RECENT AMERICAN SCULPTURE AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHANGING ARCHITECTURE

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PREFACE

This paper started out originally to be a rather comprehensive survey of the history of architectural sculpture in the United States. In the course of my research on the subject I noticed that much that had been written on the subject was hampered or warped either by the critic's personal prejudices or by a very superficial approach to the various ideals of our rising sculpture.

I have found a wealth of references to the "new ideals", so-called, of the group which are virtually slaves to the influence of Maillol. Much has been said for the need of "truthfulness" in the handling of materials. Even more has been said for the ideal of making strictly "tectonic" all sculpture, whether architectural or "salon". All in all, I have noticed that critics and certain of the strongest groups have obscured the fundamental issues by a new series of tenets which limit and restrict the discovery of a vitally new and significant sculpture in this country just as did the over powering influences of classicism and the more recent romanticism.

My reaction to much of this popularized criticism and dogmatism is the cause for a new direction in my paper. It seemed to me that there was a need to analyze the very nature of the problems involved, especially in the significance of new demands which the "modern" architecture has placed upon sculpture. In this way we may arrive at certain bases for our judgment or appreciation of the work which has been done.

I have noticed, among other things, that the occasional figures of real strength and personality in recent American sculpture have been able to sell themselves so completely to public and critic alike that they have drawn all eyes to the rather limited field of their own experiments and purposes. The ascetic ideal of Maillol, Zorach, Laurent, Lawrie, and a host of lesser figures imbued with the same zeal of the disciplinarian, and similar ideals of formalism has become the accepted measuring stick of our sculpture. Such figures of strength in differing trends as Archipenko, Milles and Manship are accepted as significant but pigeonholed as special cases while the critics go merrily on their way. Other significant developments such as experimentation in new materials, the rising school of ceramic artists, and experimenters with forms to meet the exigencies of an international style of architecture are treated with magnificent disregard.

This ready acceptance of new tenets of form, really just a return to the basic principles which were observed by the ancients and all subsequent sculptors of importance as well, seems to me to have imbued the field of sculpture with an ascetic ideal/the throttling grip of which has strangled or subdued many of the significant utterances of other rising groups. That there is room for more than the disciplined recitals of form which have characterized most of our recent exhibitions and commissions for architectural sculpture, I am convinced. This paper is a statement not only of the convictions which have resulted from my study in this field, but a setting down of those studies in abbreviated form to warrant such conclusions.

It is my purpose in this thesis to outline the main developments in American sculpture of the so-called modern era, beginning actually with the indelibly stamped Romantic influence of Rodin and continuing up to the present day. With this outline as a starting point I propose to lay the scene for the impact of modern architecture and develop an analysis of the changing problems of form which resulted from that impact.

With this groundwork laid I will discuss some of the outstanding figures now at work along with the reactions of various groups and individuals to the problems of form as presented by the advent of modern architecture and our

Twentieth Century needs.

Using this analytical method as a measuring stick for criticism, I will then give my reactions to these developments and indicate as much as is possible a few of the healthful avenues along which, in my opinion, American sculpture should and will find its way.

INTRODUCTION

This paper does not aim to be a comprehensive historical survey of architectural sculpture in the United States; neither does it concern itself with a cataloguing of all recent work of that type in this country. It is rather my intention to present an analysis and consideration of the current problems, trends and possibilities in this field.

It is more my purpose to examine the status and future of sculpture than it is to limit myself entirely to a consideration of architectural sculpture. A major part of my discussion will involve this phase of plastic art, however, because of its great advance in recent years and its promise of a new role and new impetus for American sculpture.

I start with a brief outline survey of the principal waves of influence in American Twentieth Century sculpture. Here I will confine myself to the simplest statement of the development up to the time when European "modernism" and more especially "modern" architecture made their first impression upon our sculpture.

Having given an economical treatment to the generally recognized developments before the advent of "modern" architecture, I will then turn to a more complete and exacting analysis of the nature of the problem presented by the upsetting of traditional forms and formulae. There I will state as completely as is possible the fundamental issues of materials, techniques, and forms.

My special object here will be to consider what effect if any, the new architecture had, has, or will have upon sculpture, both architectural and 'salon', in regard to forms, responsibility to nature and subject, and materials.

Next I will give, by means of a selected group of representative and independent sculptors, a survey of their response to the changing demands of their art. This will include the progression from the 'artist-mason' (as I have called that group which were craftsmen working on a copy-book basis) to the skilled eclectics, and the significant pioneers. As a further enlargement upon these latest developments I will give as far as is possible an appreciation and consideration of the treasury art projects and other government enterprises which seem at the present time to be the most significant development in American sculpture.

The paper will conclude with a discussion of the basic issues which have evolved from the above survey and analysis

as those ideals, tendencies or demands which most clearly point the way to a strong sculptural art in the United States. In this part I will indicate which figures and groups now working in the field, judged on the basis of this study, seem to possess the most healthy and virile standards and abilities to be employed in the accomplishment of that ideal in this country.

DEFINITION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since our major concern in the course of this study is to center about "architectural sculpture", it is advisable for us to take a stand at the outset as to what the term "architectural sculpture" implies. It can be assumed that "architectural sculpture" need be not only that sculpture which satisfies the requirements and occupies the traditional forms of architecture assigned to it in the past, but also that sculpture which satisfies a need or augments the function or appearance of any style of building today. In this sense it may even include free standing figures which are strategically placed to "humanize" or otherwise enliven the composition of a building.

> "...What is architectural sculpture? In a sense, all sculpture in and about buildings is architectural sculpture; yet, in another more accurate sense, we may restrict the term to that sculpture which is definitely and integrally a part of a building. In this sense, architectural sculpture has been an important factor in many of the world's richest artistic cultures, and from time to time there have been special flowerings which have shown that buildings with sculpture are somehow nobler and more lovable than buildings without, and that, on the other hand, sculpture never achieves its great-

> est dignity, its greatest power over the human mind and imagination until it has become an integral part of building composition..."[1]

In the great artistic "flowerings" of Egypt and Greece, in the Gothic and then once again in less pure form during the Renaissance we can see how intimately connected and interdependent were these two great arts of sculpture and architecture. Each is quite inconceivable in its full greatness without the other. And then, too:

> "...All three of these cultures produced much sculpture that was free-standing and movable, yet it would seem that even the excellence of these single pieces owed much to the discipline, the form sense, the solidity which came originally and essentially in each case from the close relation of the two arts."[2]

While it is probably true, as Mr. Hamlin has said, that sculpture "never achieves its greatest dignity, its greatest power over the human mind and imagination until it has become an integral part of building composition", it is also true that when conceived as an element in the composition of a building sculpture has quite severe restrictions placed upon it. These, while not necessarily being detrimental to the best interests of the sculpture, or the sculptor, nevertheless inhibit the sculptor and limit his

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1 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points 19:767, January, 1938.
2 Ibid.

scope considerably. As Walter Agard said in his recent book on the subject:

> "...It is doubtless true that sculpture sacrifices something of its freedom when it engages in this cooperation. It must, first of all, subordinate itself to its building, even while it retains sufficient dignity of its own so as not to seem inconsequential. It must give no sense either of weakening the stone structure by being gouged out of it, or, on the other hand, of being simply imposed on a building which is already adequate in itself. Its design must make an organic contribution, accentuating those parts that the architect wishes to emphasize..."[3]

What these restrictions properly should be, what the sculptor's responsibility to the architect, and vice versa, should be, and what the best possible relation of sculpture and its sister art, architecture, may be can only be determined by a logical and unbiased approach to the problem in its most fundamental terms. In the past it is not difficult to observe that there has always been an intimate relation between the best sculpture and the best architecture. Even sculpture conceived as an independent unity has, I believe, always been effected, inadvertently at least, by the contemporary architectural forms.

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3 Walter R. Agard, The New Architectural Sculpture, Oxford University Press, New York, 1935, p. 3.

It must not be forgotten that sculpture, in its relation to architecture, may appear in many different roles, each to be judged on how well it succeeds in what it sets out to do. One who looks exclusively for an adherence to an emphasis of tectonic structure must necessarily be disappointed in plastic rendering which sets out to be a mere decorative accent or a piece of a propagandistic nature.

Quoting Mr. Louis Flaccus in his book, The Spirit and Substance of Art:

> "...Sculpture in its historical development is closely related to architecture. In the great temples of Egypt, Assyria, and Greece; in the huge and intricate Gothic cathedrals; and in the slighter, commemorative and civic structures- tombs, shrines, triumphal arches, town halls, and fountains - it has served the double purpose of giving varied decorative effects to masses and lines and artistic form to structures, and of yielding a heightened impressiveness, social and spiritual, to objects, events, ideas..."[4]

One thing becomes evident as we consider the many-sided phases of the architectural sculptor's task: in contrast to the "salon artist", who needs acknowledge no responsibility to anyone else, public or "initiate", the architectural sculptor by the very nature of his task must acknowledge a responsibility to and cooperation with the architect

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4 Louis W. Flaccus, The Spirit and Substance of Art, New York, 1926, Chapter on "Sculpture", p. 110.

and a certain popular dependence as well. His sacred right in the philosophy of "l' art pour l'art" isn't worth a nickel if he is working with an intelligent and creative architect, or especially if he is working with a board of directors. His fine upright figure, as an embodiment of Archipenko's "germ of international sculpture" must suddenly learn to bend. He finds himself in contact and interplay with another mind - in many cases a man more informed and aware of the significant developments in progress and, in his closely-related field, more talented or creative than the sculptor. What his experiences with the "hard-boiled" board of directors will be, it is quite easy to imagine.

Since there exists the restriction that the sculptor must acknowledge both a responsibility to the architect and the public, it remains to be seen what room for really creative effort exists for him. He is, of course, only superficially restricted as to subject matter, and any one of a number of possible solutions are available for him in answer to the architectonic problems involved. His interpretation of the subject matter as well as the form in which he expresses it are essentially his own for him to solve or present according to the dictates of his imagination or artistic principles. How well he succeeds in making the architecture greater, more interesting, or a more powerful expression of his times, in the last analysis, is the

basis for our judgment of him. The artist's individuality is not seriously hampered and the extent of his genius alone is taxed by the complexity of the problem and the number of restrictions placed upon him by that problem. The fact remains that there are successful pieces and unsuccessful pieces, the latter being what they are because of ignorance of the nature of the problem, lack of imagination to produce anything beyond a mechanical solution of that problem, or sheer inability to accomplish either.

