THE MODERN MOVEMENT

IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCULPTURE

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by

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"Art can only develop in a favourable climate of social amenities and cultural aspirations; but art is not something which can be imposed on a culture like a certificate of respectability."

Herbert Read - Art and Society
INTRODUCTION

THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

OF SOUTH AFRICA

There are very clear historical and geographical reasons for the inferior achievements in modern sculpture in South Africa. The Republic is isolated both temporarily and spatially from the culture of Western Europe — of necessity the standard against which the local endeavour must be measured.

In so far as one can speak of a South African art scene it is only of very recent standing. The people of South Africa had in their first two centuries of occupation very little energy for anything but the pre-occupation of social and political survival. "Cultural aspirations" always ran second to these considerations.

The comparison to the cultural development of the United States is a valid one. It was only when at the end of the 18th Century the American settlers rediscovered and re-established a continuous contact with the cultural centres of Europe that painting, sculpture and architecture came to have an identity of their own.
In South Africa the problem is further exacerbated by the smallness of the European population and more especially by the urban population without which no artistic movements can survive. The scattered communities on the platteland are too isolated not only from one another but also from the major cities to form strong cultural entities. Further the main bulk of immigrants from Europe consist largely of "artisan class" who are unlikely to bring prevailing national trends in contemporary artistic styles and techniques with them from their countries of origin.

Although the white population of South Africa is pan-European in background - English, Dutch, German, Scots are all well represented - the groups tend to a mutual exclusion from one another. Again cultural continuity with Europe was hampered. The Afrikaner who has evolved as a result of a fusion of two of the most artistic of the European races - Dutch and French - and is "by instinct conservative"¹ remains practically cut off from the contemporary European cultural tradition.

¹ C. de Water  Cultural Heritage of S.A. (Studio Vol. VII 1934. No. 43)
Afrikaans culture is further diluted as an artistic force because so much of its language and ideals are fostered toward political and ideological concepts. Historical Romanticism, rigid Calvinism and an outdated patriarchy find little consonance with cultural trends in Europe (and indeed in the rest of the world) in the 20th Century.

The lack of a homogeneous "cultural aspiration" between the main groups of European origin, though supported by super-abundant "social amenities", cannot produce a vital and continuous contemporary movement. Even though a country were to be excluded from Europe it might still if free from these internal schisms create a modern movement out of its individual impetus. In South Africa there is the additional deception of security and leisure. This tends to encourage superficial and profuse experimentation rather than the gradual growth from the deepest feelings which is essential to any significant movement. In South Africa sculpture has been more adversely affected than painting by the lack of interest on the part of the general public, the lack of a continuous cultural exchange with Europe, and internal conflicts. Consequently this has created a certain bias against sculpture.
It is only in a limited sense true, that Van Wouw brought a modern European sculptural concept to South Africa; therefore as late as the 1936 Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg, where contemporary works were exhibited for the first time, have we had European sculpture as a formative influence. These are the conditions against which the success of the Modern Movement in South African sculpture must be measured.

* * * *
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE

SCULPTURAL TRADITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa cannot be said to have any continuous sculptural tradition before 1900. In fact only two men, Anton Anreith and Louis Thibault, can be regarded as sculptors, in a modified sense, prior to the arrival of Van Wouw at the turn of the century.

Anton Anreith was born in Riezal, Southern Germany, in 1754.\(^2\) He was apprenticed to the studio of Wenzinger in his youth, and later became a soldier-craftsman with the Dutch East India Company in Amsterdam. He subsequently made his way to the Cape in November, 1777. On his arrival he found that there was not much demand for sculpture and he managed to earn a living as a carpenter until 1786. Gradually, by proving his ability in the execution of a private commission, he was appointed master-sculptor in 1786. Elevated to this position he became associated with the French architect Louis Thibault (1750-1815). He became responsible for all decoration of government buildings which is evidence of the official recognition which he

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2) Prof. G.E. Pearse - Anton Anreith. Our Art I, p.43
eventually received. As no one else provided any competition there was no means of comparison, and as a result, whatever he did was acceptable. Nor was there any established tradition, and so he introduced the German Baroque style which was blossoming in Europe at this period. Due to his collaboration with Thibault he fulfilled many decorative commissions and between 1801 and 1804 executed his seven symbolic statues for the Lodge de Goede Hoop. He also gave some drawing lessons, and in 1815 became the principal of a technical institute opened by the Freemasons. He used, in general, the stucco technique (which had originated in Italy) and which he subsequently learned in Germany. He also executed some decorative carvings in the only materials available - the local woods. Death, Bereavement and Silence (fig. 1) are good examples of his work, though time has taken its toll on the inferior stucco of which constant restoration has obliterated much of the original form. They are all within the tradition of the Baroque style - with its typical dramatic rhythm, vigorous movement and elaborately flowing drapery.

His work, however, left no significant influence. After Anreith's death in 1822, no other sculptural contribution materialized, and this lack of significant sculpture was evident until the arrival of Van Wouw in 1899.
1 ANKEITH Silence
Van Wouw (1862-1945) was born in Driebergen, a province of Utrecht, Holland. Although any artistic inclination which Van Wouw showed as a boy was discouraged by his father, he managed to acquire some instruction at the art academy in Rotterdam.

His father emigrated to the Cape Colony in 1882, and seven years later Van Wouw followed. His story is much the same as that of Anreith's and the conditions at the Cape on his arrival were not dissimilar to those encountered almost a hundred years earlier by his predecessor. He found no established sculptural tradition and to implement the salary he earned repairing rifles in a gunsmith's shop, gave drawing lessons. Like Anreith he received a small private commission which was so well liked that, when the Afrikaner patriots wished to erect a statue as a tribute to their leader, Paul Kruger, it was Van Wouw who won the competition in 1899. This helped to reinstate sculpture once again into the South African cultural environment. Three years elapsed before the work was completed, since the bronze figures had to be cast in Rome. To the great disappointment of the sculptor the monument was not erected in front of the Pretoria station until 1925. It has since been moved.
2  VAN WOUW  Kruger in Exile

3  VAN WOUW  Hunter Drinking Water
to the happier surroundings of Church Square, Pretoria. 3)

This established Van Wouw's reputation as a sculptor and he received numerous commissions including the Women's Monument (Bloemfontein) 1923; Kruger Monument (Pretoria); Boer Figures of the Kruger Monument, and the Voortrekker Monument 1942. It has been acclaimed that Van Wouw became the first "official national sculptor of the Afrikaner people". He identified himself with Afrikaner society and their cultural origins, and their generous patronage enabled him to establish himself as a sculptor.

While Van Wouw was executing various commissioned works, he was also executing numerous native studies which can be broadly termed free experimental sculpture and it is in relation to the modern South African movement that these works are of particular importance.

In 1915 Moses Kottler (b.1896) arrived to settle in South Africa - first in Oudtshoorn and later at Cape Town. It was only ten years later that Meyerowitz (1900-1945) arrived from Germany. His approach was essentially decorative, as is evident from his carved

3) Dr. S.H. Pellisier - Van Wouw. Our Art I, p.7
4 ZADKINE Standing Woman
5 GAUDIER-BREZERKA Red Stone Dancer
doors, fanlights and panels of the National Gallery, Cape Town. In 1925 Meyerowitz was appointed lecturer in sculpture at the newly formed Michaelis School. He resigned in 1927 and after executing many commissions for cinemas, he joined forces with Mitford-Barbeton in the establishment of a private art school in Cape Town.

Also working in Cape Town was Mitford-Barbeton (b.1896) whose sculpture was well thought of at the time. His work has not progressed along with contemporary developments, with the result that it is of minimal importance to the modern movement in South African sculpture.

Kottler's earliest days in Cape Town coincided with the "slump" directly after World War I, but he had the good fortune to be away on a study tour in Greece during the worst depression of the South African economy (1929-1932). Kottler returned in 1932 to settle in Johannesburg. South Africa, having abandoned the gold standard in the same year, Johannesburg was the centre of an economic boom and he was well received. The acquisition of sculpture, supported by industry, the public and the State, stimulated a new interest.

It was one of Meyerowitz's students,
7 DOBSON  Reclining Figure

6 MAILLOT  Seated Figure
Lippy Lipshitz (b. 1903), who was to have the greatest influence on experimental sculpture in South Africa. In 1927, after four years study in Cape Town, Lipshitz left to acquire greater experience in Paris which was the world art centre at the time, particularly for sculpture. There he became a pupil of Anton Bourdelle, a former student of Auguste Rodin. Among Lipshitz's fellow students in Paris were Germaine Richier and the Swiss, Giacometti.

In 1925 Steynberg (b. 1905), who was to become another of the important figures in the modern movement in this country, began his three year course at the Art School in Grahamstown. In 1928 he went to London for further study and also made occasional trips to the Continent. He returned to South Africa in 1934, having completed the Diaz statue for South Africa House in London. This helped to establish his reputation and on his return to this country he continued the tradition of the aging Van Wouw as the sculptor of Afrikaner aspirations.

There had been at the time of the First World War, a revival of sculpture in England. It was stimulated by the work of Gill (1882-1940), Dobson (1887), Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915), which was soon to be consolidated by the work of Epstein (1905-1961), Hepworth (1903),
POSTMA and POTGIETER

Detail - Frieze
Voortrekker Monument
and Moore (1898). Steynberg came under the influence of this movement as well as the revolutionary trends introduced by Rodin (1840-1917). The Natal born Mary Stainbank (b.1899) was also to come into contact with these influences during her years of study at the Royal College of Art.

Willem Hendrikz (b.1916) was, at this time, still continuing his study of architecture in Europe. Influenced by the revolutionary attitudes adopted by the Bauhaus towards the arts, he began to study sculpture and subsequently pioneered a new tradition of sculpture in relation to contemporary architecture in South Africa. This aspect of modern sculpture was to be greatly furthered after 1947 by the Italian, Edoardo Villa (b.1920).

In 1929 The Spirit of Sportsmanship (fig.8) by Fanie Eloff (1885-1947) was bought by the Pretoria City Council for the entrance of the Loftus Versfeld Sportsground. Among South African sculptors since 1900, Eloff remains "an artistic expatriate". Most of his working life was spent in Europe and therefore his influence on modern sculpture in this country was small.

4) Auerbach - Sculpture p.72
Spirit of Sportmanship
By 1933 Kottler, Lipshitz and Stainbank had returned to the country and only Steynberg — of the important sculptors — was still overseas. Elza Dziomba (b.1906), who had studied in Berlin, emigrated to South Africa the same year. In theory at least, contemporary European trends in sculpture were about to infiltrate into the South African cultural world. But the strong reactionary background had still to be countered, for as late as the 1930's the standard art fare (in South Africa) was a form of 19th Century academism long outmoded in Europe. A faint echo of impressionism, well watered down for local popular taste, was doubtfully accepted with a wry smile as the ultimate possibility in experimentation.5)

The new movement was to manifest itself as an entity for the first time at the 1936 Empire Exhibition. The works exhibited were all "free" experimental works as opposed to the dull officially commissioned monuments and busts that had seemed to represent the limited concept of South African connoisseurs. At last the young sculptors could make a direct appeal in unfettered personal and experimental terms, to the

5) D. Anderson — Art in South Africa
public of South Africa. What these sculptors had learned in Europe became the so-called cultural heritage of South Africa. At the time there was a new enthusiasm for all types of artistic expression. Active in the world of literature at this time were Uys Krige, Vincent Swart, Laurens van der Post and Van Wyk Louw.

