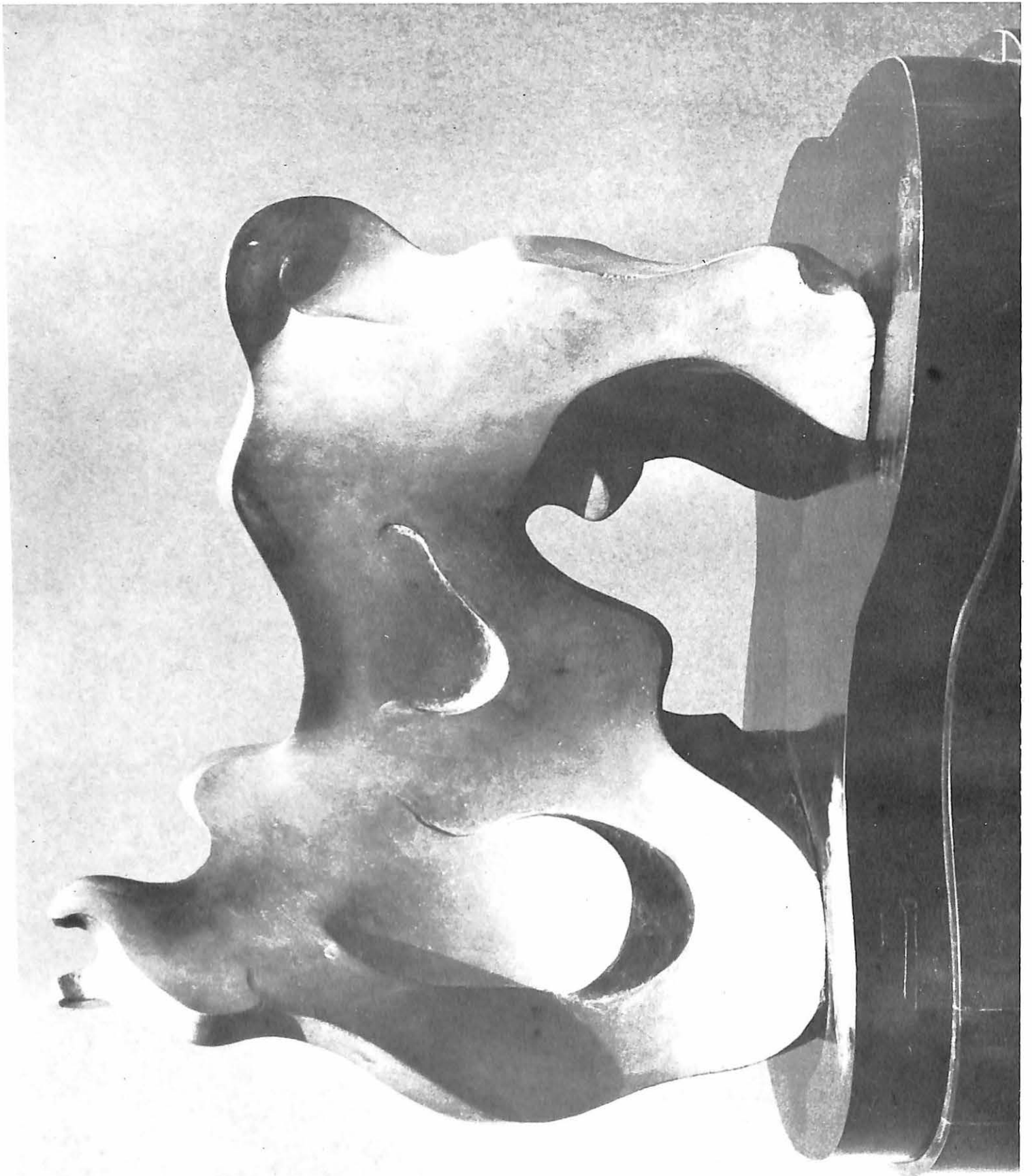


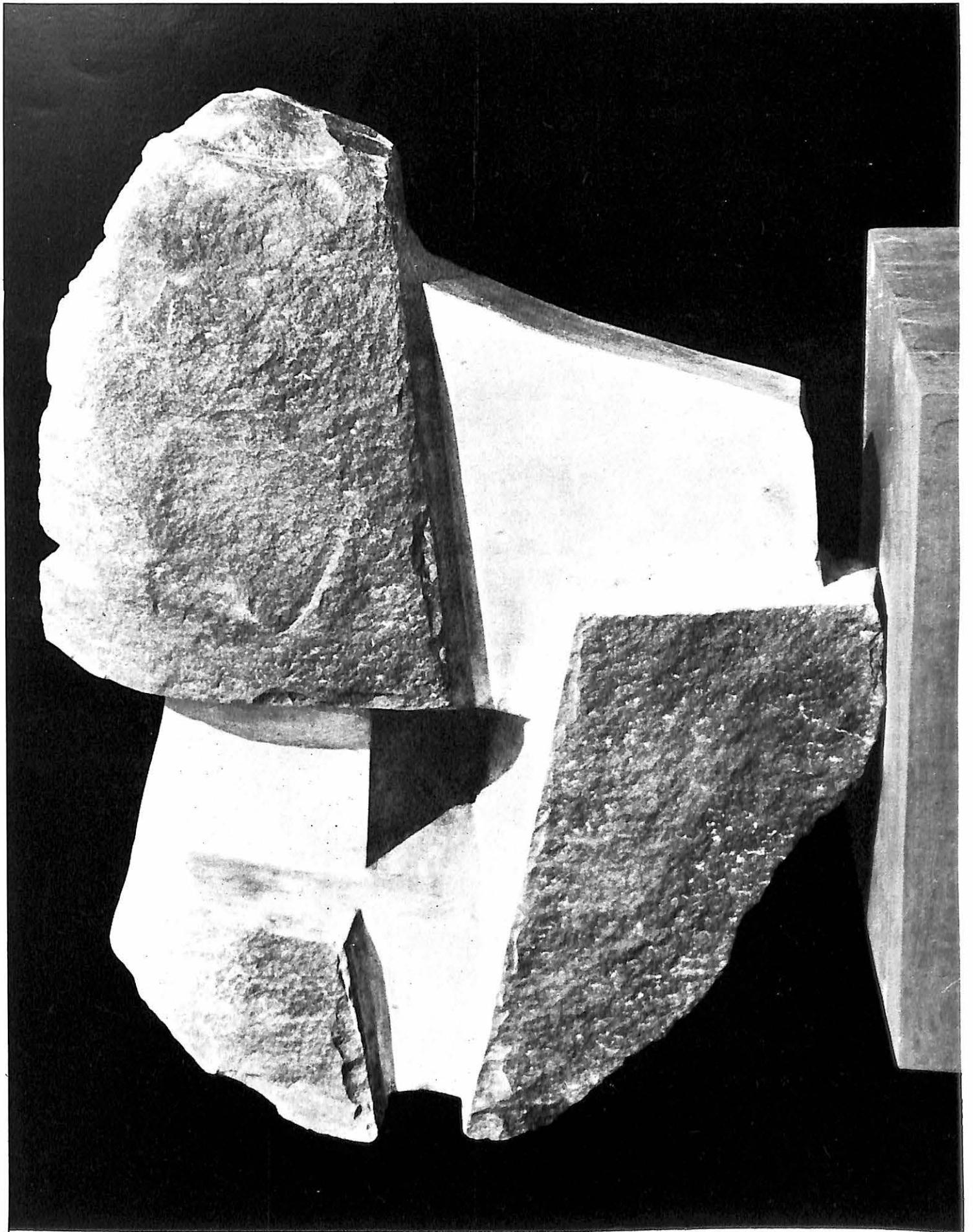










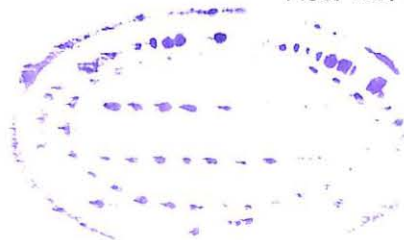




LIST OF REPRODUCTIONS

1. Tagore, Rabindranath (1861—1941)
Indian
Bird, Undated
Ink on paper, 17.8 × 22.8 cms.
Acc. No. 1224 (Detail, Cover)
2. Tagore, Gaganendranath (1867—1939)
Indian
Himalayan Bride, 1927
Water colour, 38 × 26.6 cms.
Acc. No. 2625
3. Roy, Jamini (1887—1972)
Indian
Three Pujarinis, Undated
Tempera on paper, 36.8 × 68.5 cms.
Acc. No. 63
4. Bendre, N. S. (Born 1910)
Indian
Portrait of a house, 1951
Oil on Masonite, 91.5 × 122 cms.
Acc. No. 1760
5. Sher Gil, Amrita (1913—1941)
Indian
Brahmcharis, 1937
Oil on canvas, 146.7 × 88.2 cms.
Acc. No. 70
6. Husain, M.F. (Born 1915)
Indian
Hawk Unidentified, Undated
Oil on canvas, 101.5 × 101.5 cms.
Acc. No. 1848
7. Gaitonde, V.S. (Born 1924)
Indian
No Title, 1969
Oil on canvas, 101.5 × 178 cms.
(Partial gift from the artist)
Acc. No. 2563
8. Gujral, Satish (Born 1925)
Indian
No Title, 1972
Oil on canvas, 127.5 × 108 cms.
Acc. No. 2694
9. Khanna, Krishen (Born 1925)
Indian
No Title, 1965
Ink on paper (Sumi), 91.5 × 176 cms.
Acc. No. 2475
10. Samant, Mohan (Born 1926)
Indian
The Three Divine Gossipers, 1966
Mixed media on canvas, 234 × 177.8 cms.
Acc. No. 2395
11. De, Biren (Born 1926)
Indian
June '70, 1970