Among the most discussed angles of the sculptor's problem of form is that of the necessity for an understandable iconography and symbolism. Esoteric art, while accountable to no one in the salon piece, is somewhat out of place in the forms of architectural sculpture. It, in this case, bears a direct relation to the status of the mural as compared to the easel painting. In view of this fact certain of the current movements in sculpture are not entirely a solution to the problems facing the architectural sculptor. Although mural sculpture, for example, need not necessarily be understandable to the layman other than as an enrichment decoratively of the building, there are many who would say that the sculptor is obligated to make his art comprehensible. Certainly the tendencies of recent sulpture have been towards the development of a Twentieth Century iconography and a predominantly socialized art. This, as much as

the problems of form, will occupy our attention when we come to discuss more fully the immediate problems of American sculpture.

Regardless of the sculptor's desire for freedom from the dictation of critic and public and his detestation of an art born of and judged by literary standards, if he wants to create great architectural sculpture, he must bring it home to the public. If his object is a purely decorative motif, it must be frankly so, and if either by symbolism or representation he means to convey a message, story or naturalistic depiction of any kind that too must be cleanly and directly stated in terms understandable for the training and intelligence of the average observer.

In summarizing this definition of terms and statement of principles, I might say with Talbot F. Hamlin, who has written the best single article on America's special place in the development and revival of architectural sculpture:

> "... From this analysis we may be able to gather some of the simplest qualifications of good architectural sculpture. In the first place, it is much more than ornament, and that is what makes its content, its message, so important. This content, of course, may be purely an abstract one; yet, if we are designing buildings to be enjoyed by more than a small portion of the elect, it is probable that the content must be of some easily understandable type. If the purpose of architectural sculpture is to humanize and to give life to buildings, surely its human quality, its life quality, must be preeminent; and we are no more solving the problem if we use forms

> with symbolisms so esoteric as to pass the comprehension of the beholder, and produce in him merely confusion, than we would be by decorating our buildings with inscriptions in Chinese.
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> "Another quality of buildings effects the content of architectural sculpture - their relative permanence and the fact that, for good or ill, once architectural sculpture is in place it usually remains, for the benefit not only of ourselves but of our sons and perhaps of our grandsons. The content, then, it seems to me, should be of our own day, but it must also be based on essential human qualities and on symbols whose interest is not merely topical. And, above all places, a building seems the place for permanent rather than transient expression..."[5]

I believe that these introductory definitions and remarks may have indicated some of the issues which necessarily must be discussed in any paper which pretends to be an analysis of the problems involved in architectural sculpture and its execution. By presentation of the remarks and observations of critics, sculptors and architects and by a more detailed analysis of the basic problems involved I hope to substantiate some of the remarks of this introduction which may otherwise seem ill-advised or hasty.

In presenting a brief outline of the historical background for a study of American sculpture, I think I could hardly do better than to put down the concise and adequate

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5 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points 19:770, January 1938.

survey given by Joseph Hudnut in his book on Modern Sculpture:

> "...America was sculpturally a European province during the Nineteenth Century. The neo-classicism of Thorwaldsen was widely imitated during the first half of the century, and, after Siemering had built his huge monument in Fairmount Park, we shared the European reaction towards the Baroque. In the last half of the century the influence of France became dominant. The pupils of Mercier, Falguiere, Dalou, and Carpeaux peopled our galleries with competent imitations of their decorative and sentimental styles. Our greatest sculptor, Saint-Gaudens, continued the Renaissance tradition of France; his monumental illustrations, in which a poetic realism is tempered by the neo-classic conventions, was French in all except his subject-matter. After 1890, a subjective and symbolical sculpture appeared to witness the universal influence of Rodin; and Rodin's early work also sanctioned that romantic realism which is most characteristic of our public memorials...
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> "A varied stylization, based on the archaic statues of Pompeii or Olympia, on the early Florentine masters, on Chinese, Indian or Aztec art, is the most notable characteristic of our contemporary sculptors whose powers of assimilation are quite without limit.
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> "We are developing also a modern sculpture. Works that obviously embody the plastic ideal of Maillol make their appearance with greater and greater frequency in our exhibitions. Sentimental sculpture is out of style, and our appetite for archaizations is fairly well satisfied. There is undoubtedly a growing understanding of the limitations and possibilities of sculpture, and an increasing number of sculptors who are doing notable work in the spirit of the revived classicism.

> "What is wanted is a recognition by architects of their need for sculpture. Sculpture attains its greatest significance and its greatest power in the presence of an architecture that imposes its firm and lucid relationships upon it. The stark architecture of our new buildings, however impressive in mass and contour, cries out for the humanizing rhythms of harmonious sculpture. What is necessary is a return to the classic tradition which united sculpture and architecture within the limits of a single art."[6]

Although we inadvertently feel a strong resentment against this accusation of complete dependence upon European standards and influences, this neatly-termed survey is very well substantiated in fact. Try as we will to find evidence of a strong native tradition, we must acknowledge that such evidences are not very apparent - much less so in sculpture, as a matter of fact, than in painting. The painters, permitted by the very freedom and unpatronized nature of their medium, were able to conduct whatever experimentation they desired even aside from their popular work. The sculptor, because of the expense and time involved, is to a much greater extent ruled by the "taste" and fashion of the period; he cannot conduct studio experiments in a monumental scale and must follow to a letter the dictates of his patron or employer. Consequently, sculpture, which

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6 Joseph Hudnut, Modern Sculpture, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 1929, pp. 88-90.

was primarily of the memorial type, was more directly influenced and coerced by the rule of accepted taste than was painting.

The influence of Rodin's romanticism and love for the flesh took immediate root in the United States and leaves, even now, unmistakable evidence of its strength on American sculpture. The effect which this influence had upon this country's production is well stated in the following words of Paul S. Wingert in his book, The Sculpture of William Zorach:

> "...In the Nineteenth Century especially, sculpture had come to mean an imitative reproducing of nature, and this brought about an over-emphasis of the subject matter and a lack of consideration of the properties of the materials employed. For an art primarily restricted in subject matter to a reproduction of the human form, this emphasis upon the externals of the object reproduced tended to reduce to a minimum the larger plastic implications of form.
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> "Having recognized the evil days upon which the art had fallen, contemporary sculptors made an important contribution towards reestablishing sounder principles by reaffirming the character of sculpture as an expression of the subject matter in terms of the material; hence bringing the art into closer relationship with the material than it had been in the Nineteenth Century. Coupled with this contribution was the rediscovery, so to speak, of the proper function of sculpture as an enlargement of aesthetic experience. The emphasis given to the imitative and decorative character of a work, in which the accidental details of the subject were care-

> fully pronounced and just as carefully arranged, was now discarded in favor of the more fundamental function a figure in stone could serve...."[7]

This statement sounds the keynote for what is now the predominant tendency in modern architecture; it first found its exponent in the frugal and disciplined art of Maillol and is now pursued with energy and blind devotion by most of the sculptors at work not only here but abroad. This spirit of revived classicism promises, or threatens, to reach similar proportions to that radical turn of affairs inaugurated by Rodin - a sweeping reversal of the preceeding order of things carried to the extreme of fanaticism by zealous disciples. Of this phase of the present situation in world sculpture we will treat further when the impact of modernism is discussed later in this paper.

Stanley Casson writes, basing his judgment on the developments in England after the World War - and which may be recognized as analogous to the situation in this country:

> "The Great War certainly created a demand for commercial sculpture, for humble memorials within the reach of the finances of villages and hamlets and even of private people of moderate means. The results are grievously disappointing. Academic figure work- by which I mean traditional figures devoid

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7 Paul S. Wingert, The Sculpture of William Zorach, Pitman Publishing Company, New York, 1938, p. 6.

> of personal style or character - has won the day and controlled the style of the minor and unrecognized sculptors. This is largely because they are asked for this kind of work by committees who sink any individual imagination that their members may possess in a common desire for compromise. Imagination in the artist or creative ability are at a discount. He will not get the commission unless he does what he is told.
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> "But the outlook is not wholly depressing. The demand for war memorials has, in turn, led to an increased demand for decorative sculpture of buildings. Here too the work has been left mainly in the hands of unknown commercial sculptors and masons...
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> "The friezes and antefixes, the pedimental groups and the panels in relief which decorate our newest buildgins are executed in a style which seems born of a teaching long out of date. A Renaissance conception of antique mythologies interpreted in the manner of the eighteenth century and finished with the sleek pomposity of Edwardian Baroque is the source from which the present generation of mason-artists draw..."[8]

If in no other material achievements, the post-war demand for sculpture in memorials at least revived interest in monumental sculpture-which had been sadly neglected during the most powerful period of Rodinesque romanticism. That the answer of the sculptor to the demand for monumental work was only feebly answered by academic attempts to enlarge inadequate salon pieces to the status of monu-

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9 Stanley Casson, Some Modern Sculptors, London, 1928, pp. 15-16.

mentality gave added incentive to creative artists. When they learned that sculpture was once again gaining commercial importance, there was a scramble on the part of every artist with pretensions to sculptural ability to partake of the spoils. This inevitably led to an advance in technical skill and a forward movement in the appreciation of formal problems which ultimately received real impetus by the impact of European modernism.

But what of architectural sculpture through all of this? There is, to all appearances, little evidence of this evolution in the field of architectural sculpture. This is relatively easy to explain since that field of sculpture was not within the ken of the "artist" - at least the artist whose work was being shown in American exhibitions and which occupied the attention of the critics and connoisseurs.

Architectural sculpture previous to the period of the World War is scarcely existent. What there was of it came largely from the hand of the mason-artist, usually a stone-carver trained in and imported from the European countries. Their earliest opportunities arose from the requirements of Gothic style churches. These "jobs", for such they were, were readily filled by an almost copybook imitation of conventional Gothic forms. The still persistent demand for this type of carving is evident in the existence and prosperity

of firms such as Ardolino, Inc., a reliable firm which will furnish a first-class, guaranteed Saint John or Mary on ten day's notice. The excellence of their technique and efficiency can be testified to by Lee Lawrie whose Nebraska State Capitol figures were executed by them with neatness and dispatch on schedule.