Prof. Martin du Toit, who organized this exhibition, adequately conveyed the feeling of the exhibits in his introduction in the catalogue:

"It is the present century, young as it is, that has brought about the great revival in our country. In a short period for 20-30 years South Africa has accomplished more than in the two preceeding centuries. No wonder that in all this exuberance art branches out in all directions. Old traditions of Europe of the 19th Century are being adhered to, but hypermodern schools of Paris and Berlin are being followed. It is naturalism, impressionism, expressionism, romanticism, neo-classicism, and even surrealism.

"This is indeed a great awakening to self-consciousness of a community that has only just come to the realization of nationhood.

"A peculiar phenomenon is the fact that the Afrikaans speaking Afrikaner has only recently turned
to sculpture and painting. His time of trekking and unrest has probably passed, and how his young art and literature flourish!

"This exhibition is small and representative of what has been done in sculpture, architecture and painting during the last few years."  

The 1936 Empire Exhibition proved the turning point in the history of sculpture in this country; here for the first time was a group exhibition of sculpture showing the old alongside the new - the doors to free experimental sculpture were opened. Among those who exhibited were Isa Cameron, Elza Dziomba, Lippy Lipshitz, Mary Stainbank, Van Wouw, Hendrikz, Ellis and Moses Kottler.

Certain of the established sculptors who were also exhibiting, were rather resentful of the so-called revolutionary trend manifested by the young sculptors and clamoured for their rejection. There was a general feeling of antipathy towards the new element and strong objections were voiced in the press. Under these difficult conditions the Modern Movement in South African sculpture was launched.

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6) Catalogue - 1936 Empire Exhibition, Johannesburg.
11  LIPSHITZ   Landscape in the Nude

12  KOTTLER   Seated Figure
While it is a fact that romantic realism or naturalism did not lose its influence before 1939, the progressive artists who had exhibited and whose work created such a furore at the Empire Exhibition, formed themselves, in 1938, into the "New Group" which included the sculptors Lipshitz and Dziomba. As a group they attempted to consolidate the new influences which, as young artists, they had imbibed overseas.

After 1938 two other sculptors made their appearance. They were Postma and Potgieter. Laurika Postma (b.1903) studied in Brussels, Munich, Berlin and Italy. Any influence which she may have absorbed from the developments in Europe has certainly not manifested itself in her work or brought any dynamic contribution to the South African art scene. Hendrik Potgieter (b.1916) worked in collaboration with Postma on the frieze (fig.10) for the Voortrekker Monument, which was commissioned in 1942. It depicts various scenes of historical importance, and Potgieter supervised the execution of the frieze in marble by craftsmen in Europe. His other major public work, Liberty Curbed (fig.31), stands obscured outside the Provincial Administration Buildings in Pretoria.

The years of the Second World War were to have a revolutionary influence on the artistic climate of
South Africa. The country became economically isolated from Europe and the importation of luxury goods became more and more difficult. Consequently connoisseurs and Philistines accumulated large sums of "frozen" money and spent it on buying works of art as an investment or to bolster their social standing.\(^5\)

It was really only after the war that South Africa received a greater impetus. Some of the emigrants who were unable to adjust themselves to the hardships of post-war conditions, left Europe and England to settle in South Africa, and at the same time many ex-servicemen returned, bringing with them a stream of new influences. This new awareness of European culture was to manifest itself in the trends of various works exhibited later in the 1950's. It can be found in the work of Edoardo Villa, an Italian prisoner of war interned at Sonderwater in the Transvaal and who remained in the country after his release in 1947, and also in the work of the newly arrived Hungarian, Zoltan Borboreki. (1950)

Beginning in 1948, with the ambitious South African Exhibition at the Tate, where sculpture and art in general from this country was shown in London, there

\(^5\) D. Anderson
have been a number of subsequent exhibitions where South African sculpture could be viewed alongside that done in other major cities. South Africa has participated with increasing tenacity and regularity for approximately the past decade in the Biennales both in Venice and São Paulo. There has also been a travelling exhibition of South African art in the U.S.A. during 1956/7. This country has also been represented overseas most prominently by Lippy Lipshitz who exhibited in 1948 at the International Art Club, Rome and Turin; in 1952 at the International Sculpture Exhibition, Arnheim, Holland; and in 1959 at the Smithsonian Institute in New York.

Nor has there been any lack of exhibitions on the home front. In these exhibitions significant changes appear in the evolution of a local art idiom, which have helped to establish what can definitely be termed a modern movement in South African sculpture. The 1952 Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition was extremely representative of South African sculptors; it included work by Borboreki, Dziomba, Eloff, Hendrikz, Kottler, Lipshitz, Mitford-Barbeton, Ollemans, Postma, Potgieter, Stainbank, Steynberg, Van Wouw and Vincent. The first Quadrennial of South African art was held in Cape Town
in 1956. Other important annual exhibitions include "Artists of Fame and Promise" (Johannesburg); the Cape Salon (first held in 1960); and in the past four years there have also been the "Exhibition of Contemporary Transvaal Art" (1960); "Art: South Africa: To-day" (1963) in Durban, and, most recently and of undisputed significance, the (6) Group exhibition held in Cape Town in 1964. This latter exhibition represented the younger generation of South African sculptors born in the 1930's and just on the verge of maturity. It included Richard Wake, Bruce Arnott, Merle Freund, Zelda Nolte and Bill Davis. In addition to them there are a few other sculptors of the same generation - Adamos, Johan van Heerden, Lucas Sithole and Sydney Kumalo - who could be added to this "new wave" of South African sculptors.

Over the past 30 years there has been a considerable breakthrough in free experimental sculpture by those sculptors working here, in their use of indigenous materials and their attempt to align themselves to contemporary European developments. Undoubtedly this has been led by Lipshitz who has done more than any other sculptor in the country in an effort to encourage young artists to experiment freely and to express their ideas, never compromising experimentation
EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS WOLFE GALLERY CAPE TOWN
31 HOPE STREET
2ND SEPTEMBER - 3RD OCTOBER 1964

9 Poster for Group (6) Exhibition
for the essentials of sculpture. This was evident in the recent group exhibition of sculpture held in Cape Town in September, 1964, when it was interesting to note that all the sculptors had been pupils of Lipshitz, yet despite their divergent approaches, each made a new and significant contribution to South African sculpture.

The field of sculpture in South Africa has long been in need of some new impetus and judging from the varied nature and high standard of the work on view, in what was Cape Town's first open air sculpture exhibition, it seems to have achieved its purpose of "making a collective artistic statement". 7)

The modern movement in Europe was basically the result of social and industrial revolution. There has been no such revolution to stimulate a similar movement in South Africa. The lack of necessity for sculpture, apart from the few officially commissioned historical monuments within a naturalistic tradition, as well as the lack of interest and support by a public, whose conception of art is confined to a faithful reproduction of visual reality, and a heterogenous society which inhibits whatever mutual cultural exchange there might be, have all been detrimental to the establishment of a truly indigenous South African sculptural tradition.

The pioneers of the modern movement who have been

7) Catalogue - 6 Group Exhibition
working here over the past 30 years are by now all well consolidated. The present generation demands from its artists the exploration of new channels of thought - the establishment of a new vision, rather than the refinement of past achievements.

Of the six young artists who exhibited, five were sculptors. The multifarious nature of the sculpture was, in itself, exciting and the unique (for Cape Town) open air setting added to the general revolutionary feeling.

In order to appreciate the development of the Modern Movement in South African Sculpture, it is necessary to refer to the causes that led to the evolution of the modern movement of sculpture in Europe.

* * * * *
THE MODERN MOVEMENT

During the 17th Century, while the Renaissance was declining, the modern scientific age was being born. Stimulated by the Renaissance ideal of complete objectivity, men's minds turned from magic and the authority of the church to independent observation.

Its spirit of inquiry instigated travel, exploration and colonization. Its love of independent thought permeated religious life, bringing about a revolt from the Roman Catholic Church and the establishment of Protestantism. It stimulated scientific activities, laying the foundation of observation and critical thinking that has resulted in unparalleled scientific development; in industrial and economic revolution; and politically in the overthrow of absolutism and the coming into power of the middle classes and the masses.

Protestantism gained a stronghold among the Dutch who, with their puritanical attitude toward art, banned sculpture, religious pictures, pagan myths and even historical subjects. This also occurred in other Protestant countries such as England and parts of Germany. The result of this Reformation was hostility towards Rome and perhaps all things Italian. Probably
it was for this reason that the traditions of the Middle Ages persisted so long in Germany, so that eventually when the influence of the Renaissance did spread further north, it came in the form of the Baroque, characterized by excessive ornament and unceasing movement.

In England the vigorous art of the Middle Ages - cathedrals, carvings, etc. - had been created under the stimulus and patronage of the Church. But when in the 16th Century Protestantism secured a stronghold, this patronage ceased and England was deprived of a large class of skilled craftsmen. Protestantism was, in general, averse to religious representation, as in Holland, and its attitude became extreme among the Puritans, even iconoclastic under the Commonwealth. The Restoration, however, gave added zeal to the aristocracy, whose wealth and position increased greatly and stimulated the production of domestic and ecclesiastic architecture and portraits.

The 18th Century initiated the Industrial Revolution which was far-reaching in its effects upon the arts, not only of England, but also in the entire world. At that time steam-driven machinery began to replace the handmade or literally "manufactured" product. The movement spread rapidly to France, America and other
countries, and vitally affected all the arts for it took away from the vast majority of workers the creative faculty and the ideal of craftsmanship.

The half century from 1800-1850 saw the first of many inventions: the steamboat, locomotive, transatlantic liner, telegraph and photography, which, amongst other results, put an end to isolation and made possible the one world of to-day as we know it. Science, after groping its way for centuries, expanded in the 19th Century to become the overpowering factor of the 20th Century.

Europe, particularly France, saw the abolition or limitation of kings and aristocracy in favour of constitutional monarchies or republics in the great outburst of the French Revolution, one of the important signs pointing to a new era based upon a new social order. Consequently the bourgeoisie and the lower classes rose to positions previously limited to the aristocracy - with the consequent shaking up of cultural traditions.

The economic background to the French Revolution had its effect upon the arts. As art seemed to create high values out of comparatively inexpensive raw materials, it was thought to add wealth to the country. Articles of
luxury, favoured by the aristocracy, helped in supporting a sound national economy, by keeping money in the country. Much of the sculpture done during the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries is superficial both in subject matter and in feeling. This was the result of the autocracy of the French Academy, which narrowly restricted the subject matter and technical methods.

The spending of vast sums on extravagant art projects contributed to the economic imbalance which ended in the French Revolution.

Meanwhile, in the arts, the work of Bernini (1598-1680), the last major sculptor of the Renaissance, characterized the theatrical flamboyancy of the 17th Century Baroque style. The exaggerated movement, agitated drapery and ornate artificial curls are evident in his Francis I d'Este (fig.15). Bernini's impact had the profound result of "breaking up the sculptural solidity"¹) established by Michelangelo and the Renaissance.

The Baroque style in the Germany of the 18th Century received additional influences from the painted wood sculptures of the church altars of Bavaria and

¹) Auerbach - Sculpture p.48
15  BERNINI  Francis I d'Este

16  BORBOREKI  queue
Austria. There were also many elaborately wood-carved altarpieces produced in Belgium at the time. This Baroque style Anreith brought with him to South Africa, as is evident in his wood-carved pulpit and organ loft of the Lutheran Church, Cape Town.