Oil on canvas, 122 × 182.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2481
12. Swaminathan, J. (Born 1928)
Indian
Tulsi, 1969
Oil on canvas, 127 × 127 cms.
Acc. No. 2444
13. Santosh, G.R. (Born 1929)
Indian
Paralysed, 1965
Oil on canvas, 94 × 129.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2398
14. Patel, Jeram (Born 1930)
Indian
Contour, 1962
Wood and Blow Lamp, 122 × 91 cms.
Acc. No. 2216
15. Dave, Shanti (Born 1931)
Indian
Painting, 1970
Oil and mixed media on canvas,
174 × 223 cms.
(Partial gift from the artist)
Acc. No. 2504
16. Chandra, Avinash (Born 1931)
Indian
Orchard, 1960
Oil on Board, 152.5 × 91.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2008
17. Delaunay, Sonia (Born 1885)
French
No Title, Undated
Gouache, 18 × 24.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2632
18. de Chirico G. (Born 1888)
Italian
No Title, 1970
Lithograph, 57 × 45.8 cms.
(Gift from Shri Bimal Banerjee)
Acc. No. 2642



19. Krishna, Kanwal (Born 1910)
Indian
Excavation, 1967
Etching, 22 × 14.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2415
20. Hore, Somnath (Born 1921)
Indian
Birth of a white rose, 1961
Etching, 44 × 50 cms.
Acc. No. 2346
21. Reddy, Krishna (Born 1925)
Indian
Maternity, 1957
Etching, 32 × 44.5 cms.
Acc. No. 1979
22. Narendra (Born 1922)
Indian
The Moon, 1963
Print on paper, 22 × 23 cms.
Acc. No. 2346