Another field for the adept workman in stone, working under the direction of a fashionable designer, has been the usual classicistic public building, a style which has hung on tenaciously until very recent years as the official style for public buildings. This field attracted fairly few men as it became a "closed corporation" within the accepted circle of official architects. Little opportunity was given here at any time since its inception to the serious artist who was searching for and experimenting with new forms.

In the trade of the "mason-artist" symbols and forms have accumulated, ready-made subject patterns to fill any requirement of conventional architecture. The frieze, the cornice, the antefix - each has its own tailor-made sculptural form carefully selected and evolved over several generations from the myriad sculpture forms of the past.

These patterns were, at least in the eyes of most persons upon whom the choice resided, acceptable as an enrichment of pseudo-classical, pseudo-Gothic or other standard eclectic forms. Since they were considered by everyone to be great manifestations of culture and taste they were

readily accepted to give "tone" or greatness to public buildings and churches.

With the introduction of more subtly or widely eclectic structures, the repertoire of the mason-artist and his company's official designer was severely taxed. Except for a few daring attempts or bluffs at doing the job, he was forced to relinquish the work to more imaginative or resourceful artists. For the most part it is the work of this archaeologist-adaptor which is appearing on our public buildings today.

These resourceful eclectics show increasing mastery in their adaptations of past styles to any and all forms of architecture. With the help of the "modernist" and his experimentation in materials and forms, they are achieving greater proficiency in their work than ever before and, despite their limitations as creative intellects, have contributed much to the exploitation of materials and the formulation of a sophisticated taste for monumental and striking forms. It may be that their search for the unusual and spectacular will help to show the "ascetic formalists" the way out of their apparent check-mate.

The "formalists", exponents of a revived classicism, while essentially following in the tracks of Maillol, are still plodding along towards a goal which may ultimately lead to an art which entails great content masterfully

shown in great form. At present, however, they seem to have reached some sort of an impasse, a situation where they are all merely manipulating the basic forms of the human figure, the only real subject for the sculptor's art, to achieve an impassive, static form of complete architectonic unity and no life other than that of the material itself,

Regardless of what direction our sculpture for buildings will take, we can expect significant developments and an advancing amount of interest in the field, for, as Mr. Hamlin says:

> "...The sudden revival of architectural sculpture in America during the last few years is one of the most extraordinary facts in the current architectural scene... The United States Government perhaps started the movement through its practice of setting aside for decorative sculpture a certain proportion of the money expended on government buildings. Then, the existence of the Federal Art Project as a relief organization made possible a wide distribution of sculpture, such as had never been the case in America before. Yet, behind these immediate causes, there is perhaps another deeper reason - a growing sense that, if art is to be truly 'of, by, and for the people', our large-scale architecture must necessarily be humanized as only sculpture can humanize it."[9]

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9 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points 19:767-768, January, 1938.

THE IMPACT OF "MODERNISM" AND ITS EFFECT ON AMERICAN PLASTIC ART

Fundamentally the significance of what is called the "modern" movement in the arts lies in its reaction to the undisciplined realism of the Nineteenth Century French sculptors and painters. In the plastic arts it takes the form of a struggle to wrest sculpture from the grasp of Rodin's romanticism. As is the case of all violent reactions, it is untempered by compromise or caution; it throws itself blindly, it seems, in the opposite direction to that of its predecessors. The neo-classicism introduced by Maillol in sculpture has its counterpart in an earlier and more disseminated revolt among the painters at approximately the turn of the century.

A good statement of what is probably the ultimate ideal for the present tendency in plastic art is stated by Giedion-Welcker in his book on Modern Plastic Art:

> "The emergence of individual at the expense of communal achievement, which began with the Renaissance, developed towards the end of the nineteenth century into a complete estrangement between art and life; for once the former was debarred from its objective function an artificial barrier was interposed. Simultaneously with this intellectual isolation art became increasingly adultereated with ele-

ments that were alien to it, such as literature and psychology. The result of that infiltration is clearly evinced in late nineteenth century memorials. These not only reflect lack of contact with nature, religion and contemporary society, but actually embody historic reminiscences, literary associations, etc., which denote a fundamental negation of the basic principles of plastic art.

"Inorder to understand the aesthetic goal of the Twentieth Century we must examine not only the reactions of our own age to these aberrations, but also its attempts to recreate a new plastic world for itself.

"Since the man of to-day has no longer any vital link with his religious observances we cannot hope to revitalize religious plastic art. On the other hand a secular plastic art based on the reality of modern life, and embodying a direct and honest approach to contemporary culture, seems perfectly feasible. If 'subject' tends to disappear, content does not. Modern plastic art provides the cultural transmutations that our new way of living instinctively demands.

"Concentration on legitimate means of plastic expression will not lead to an 'art for art's sake' introversion so long as plastic art remains an intrinsic part of a much wider cosmic unit. In point of fact the very reverse of what happened at the end of the previous century is now taking place; there is a rearticulation into the comprehensiveness of daily life, accompanied by the awakening of a new sincerity in means of expression which ruthlessly eliminates all that is extraneous or incidental.

"Our life is divided between town and country, the technical and the natural worlds, and it is from our transitions between them that variety ensues. What is

> physical in us inevitably lives in a world of physical forms. From our impact with the reality of a tree growing in a wood, or the equal reality of a traffic-signal in the street, down to our daily associations with cups and saucers, apples and eggs, a continuous chain of impressions results which is obviously capable of influencing plastic design.
>
> "The problems of statics and dynamics, as of the disintegration of mass and the space-time inter-relation of volumes, are bound to become a new plastic medium once their divorce from literary and psychological suggestion allows a return to first principles. What the artists who are preoccupied with these problems have to say can no longer be embodied in interesting or heroic motifs, but must rely exclusively on force of expression or the kind of symbols they chose. That these images are so simple is a direct reflection of our new attitude to life. In contrast to that of the preceeding age our own signifies the subordination of the individual, and his reacclimatization to nature and experience. This change is simply part of the psychological and social evolution of our age, and is in no sense due to esoteric little artistic coteries."[1]

As has been the case in this country ever since the inception of our sculptural tradition, our artists are strongly influenced by the giants of the European developments. Now there is in evidence a most potent influence and direction resulting from the Maillol-Bourdelle return to classic fundamentals of form. In sculpture, we see here,

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1 C. Giedion-Welcker, Modern Plastic Art (Eng. version by P. Morton Shand), Effingerhof A. C. Brugg, Switzerland, 1937.

as in Europe, that there lie the greatest possibilities for a more complete experimentation in the search for and manipulation of "significant form".

> "In the contours of sculpture are most completely realized the conception of form behind the structure of contemporary painting and graphic arts, both of the abstract and realistic types. The advantage the artist of pure form derives by a reduction of his forms to the abstract lies mainly in the elimination of hampering detail..."[2]

It is this preoccupation with the experimental manipulation of almost strictly formal problems that characterizes much of the work seen in exhibitions of contemporary sculpture and much of the latest work in mural and architectural sculpture. In architectural sculpture, because of the new problems created by an introduction of many of the formal problems to building, the sculptor is faced with an even more involved problem of form. In addition to facing the responsibility of solving the formal problems of the sculpture itself, he must enforce upon his work the added restrictions of a building style or composition which demands and needs certain forms or embellishments in order that it may become a complete and unified thing. Little wonder that many, even most, of the sculptors at work in America today have taken the easy way out - a search for,

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2 Sculpture of Our Times, The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, November, 1937, pp. 137-138.

and adaptation of, past styles which embody the solution of similar problems.

While we recognize the fact that the salon artist has little, if any, responsibility other than to his own conscience in the creation of a piece of sculpture, we have also observed that the architectural sculptor most undeniably has responsibilities to both the specific requirements of the job at hand and his own convictions. What the precise nature of these responsibilities are, and the vocabulary he has at his command with which to solve them, it will now be our purpose to uncover.

In approaching the problem of analyzing the nature of and fundamental methods of approach to the problem of form Talbot F. Hamlin has differentiated strongly between what he calls the "Greek version" and the "Gothic version". Continuing along these lines, he says:

> "According to the Greek version, architectural sculpture is sculpture, frequently free-standing and in the round, placed in a strong architectural framework,which requires the sculpture it enframes just as the sculpture gains its complete meaning only within that frame. In the Gothic system, the relation is an even more integrated one; in the best of it the sculpture itself seems to become an actual part of the architecture, indistinguishable from it, so that in such a creation as the west doors of Chartres or the Porte de la Vierge in Paris it is literally impossible to say, 'This is architecture and that is sculpture', for each is both.

"Our own building methods seem to lead us inevitably towards the first type; our whole building technique seems to necessitate the placing or the carving of sculptural features after the structure is completed. There are a few exceptional examples of the other technique, especially in the work of that extraordinary team of Bertram Goodhue and Lee Lawrie, which produced so much that seems greater than the single work of either man. Thus the Nebraska State Capitol, in its famous bison entrance-stair pylons and its majestic figures of the law givers, which grows so surely and with such magnificent dignity from the stones of the courtroom facade, is as pure a reflection of the Gothic type of relation as the twentieth century has produced. Similarly too, in some of the decorative work of the Goodhue church interiors, something of the same perfect integration of sculptural form flowing from and coalescing with structural form can be found. Yet these examples are rare, and the high difficulty of achieving the sense of single oneness may be seen in the disastrous results of unskilled imitations of this apparently simple marriage of sculpture and architecture, in the inept copying of non-essentials and the frequent absurdities of the results. It takes more than figures growing out of a pylon, with their lower parts uncarved, to make architectural sculpture.

"The first method, the Greek system, is difficult too - perhaps even more difficult, because so deceptively easy. Applied architectural sculpture may be great, as the Greek was, or it may be as ineffectual as a cheap chromo, even in a good frame."[3]

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3 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America," Pencil Points 19:768, January, 1938.

While Mr. Hamlin's classification of the two major types of architectural sculpture is accurate in so far as it goes, yet I believe there is room for a further segregation of sculpture in its relation to the building.

First, then, there is the "Greek version" in which sculpture is created to enrich the structural and already existent forms of a building. In this case sculpture plays a definitely secondary role, adding notes of grace or meaning to an architecture which in itself is not sufficiently gracious or self-explanatory.