According to Wölfflin, the Renaissance style was classified as "plastic" and the Baroque as "painterly". The plastic character of Renaissance art, expressed by means of contours and solids, essentially appealed to the tactile senses. In contrast, the painterly character of Baroque art softened contours in light and shade, appealing to the visual senses. Baroque sculpture and architecture depended for effect on the use of chiaroscuro, and in sculpture it was combined with an emotional intensity. It is necessary to bear this in mind when assessing the work of the 19th Century Impressionists, especially concerning the work of Medardo Rosso (1858-1928)(fig.18), whose sculpture is known to have inspired Auguste Rodin (1840-1917).

In an effort to liberate himself from the influence of the Baroque movement, the Italian sculptor, Antonio Canova (1757-1822) and the Danish Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844), who was working in Rome, produced work in a neo-classic style. They were probably influenced by the writings of Winkleman, the
17  STERN  Conversation Piece

18  ROSSO  Conversazione in Giardino
distinguished art critic. Also working in Rome at this time was the Englishman, John Flaxman,\(^2\) who subsequently became the dominant influence in English sculpture.

In France, the neo-classic style of the period is expressed in the work of Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), and also in the work of his contemporary, Rude, who was carving his dramatic Marseillaise on the Arc de Triomphe, and Anton Louis Barye (1795-1875), the teacher of Rodin, was producing sensitive animal sculpture sometimes in combination with figures.

Certain social and economic factors must also be taken into consideration as having a decided effect on the attitude of the exponents of the modern movement.

Previously there had been but a single style for each period; with the disappearance of a single accepted style in the late 19th and 20th Centuries, artists divided into hostile factions and the bond of common understanding which formerly had limited artist to patron also disappeared. This eventually led to a further estrangement between the public and the artist. The conservative or academic artist, however, fared

\(^2\) Auerbach - Sculpture p.49
RODIN  Age of Bronze
better economically than the radical who pursued new ideals of his own choosing. Now there were several styles concurrent and also one superceding the other. World War I, the Great Depression and World War II have followed one another in swift succession and the chaos of the 19th Century has become the super-chaos of the 20th Century which has manifested itself in the diversity of the modern art movement.

* * * *
MONUMENTAL AND CIVIC SCULPTURE

In South Africa the artists confined themselves to creating monuments illustrating historical events. Prominent among these anecdotal sculptors have been Van Wouw, Steynberg, Potgieter and Postma. Others have, at one time or another, executed the isolated commissioned piece such as Barbeton in his Monument to the 1820 Grahamstown Settlers (fig.23); Lipshitz's German Settler Monument (fig.24) at East London; Herman Wald's Diamond Diggers Memorial Fountain (fig.50) at Kimberley; Kottler's Striving (fig.30), and his monumental figure of President Burgers in Pretoria.

There are numerous historical and symbolical monuments by Steynberg: the Blood River Monument in Natal; the Equestrian Statue of Louis Botha and the Andries Pretorius Monument, both in Pretoria; the Hugenot Memorial at Fransch Hoek; the Sarel Cilliers Monument at Kroonstad; the Peace of Vereeniging (fig.25), at Vereeniging, and his two recent civic sculptures Our Hope (fig.32) and Glanstoring (fig.27), for the Public Administration Buildings in Pretoria. These Government-commissioned projects extol the ideology of the Afrikaner, and in this respect Steynberg inherits Van Wouw's restricted tradition which he strives to
stylize in his later public work, *Peace of Vereeniging*, in accordance with contemporary trends. Sculptural merit, unfortunately, has not always been the criterion in the awarding of public commissions, nor has it been easy to satisfy miscellaneous boards and committees whose artistic education has been overlooked. Often the sculptor must satisfy a coterie whose financial means are in excess of their cultural attainments.

In his thesis on Coert Steynberg, E.C.L. Bosman states that Steynberg's most revolutionary monument is undoubtedly the *Peace of Vereeniging*; that not only his style is revolutionary, but also the use of various materials which he has introduced in this work. He also considers the recumbent figure of the "stryder" to symbolize the Afrikaner nation after the Boer War, since the steel figure expresses the "gees van staal" which emerges out of the "Afrikaner volk". He concludes that this is a pure, aesthetic work, in which Steynberg freely expressed his inner convictions. In spite of its historic reality and symbolism, Steynberg has utilized a "hoog stileerde vorm". Bosman assumes that this so-called stylized form and rhythmical composition will distinguish it as a work of "hoogstande estetiese waarde". He enthusiastically
concludes by proclaiming that this monument will
give a new direction to South African monumental
sculpture of the future.¹)

As a matter of fact, the floating stylized forms
are decorative and rhythmical and the metal figure,
combined with stone, despite its symbolical intention,
seems inharmonious and unbalanced. It is questionable
whether this sculpture, as Bosman claims, has given a
new impetus to monumental sculpture in South Africa,
the credit of which he so earnestly wishes to accord
to Coert Steynberg.

This new direction has actually received the
overseas influence of English and Portuguese sculpture,
manifested in the sculpture representing the
swashbuckling Diaz (fig. 35) by the Portuguese sculptor
Prof. Barato Feyo, and more recently in the
controversial Smuts statue (fig. 36) by the British
sculptor Sydney Harpley.

Evidently Steynberg has been influenced by
Zadkine's bronze City Destroyed (fig. 26), the most
revolutionary post-war monument in Europe, erected as
a reminder of the bombing of Rotterdam. In this

¹) 'n Kritiese Waardering en 'n Beskrywing van die Vrye,
Persoonlike Beeldhouwerk van Coert Steynberg —
E.C.L. Bosman p. 51
particular monumental masterpiece there have been no concessions of formal content and there is a harmonious fusion of the message and the aesthetic appeal of the sculpture.

In Steynberg's experimental work and particularly in his monumental sculpture, one can distinguish two completely different approaches. There is his conventional monumental work following the Afrikaner sculptural tradition, commissioned and, as a result, limited in conception by his conviction to convey some historical or symbolical events. In his modern work he is striving to keep up with contemporary trends and pre-occupies himself with the use of various media. The combination of steel and stained-glass mosaic, which he used for the first time in Atoomeuse Wildebeeskalfie (fig.66), is elaborated and combined with a figurative element in Dwarrelwind (fig.98) in which he used gridded mesh-wire with random bits of coloured glass, resulting in a decorative use of colour, which ceases to be an integral part of the sculpture.

By contrast the younger South African sculptor, Michael Bolus, who recently startled Cape Town and Johannesburg with his painted Non-Figurative exhibits, has incorporated successfully colour and form.

Colour in sculpture is not revolutionary. It can
be traced in the work of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans who either painted the surfaces of their sculpture directly or obtained the desired effect by varying the patina of the bronzes. Nowadays the use of colour in sculpture has been revived, particularly in the work of the Italians, and that of Marino Marini. Primitive sculpture, too, extensively uses colour with great effect. Unfortunately, Steynberg has neither reconciled the mesh-wire or the colour, but applied them as an afterthought to his figurative element, reducing his sculpture to mere decoration. A sculptor could have solved this had the mesh effect been cast together with the figures in bronze, resulting in an improved unity and, at the same time, retaining the desired effect.

These experiments have culminated in his most recently completed civic sculptures, Glanstoring (fig. 27) and Our Hope (fig. 32).

Steynberg has attempted to justify his impulsive style in this statement:—

"Dit is so 'n heeltemal nuwe rigting, 'n rigting meer abstrak, maar 'n rigting waarin ek tog nog aan die egte figuur hou. Ek moet sê die oorgangstadium was 'n baie, baie stadige proses. Die gedagte het deels ontstaan by my kopstukke en 'n gevoel vir ruimte
het ook daartoe bygedra. Die buiterste lyne en ruimtes om die eintlike beelde moes harmonieer met die soliede vorm binne in. Maar hoewel ek hierdie ruimtes behou het, het ek gevoel ek moet die vlakke ook behou. Dit het ek gedoen deur die aanbring van vierkantige ogiesdraad oor die ruimtes. 'n Sterk gevoel het by my posgevat om meer kleur te gebruik, nie net in my beelde nie, maar ook om dit van materiaal te maak wat kleur het. So het dit dan gekom dat ek ook mosaïekglas begin gebruik het om die vlak van my beelde kleur te gee."

As a naïve evaluation of Steynberg's modernistic pretentions, is the following extravagant excerpt from the souvenir pamphlet extolling the art works of the new Provincial Administration Building :-

"The theme of Glanstoring is the mineral wealth of the Transvaal and the commission to erect this statue near the main entrance of the building was given by the Administration in recognition of the debt we all owe to mineral and mining. A comparison between the limited prospects of 1883 and the prosperity of 1963 compels us to pay tribute to whom(ever) tribute is due. Even during the last few decades, with all our industrial and agricultural development, mining

remained the mainstay of our economy.

"The Glanstoring is a slender pyramid of vertical pillars divided into three horizontal sections supporting representative figures. In the lowest section between the three pillars of the pedestal, at ground level, the upper part of the body of a miner is to be seen, wielding his pickaxe in a shaft. The view is intentionally obscured by a kaleidoscope of crystals and precious stones.

"On the platform above the miner stands the figure of a woman reaching for a jewel held by the man above her. The jewel has obviously just been removed from the jewel box of Cappa Crucis, shown in the upper section of the statuary. The reference is to the myth concerning a jewel box in that colourful group of stars in the Southern Cross. The figures are all 1 1/2 times life-size but extended to correct the perspective.

"The artist's intention is to suggest the interplay between the radiance of the stars and the lustre of the minerals and precious stones of our country.

"From below the impression is one of ascending movement created by the slender sharpness of the tower and by the series of pillars and platforms in its construction. From above the impression is that of
effulgence embracing the whole group and penetrating right into the shaft.

"Coloured enamel and burnt glass are generously used to emphasize wealth. The draping of the figures is intended not only to unify the construction but also to emphasize the delicacy of the whole....."

As yet only the bare pyramid has been erected on the site, and of the three sculptures dominating the various entrances of the building, Glanstoring appears as though it might be the only one to harmonize with the architecture.

This kind of literary apology cannot explain away the sculpture, nor can it lessen the imbalance of literary and formal content.

Rising out of the concourse on the further side of the Building is a group of three figures, Striving (fig.30), by Moses Kottler. In contemplating these figures, one must bear in mind the unfortunate experience Kottler had when some years ago he was commissioned to do a sculpture for the Population Register Building in Pretoria, and that when the figures were unveiled there were violent objections and public and official reactions on the grounds of indecency.4)

4) To-day it can be viewed in the sunny secluded courtyard of the Humphrey Gallery in Kimberley.
29 GABO Bijenkorf Construction, Rotterdam

30 KOTTLER Striving
Kenneth Clark, discussing the philological associations of the words Naked and Nude, states:—
"The English language, with its elaborate generosity, distinguishes between the naked and the nude. To be naked is to be deprived of our clothes and the word implies some of the embarrassment which most of us feel in that condition. The word nude, on the other hand, carries in educated usage, no uncomfortable overtone. The vague image it projects into the mind is not of a huddled and defenceless body, but of a balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body reformed. In fact the word was forced into our vocabulary by critics of the early 18th Century in order to persuade the artless islanders that in countries where painting and sculpture were practised and valued as they should be, the naked body was the central subject of art."5)

A difficult problem has been created by the moral prejudices of the 20th Century. From earliest times the nude has been the dominating subject in the art of sculpture. During the Greek and Renaissance period sculpted figures in the nude were prominently displayed in public. During the Renaissance,

5) Kenneth Clark — The Nude p.1
Michelangelo once again brought the nude to prominence in his David. Subsequently Rodin cloaked the figure of Balzac in a monumental mass, whereas Zadkine's symbolic figure, City Destroyed, successfully obviates this difficulty by breaking up the forms into semi-abstract shapes. Harpley, evidently a follower of the Rodinesque conception, produced in his Smuts statue a synthesis of "clothed form". Certainly Steynberg's recent public work has not succeeded in solving this problem, nor have Kottler's drapes in his Striving; Potgieter's shorts in Liberty Curbed; and Uhlman's sprayed-on bathing-costume effect which has unfortunately been added to a carved female nude.