23. Epstein, J. (Born 1880)
British
Head of Rabindranath Tagore, 1926
Bronze, 51 × 33 × 23 cms.
Acc. No. 1969
24. Calabrone, Domenico (Born 1928)
Brazilian
No Title, Date not known
Brass, 21 × 17.5 × 4 cms.
(Gift of the artist through Brazilian
Embassy, New Delhi)
Acc. No. 2506
25. Ram Kinker (Born 1910)
Indian
Guru Abanindranath Tagore, 1943
Bronze, 39 × 29 × 25 cms.
Acc. No. 2506
26. Das Gupta, Prodosh K. (Born 1915)
Indian
In Bondage, 1943
Bronze, 60 × 103 × 67 cms.
Acc. No. 2184
27. Kar, Chintamani (Born 1915)
Indian
Flight, 1962
Wood, 111.8 × 29 × 21.5 cms.
Acc. No. 2558
28. Chaudhuri, Sankho (Born 1916)
Indian
Reclining Figure, 1971
Pink Marble, 68 × 38 × 40 cms.
Acc. No. 2583
29. Bhagat, Dhanraj (Born 1917)
Indian
I Support the Universe, 1972
Papier mache, 15 × 40 × 5 cms.
Acc. No. 2577
30. Amarnath (Born 1922)
Indian
Anguished Cries, 1971
Bronze, 190.5 × 170 × 46 cms.
Acc. No. 2715
31. Davierwalla, A.M. (Born 1922)
Indian
Icarus, 1963
Iron, 43 × 145 × 30 cms.
Acc. No. 2218
32. Pandya, Mahendra D. (Born 1926)
Indian
Mother and Child, 1958
Marble, 21 × 73 × 30 cms.
Acc. No. 1768
33. Kaneria, Raghav R. (Born 1936)
Indian
The Bull, 1959
Bronze, 41 × 37 × 20 cms.
Acc. No. 1800
34. Katt, Balbir Singh (Born 1941)
Indian
City Square, 1971
Granite, 96 × 72 × 29 cms.
Acc. No. 2471



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