Secondly, sculpture may be conceived as the "Gothic version" wherein it becomes architecture or a vital element of architecture. As a form serving a function either structurally or as an element in the composition it assumes an entirely different role than that in the first case, which was merely a decorative embellishment of self-sufficient forms.

Thirdly, the architecture may be conceived, as is the domestic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, to accomodate the forms of carved art. This approach is fundamentally that of the connoisseur who provides interesting nooks for "delicious fragments" of fine art both within and as part of the exterior. It is a form of compromise in which the sculptor, if he produces a delectable enough piece, is permitted a showing and a favorable place to exhibit his

work. If this sculpture is conceived and executed to fill such a position and if the place requires such a form for its complete success then that sculpture, too, may be considered to be architectural sculpture. Ordinarily, however, there are few buildings which provide place for or require such sculpture. There is no reason that this form of cooperation should not become as vital and as much a challenge to the ingenuity and creative spirit of the sculptor as more monumental forms, on the façade for example.

All three of these phases of architectural sculpture and decoration permit the use of relief, both high and low, and free standing figures, in one way or another.

Although these three categories cover fairly well the major divisions in the general use of plastic art in buildings, it might be profitable to catalogue, regardless of their employment in any of these categories, the principle types of forms, largely for the purpose of simplifying my future remarks when I will refer to these forms by their names as listed here.

On the subject of forms in connection with architectural sculpture, I believe we can safely establish five quite arbitrary divisions. These, for the purpose of simplifying my future remarks and allusions, I will establish first as a sort of working plan.

Firstly, I would catalogue one important group as "forms of antiquity". By this grouping I mean the most

common forms of Greece and ancient Rome, the Gothic, Romanesque, and Renaissance forms, and the conglomerate forms of eclecticism. This arbitrary grouping, I feel, is justified because it distinguishes sharply between the use of accepted *past styles and the meeting of new demands in modern architecture.*

Secondly, I list the purely decorative forms, divorced from representation except as obvious stylizations of natural motives for the purpose of giving texture or richness to certain areas or forms.

Thirdly, I group the cubistic forms, or purely spatial manipulations which are not necessarily representational or decorative except in their powers of spatial suggestion and consistency with the three-dimensional composition of the architecture.

Fourthly, come the forms of functionalism, the use of sculpture as a structural feature or the use of carved forms to emphasize the architectonic features or motives of the building. Here the end is a reiteration and emphasis of the engineering problems solved.

Fifth is a general category which necessarily involves an employment or assimilation of some characteristics from the first four groups-representational forms. Representational forms may be tempered and varied, dependent upon the artist's tastes, ideals or requirements. It may, for example,

lean towards simple decorative motives or be strongly influenced by traditional forms, forms of antiquity. It may, on the other hand, sacrifice some of its possibilities of representation for its demands as a spatial motive. In the same way, it may, while being fundamentally a representational or expressive work, be strongly influenced by or adapted to the most tectonic of architectural features.

In the revival of sculpture in general, and more specifically since the very recent revival in architectural sculpture has taken place, sculptors have been faced with many and complex problems of form, problems which they had never encountered before, problems which taxed their abilities and resourcefulness. This fact, coupled with the fact that the Twentieth Century has been a great age of experimentation and search for new forms, has led to a very advanced understanding of and concern with materials and the basic features of their art.

In the book of Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr, Art in America in Modern Times, an analysis of this situation is presented in simple terms:

> "The new wealth of facts has been used by different sculptors in different ways. With some it has led to a hollow and meaningless eclecticism. With others it has meant a chance to study the basic problems of sculpture in all ages, and those artists have turned away from the impressionistic methods of the nineteenth century. They have concentrated their attention on the architectural foundations

of sculpture, on rhythm, mass, organic structure, unity of space, rhythmic relation of mass and space, and on simplifications that tend toward the abstract and the primitive. They have revived the idea implicit in all good sculpture, and explicitly stated by Michelangelo, of a collaboration between the sculptor and his material.

"The sculptor's materials impose upon him certain limitations but these very limitations may be made to enhance the esthetic quality of his work. He can take advantage of the very hardness and resistance of stone, its weight, grain, and color. The harder materials are suited to concepts that suggest gravity, calmness, monumentality. They call for a method of working in broad planes that take the light evenly. Wood, which carves easily, has its own beauty of grain and texture and is suited to a suave treatment or to elaborate surfaces. The hard flowing surfaces of metal are ideally suited to naturalistic treatment. They may be made to reproduce all the nuances of the clay modeller's technique - the sudden transitions of crest and hollow and the individual peculiarities of form that make for expressiveness and character. Metal surfaces may be roughened to make a dramatic interplay of light and shade, polished to reflect light or given a patina which enhances warmth and variety of surface.

"The Italianate sculptors of the mid-century were clay modellers whose work was cast in plaster, pointed-up, and carved in marble. Most of the Paris-trained men of the seventies, eighties, and nineties were modelers whose final medium was bronze. In the past thirty years most of the leading American sculptors have been carvers as well as modelers. Direct carving in hard stone makes for concentration on mass and geometric form rather than on lively surfaces or naturalistic treatment, and for this reason it has been a most beneficial discipline for

> American sculptors. Of the generation now in maturity such sculptors as Jacob Epstein, William Zorach, Gaston Lachaise, Maurice Sterne, Elie Nadelman, Robert Laurent, and John Storrs have done important work in direct carving."[4]

While there are a number of promising new materials available to the sculptor today, it is interesting to note that little has been attempted in anything other than the traditional one of stone. Even the advance in technical equipment for the cutting and polishing of stone is discounted by the present movement against "pointing" and machine aid in carving. The strongest sculpture of our day is being produced neither in Twentieth Century materials nor by the Twentieth Century instruments. It is here that the evidence of a neo-classicism is evident. The followers of Maillol's revolt against Nineteenth Century frivolity have returned so drastically to earth that they permit themselves no flights in the direction of new materials - "good solid sculpture" is their motto and their aim.

As an experimental phase in the return to a more sound appreciation of the problem of form and the nature of materials, the work of this group can scarcely be evaluated. Starting with the solidity and soundness of the work of Maillol and Bourdelle in Europe, the greatest Americans, Zorach, Laurent, Lachaise, Sterne, and others have produced

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4 Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr, Art in America in Modern Times, Reynal and Hitchcock, New York, 1934, p. 55.

a volume of work which will stand as a monuments to the reasoning approach of the Twentieth Century artist. The very strength of their sculpture, in contrast to that of Nineteenth Century sculpture, and their imposing abilities as compared to their less personable contemporaries have since proved to be a detriment to the best interests of our rising sculpture.

This ascetic ideal of the direct carver who takes great pride in his truthfulness and recognition of the fundamental nature of the problem and his material is not entirely wholesome. For one thing it tends to become an end in itself, limiting and confining the sculptor to what amounts to a merely formal problem, an "art pour l'art". None of this experimentation, especially in the field of architectural sculpture, which is like mural painting, fundamentally a socialized art, achieves anything unless it is ultimately employed in the creation of a great human art. Of what value is honesty if it does nothing more than repeat truisms in the manner of the Puritans? Puritanism never contributed anything to culture or to the art of living except in so far as it was instrumental in disciplining an art which had strayed too far from the accepted social tenets.

The direct carver (a name of which he is passionately fond as the antithesis of a designer or an "ornamentalist")

too frequently limits himself so severely that he cannot permit himself even the most demure manifestations of spirit or expression of human passions. Discipline too frequently, especially under the dictation of an unimaginative or limited mind, can become an end in itself and destroy the creative instinct which it sets out to assist.

The purists and disciplinarians, for example, have been so busy in their search for truth and a return to the fundamentals of carved art that they have failed to notice the advent of new materials or new conditions which alter the nature of those fundamentals. The numerous workable alloys, the advanced knowledge in the handling of glass, the advent of poured concrete and the increasing advantages of machine production have made little impression upon them. We find comparatively few men working with the possibilities of these new materials. It is with great pleasure and surprise that we read of the occasional pioneer who is employing the acetylene torch and welder's equipment to whip steel into an art form. Glass is still relegated to the conventional niceties of the factory craftsman and poured concrete has scarcely been tested by any of the better-equipped sculptors of today.

We are, of course, doing such men as William Zorach an injustice when we allude to his making formalism "an end in itself". There is in his work something far above

and beyond mere experimentation with formal problems and the vocabulary of materials. What he is attempting, and, to a great extent, achieving may be stated by quoting his biographer, Paul S. Wingert:

> "...Since the art of sculpture has the human form as its principal subject matter, sculptors of recent years have realized that by interpreting the structural relationship between the component parts of a form held together in a design by a unifying linear and spatial rhythm and by expressing these relationships in plastic terms inherent in the material and in the structure of the form, they could again make sculpture interpret and express life. In this way a figure instone would no longer be just an imitation of natural appearances. Rather it would be an interpretation of the essential elements of a form as the artist perceives them, arranged in an interesting and expressive design. This was the point of view from which the direct carvers approached their art, and among these one of the most outstanding was William Zorach."[5]

Such sound principles as those voiced by Zorach can scarcely be criticized adversely because of their virile quality and honesty. The detrimental effect arises out of the unthinking, expressionless copying of the outward aspects of form by his followers and contemporaries. This, of course, is even more true of the work of Maillol who achieves an expression of timeless monumentality in signi-

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5 Paul S. Wingert, The Sculpture of William Zorach, Pitman Publishing Company, New York, 1938, p. 6.

ficant form but by so doing enforces upon his followers a form which is essentially not expressive and not monumental in the sense of being significant in the hands of others. To avoid triviality and impressionism this group of "direct carvers" has sacrificed many of the stage tricks of complicated movement and gesture. Their ultimate ability to express something resides in their ability to make a composed entity out of simple and unspectacular forms. In the hands of an inferior sculptor this disciplined and simple approach becomes little more than an academic abstraction of static forms.

Zorach, as an outstanding example of the best in this group, would be the last to set down a rule or method by which sculpture should be governed. He neither places too great an emphasis on the greatness of the past nor upon the significance of his own special work; he merely recognizes the necessity for a sound approach to the problem as a whole.