These local sculptors have apparently learnt nothing from Henry Moore who has successfully solved the problem of the draped nude in his sculptures. He explains his constructive use of drapery in the following statement:

"Drapery can emphasize the tension in a figure, for where the form pushes outwards, such as on the shoulders, the thighs, the breasts etc., it can be pulled tight across the form (almost like a bandage), and by contrast with the crumpled slackness of the
drapery which lies between the salient points, the pressure from inside is intensified.

"Drapery can also, by its direction over the form, make more obvious the section, that is, show shape. It need not be just decorative addition, but can serve to stress the sculptural idea of the figure.

"Also in my mind was to connect the contrast of the sizes of folds, here small, fine and delicate, in other places big and heavy with the form of mountains, which are the crinkled skin of the earth."^6^)

Quoting from the same source, the idea behind the sculpture is interpreted as having been "raised by some mighty hand from the depths of the earth".\(^7\)

The central male figure is supposed to be in the act "of supporting the woman at his side who is striving to reach an erect position". This emaciated Hercules lifts his "suppliant hand for some divine power to grasp and lead him to his destination".

The general intention in creating these melodramatic figures was to "represent the South

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6) Notes on the Draped Reclining Figure - Catalogue of the Open Air Exhibition of Sculpture, Holland Park, London.

7) Inaugural pamphlet of Provincial Administration Building, 1963. p.26
African nation which is striving to understand and achieve its own destiny".

The sculpture appears to be badly placed on its magnificent polished granite base which rises from the solid foundation of the basement and reaches above street level through a spacious opening in the floor of the concourse. This is emphasized by the standing central figure that gazes upwards and which seems to confront the glass facade of the building as one might confront a brick wall. Looking at the sculpture in the round it seems to be confined to only a frontal view, and on account of this it should have stood diagonally across the courtyard. This would have freed the standing figure from the gesture of claustrophobia. The project seems to recall the old-fashioned device of the grand piano emerging from the depths of the proscenium. An attempt has been made to modernize the figures by angularizing the limbs. One is consciously aware of legs and arms irritationally distorted at right-angles, giving the entire group a stiff agitated effect. This is particularly contrived in the female figure and the mutual handshake linking herself and the youth. The fact that the hands are feebly outstretched is not convincing in itself to convey the essential quality of striving,
which might involve an interpretation of "endeavour, battle, struggle or competition".  

Another disturbing element is the flimsy loin cloths which seem to grow magically out of one limb and disappear abruptly into or behind the respective thighs. The lack of plasticity is evident when viewing the sculpture in profile.

The earlier Nudes by Kottler are sculpturally more satisfying in their simple rhythmic and stylized classic naturalism.

*Liberty Curbed* (fig.31) by Hennie Potgieter which decorates the same building, is conceived on classical lines. The apologist, identifying the Afrikaans nation with the sculptured bull, enthuses this explanation. "Usually the human figure is represented as being in control of a proud stallion or even a leopard. Appropriately the artist has chosen the Afrikaner bull to represent the people of the Transvaal. With photographic correctness he shows the overgrown hump on the shoulders, the 'coffin-shaped' skull, the ridges across the flanks, and the oval horns - all signs of the virility of a young nation just

8) The Oxford Dictionary
approaching maturity."  

On the contrary the sculpture's clumsy proportions and life-cast, type modelling appears hollow and grotesque, and its view is partly obscured by the open stone walling and hemmed in against the building. This is a typical example of a sculpture being utilized to fill in an empty space after the completion of the building, in this instance to landmark an entrance, with the result that it has no relationship whatsoever to the magnificent architectural background, does nothing to enhance the building entrance, nor does it have any relation to the architectural features of the building.

Finally one could mention Steynberg's Our Hope (fig. 32) which stands in one of the lower entrance halls. The realistic and stylized group shows evidence of sculptural talent, but his pre-occupation with wire-mesh results in the validity of the sculpture becoming suspect. More successful perhaps is the approach used in modelling the boy's shorts, but here again there is no differentiation in treatment, except the sharp circular ridge

9) Inaugural pamphlet of Provincial Administration Building, 1963. p.27
indicating where they begin.

One cannot understand why the front of the teacher's dress terminates well above the knees, and the back of it ends at usual dress length. It is certainly not for aesthetic reasons.

It must be emphasized that until the sculptor can dispense with having to play up to the sentimental requirements of his official Afrikaner patrons, only then will he succeed in attaining purely sculptural and aesthetic harmony.

In accordance with the modern movement, Harpley, in his Smuts statue, has given priority to the formal content. Consequently the sculpture takes on abstract overtones which limit considerably its public appeal and gives it its modern appearance in the eyes of the public.

It is interesting to compare the difference of approach in Van Wouw's Paul Kruger (1899) (fig. 33), Steynberg's M.W. Pretorius (1955) (fig. 34), and Harpley's Smuts (1963) (fig. 36), concerning three prominent statesmen in South African history.

Dr. S.H. Pelliser, discussing Van Wouw's unofficial sculpture, refers to a small piece which he modelled as a young student in Rotterdam. He tells us
33  VAN WOUW  Paul Kruger

34  STEYNBERG  President Pretorius
that De Vogelaar (fig.150) may have been modelled under the influence of his teacher while he was still a student, and that he adopted the style of Rodin who was coming to the fore at that time.

Dr. Pellisier believes, therefore, that "Van Wouw became a realist only after he had escaped from his tutor's influence". This proves that he was always a realist in the manner of the Dutch naturalist tradition. If Van Wouw made this when he was a student, as Dr. Pellisier suggests, it must have been done in about 1880 or a little later, and at that time Rodin had only created his Age of Bronze (1876) (fig.19). Therefore Bruce Arnott is justified in stating in his thesis that "the full impact of his (Rodin) revolution had not been universally diffused even by the time Van Wouw emigrated to South Africa in 1899. Hence Van Wouw's half appreciation of Rodin".

Paul Kruger remains a fine example of Van Wouw's 19th Century romantic realism, despite its stiff formality and outdated costume. In the light of the modern movement, it is merely of historical interest.

10) Dr. S.H. Pellisier - Van Wouw. Our Art I, p.7

11) Arnott - Thesis: Sculpture in South Africa
150 VAN WOUW  De Vogelaar  151 VAN WOUW  Hunter
The statue of President Pretorius, executed some 55 years later, is not far removed from this, and follows the Afrikaner tradition which Steynberg inherited from Van Wouw. Although this is freer and more relaxed in its handling, its conception is uninspired and the effect of the modelling dull and laboured.

It is generally accepted that Rodin was the initiator of the modern movement in European sculpture. The romantic realistic approach of his Age of Bronze and the wide range which he explored between this and his later symbolical Balzac, exerted a profound influence on the modern movement.

For the Smuts statue the London-born Harpley was commissioned in preference to local competitors. Harpley's approach was more objective and detached than would have been that of any South African sculptor. His intention was to represent Smuts in the light of world history and not as a local figurehead.

There are many statues of statesmen situated throughout the country, glaring examples of insipid and lifeless official monuments which are generally ignored. This is caused by the inability on the part of the sculptors concerned to express themselves in
any way other than by the reproduction of realistic likenessess. Edward Trier expresses the correct contemporary attitude to civic sculpture:—
"The public monument of our time can no longer imitate Renaissance fountains and Baroque apotheosis or serve to glorify deserving individuals. Its sense must be wider and more spiritual".12)

Instead of using the conventional standing pose that one finds in Van Wouw's Kruger or Steynberg's Pretorius, Harpley has expressed the character and personality of Smuts, seating him in an informal and relaxed manner on a rock-like mass. This becomes a daring and unconventional composition for a public monument, and is even dubbed by some as being "old hat", since this 80-year old style has long been superceded. This being contrary to what the public is used to accepting as a monument, since it is not a waxwork, its prominent presence has aroused public indignation.13)

12) Trier - Form and Space  p.243

13) While attempts are being made by various members of the Cape Town public to have the Smuts statue removed, it is interesting to note that in Johannesburg it was the sculptors and artists themselves who complained about the crude Miners Monument by MacGregor and its placing outside the Civic Theatre, from where it has subsequently been removed to an unknown destination.
It seems that Harpley has conveyed in modern sculptural terms the essence of those qualities which made Smuts the Man. As such it is vigorously and sensitively modelled, and he has adequately overcome the problem of covering form.

Looking at a piece of sculpture by Maillol, one immediately responds to its formal content. In contemporary sculpture associative imagery (that is narrative imagery) or images that are within our everyday experience, have been dispensed with or narrowly restricted to a more individual form of expression. This, when applied to Non-Representational sculpture, has created the "New Reality". Form, especially in Non-Representational and Non-Figurative sculpture, refers synonymously to the Content. Ben Shann defines significant form:— "Form is the shape of content". Art devoid of content cannot exist, and therefore one might conclude that formless sculpture is not art. The sum total of content is relative to the emotional depth of the stimulus. Profundity does not depend on the subject matter alone if the content, that which is expressed in visible terms, has no form, and by form one would include the marshalling of materials; the relating of
inner shapes to outer limits; the initial establishing of harmonies (internal relationships, fusion and juxtapositioning), and the abolition of extraneous materials (that is, to the order of shapes now established). Form then is discipline and ordering according to the needs of content. 14)

The site in fact is congenial. It has provided the Smuts statue with a close affinity to the mountain and as one moves around it, the possibilities of continuous change create a source of never-ending surprise. The feeling of monumentality is intensified by the fact that the top portion of the sculpture can be viewed against the sky in a definite setting of pure space. In contrast, Diaz (fig.35), with its hard and definite lines, seems unsuited to its site and should be transferred to the Foreshore where it would be seen to its advantage against a setting of modern architecture.

Compared to these most recent monuments, those by Van Wouw and Steynberg, mentioned earlier, appear to be derived from barren 19th Century academic principles. In spite of the controversy, there is no

14) Neville Dubow
doubt that Harpley's Smuts will give a new direction to monumental sculpture in South Africa.

Discussing his Monument to an Unknown Political Prisoner, Reg Butler postulates that "the dimensions of the actual construction shall be huge. In other words, sculpture itself must become architecture, something one can step into and walk through".\(^{15}\)

In South Africa, however, there is only one monument which fulfills this requirement, and that is the Airforce Memorial near Pretoria.\(^{16}\) In its proximity is the overbearing Voortrekker Monument. These monuments express the negative and positive approaches characteristic of contemporary South African sculpture.

