

THE

# PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

APRIL, 1965

SHOWCASE FOR  
MODERN ART





IT WAS STARTLING at first to see the neon sign at the entrance to the Furness Building announcing the "Current Art" exhibition. The scene on this month's cover was photographed inside, where the students are viewing a series of flickering lights called "Move #2."



GREETING VISITORS to the "Current Art" show is "America America" by Martial Raysse. Outlined in neon blue, it flickers on and off representing the finger-snapping generation.

# A SHOWCASE FOR MODERN ART

A place to observe widely praised abstract expressionism — or much discussed pop art

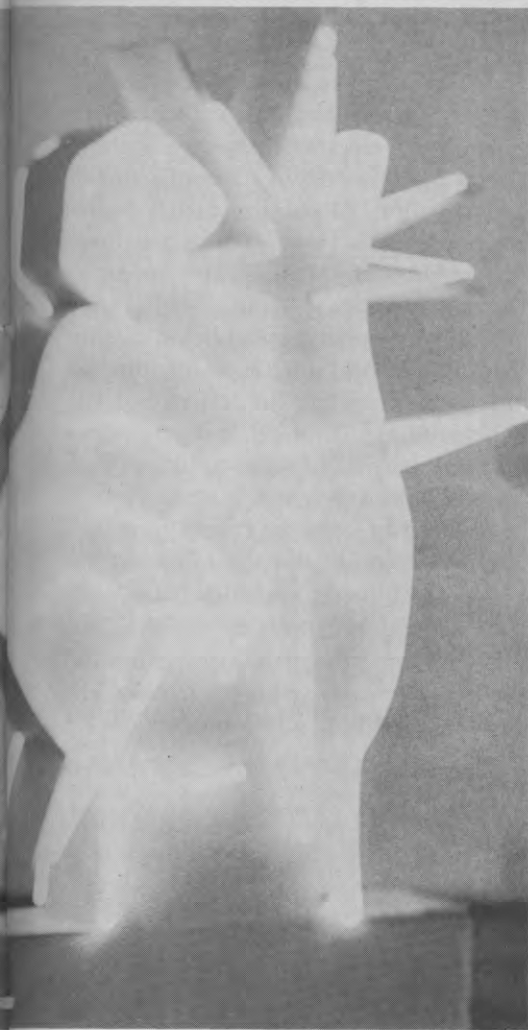
By **MARY ANN MEYERS**

MODERN ART has a showcase at the University which measures its success in terms of diminishing brickbats. Now in its second exhibition year, the Institute of Contemporary Art hasn't yet been wholly accepted by the campus or the community, but, metaphorically, there's less broken glass.

The Institute was established in the autumn of 1963 for the purpose of examining and presenting international activities in the visual arts. Its aim is to intensify concern for and enlarge understanding of current thinking in this field within the University and the city of Philadelphia at large.

Exhibitions are selected for their pertinence, provocativeness, and im-





A TAKE-OFF (right) on traditional theme is Charlott Gilbertson's "Raysse, Inc." Set in a steel gray frame, lined with neon blue, it is an interpretation in black and white.



Photographs by PETER DECHERT

pact, as well as for high standards of creative performance. Temporarily they are being housed in the Furness Building, but it is expected that some 4,500 feet of gallery space will be included in the new Graduate School of Fine Arts building scheduled for completion in 1966.

Samuel Adams Green is exhibition director of the Institute. A native of New York, he attended the Putney School, Brown University, and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Before coming to Pennsylvania, Green was associated with various galleries, including the New Gallery in Provincetown, Mass., and the Area, Kornblee, Allan Stone, and Green galleries in New York. He arranged two shows at the Stable Gallery and one at Wesleyan University last year.

THE INSTITUTE'S initial offering was an exhibition of the work of the American painter Clyfford Still, who served as a visiting professor of painting in the Graduate School of Fine Arts during the fall term of 1963.

The show consisted of 32 major oils rarely seen before. Although critics hailed them as skilled examples of abstract expressionism, many of the uninitiated were puzzled by Still's non-objective canvases slathered with paint laid on almost as thick as bas-relief.

The second exhibition at the Institute was of drawings and welded metal sculpture from David Smith's Voltri-Bolton series. The American sculptor is a pioneer in free-standing, open, metal forms. The sculpture in the Institute show was welded from steel fabricating tools; some of it suggests

the human figure.

Members of the University community got a close look at the New York art scene when the Institute presented "The Atmosphere of '64" this past spring. The exhibition consisted of samples of key works from 14 one-man shows held last year in New York galleries. Almost half the work exhibited was pop art, the satiric new trend in painting and sculpture, typified by George Segal's life-size plaster people and Roy Lichtenstein's larger than life comic strips. The show was a shocker. While many people found humor in it, others were appalled by Andy Warhol's multiple views of an empty electric chair and John Chamberlain's sculptural experiments with the crumpled parts of discarded Yellow taxis.

The Institute's 1964-65 season

## ART

*Continued*

opened with a 28-man Zero exhibition. Group Zero is defined by its German founder Otto Piene, a visiting lecturer in the Graduate School of Fine Arts last term, as "not a style, not a movement, but a point of view." The loosely knit body of artists who were represented in the show, seem fascinated with light. To shape their visual ideas, they use the materials and elements of our contemporary scientific age.

A distinguished collection of 45 paintings, examples of abstract expressionism, were exhibited at the Institute this past January and February. Entitled the "Decisive Years—1943 to 1953," the show included the works of such members of The New York School

as Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Willem deKooning, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still. Their paintings are the ones which have been chiefly responsible for establishing America's reputation as a leader in the art world. Many of them of a size to cause the spectator to feel surrounded by canvas, the works in the Institute show illustrated a transition in approach from the representation of objects to the representation of the painter's subjective states.

THE "DECISIVE YEARS," like its predecessors, was assembled from private and public collections. None of the Institute's shows is pre-packaged; each costs upwards of \$4,000.

The works now on exhibit make up the Institute's third show of the 1964-

1965 season. They are grouped under the all-encompassing title of "Current Art" and consist of 25 works by ten artists representing five countries. In this show electric light, particularly neon light, is used in place of paint to effect color. All of the artists represented in this show (which will continue through May 6) are under 35 years of age.

The University, in addition to providing physical facilities for the exhibition program, underwrites basic operating costs. The Institute seeks private support for supplementary needs, and has several categories of membership open to individuals and organizations in the Philadelphia area. On outside aid hinges its hopes for future programs of vision and strength.

*This was the scene in the Institute of Contemporary Art during winter exhibit of 45 paintings of abstract expressionism.*

MARY ELLEN MARK