> "There are a great many ways of doing sculpture and there is no one way that is the right way. No person or age has had the perfect way. Their way may have been perfect for them, but that does not mean it is the right way for us. The means and forms differ, but the underlying basis of qualities are ever the same. The eternal desire of man to recreate himself in a more perfect image, phsycially or spiritually, or mystically is there in all races at all times..."[6]

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6 William Zorach, Direct Carving, New York

However, slow the rising generation of sculptors may be to follow up their lead with an exploitation of the new discoveries of these experimenters, it is to these men that we will owe much of the greatest work which undoubtedly will evolve from the present state of affairs, in American sculpture. Perhaps their greatest weakness resides in their inability to detach themselves from the use of conventional materials and a failure to recognize the possibility of a changed status for sculpture. Certainly the changing foil of architectural forms and the possibilities for a new impetus which are latent in the field of architectural sculpture have had little effect on their work; it remains, in the last analysis, a revived and simplified form of classicism.

While they have contributed, perhaps unknowingly, to the future of architectural sculpture by their experimentation with both forms and conventional materials, they have not as yet taken advantage of the possibilities for expression and creative unfoldment which await the original and intelligent artist in the forms of a new architectural sculpture. Modern building by its very nature cries for the final accent and vitalizing contribution of sculpture to humanize its functional and formal compositions.

What this opportunity is, has been well stated by Talbot F. Hamlin in the following paragraph from his arti-

ticle in the architectural magazine, Pencil Points:

> "The great size, the mechanical regularity, the plain clear surfaces, which result from modern building needs and technics, frequently, though of course, not always, tend to produce buildings that are stark and without human scale, impressive but without the warmth that somehow we seem to need. To bring such buildings into closer relation to those who see them, to make them somehow integral parts of our human environment - things that interest, excite, and delight us - nothing is more effectual than good architectural sculpture. Some of us may go even further and say that the simple directness of the best contemporary architecture is an opportunity for the sculptor that has not existed for generations, and that architectural sculpture as good as the best of these buildings would make even the greatest of them greater."[7]

The forms of modern architecture, rising from a first extravangant experimentation in the forms of "l'art nouveau" ran parallel to the development in painting and sculpture of the modernists, although somewhat behind in its evolution. Today it stands as probably the most significant development in the arts of modern times.

The engineer, truly the best manifestation of Twentieth Century thinking so far, helped to lead architecture out from the impasse of revivalism. The cubist and other "formalists", recognizing the genius of function as a path to a new architectural horizon, began to manipulate the

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7 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points, 19:768-769, January, 1938.

organic forms of buildings into compositions and living, growing unities. Within the limited field of formal and functional problems they discovered a new beauty, a clean, organic unity in space, at once livable and beautiful in its clear-cut answer to necessity. Like the abstract painters, they unfolded a new world free from literary and traditional prejudices and offering them a free path to a solution of those basic problems which are the concern of artists of all time.

Today, while they have been instrumental in achieving a new ideal of living conditions and releasing us from a multitude of false standards and conventions, their work is temporarily at a standstill. Just as in the fields of painting and sculpture, a mere handful of the greatest pioneers continue to develop their theories and practice. As yet the followers have not had the ability or the insight to carry on the work for another step - the step which will transform a magnificent experiment in space-patterning and compatible materials into a further realm of fine art. We can, of course, see evidences of the evolution of a fine art from this great, experimental formative one. We can conceive of an architecture which, while embodying the sound principles of the "international style", will nevertheless be free to exploit the rich possibilities of expression and humanization in any number of

ways, whether it be mural painting, weaving, architectural sculpture or any of the creative arts.

The attitude of one of these pioneers of modern architecture towards ornament in the new style of architecture is that given here of Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus in Germany and one of the most prominent figures in his field today:

> "So many people ask, 'Why do modern architects use so little ornamentation?' - 'Why were so many attempts at creating modern ornament doomed to failure?' History shows that genuine ornament originates only during harmonious periods of the human race, when man, following his natural impulse to play and to adorn his environments, seeks to shape the inward intentions of an established society rather than mere personal feelings. It shows that true ornament is the result of the unconscious work of a whole period of civilization, not of individuals; that is the last organic refinement to its buildings and things- a creative expression, not a matter of taste. Is our time congenial and ripe for this performance? No. The present attitude towards ornament is very feeble and superficial. Unable to produce an ornament of today which would appeal to every one- unable because our social structure, is still in a state of transformation- we satisfy ourselves with rehearing again and again bygone forms and ornaments. More and more replacing genuine creative impulse by scholarship and taste, decorative charm

> borrowed from vanished periods has become the substitute for true ornament."[1]

It is from the experimental work of such groups as the Bauhaus at Dessau and a number of independent sculptors both here and abroad that a new interest in and appreciation for materials has developed. Brancusi in France, Gill in England, and Archipenko in the United States represent three types of experimentation in materials and techniques. None of them are especially interested in the block-like forms of the group following Maillol; their interests lie closer to the type of thinking which characterizes the architecture of Le Corbusier, Maxwell Fry and Peter Behrens in Europe.

Although stone of various kinds remains the most popular medium for sculpture both architectural and other types, there is a certain amount of experimentaion in other materials. Bronze, although far from being as popular as it was in the Nineteenth Century, still is a significant medium - especially in the work of the "popular" sculptors, Milles and Manship. The bronze casting technique has been applied in some cases to metals of other kinds, especially iron. Under the government building of the Treasury Department Procurement Division cast pieces have

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1 Walter Gropius, "Toward a Living Architecture", The American Architect and Architecture, January, 1938, 21.

frequently been gilded or plated with aluminum, giving the semblance if not the actuality of a new medium.

Terra cotta is gaining a place once again as a material for architectural sculpture and promises to be one of the important media in the future. The great interest in ceramics may effect this type of sculpture, and some of the new techniques of that field may be carried over into the monumental scale.

Other materials, such as wood, glass, brick, and poured concrete, have all been employed to some degree, but stone and bronze remain the major media for architectural sculpture not only here but abroad as well. In connection with the tendency to build in glass and steel one would naturally expect a certain amount of experimentation in the use of metal or glass for some type of decorative embellishment, but this is seldom the case. The new alloys of aluminum, chromium and brass along with stainless steel and Allegheny metal should, if some one takes the initiative to employ them, assist in giving new possibilities of expression and adaptation to the clean forms of modern architecture.

One interesting possibility in sculpture, as it is in architecture, is the introduction of color. In modern architecture there is no reason why the blank forms and areas of functionalism should not be enlivened by color; and if it can be enlivened by colored areas it might well

be further enlivened by a plastic addition in color.

Sculpture in color will, no doubt, claim the attention of many sculptors in the near future. It has just been realized by a few of them working today that the ideal of cold classic perfection in monochrome is a mistaken one; sculpture need not necessarily be deprived of color. C. J. Bulliet wrote in the Chicago Tribune, a not very progressive paper - especially in the line of new trends in problems of form, the following article on the subject:

> "...In ancient Greece, as well as in all primitive nations, statues of the gods and goddesses, even when done in pure marble, were tinted with rare and delicate pigments and thin pure gold. Centuries of rain and burial in earth amid ruins destroyed the color, and when the Renaissance came and the 'classic' pieces were unearthed the cemetery white of the old marbles became the custom of sculptors. Even the medieval masters, however, when they worked in wood instead of stone, finished with paint and gold."[2]

Stanley Casson, although recognizing the fact that sculpture while adopting Greek or other early sculpture as its starting point has overlooked one of the most important features of that sculpture, still holds out little hope for a revival of interest in colored plastic art. He says:

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2 "Sculpture in Color", Art Digest, February 15, 1938, 12:19.

> "Colour and stone have been so long divorced in the art of sculpture that reconciliation is almost impossible. The technique of painted sculpture whether Greek, Gothic, or Cinquecento, is almost forgotten. The corpse-like pallor of post-Renaissance sculpture has set the fashion, the convention of unpainted stone being based, as is all too well known, on the fallacious belief that the ancients did not use colour. In fact no stone figure from 650 B.C. to A.D. 1600 in Europe was executed without some touch of gold or colour. The idea of a blank white statue was in antiquity and the Middle Ages as abhorent as that of a bronze figure untouched by gold or silver or enamel or inset stone..."[3]

Of the more significant artists at work today only one in this country and one abroad have done any real work in the attempt to reintroduce long-forgotten color into their sculpture. Eric Gill in England and Archipenko here have both done an appreciable amount of experimentation in this field.

Of Archipenko's work in this line I quote from the Art Digest:

> "...Color has been Archipenko's concern for some time. Ten or twelve years ago he was tinting his creations in the old manner of pigment and gold leaf. But a trip to California where 'there are colored earths to match the flowers and sunsets', brought about a

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3 Stanley Casson, Some Modern Sculptors, London, 1928, pp. 12-13.

> new mode in the sculptor's work in which these colored clays were utilized, points out Mr. Bulliet. 'Then chemists developed a method of suspending particles of metal in solution, that could be blown into clay - gold, silver, iron, copper anything. Archipenko has put this method into practical use in his work..."[4]

There are various ways in which color could be introduced into sculpture whereby it might contribute a note of vitality or liveliness or accent the color harmonies within the architectural composition itself. To list a few possibilities: the natural colors of materials themselves either as single accents of one color or in combination, making a construction in many colors, glazes for terra cotta, painted, stained or gilded surfaces.

I can see no logical or aesthetic objection to the use of color in sculpture. For example, it is quite possible that color applied to its surface might greatly enhance the texture, the power of expression, even the architectonic arrangement of a piece of sculpture. It might also permit the use and proper preservation of materials which inherently would be impractical or aesthetically inadequate without this added color, texture or protection.

I am thinking most specifically here of soft, easily-carved woods which do not take a hard or lustrous finish.

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4 "Sculpture in Color," Art Digest, February 15, 1938, 12:19.

The same may be true of soft stone, poured concrete, or various compositions which might be employed. Among other things this might point the way to a new field for architectural sculpture, making it a more economical and practical feature of decoration. It might, for example, make it possible to introduce architectural sculpture into the field of domestic architecture which under present circumstances could not possibly afford such decoration.