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\(^{15}\) Trier - Form and Space  p.243

\(^{16}\) Figure 154
TAYLOR and TAYLOR  
(architects)  
S.A.A.F. Memorial
SCULPTURE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ARCHITECTURE

The new trends in modern architecture were represented in the early part of the 20th Century in America by Frank Lloyd Wright, and in Europe by Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. The early tendency of the modern builders was to go to the extreme of functionalism and geometry expressed by Le Corbusier who said, "the house shall be a machine in which to live". This movement in Europe culminated in the Bauhaus during the 1920's. Walter Gropius, one of the founders of the Bauhaus, clarifies its aims: - "Our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake'...."1)

Five years earlier Gabo, with his constructivist theories, was experimenting with problems of inter-related and inter-penetrating space, applicable to architecture and sculpture. "The constructivist principle leads into the domain of architecture," Gabo declared. "Art formerly reproductive has become

creative. It is now the spiritual source from which future architects will draw."\(^2\)

During the Renaissance, sculpture was created either for indoors, or for adorning the parks of the villas to articulate the open space, and, as such, was exclusively admired. Occasionally it became an integral part of the architecture. In the great periods of Greek art, sculpture was intimately co-ordinated with architecture so that sometimes it replaced the structural elements.

It is the contemporary diversity of style and the stress of functionalism demanded by the revolutionary architectural principles of the 20th Century, that has led to the prevailing separation of sculpture from architecture. Previously the Church or the nobility had invariably commissioned artists and architects. To-day the autocratic demands of the Government on artists results in the abundance of dull official art existing on public buildings and in city squares. In an effort to overcome the bad taste and disorder which predominates, the French sculptor, Andre Bloc, founder of the "Groupe Espace", declared: "to give their human value back to the plastic arts, contact must be

\(^2\) Herbert Read - Concise History of Modern Sculpture p.110
re-established with the public, with the crowd. If the artist is to have any social influence, his role must be enlarged by the continual presence of his works in every sphere of activity."

The after effects of the Industrial Revolution were manifested in the social and economic changes. The population began to drift to the cities where manufacturing plants were located, with consequent overcrowding. In order to accommodate the influx of the population to the cities, the architect became an experimenter. He explored the technical possibilities of new methods and materials such as steel, glass, concrete, brick and aluminium.

In sculpture two factors made the use of the newly discovered steel possible. The first was the introduction of the versatile welding and cutting process, employing an oxy-acetylene flame which made the cumbersome, but effective, forge-welding process, used by traditional smiths, obsolete. The second factor was the flight from realism stimulated by the avant garde sculptors. As a result of the new aesthetic climate of the 20th Century, abstract expression was pursued. Spacial constructions, such as Tatlin's projected Monument to the Third International in 1919,
could never have previously been considered. The constructivists originated a movement which is still dominant in contemporary sculpture. Constructivism embraces abstract sculpture utilising non-traditional materials, such as wire, glass, sheet metal and perspex, expressed in the typical works of Pevsner and Gabo.

There are three ways of combining sculpture and architecture which, in South Africa, have been actively exploited:

1. Sculpture can be applied to a surface on the completion of a building. This has been done by Hendrikz in his Relief (fig.49) for the S.A.B.C., and by Stanford in her metal Construction on the Rex Trueform Building (fig.48), which is a kind of commercial contrivance to draw attention to the building.

2. Sculpture can be integrated with the building, at the time of conception, such as Wake's Wall Panels (fig.40,41,43) and Villa's Harrow Road Synagogue (fig.37), which succeed in sharing the architectural space.

3. It can also be related to the building, as should
HENDAKAZ  Young Gods in Pain
be Steynberg's decorative *Glanstoring*, or the *African Life* group (fig. 39) by Newall. In this respect Steynberg's *Glanstoring* is possibly the more successful because its pyramidal structure has some relationship to the architecture behind it.

Most South African contemporary architectural sculpture—Uhlman's three groups in a Johannesburg shopping arcade, the sculptures at the Provincial Administration Building in Pretoria, the African Life group, Villa's fountain at Booysens, or Kottler's fountain—has simply been used to fill or decorate an open space.

The essential difference in the spacial relationships between sculpture and architecture as expressed by Sucker are:—"In architecture we enjoy either formed space (interior) or formed masses (i.e. outside view). In sculpture we experience formed masses and formed space always together in continuity and simultaneously". 3)

During the Romanesque and Gothic periods, the figurative sculpture was not an autonomous element but

3) *Aesthetics of Space* — Paul Sucker.  
Vol. IV No.1. September 1945
one of the architecture. It does not create a space of its own as does sculpture in the round, but participates in the space of the architecture, and hence its functional effect on the building becomes the same as if it were executed in abstract form.

This is characteristic of Edoardo Villa's sculpted screens on the Harrow Road Synagogue (fig. 37) in Johannesburg. Here the sculpture serves a double function. It has become part of the architecture, in so far as it becomes a part of the facade and also serves as a structural element supporting the roof. It permits light and air to circulate, dispensing with the necessity of windows. The sculpture becomes both functional and decorative. The protruding edge of the roof has been similarly devised to emphasize the unity of the building.

Villa has been inspired by the roughly-hewn sandstone, with its breaking up of surface area, resembling pieces of mosaic and its uneven surface, which creates infinite shadows. He has constructed an ornate design of these multitudinous shadows which manages to maintain an overall unity. The stone areas slope away to create interesting shapes, and out of their limits grow Villa's sculpted screen. Horizontal
37  VILLA  Harrow Road Synagogue
lines not only break up the screen but also unite the stone masses. While Villa's design harmonizes well with the natural material, one may be critical of the combination of this abstract sculptural approach in relation to the primitive appeal of the roughly hewn blocks of stone. By using convex and concave planes, Villa achieves half tones of light and dark which once again link the design to the surface pattern of the stone.

The younger sculptor, Richard Wake, strives to solve the problem of strict integration of form and content in his wall panels.

In a recent isolated Panel (fig. 40), he retains the surface limits of the dimension and creates an open network of light and shadow, solids and negatives that never exceed the limitations of the mosaic-like relief.

In his second Panel (fig. 41), Wake attempts to relate a number of simple solid shapes, once again by means of this combination. Constructively, this panel is less successful because the two middle shapes terminate directly opposite one another, and the two-way relationship of the forms has been destroyed. Another shortcoming seems to be the fact that solid shapes themselves are too bold for the delicate tracery
WAKE Wall Panels
which relates them. If this panel is used architecturally, and seen from some distance, one would only be aware of the shapes themselves and the effect of the tracery would be completely lost.

In the third panel (fig.43) he has combined the relief with the horizontal grain of the wood which he used in the casting. These lines and ridges add a fascinating texture and linear rhythm. Had they been successfully incorporated in the design, they might have unified the composition to a greater extent. In spite of these inequalities, the panels by Wake are sculpturally important in South African modern sculpture.

Lippy Lipshitz's recently completed Panels (fig.44) for the Provincial Library building, Cape Town, have, as their theme, the arts - music, painting, photography, literature, drama and dance. In these he has used the human figure as his predominant motive. Throughout the panels, a man and woman alternate: this enforces the dynamic rhythm, enabling the eye to take in the effect immediately and spontaneously. The stylized clothes and figures harmonize; through the subtle underlying abstract conception the message is conveyed to Everyman. The ever changing light plays
42 VILLA: Detail - African Totem

43 WAKE Wall Panel
an important organising element in these reliefs, 
where half tones and deep shadows combine to enforce 
the rhythm breaking the surface area into an almost 
abstract design. The panels have about them a 
certain neo-classical character derived, to some 
extent, from their stylization and which only makes 
them more universal.

Lippy Lipshitz has fully succeeded in harmonizing 
a purely sculptural means and a narrative end. 
Unfortunately these panels are unhappily integrated 
with the building, for which the architect must take 
full responsibility. More successfully integrated 
are the panels by Edoardo Villa in the African Life 
Building, Cape Town.

A new stimulus to architectural embellishment has 
been given by the sculptural Frieze (fig.45) in granite 
on the General Mining Offices in Johannesburg. 
Unfortunately this stimulus does not come directly from 
a South African sculptor, but from Professor Guiseppe 
Croce of Salisbury, Rhodesia. The frieze shows a 
contemporary feeling for the archaic, reminiscent of the 
sculptural decorations of the Romanesque period. The 
figures are carved into basic abstract shapes related 
to one another. It conveys the story of 
Johannesburg against a historical background of
history and achievement since the earliest days. The carving is competent and strong and in keeping with the archaic conception. It preserves a narrative and lyrical appeal in the composition. Light and shade stress the linear quality of the figures. This is a welcome departure from the more conventional carved or modelled panels. It permits greater freedom of composition since the sculptor is not confined to composing his figures within the limited area of a panel.

It is now necessary to refer to the relationship between sculpture and architecture.

Two different approaches can be adopted by the artist creating sculpture for architecture. Certain sculptors do not believe that they should subscribe to the theory of repetition of structural elements of the new architecture, but should compose a dynamic counter-emphasis which serves to animate the structural mass; or, as in the case of the African Life group, comply with the stark verticality, striving to harmonize with the pure geometrical outline of the building.

The architect, Monty Sack, explains the sculpture for the African Life Building (fig. 39) in the following terms :- "This is an abstract sculpture - a trilogy.
based on related elliptical forms was conceived in bronze. (It has subsequently been executed in terazzo.) The elevated figures are delicately posed on a perforated triangular platform, marble-sheathed and supported again on a tripod that ties the whole composition back to the base of the building. It has also been described as symbolizing the African Family, the actual shapes suggesting the composite forms of the assegai, the sharp-bladed African plants, flight, space, aspiration and determination - in fact everything possible in toto. But no amount of literary explanation or symbolism can condone the absence of a finer sculptural sensibility, and in this regard it is not far removed aesthetically from Steynberg's decorative Glanstoring. Evidently this design conceived mathematically on a piece of paper and transferred mechanically, cannot hope to achieve a positive and inspired sculptural entity.

These unrelated forms lack volume and are too isolated to achieve a sculptural cohesion. They are more acceptable when seen from a point where they overlap. The mechanical quality of the forms is

4) Underlining and brackets by author.
exaggerated by their rigid triangular placing on the over-emphasized geometric base.

Once again significant form is sacrificed for naive symbolism. Often a sculpture of this nature is inclined to take on commercial overtones and becomes an advertising landmark for the building.

Willem Hendrikz's Young Gods in Pain relief (fig. 155) on the exterior of Ingram's Building, Johannesburg - a memorial to the Medical Corps - blends with its architectural setting, in its stylized simplicity. Here the problem was to use the human figure in such a manner as not to subordinate the sculpture to mere decoration and at the same time, create a sculpture harmonizing with its setting. Hendrikz has succeeded in achieving a complete unity. It is certainly far easier to integrate an abstract sculpture with a contemporary building rather than reconcile a figurative sculpture with a solid background.

His sculpted reliefs on the bronze doors of the Volkskas Building, Johannesburg, are vigorous and powerful. They have a strong linear quality, despite the fullness of the modelling, and, like the panels by Lippy Lipshitz, they have an international appeal.

In his decorative Sculpture for the S.A.B.C. (fig. 49), Cape Town, Hendrikz has organised a flowing,
48 STANFORD Rex Trueform Construction

49 HENDRIKZ Relief - S.A.B.C.
female form into a graceful and rhythmical design, and has cunningly retained the aquatic associations of the site. He has also succeeded in incorporating the signs of the zodiac, each of which is meticulously modelled.

Cynthia Stanford's unbalanced metal Construction (fig. 48) of ill-assorted objects of the tailoring trade for the Rex Trueform Building, Cape Town, remains a meaningless appendage to its peppermint-coloured wall.

By contrast, Edoardo Villa's Fountain-sculpture (fig. 46), constructed in sheet metal for the Booysen's Shopping Centre, is the most advanced and successful achievement in this respect in South Africa. Franta Belsky's Shell Fountain (fig. 52), which stands outside the Shell Oil Headquarters in London, is an organically-derived form with the accent on the vertical and spiral movement incorporating water as an essential part of the composition. Here, Villa, confronted with the same problem, has created a highly-polished abstract sculpture in copper and bronze, which, in essence, symbolically conveys a jet of water. The sculpture stands on an architecturally designed base from which water spouts. The metal sculpture seems impelled with great force out of the base, and like a jet of water, having reached its maximum height, returns to the
catchment. The water, trickling from the teat-like appertures, and the box-like base, fail to complement the dynamic vitality of the sculpture. One is inclined to feel that this sculpture could stand quite adequately in any setting and that it is independent of its aquatic associations. As a consolation, however, for those who may object to Villa's abstract, there is a smaller, more ordinary fountain with its solitary feeble jet spurting skywards.

More charming and ornamental is the sheet-metal Fountain (fig. 47) by the Pole, Jaholkowski. Rising and plummeting forms, Gothic-inspired, are well assembled, although their appeal is linear and two-dimensional in character.

Moses Kottler's abstract, fungus-like Fountain (fig. 51), outside the General Mining Building in Johannesburg, is a welcome change from Uhlman's pair of water-lapping buck, which stand upon a contrived, roughly hewn, perforated base.

One last fountain must be mentioned. It is Herman Wald's ineffective Diamond Diggers Memorial Fountain (fig. 50), which stands outside the Humphrey Art Gallery in Kimberley.

* * * *
THE AFRICAN THEME

AND ITS INTERPRETATION

An essentially South African culture cannot ignore the African anymore than it can ignore the geographical or climatic conditions which set this country apart from all others.

It seems incredible that South Africa, with its vast spaces, diverse humanity, political and social difficulties, its strategic position and its vast sources of natural materials, cannot produce an indigenous set of forms or characteristics which will determine a purely South African character in sculpture and art in general. Too often one is confronted with half-hearted second rate imitations of European trends. Much in contemporary art has found its sources in primitive cultures, but to condemn South African art as being entirely derived from European trends, is unjust, as all art forms receive their inspiration from other origins.

In an attempt to convey sculpture with a South African mood, various artists have exploited the African theme, but this alone is inadequate to create a native South African art.

May Hillhouse, discussing painting in South Africa, has remarked:— "African and Bushmen symbols
were not really any longer living realities to draw from and could not in any way reflect our way of life so that they seemed extraneous matter applied to wholly European space patterns and aesthetic trends. This would not indicate that they could not be used to help in the building of a creative work of art".1)

The Primitive Revival, as it has become known, first stimulated the painters Van Gogh and Gauguin. The remoteness in time and the symbolic nature of primitive art fascinated them and it is upon this that these sculptors drew. It was Cézanne who claimed that he intended to express natural forms in terms of cylinders, spheres and cones in such a perspective that all sides of the object would be orientated towards a central point. Picasso spontaneously responded to these theories and assimilated them in his revolutionary painting *Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon* (1907), although Herbert Read states that "Matisse began to collect Negro sculpture before 1907, and according to Gertrude Stein it was to Matisse that Picasso owed his first knowledge of African sculpture".2)


2) Herbert Read - A Concise History of Modern Sculpture p.51
53  BARLACH  Veiled Beggar Woman

54  DE LEEUW  Tokelossie
The majority of African sculptures show an interplay of round forms. Exclusively angular forms are rare. When angularities are used, they are often surrounded by round forms, resulting in an interplay that creates a tension of inter-relationships similar to those found in organic life.

Those who were concerned with forms, who recognized the architectonic character of African art and who were chiefly interested in how the expression took place (i.e. a more intellectual approach) eventually formed the French Cubist movement from which all subsequent abstract art forms developed.

Emotionally the African sculptor is animated by fear – fear of the mysterious elements, fear of the dead and of the forces of nature. He attempts to project in symbolic form the spiritual essence of these forces; he tried to get beyond the mere physical appearance of things. Consequently, artists, attracted by the emotional content and mixing mystic romantic notions of their own, formed the German Expressionist group.3)

The sculpture of the Italian, Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) must be considered. Modigliani was

3) Ladislas Segy - Introduction, African Sculpture
influenced by the simplified, almost geometrical, solid forms in Negro sculpture and carved several direct heads in stone (fig. 20). He availed himself of these innovations to which he added his refined sensuous and personal sensibility. He was befriended by the Rumanian, Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) who "stripped sculpture of all its accessories - literary, historical, mythological or anecdotal - and gave it an existence of its own, an objective reality". 4) He also understood and utilized to their full extent his materials and tools. Brancusi experimented almost entirely with completely geometric shapes. "He may be considered as a major influence in the breakaway from tradition and naturalism towards experimentation with new ideas and sensations and the invention of new forms in which to express them". 5) This influence was consolidated in other directions by the work of Zadkine, Archipenko, Jacques Lipchitz, Moore and others.

Three prominent South African sculptors who have been inspired by African sculpture and have used an African theme, are Lippy Lipshitz, Mary Stainbank and

4) Ionel Jianou - Brancusi
5) Auerbach - Sculpture p. 61
Moses Kottler, and recently, Edoardo Villa, they have produced successful works in various indigenous materials, expressing themselves in styles inspired by African sculpture, and an essential sympathy with their subject. They have strived to interpret the soul and character of the African in such a way that it becomes universally appealing. This is evident in the sculpture of Villa and Lipshitz which, though widely divergent in style, impress us by their sympathetic understanding of the tremendous quality of dignity and nobility of the African. This feeling emerges from Lipshitz's *Eve of Africa* (fig. 58) in which he confines himself to a naturalistic concept of an African woman and at the same time maintaining his abiding interest in the strong sensual lines of the female form. This same feeling radiates from Villa's *Zulu Boy* (fig. 56) and *African Masque* (fig. 55), although the means which he uses to convey this is in complete contrast to that of Lipshitz. In these sculptures the abstract modelling in steel has a strong human resemblance: both are proud and powerful and the use of cross-bands of metal create a tension which hints at an underlying aggression, and emphasizes the inherent
"arrogance" of the African. 6)

In Tree of Life (fig. 59) and Africa (fig. 51), exists Lipshitz's conception of growth, and the intimate relationship between mother and child. The organic growth of the figures strengthens their dependence on one another. His entire conception and philosophy is sympathetic, humanistic, and universal to the extreme.

Kottler was the first sculptor, after Van Wouw, to use the African as a subject. Whereas Van Wouw's naturalistic studies of the Native (figs. 3 and 151) remain objective and concentrate on obtaining a strictly figurative likeness, Steynberg's artificially impose a voluptuousness that the Africans do not actually possess.

Kottler's rounded architectonic volumes are equally in sympathy with the African in Bantu Mother and Child (fig. 62). In Meidjie (fig. 60) they are more simplified in conception and, as such, more limited in their appeal than those of Lipshitz. Kottler's conception seems to dominate his material. This is evident in all his carvings. He uses his material

6) From a conversation with Villa.
59 LIPSHITZ  Tree of Life  60 KOTTLER  Meidjie
skillfully but is pre-occupied with the subject. Finally, he perfects the execution to such a degree that the result often appears to have a modelled, rather than a carved, appearance. This differentiates Lipshitz's sculpture from that of Kottler's. Kottler, in spite of his glyptic inadequacy, remains an imaginative and sensitive sculptor with a fine apprehension for form.

The sculpture of Mary Stainbank falls between these two extremes. Compared to Kottler's Bantu Mother and Child, Stainbank's Mother Love (fig.61) is more undulating and sensuous, composed of forms that are either modified or distorted to suit both conception and limitations of the wood.

Family Group (fig.68) by the African artist, Selby M'vusi is a remarkable achievement. The migratory African was constantly on the move, and very little sculpture infiltrated into South Africa from Rhodesia, which was as far as the general migration went. There was also no demand from his own social group for pure sculpture. Consequently, the subject of a "family group" is extremely rare in African art. Even to-day the African does not have particularly strong family ties, because he is obliged to leave his family behind
61 STAINBANK  Mother Love  62 KOTTLER  Bantu Mother and Child
in order to seek work in the cities.

M'vusi retains a strong African appeal, but not that typical of West African carving. His spontaneous carvings are primitive and naive yet they have a compelling inner unity and strength. His significance lies in that he has made an original and spontaneous contribution to South African sculpture, compared to the Cape Coloured sculptor, Louis Maurice, whose slick carvings align themselves with certain contemporary European trends without making any individual contribution. The sculpture of Sydney Kumalo has a convincing African feeling, showing a difference in interpretation of European influences on the part of the African.

Professor Guy Buttler, in a lecture "The Republic and the Arts", discussing the cultural exchange between European and African, states :- "The urbanized, Westernized African is here to stay. He is the personification of the African paradox. The trouble is, of course, that the White man is also the personification of the African paradox. He has been retribalized, Africanized, but is still European - English South Africans are being Africanized,
Afrikaners Anglicized, Africans Westernized and all Europeans Africanized - and not merely on a superficial level........ Cultural apartheid, like economic apartheid, is inhibiting, but cannot stop the inevitable cultural exchange".7)

Steynberg attempts to infuse his Atoomeuse Wildebeeskalfie (fig.66) with a contemporary feeling. The form is broken up into shapes and conveyed by means of glass mosaic, within a metal framework, resembling stained glass windows. Experimentally these tentative abstracts may be intriguing in their use of non-traditional materials, but they can only be accepted in terms of decoration.

More exciting is the Dying Warthog (fig.67) by Lucas Sithole, in petrified wood. This was originally an old tree root which the sculptor has used to his own end. It is vigorously executed and his use of a point has given the leathery surface an additional texture. As a sculptor of animals, Steynberg is objective, while Sithole is more subjective and sympathetic. Inspired by the killing of a warthog, it possesses a far greater authenticity and primitive understanding of the wild

STEYNBERG  Atoomeuse Wildebeeskalfie

SITHOLE  Dying Warthog
animal. Undoubtedly a European interpretation of an essentially African subject will always be limited due to a certain isolation, while an African, by virtue of his being a native of Africa, will effortlessly produce this elusive quality which is immediately at the core of what the European artists seems generally unable to express.

A good example of this is Kumalo's *St. Francis of Assisi* (fig.63). Obviously it is an adaptation of a European Christian theme but there is that indefinable something that distinguishes it as being undeniably African. This contribution to South African culture Professor Guy Buttler evidently anticipates.

In the future, South African artists will draw their inspiration directly from African sources instead of via Europe.

Regional differences have also come to manifest themselves in South African sculpture. There is a distinct contrast between the sculpture produced in Johannesburg and Cape Town. One is forcibly impressed in Johannesburg by the predominant presence of the African; on the other hand, the Cape Coloureds do not make quite the same impact, and consequently their influence on sculptural subject matter is not nearly as
63 KUMALO St. Francis of Assisi
64 KUMALO Seated Woman
65 KUMALO Seated Woman with a Dove
marked. As a result, the subject and style of the art is more international in character. This applies to the already mentioned *Tree of Life* and *Africa* by Lipshitz, and also *Mother Love* by Stainbank.

Several Johannesburg sculptors, Coert Steynberg, Rhona Stern, and the Hungarian-born Zoltan Borboreki, have exploited the African subject matter in an attempt to give their work a more South African attractiveness. This device, however, is inadequate to produce an indigenous art form. At most, their work achieves a merely decorative level.

Steynberg and Borboreki depend on rhythm as the essential organizing sculptural element. Their abstraction is generally sacrificed at all costs to decorative rhythm.