Mr. Walter Agard, in his book on The New Architectural Sculpture says concerning the possibility of color in architecture- and consequently in architectural sculpture:

> "...Progress has been made. First in the use of various colors and textures. There is no necessity for concrete buildings to be white; the material can be colored in a single flat tone or different parts can be distinguished by a color pattern. The gold, brown, green and silver of brass, bronze and chromium; polychrome terra cotta tiles and textured brick; stone veneers; all may be used in conjunction with concrete. Just as we have increased the color range of other machines (the automobile is the best example), so we shall come to insist on colorful buildings. We may as well reconcile ourselves to many a deplorable result during this experimental period, but our patience will probably be justified."[5]

The possibilities, I think it will be agreed, are existent for a new and vital art growing out of the demands of

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5 Walter Agard, The New Architectural Sculpture, Oxford University Press, New York, 1935, p. 46.

modern architecture. With the almost limitless facilities at hand, not only in materials and tools, but in an architecture abounding in possibilities for adaptation and orientation, I believe that we can look for a great and significant art emerging in this country. What evidences of this trend are now in existence in the form of actual architectural sculpture will be the theme of the next chapter. Here we will attempt to observe the American sculptor's answer to the challenge of a changed and demanding architecture.

THE ECLECTIC AND THE PIONEER

The rapid developments in all the arts which followed the advent of modernism has produced such a variety of experimentation and theorizing that it has become increasingly difficult for the sculptor to hit upon the style or approach best suited to his talents. With such a multitude of materials and means at hand he, unless he is imbued with an ascetic ideal such as that of the direct carvers, often turns to the past for inspiration or reassurance. By diligent effort he may then adapt to one degree or another the forms of the past to suit the needs of today.

It is the work of these resourceful eclectics, constantly refining and adapting the methods and manners of other ages, which has to a great extent filled whatever necessity there was for sculptural decoration in recent years. Only their neat refinements could catch the eye of the board of directors or public and satisfy their demands for a work in good "taste". The unspectacular efforts of the neo-classicists and formalists had little

exterior nicety to recommend it to the persons upon whom the selection depended. Consequently we have the varied but somehow related efforts of Milles, Manship and Lawrie occupying the center of the stage today.

Cahill and Barr in their Art in America in Modern Times phrase this popular appeal of the skilled eclectic very well:

> "...Paul Manship has derived from Renaissance, archaic and oriental sculpture a suave form and decorative handling of silhouette and drapery, though he has little feeling for mass. His technical proficiency is remarkable but he lacks original and creative force. He is the leading adept of the cult of archaic prettiness fostered by the American Academcy in Rome, and his work brings up the question of the wide-ranging eclecticism made possible by modern archaeological research. His archaistic-academic-popular style has enormous prestige with the architects. It seems destined to dominante American architectural and monumental sculpture in this generation just as the style of Daniel Chester French was dominant in the last generation."[1]

> "In contrast to Maillol and Brancusi whose works interpret modern thought by emphasizing certain aspects of it, there is a group of sculptors who are so overwhelmed by its complexity that they have no hope, and possibly no power, to express it at all. In consequence of this, they take refuge in the pure design of other periods, untained by contemporary thought or feeling. This twentieth century manifestation of the Romantic view-

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1 Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr, Art in America in Modern Times, Repnal and Hitchcock, New York, 1934.

> point is represented in American sculpture by the work of Paul Manship (b. 1885). A decorator by temperament, Manship's training in the American Academy at Rome served to turn his attention to the classic styles. The repertory of forms he derived from them was later expanded by contact with art of the Far East. His development as an artist is the history of the absorption of these various influences to which may be added the factual sense apparent in his portraits. The fusion of all these elements into what may be considered Manship's personal style has produced such figures as the Prometheus on the Radio City Fountain in New York City. It is characterized by great technical skill in the handling of bronze, a notable feature in all Manship's work, it is decorative and utterly devoid of meaning. The motive of the flying figure has been used by the sculptor in three other works and the idea of the band with signs of the Zodiac comes from a fourth, objective proof of the sterility of such an eclectic conception of art. Unrooted in experience as such a conception is, it leaves the door open to all the eccentric methods of conveying mere impressions that pass current muster for the synthesis of profound meditation upon experiences of life and logical analysis of them which is the foundation of all great art."[2]

Another prominent figure is the imported one of Carl Milles who is now working in connection with Saarinen's school, Cranbrook, near Detroit. It makes little difference whether he is imported or not since his work has the international style of the dyed-in-the-wool eclectic. It is scarcely more Swedish than it is American and can hardly be considered any manifestation of indigenous plastic art here. Although not yet as well patronized or popularized

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2 David M. Robb and J. J. Garrison, Art in the Western World, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1935, pp. 435-6.

as Manship, Milles' art is gaining a stronger foothold with every work that he produces.

The most significant works of these two popular sculptors are perhaps Manship's work in connection with Radio City, the fine arts sector of New York's Rockefeller Center, and his Morgan Memorial, Milles' Peace Memorial in Minneapolis and the many duplicate copies of his Swedish fountains. All of these works will inevitably have a strong effect upon the work of contemporary American sculptors because of their tremenduous popular appeal and the slick nature of their technique.

Lee Lawrie, the third member of this group, is somewhat of a transitional figure, representing at once some of the most outstanding characteristics of the eclectic group and yet reflecting the tendency of the neo-classic group to rid itself of traditional and un-American impediments. He is best understood in the light of a development which occurred within the limits of our national sculpture having its inception in the pioneering of Karl Bitter.

It was with Bitter that the first real attempts at freeing sculpture from the forms of that literary dependence and casual quality of romanticism. His sculpture, that for the Wisconsin capitol for example, shows at least an attempt at a fundamental solidity and acknowledgment of

the nature of the stone employed. The reactionary tendencies of MacNeil, Wernman, Aitken and Calder temporarily impeded the development until Lawrie and a large group including Ellerhusen, Gregory, Friedlander, Jennewein and Garrison took it up once more in virtually the order named. These men, while definitely limited by an adherence to classic standards of dignity and form, nevertheless made great strides towards the achievement of a native symbolism to displace the accumulated symbolism of the mason-artist. Their monumental conceptions, produced in great volume and still being exploited to a great extent in monumental building and exposition sculpture, had its beneficial effects and ties up quite well with the foreign influence of the Maillol school.

The best introduction to the work and status of Lawrie can be gained by a reading of his statements concerning the philosophy which directs his art. For example:

> "Sculpture for buildings serves to accent the architecture, and sometimes also to characterize the building for which it is made. The sculpture shown here aims to do both. It consists of details and parts of series from work done for a number of buildings, and the same, few, simple rules were applied to it all. None of it employs the forms that are brought to mind by the term 'architectural decoration'. Those symbols of past ages whose forgotten meanings render them useless except for the one purpose of accenting the

architecture they adorn. It seems like a waste of effort when sculpture aims only to 'decorate'.

"If the sculpture is to reflect ideas that will tell the passerby the kind of building it marks, pertinent subjects must be found for all the surfaces provided for it. Good subjects make one feel that the work needs to be done, and that feeling causes it to take shape readily. Unconsciously, then, the sculptor returns to the principles that guided the primitives, who were not too knowing, but were intent upon bringing out an idea or a story.

"After the subject is determined, the next consideration is the design, which is a simple arrangement that may be comprehended at a glance. Then comes the modelling, which must have no unnecessary details that would complicate the design and obscure the idea - no capricious touches to divert the beholder's attention from the sculptor's meaning. The design and modelling being kept simple, the meaning is clear.

"In looking through an illustrated history of sculpture, one reaches the conclusion that there is no new way of designing and modelling, for there is ample evidence that every arrangement has been done as well as every manner. There are two reasons why this is so; the human figure with which all sculptors have been mainly engrossed, has certain bounds which cannot be disregarded without resulting in the production of a monstrocity; the other is that the carving of stone and the casting of metal are the same today as they were in the earliest times, and hold the sculptor to certain principles that are handed down as traditions, from which he could not escape if he would.

"If newness is the desire, it must be achieved in the idea that the sculpture presents. Almost the same modeling can be

> used to make a frieze of corn, wheat or any native plant as in making the acanthus. The same rendering that produces an Athena may be used to make a personification of a modern city. By bringing the native subject forward, interest and vitality will be added to modern sculpture, and the citizen will feel a relationship to it.
>
> "It is not meant that the acanthus will not always be considered a beautiful ornament, nor that so long as civilization lasts, traditional symbolism will not be venerated and used. A greater respect for it would surely be indicated, however, by its being used more sparingly and appropriately.
>
> "Also it is not meant that a sculptor cannot be a creator, although no new ways of designing and modelling are available, the personal characteristics that stamp each sculptor's work, when applied to an original theme and architectural problem, make it a creation. What will be done when the sculptors have full play with the tremendous and dramatic themes that are to be recorded of our age and scene can only be imagined. The opportunity for this expression will no doubt bring forth work equal to those of the great monuments of the past."[3]

Although certain limitations become apparent after we have examined the oeuvre of Lawrie and read his statements of the theory underlying that work, we must recognize in him the first sculptor of outstanding abilities and energy to approach architectural sculpture with an attitude consistent with the demands of our changing architecture.

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3 Lee Lawrie, Sculpture, J. H. Jansen, Publisher, Cleveland, 1936 (In foreword).

In his work, rather than in the virtuose recitals of Manship and Milles, we see some indications of the possibilities which await the sincere artist. Lawrie, for all his eclecticism and mannerism, has the courage and direction of a sincere artist. That his solution to the problem does not coincide precisely with that of more independent spirits is no real basis for criticism of this man as a significant figure in our sculpture. While we ultimately look for an expression of the more virile qualities of our indigenous art and a fuller exploitation of the rich iconography of a new country, we must recognize in Lawrie the spirit and energy of a pioneer.

While we recognize the fact that the eclectic artist frequently contributes much to raising the standards of art in technique and a certain sophistication and dignity of forms, it is to be hoped that such artists in this country will return to past styles a little more closely related to our indigenous roots and locale. Within the tradition of American crafts, folk art and a North American iconography lie possibilities of expression of a truly American spirit which have never been tapped. Mayan culture, just as the Greek, Roman or Medieval cultures, is far from the heart of the American who still feels the invigorating challenge of the pioneer facing new frontiers.