Contemporary definitions of sculpture are variable and numerous. Henri Laurens defines sculpture as "essentially occupation of space, the construction of an object with hollow and solid parts, mass and void, their variations and reciprocal tension and finally their equilibrium". 8)

Steynberg's work suffers from relying almost

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8) Edward Trier - *Form and Space* p.278. This definition does not cover all aspects of modern art.
entirely on figuration and rhythm, and rather too much literary association as in Jingling Anklets (fig.70), Boesmanmeidjie (fig.69) and Dansende Meidjie (fig.71).

All Borboreki's sculpture is likewise repeatedly decorative. One can trace his development in Seated Pondo Women (fig.75). In his most recent carving, Pondo, in red ivory wood, he combines his earlier European style with the elongated forms of the native African of his adopted country. This present style he unhesitatingly claims is the new Baroque.

The difference between Borboreki and Stern can be seen in their respective plaster Wall Panels (figs.72 and 73). While Borboreki relies on exaggerated diagonals, Rhona Stern's sculpture is essentially static, decorative, and pre-occupied with doodles and superficial textures to the detriment of form and spatial relationships. This is obvious in her African Group (fig.74) and Mother and Child (fig.95). She works directly in plaster, striving to retain a certain spontaneity vaguely reminiscent of Giacometti.

The Hollander, Gerard de Leeuw, who works in Johannesburg, uses expressionism in his figure of the native evil spirit Tokolosie (fig.54). Here again the
African is aroused by fear, and despite his outer Westernization he still remains extremely superstitious. De Leeuw has caught the sneaking Tokolossie ominously plodding along on his evil missions. The exaggerated far apart feet emphasize the feeling of stealth, and the broad vertical folds of its cloak and its bowed hooded head, give it a frigid uncanny atmosphere which is increased by the evil-looking panga implanted firmly before it. One can trace in this work the strong influence of the German expressionist sculptor, Barlach.

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FIGURATIVE EXPERIMENTAL SCULPTURE
IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ever since antiquity the human body has been the sculptors' principal subject. The 20th Century witnessed a fundamental change in the representation of the nude.

During the brief period when Rodin had been a student of Barye, the Neo-Classic style was in full swing. Although this style did not suit Rodin's romantic temperament, he welcomed this classical revival. Therefore Rodin became absorbed in the selective study of sculpture of the antique Greek, Renaissance and Gothic periods, and in particular, that of Donatello and Michelangelo and also in the work of his contemporary, the Impressionist, Medardo Rosso. This awareness he fused in his personal and original concept of the nude.

Rodin, according to Auerbach, "influenced European sculpture positively by enlarging the possibilities of modelling to express emotional feelings and ideas, negatively by breaking up the traditional ideas of continuity of form and opening the way for experiment and a reconsideration of the
20 MODIGLIANI  Head

21 BRANCUSI  Bird in Space

22 PICASSO  Head of a Woman
whole basis of sculptural meaning". 1)

Rodin influenced his celebrated pupils, Aristide Maillol (1861-1944) and Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929). Maillol, like Rodin, was stimulated by the classical idealism of the antique sculptures. His ever-recurring theme was the nude, in which he achieved a plastic simplicity and an architectural harmony. The semi-abstract forms that he organized were always derived from his perception of the human figure. Bourdelle and Maillol were, in their early days, assistants of Rodin. The link with Rodin in South Africa comes through the association of Lippy Lipshitz with Bourdelle, under whom he studied. Consequently, a bronze sculpture of Bourdelle's Sappho (fig.79) was acquired recently by the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Before the Boer War there was no cultural tradition in South Africa, except the humdrum realistic sculpture imported by Van Wouw. Nineteenth Century Dutch sculpture was essentially homely and decorative. The only place seething with activity in the 1920's was Paris.

Kottler, revisiting Europe, returned to this country with a cautious acceptance of certain current

1) Auerbach - Sculpture  p.53
figurative trends, in particular those derived from Maillol. One can discern two distinct approaches in the older sculptors Van Wouw, Steynberg and Kottler. Cramped by the limits imposed by officialdom, romantic realism dominates South African art, and although these sculptors remain recorders, their experimental work is, in approach, much freer and livelier.

In the sculpture of Kottler and Steynberg, there is a wider range of materials such as metal and indigenous woods and stone.

The Afrikaans aesthetic, Dr. Pellisier, firmly proclaims: "Van Wouw's greatest art is to be found in the statues that he made of his own accord and at leisure". This seems to explain why, for the first time in South Africa, we find a sculptor giving plastic expression to subject matter from his everyday experience, whether it is the pathos of a forlorn old man as in Kruger in Exile (fig.2) or any of the laborious native studies (figs.3 and 151).

Lippy Lipshitz, working in solitude after his return to South Africa in 1932, was searching for a new direction – a new way of expressing himself. He

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2) Dr. S.H. Pellisier - Van Wouw. Our Art I, p.7
fervently desired to create sculpture that was unlike the prevailing trends in South African art. He followed the current movements and experiments on the Continent. In his early delicate modelling of the Annunciation (fig. 80), there is evidence of expressionism. Lipshitz, however, remains essentially a carver and his sculpture shows a deep attachment and pre-occupation with the country and its sculptural materials. He believes that South Africa must discover its own sculptural idiom and in his search for this he went to the country itself - in the stones, rocks, trees, on the beaches he sought it. He has said: - "The bones of the country are the stones of the country", and "the natural slope of a boulder or tree-trunk often suggests the conception to me when the found mass is intriguing or provocative. But always I strive not to be carried away or dominated by the existing curious or fascinating forms. It is always a problem of accepting or discarding, clarifying or refining. To me it is a process of discovering and pursuing the idea inspired by this particular log or unquarried stone". 3)

3) John Paris - Lippy Lipshitz. Our Art, Vol.2
A year after Lipshitz's return to South Africa, Elza Dziomba arrived in the country. Exhibitions of African sculpture in the 1920's are said to have influenced her in coming to South Africa. Dziomba, like Lipshitz, exploits the abundant wood, stone and marble. Her Woman (fig. 76), an early carving of an archaic stylized nude, shows positively the influence of Maillol. Unfortunately the base of the figure is carved in an unrelated Cubistic style.

Twenty-five years have elapsed since the creation of these works by Lipshitz and Dziomba, and a divergent conception is to be found in Richard Wake's Nude (fig. 78). He has used the nude as an end in itself, purely as a means of creating "significant form", and in this way the sculpture becomes abstract. Simply one form juxtaposed, counterbalanced and related to another. The approach to the modelling is not without some relationship to carving. Instead of being entirely modelled, each piece being added until the desired forms have been achieved, large masses are built up and then cut away to achieve the final solution. This neo-classical nude has its archaic affinity emphasized by the lack of any contraposta. This is evident in the Etruscan-like treatment of the
figure and particularly in the head which is less stylized and more sensitive than that of Dziomba's. There is an awareness of surrounding space harmoniously generated by each form according to its size, shape and volume, subscribing to Sucker's definition of sculptured space that "is aesthetically as impenetrable and unambiguous as the solid that gives rise to it. There can be no variety in the possible shape and size of the space envelope of a sculpture. There is only one - that clearly defined by the figure". 4)

While Wake's **Nude** has a Northern directness, Bill Davis' compassionate humanism is stimulated by action. His sculpture has a heightened emotional and expressionistic quality. In **Dancer** (fig.77), this emotional element is heightened by the imploring gesture of the clasped hands above the head well thrust back. In **Runner** (fig.152) this is achieved by the amputated limbs, which could have upset the well-defined equilibrium. In the **Dancer** there exists a greater degree of refinement of form than appears in the earlier work so that the growing sensual rhythm of these pieces develop a certain angularity as in his

recent sculpture, **Prisoner** (fig.157).

It is only since the war that creative sculpture has received a further impetus. Previously it was considered superfluous as a necessary component of our culture. Sculpture for art's sake was cultivated in France in the 1830's. Approximately a hundred years later its reverberations are to be found reaching South Africa and germinating in the free experimental sculpture of Lippy Lipshitz.

A lifetime devoted to the creation of sculpture has elapsed between Lipshitz's ebony **Lock** (fig.81), carved in 1931 in Paris, and the marble **Two in One** (fig.83), carved in Cape Town during 1962. A pertinent observation about Lipshitz was expressed by Professor Rupert Shepherd. He states: - "Lipshitz is by temperament too interested in humans and in nature to choose abstraction as a form of expression". 5)

The romantic realism of the **Lock** utilizes some abstraction in the tentative use of planes, although hands, breasts and heads predominate. The fusion of the figurative element reaches a higher degree of intimacy and refinement in the abstract **Two in One**. "The conception expresses the indissoluble unity of

5) Prof. Rupert Shepherd - Studio
81 LIPSHITZ: Lock  82 MAURICE Couple  83 LIPSHITZ Two in One  84 FREUND Gymnasts
two contrasting figures - seen from every aspect". 6) Lippy Lipshitz has defined the overall mass in octagonal planes and by interlocking the arms has increased the rhythmic convolution and strengthened the feeling of energy flowing from one figure to the other and upon which they appear to be mutually dependent.

Lipshitz's influence can be traced in Louis Maurice's pre-occupation with elongated forms, as in his abstract carving Couple (fig.82). He, too, is primarily a carver working in stinkwood, red hard jarah, and ivory. He is concerned with abstract design, relating masses and interpenetrating planes. In his well-known Figure in Counterbalance (fig.87), he preserves the basic shape of the ivory and in doing so, emphasizes the verticality of the composition. He also shows a great pre-occupation with "slotted openings" through the tree trunk and ivory tusk, a device which has almost become a mannerism in contemporary sculpture. This device which, unless it really contributes to the elucidation of locked or interpenetrating planes, is inclined to become a

6) Lippy Lipshitz - Introduction, Groote Schuur, 1963
85 FREUND Female Form
86 LIPSHITZ Torso

87 MAURICE Figure in Counterbalance
cliché. Similarly, in Lipshitz's *Oasis* (fig.105), the vertical form is accentuated. In Maurice's one is still aware of the human element abstracted and intertwined.

Among the younger sculptors, Merle Freund's vigorous and lusty carving shows her understanding of her medium in wood, stone or travertine marble and aiming at harmonizing material and conception. One can follow her development from the figurative *Gymnasts* (fig.84), with its vibrating sensuous forms and juxtaposed masses arriving occasionally at a simplification, and greater abstraction in her monumental *Ganymede* (fig.88).

At her best, Merle Freund attains purity and a sensuous refinement, especially in her *Female Form* (fig.85). This pepperwood carving, with its internal and external form, although reminiscent of Henry Moore, has a decided African atmosphere. The two complementary, yet independent, forms seem well related. This could be considered as a variation of Lipshitz's "two in one" theme.

Elza Dziomba's Teutonic romanticism can never suppress the human form on which she relies exclusively, even in her most abstract-expressionistic effort *Composition* (fig.90). This carving is
delicately balanced and the flowing rhythm of the forms carry the eye easily over the polished surface of the maroon coloured marble.

By contrast the freedom found in Lipshitz's *Landscape in the Nude* (fig.11) becomes more compact and conventional in Kottler's *Reclining Nude* (fig.156). One of the qualities which always makes Lippy Lipshitz's sculpture palpitate with an inner vibrancy, is his retention of the chisel marks on the wood or stone. Unlike Kottler, he refrains from filing and sandpapering his carvings to give them a heightened polished finish. Perhaps his breaking up of the surface could be called impressionistic, giving the sculpture a sensuous appeal.