The main group that we might term pioneers is that which follows the example of Maillol in the achievement of a neo-classicism, an art which finds its expression in a pursuit of simple and meaningful forms. Its principle exponents are William Zorach, Elie Nadelman, John Storrs, Maurice Sterne and Robert Laurent. They in turn have been the means of spreading "the gospel" to a host of pupils and imitators who have made this particular phase of contemporary sculpture the most important and significant trend in modern sculptural art.

William Zorach, perhaps the most significant figure in this group and the leader in a movement to revive the tradition of direct carving, may well be quoted as the "keynoter" for this entrie trend:

> "...The modern movement has freed art from the idea of reproducing nature... which has suddenly been found to have nothing to do with art. The essential contribution of modern art is the building up and development of purely abstract forms...By abstract form I mean purely geometric shapes and simplified equivalents of nature,- such as an apple reduced to a circle, a head to an oval, - and the building up of a piece of sculpture by a combination of these forms, dissected and interlaced, interwoven and developed. Through this recreation, this building up and eliminating of everything not vitally necessary, is built up a structural whole, is developed a harmony of form...In finite possibilities of expression and beauty lie in the development of this subtle interplay of form, the disappearing and approaching of shapes and planes, the projections of solids and the

> dissembling and reassembling of forms. Handled by an artist, sensitive to feeling, to design, to the relations of form and color, they reveal an inner and outer construction and a spirituality that may give the spectator in turn a deeper realization, a consciousness of a new beauty..."[4]

He further states his reaction to the fundamental nature of modern art by saying:

> "There is nothing particularly new in this modern art. It is based upon the same cosmic principles of harmonious balance and relation of lines, forms, colors, volumes as is all true art."[5]

It is to this strong group of sculptors that Cahill and Barr have reference when they say, "American sculpture in the past twenty years has been turning away from its concern with surface and silhouette, its anatomical realism and its idealizing tendencies to a renewed interest in the architectonic."[6]

How closely the art of Zorach and the "direct carvers" follows the example of Maillol in Europe and the work of Ellerhusen, Lawrie, Gregory, Friedlander, Jennewein and Garrison is illustrated in the following analysis of Zorach's position by this biographer, Paul S. Wingert:

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4 William, Zorach, The New Tendencies in Art.
5 Ibid.
6 Holger Cahill and Afred Barr, Art in America in Modern Times, New York, 1934, p. 55.

> "William Zorach belongs to a pioneer group of contemporary sculptors who have interpreted sculpture to mean the art of carving stone, rather than that of modelling in a pliable material, such as clay. In the twenty years which have passed since his early experiments, this group of stone carvers has increased to include many of the younger generation, on whom Zorach has had considerable influence. The art of carving stone means, as is implied, the actual cutting of a form from the stone directly by the artist. Much of the finest sculpture of ancient times was produced in this way; but for the past few hundred years it has been the practice to model a figure first in a material easy to work and then to have a professional stone cutter copy the model mechanically in stone, the sculptor afterwards often polishing the finished work and sometimes making a few changes. It was in reaction against this practice that a group of sculptors returned to the method of direct carving in the stone. The advantage of this procedure is that, to cut directly in the stone, the artist must understand the intrinsic properties of his materials; and the more thorough this knowledge, the more adapted will the finished work be to the medium, and the more will it show the handiwork of the sculptor. This method of carving also necessitated to a certain extent a revival and a restatement of the principles previously held regarding the function and character of the art."[7]

While there is in all of the best work of this group the nucleus for a better understanding of the problem of form and the nature of materials, it is limited by an adherence to old standards of greatness. Being preoccupied

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7 Paul S. Wingert, The Sculpture of William Zorach, Pitman Publishing Company, New York, 1938, pp. 5-6.

with attempts to treat the conventional medium of stone in the manner best suited to its nature and properties, these men have neglected the possibilities of the newer media which are available to them. It has become evident that, in the new architecture, stone - at least in its usual use of heavy block-like forms-is of less and less importance as a building material. With steel doing the work of construction and glass playing an increasingly important role stone inevitably is being used in less conventionally "masonic" terms. When the cubic character of stone does not play an important role in the composition of the whole in architecture, there is little need to echo the block-like character of conventional stone in sculpture. Here, I believe, is the main weakness in the disciplined and limited approach of the direct carvers.

Of course the main interest of Zorach, Laurent and the rest of this group does not reside in the creation of strictly architectural sculpture; they are still to a large extent limiting their work to the problem of returning free-standing salon figures to an honest and direct expression of the fundamental nature of things. While their interest, for the most part, is in producing a sculpture which is complete and independent in itself, their influence most certainly is felt in the field of architectural sculpture and to some extent rules the field of

sculpture of all kinds in this country.

In the rush to be "truthful", to be frank in our expression of the materials used, to conceive our art as an expression of the age in which we live, to acknowledge the necessity of cooperation with and adaptation to the fundamental problems of architecture, and a host of other moral obligations which the Twentieth Century artist has taken upon himself, we must remember that there are other fundamental laws. First, it seems to me, we must remember that we are human beings faced with many of the same problems and responsibilities, torn by the same passions, effected by the same moods of happiness, introspection or fear, imbued with the same ideals which have occupied mankind since time immemorial. It is not our major obligation, in the end, to erect a monument to the machine which is a monument in itself; it is not our obligation to erect a monument to the nature of stone, certainly a monument by its own nature; neither is it our obligation to be so complete an expression of our age that we cannot express ourselves.

Influenced by, and adhering to, many of the principles of the pioneers of the revived classicism, there are a number of individuals and groups at work who are helping to lay the path for a new era of expression in the plastic arts. Such groups as the ceramicists, the sculptors who dare to upset the dignity of the sculptural tradition by

introducing humor or genre implications into their art, propagandistic sculptors, ornamentalists and experimenters in abstract form all are developing their vocabulary and gaining increasing importance in the field of plastic art today.

Discipline and "sound principles" need not become an end in themselves. The restrictions of materials and the complexities of problems such as those presented by architectural sculpture must serve rather as a challenge to the creative imaginations of the sculptors than as a depressing and strict taskmaster. It seems to me that there is little need to repeat the cubistic, overdisciplined efforts of the pioneers, but an increasing need to apply these fundamental discoveries to the ultimate end - an expressive, original work which exploits the latent possibilities of the medium and the artist.

The necessity for a more direct approach to the problem of form, the need for the direct expression achieved by direct carving as opposed to the methods of "pointing", and a careful adherence to the character of the materials employed - all have been established by the pioneers. We now await a further advance which recognizes the untapped resources of contemporary iconography and the more powerful manifestations of spirit and life.

Monumentality has become such a god with most of the good sculptors at work that we are constantly reminded of

our infinitesimal status and the overpowering strength of the industrial age. Let us now see the man and the art which speaks in terms of life in the human scale, an art which has a sense of humor and an acknowledgement of man's pleasures in less sonorous notes of genre, legend, and the universal human passions. Must we take our new creations of machine and state so seriously that we can sound no other note than the recounting of our "glorious past" and the reminder that we are dwarfed and enslaved by the industrial state we have created?

There are, of course, many evidences of just this release from over-disciplined formalism in the work of the ceramicists and other groups. A review of a recent ceramic show may serve as an introduction to this trend:

> "One of the 'four horsemen' of American ceramic drollery, Russel Barnet Aitken, is holding a one-man show at the Walker Galleries, New York, marking once again the rapid rise of the native American expression. Along with Carl Walters, Henry Varnum Poor, and Wayland Gregory, this has led in the development of a school of ceramic art that has shaken off almost completely the heavy hand of ancient Ming potters in search of the light touch of some whittling Huck Finn."[8]

This experimentation in a plastic material adaptable to and in sympathy with the simplicity and cleanliness of

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8 "Ceramic Drollery", Art Digest, April 15, 1938, 12:21.

modern architecture may ultimately lead to a new form of expression. It, along with its independent strength and beauty, has the added advantage of appealing to the public in simple and unpretentious terms. Its great popular appeal may lead to the establishment of new possibilities for plastic art both in domestic architecture and public buildings. Just as terra cotta has played a role in architecture so may the more colorful and varied textures and effects of the ceramicists add the note of grace and color to architecture.

This popular trend is further augmented by the presence of new personalities who are not trained and molded by academic standards, artists working in plastic art for sheer pleasure and satisfaction of the hobby instinct. John Held, Jr. and William Steig, two cartoonists who have turned to sculpture as a vehicle for further expression of their observations on American life, may help to free American sculpture from its self-conscious inhibitions and preoccupation with monumental conceptions.

Another important experimenter in American art is Alexander Archipenko whose position in the field of abstract experimentation is unique. With the exception of John Storrs, he is the only significant sculptor in the United States who has produced important experimental work in the field of pure abstraction of spatial motives. His work with

new materials and the introduction of color to plastic art, as mentioned previously in this paper, have helped to break down the strongly-entrenched tradition of stone and bronze as the sole proper media of a serious sculptor. Terra cotta, ceramics, wood of various finish, and a host of metals and alloys have occupied his attention. In addition to the fact that these experiments alone are helpful in the release of our sculpture from conventions and restrictions, Archipenko has produced a number of significant works. Although he seems lately to have reached a point where he is satisfied to rest on his laurels and produce a volume of trivial work, his earlier work is at least interesting because of its relation to the clear-cut forms of architecture and the feeling of machine design. While almost completely divorced from naturalistic allusions and planimetric features it has great spatial implications and is strangely adaptable to the unfamiliar nature of a new "architectonic sense".

John Storrs, also an experimenter in the abstract forms, has limited his work largely to experimentation in the geometric and architectonic forms. He has not as yet won either the recognition or complete freedom from tradition which characterizes the highly individual art of Archipenko.

Boris Lovet-Lorski is another experimenter but the value of his experimentation is lessened considerably by the fact that he is the most pandying of popularizers. The variety of his attempts in various media shows a great facility and ease with his materials, but his oeuvre gives no feeling of a concentrated or sincere effort at answering the more basic problems of the period. He is, as his biographer and popularizer, Armitage said:

> "...A soaring romantic and his work an expression of Romanticism which has been brought under control and disciplined...There is an inherent heroic quality in a sculptor who will meet the challenge of such stubborn material as marble, granite, slate, onyx, tonnere stone, bronze, jade and lava."[9]

For the purposes of our study here Lovet-Lorski's work has little significance. It is conceived and executed in the romantic vein of the delectable fragment and has little adaptability to the more virile and sound spatial manipulations of modern architecture - as has that of Archipenko, for example.

Another interesting figure, although not especially concerned with architectural sculpture is Warren Wheelock whose American series, including simply conceived and honest figures of Walt Whitman and Lincoln, returns to the

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9 Merle Armitage, Sculpture of Lovet-Lorski, E. Weyhe, New York, 1937.

straightforward tradition of American folk art.

Richmond Barthe, the negro sculptor, Romuald Kraus, the carver of the much-maligned figure of Justice for the courtroom of the Federal Building at Newark, along with a group of sculptors working under the Treasury Department Procurement Division's sponsorship, Gaetano Cecere, Heinz Warneke, Louis Slobodkin, Chaim Gross, Atillio Piccirilli, Oronzio Maldarelli, Gleb Derujinsky, Sidney Waugh, Concetta Scaravaglione, Carl Schmitz, Berta Margoulies, and Arthur Lee, all have worked consistently for the establishment of a truly American sculpture.

Alfonso Ianelli, who has worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and the progressive Holabird and Root, architects, is a consistent worker in the searching out of unpretentious and honest solutions to the problems of plastic adaptation to architectural forms. Much of his work has been along the lines of abstraction and the reduction of indigenous subject matter to a new symbolism and iconography.

While there are a great number of sculptors at work, constituting a virtual revival of the great popular interest and wide activity in sculpture of past periods, it has not quite taken the form of a cooperation with architecture. The demand for exposition sculpture is constant, as is that for public memorials, but most of the architiects

seems reluctant to release the sculptor on anything but adaptations and revisions of "disinfected classic" forms. This is true, to a great extent, of government building as well. The Treasury Department, while exercising as liberal a policy as is possible in the choice of committees for competitions and in the selection of deserving work by artists of a varied and wide set of ideals, unfortunately is limited by the calibre of the architects employed. While the level of architecture in government buildings has risen considerably in recent years and the opportunities for architectural sculpture has increased almost proportionately, there is yet a need for really creative and alive architects in the field.

If things progress as they have under the newly instituted Treasury Department Fine Arts Division we can look for at least a great advancement in the experimental sense and, no doubt, some really great buildings in which architecture and sculpture are given the opportunity of combining their own best elements into a new and impressive unity of expression and function.

One interesting and significant example of the occasional efforts of sculptors and architects to cooperate in the creation of something practical, unpretentious and beautiful in its final result is the new Community Building at Jersey Homesteads in Hightstown, New Jersey. Here

Alfred Kastner, a progressive and advanced architect working in the simple internationalism of a functional style, gave an opportunity for a sculptor, or in this case, a sculptress, to add the most important accent of the entire façade. In the simple horizontal mass of the reinforced concrete façade, otherwise broken only by a judiciously-placed fenestration, appear her hammered aluminum doors, the one enrichment of a bare but well-proportioned façade. An example of minimum cost decoration of an extremely functional and basic type of building, it is a strong statement of the possibilities which await other creative and sincere combinations of architect and sculptor.[10]

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10 "Schools", Architectural Forum, March, 1938, 68:227.

CONCLUSION

Though it is a comparatively easy task to catalogue and point out the most significant developments in sculpture and the part it has played as a component of the new architecture, this does not necessarily point the way to the fullest and greatest employment and exploitation of the possibilities of that art in our civilization. We may recognize clearly the most wholesome trends without realizing in what direction they actually point.

Talbot Hamlin, in the article which has been most frequently quoted in this paper said:

> "...For what purpose does architectural sculpture exist? If we find the right answer to this question, we may be able to help in the solution of the difficulties of the whole problem. It is easy to say, 'To make architecture more beautiful'; but today ideas of beauty vary so widely that we must analyze more deeply. Sculpture must make architecture more beautiful by making it more interesting and more humane, by impressing upon it the stamp of human aspiration and human creation - in other words, by making it live, giving to it some spark of human life and feeling. The requirement is double; it entails both form and content (if we may be forgiven for speaking of them as two separate things, rather than as two aspects of the same thing).

> It is impossible to say which is the more important, for here again tastes differ widely - the formalists generally preferring the form aspect, to the disregard of content; the propagandists going to the other extreme. I think we may accept the concept that great sculpture is great content in great form..."[1]

There is, we have seen, a great latitude to the possibilities in choice of materials, technique and style. There are numerous ways of solving any given problem. There are sound, original ideas; and there are unsound, unoriginal or eclectic ideas. From this maze of personalities and formal complexities we merge only to ask what the artist has to offer to the society for which it is supposedly intended. It must, I believe, be more than a mere subservient, abstract addition to a structural motive which, in itself a solution of its own problem, would need no such emphasis or addition. To "accent" a door or any other member is merely an indication that the structural solution and composition in themselves are not adequate. Sculpture, I mean by this, should not merely be used to cover up the weaknesses of the architect's conception.

It is an accepted tenet lately that architectural sculpture must emphasize the functional aspects or structural features of the architecture which it graces. This,

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1 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points 19:768, January, 1938.

it seems to me, is an assumption a little too readily accepted as gospel in the analysis of the sculptor's responsibility. That the sculpture should identify itself somehow with the character of the building and its occupants is a natural and logical assumption. Sculpture may attain its greatest and most significant role as an enlivening element in the composition which is architecture. Its possibilities are scarcely touched, however, when it merely stands at attention or gives the fascist salute to a doorway, arch, or other structural feature. In this completely chastened and disciplined role it is robbed of the rich possibilities which are inherently its own and reduced to the complete subservience of an echo.

If, however, it escapes the fate of being a mere pointer to indicate the technology of building construction or a guide to the functions of the units within, it can find unlimited possibilities of expression. It can, for example, be a graceful decorative note or a sumptuous enrichment of surfaces quite apart from any reechoing of structural elements already adequately expressed in the building itself. In this case it becomes an active part of the composition taken into the unity of the whole by its sympathetic surface, form, or movement, conceived as an independent and living element of the original concept. In short, it does not reecho a composition already a com-

plete thing but forms a component part of the composition which would otherwise be incomplete.

In its present form architectural sculpture has little place in and little adaptability for domestic architecture. If it is to assume a place of importance in this field it must find a means of adapting itself to the necessary economies of private building. Whether this means design for machine reproduction such as the embellishment of functional or structural members or a new crafts-consciousness depends upon the will and resourcefulness of the sculptor and his ability to cooperate with the architect.

The closest point to which architectural sculpture has approached the living quarters of Twentieth Century human beings is in the housing project, block building for low salaried people. As Talbot Hamlin said in the magazine, Pencil Points, "When the necessity for adequate sculptural decoration for even low-cost housing developments has become an accepted fact, as it has recently in this country - for example, in Harlem River Homes and the new Queensbridge and Red Hook developments in New York - then truly we may be sure that a new era in the close relationship of the two arts has begun."[2]

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2 Talbot F. Hamlin, "Contemporary Architectural Sculpture in America", Pencil Points, January, 1938, 19:767-768.

These three developments, significant for their contributions as experiments in materials and forms, have a further significance: they symbolize the something which is taking place in the field of sculpture and the fine arts in general. They point to a more humanized architectural sculpture which has an ideal other than glorifying American industry and American history; they aim to express the spirit and ideals of a socially-conscious citizenry.

In recent years there has been much concern about our responsibilities in recording the characteristics of our culture, the spirit of the Industrial Age, as it is called. In the work of mural painters and sculptors there has been a persistent tendency to reduce the many-sided features and forms of the machine to a symbolism which might become the trade mark and record of our age. In the minds and work of some this idea has become so firmly implanted that they are satisfied to spend their time merely reproducing the existent forms of machinery and industry. This, in my opinion, is a false ideal.

Industrialism need not become the Galatea of our civilization; it must serve us in the achievement of a fuller life and an enrichment of our experience. Life with its many human problems, everchanging, ever the source for man's deepest introspection and inspection remains. That the machine has had and is having its effect upon our

way of living no one would deny, but that it should become the god for which we must devote our lives in awesome worship there are many who would deny. The machine is its own best monument and a puny echoing of its grandeur in the forms of painted or carved art is hardly a goal worthy of the efforts of the Twentieth Century man.

It seems to me that the need is consistently arising in this country for a rational approach to the entire subject of art and its place in the American culture. There is, for example, a necessity for a clear-cut distinction between representational and non-representational art forms. Pure decoration may very well have its place as will the more representational forms, but the sponsor and the public alike are beginning to learn that there is nothing sacred or intangible about the place of carved or painted art in our civilization. Art may be either for a select circle of the initiated who are contented with a more experiment in formal problems or it may be an addition to the experience or satisfaction of the uninitiated. Whatever it chooses to be, along with how well it is done, are the only real bases for its acceptance or rejection.

It is a seemingly hopeless goal to initiate society as a whole into the complexities and subtleties of the artist's vocabulary, but it is entirely conceivable that the level of taste will rise with the accomplishment of

great and human works of art. If the artist, whether painter or sculptor, contents himself with confining his rehearsals in the "A.B.C.'s" to his studio and for the delectation of connoisseurs and employs these devices (for such they are) in the creation of understandable, honest attempts to reach the public, he will make a greater contribution than he has thus far achieved.

Even eclecticism, as demonstrated by Manship, Milles or Lawrie is forgivable if it achieves in the end something close to, and of more meaning for, the people for which it is supposedly aimed.

Whether we are heading straight into a period where art will be ruled by the public or the critic once again as it has been at other periods in its history, I don't know, but whether the exponent of "art pour l'art" likes it or not critic and public are both beginning to exercise a strong influence over artistic production in this country. So far it is in evidence only in the return to an understandable art and a rejection by many of the purely formalistic exercises of the abstract artist. The esoteric is going out with the academic-classicistic and an art more intimately connected with the public seems to be coming in. Certainly this is in evidence in the recent trend in mural painting; it seems equally to be true in the case of architecutral and even "salon" sculpture.

There are many today who share the opinion of Eric Gill, the English sculptor when he says:

> "Sculpture is the making of images of things known and loved. But to arrive at the highest possible grandeur they must be communally known and communally loved."[3]

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3 Eric G. Underwood, A Short History of English Sculpture, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1933, p. 158.

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