This tactile quality the Chinese have incorporated in their sculpture for centuries. Francis Herring refers to this tactile enjoyment of art - rare in most European sculpture: - "The importance of touch in creating and appreciating plastic art can be seen in the responses of primitive people and even in the medieval period, where one can still see sculpture of the Babe with the face almost entirely worn away by the caressing hands which have passed across it". 5)

5) Francis Herring - *Touch, The Neglected Sense*, Journal
In Lippy Lipshitz's Sea Nude (fig. 91) the limbs have been exaggerated, their heaviness and inertness suggesting a slumbering female strength expressed in the sleeping face. "His hands have done the work of the wind and sea enclosing in their perfect forms the dazzling expression of their mysteries. I know of nothing more self-evident than these sculptures which beg for our caress which perpetuates in the beholder the thousand similar gestures which the sculptor had to perform in order to attain perfection". 6)

What has been written about Brancusi could be aptly applied to Lippy Lipshitz's Sea Nude.

A similar theme occurs in his later Sea Nymph, except that it has been more abstractly treated. Both Sea Nude and Sea Nymph, when compared to Dziomba's

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of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol.VII, No.3, March 1949. In addition, Herring quotes W.R. Valentiner in reference to tactilism in sculpture: "A piece of sculpture like the Human Concretion by the Swiss, Hans Arp ..... affects us, as beautifully shaped pebbles on some beaches do, but it has an additional aesthetic value given it by a conscious artists mind, a symbolism expressed in a carefully thought out composition; while the pebbles have only accidental forms" - Origins of Modern Sculpture.

Lipshitz  
Sea Nude

Dzioba  
Woman
Woman (fig. 92), are far more successful. Dziomba is fascinated by the found shapes of the wood and stone and utilizes them by forming a conception suitable to their characteristics. This obsession with the superficial possibilities of the material seems to assert itself in her Woman.

Sydney Kumalo's sculpture is more distinctive and organic. From his African heritage he has extracted the characteristic elongated body, the stunted legs, the rigid symmetry and to this he has combined numerous influences of Henry Moore - the refinement of a small head, the use of "clothes" to stress form the grooved breasts and an emotional content stimulated by German expressionism. All these, he has adapted successfully to his own vision. One might suggest that Kumalo's three sculptures symbolize Aggression, Peace and Distress. Lucas Sithole is a follower of Kumalo, as is evident in his Labour, Work of Nature (fig. 93).

The influence of Giacometti is apparent in Rhona Stern's Mother and Child (fig. 95). Depending on the same source is Patricia McAllister's more competently handled Two Girls on a Step (fig. 96). Rhona Stern believes that one does not have to enclose
93 SITHOLE  Labour,  
Work of  
Nature

94 KUMALO  Praying Woman
form for it to exist, and sets out to qualify her theory in *Hollow Dancing Torso* (fig. 97). The concave frontal side of the sculpture is not nearly so convincing as the convex view with its curved spiral back and wing-like shoulders. She cannot solve the problem of relating negative to positive forms with which one is confronted in a sculpture of this nature. This also applies to her *African Group* (fig. 74) and *Mother and Child*.

A great deal of Borboreki's and Steynberg's sculpture, despite the varying degrees of abstraction in a variety of materials, persists in being decorative. This is mainly due to the predominance of a rhythmical element and the lack of a definite sculptural direction.

Borboreki's *Seated Woman* (fig. 100), produced in Budapest in 1937, illustrates dominant baroque elements in the exaggerated contraposta movement, and in the strained arrangement of the figurative forms tending to enforce the attitude and, at the same time, resulting in inevitable holes. The massive forms seem distended to bursting point; *Woman on Ladder* (1947) is similar in conception, except that it has a stronger impact. In *Composition* (1953) (fig. 99), the forms seem
deliberately scooped out, all the sculptural elements being subjugated to a restless rhythm.

Boccioni (1882-1916), writing in the Futurist Manifesto, expresses dynamism as "the typical sensation of our time", and later, making a distinction between the Futurists and Cubists, he states that primitivism "should have nothing in common with that of antiquity". He feels that our primitivism "is the extreme climax of complexity; whereas the primitivism of antiquity is the babbling of simplicity".

Superficially, Borboreki's work is derived from Futurism. Consequently, he describes it in his own terms as Borboreki's new Baroque. He seems oblivious to the fact that there are certainly no decorative elements in the dynamism of the Futurists.

In Three Natives (fig.158), which only represents a frontal view, he has created an effective formal pattern by frantically slicing the form with sharp black lines separating the different areas - geometry being a means to this end, in a synthetic Cubist manner. His Woman Playing the Harp is concocted of recurring and disjointed bulbous forms. In the horizontal Queue (fig.16) and vertical Totem (fig.108),
he has strived to render, in plastic terms, a feeling of ambience which relates the sculpture atmospherically to its environment.

Of these terazzo sculptures, Queue is more successful, while Totem consists of a number of sections stuck one upon another. They are devoid of any inner organic momentum.

Like Steynberg, Boboreki has experimented extensively in bronze, fibre-glass and in wood, and like Kottler he relies upon a lustrous surface finish.

The sculpture of George Jaholkowski, one of the two notable sculptors working skilfully in metal in South Africa, create a farmyard world all of their own. Jaholkowski studied architecture, but after the intervention of the war, found himself destitute in London. He was obliged to take up an art craft which would enable him to express himself as inexpensively as possible. He employs sheet metal for his purpose. Having made a small model in cardboard, he transfers it to the sheet metal, generally copper. Fortunately Jaholkowski comprehends the nature of his material, its tensile strength and elasticity, otherwise it would be superfluous for him to assemble them in endurable
99 : BORBOREKI  Composition

100  BORBOREKI  Seated Woman
- 158  BORBOREKI  Three Natives
metal. This commendable sympathy with his material, combined with a technical skill, is revealed in all his metal sculpture.

His most successful works are undoubtedly his vivacious animal sculptures. Whether he creates a volumetric shape, as in Hen, or uses the metal in a flat rhythmic composition, he succeeds. Whenever he attempts figuration, his sculpture seems to lack volume, one of the essentials of free-standing sculpture, as in the early Boy with a Flute (fig. 103).

His neo-Gothic Abbey, Cathederal and Fountain (fig. 47) are reminiscent of his architectural training. It is to his credit that in sheet metal, a comparatively cold medium, he has the capacity to convey such a strong feeling of religious aspiration. They would be seen to greater advantage in an architectural setting.

Jaholkowski's recent work is intriguing. He is concerned with giving a utilitarian function as well as aesthetic significance to his metal sculpture.

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NON-FIGURATIVE EXPERIMENTAL SCULPTURE

IN SOUTH AFRICA

Before the Modern Movement artists subscribed to the uniform style of the epoch. The Modern Movement, however, has introduced innumerable conflicting styles. To-day it is permissible for sculptors to work in unrelated styles in accordance with their individual needs and preferences.

In the 20th Century the function of the artist as a recorder has been usurped by the camera, freeing him from the shackles of naturalistic representation. This, as well as the fact that the devotees of naturalism, were considered old-fashioned or decadent, has aided the breakaway from traditional subject matter. This has inspired the modern artists to search further afield for new art forms, leading to a considerable amount of artistic introversion.

The philosophical justification of abstract art may be found in Plato's often-quoted Philebus: - "I do not now intend by beauty of shapes what most people would expect, such as that of living creatures or pictures, but ..... straight lines and curves and the surfaces or solid forms produced out of those by lathes,
rules and squares ..... These things are not beautiful relatively, like other things, but always and naturally and absolutely". ¹)

With Cubism, artists no longer explored the external form of an object, but were concerned with its inner components. This Non-Representational sculpture has given rise to the pursuit of form for its own sake.

To convey the numerous ends of abstraction, there are also numerous means:–

(a) abstraction has its purists – none in South Africa;

(b) its Baroques – Steynberg and Borboreki;

(c) those who limit themselves to the monolithic block – Arnott, Nolte, Freund;

(d) those who assemble – Bolus;

(e) those who juxtapose and solder metal rods – early Villa;

(f) or work with sheets of metal – Jaholkowski and Villa;

(g) those who use steel for linear construction – Jaholkowski and Villa;

¹) Herbert Read – Art Now  p.72
108 BORBOREKI Totem
109 STEYNBERG Kanteelfiguur
110 VILLA African Form
(h) those who co-ordinate bits of carpentry - none in South Africa;

(i) those who engrave surfaces - Wake and Arnott;

(j) or work with burned material - none in South Africa;

(k) and those who have made sculpture a kinetic experience, using movement either through the natural displacement of forms in space - none in South Africa;

(l) or through the action of electrical energy - none in South Africa.

Another movement which had profound influence on the Modern Movement as we know it to-day, was Futurism with its insistence on dynamism. Boccioni declared:- "We break open the figure and enclose it in environment", 2) as in his revolutionary Development of a Bottle in Space (1912). Holes appeared in Archipenko's Boxing Match of 1914, and later Ossip Zadkine also experimented with concavities. This was a prelude to the actual piercing of the mass, of creating open space within the space determined by the material. This was accomplished by Jacques Lipchitz who, still under the influence of cubist and primitive

2) Herbert Read - Concise History of Modern Sculpture p.129
art, created compositions composed of inter-
penetrating volumes and planes. Finally he
lightened the weight by piercing the mass as in his
Reclining Woman with Guitar (1926) (fig.13).

In Lippy Lipshitz's Oasis (fig.105) or Van
Heerden's Carving (fig.106), the figurative element
is suppressed, hence the vagueness of representative
imagery. The formal content predominates,
conveying the essence of the idea, establishing that
reality could be present in pure sculpture
unassociated with external values.

An awareness of this New Reality can be found, to
a certain degree, in Richard Wake's Form in Flight
(fig.125) and Michael Bolus' Two Percent (fig.113),
Moonbloom (fig.112) and Fiddlesticks (fig.111).

Certain forms of abstraction owe its origin to the
human figure or natural forms as in Edoardo Villa's
Four Seasons.

Michael Bolus makes his sculptural statements by
cutting and welding iron sheets and rods. They stand
on the ground, free of bases. Colour is an integral
part of these spatial constructions. The vertical
stripes in Two Percent make one conscious of the
aggressive space. One is instinctively impelled to bridge the gap between the forms which, in effect, only seems to give the negative and positive equal value. Here texture no longer plays an important part in arousing a tactile response. Instead colour defines form creating a stark and startling impact. The horizontal forms of *Fiddlesticks* explore space which becomes the "connecting tissue of the work". These are essentially open air sculptures where the cast shadows add a complexity to the basically simplified forms and the sunlight enhances the strong colour, both of which change continually as one walks around them.

Michael Bolus' exciting statements relate only indirectly to our everyday experience. It has been proclaimed that we live in an artistically introverted age, resulting in a fantastic personality cult in which the artist unconsciously reveals himself. This is particularly true of Bolus' sculpture which is not yet pure abstraction. In fact, none of our contemporary sculpture can be considered to be Non-Representational. Regarding pure form, the erudite modern art historian, Alfred Barr, proclaims: "Since
resemblance to nature is, at best, superfluous, and at worst distracting, it might as well be eliminated."

All abstraction is credited to derive its inspiration from the objective. Sculptors and their patrons in South Africa are still clinging to the romantic nostalgic association of literary descriptive titles. Even Bolus does not break away completely but relies on an associative image conveyed by Moonbloom, no matter how far-fetched it may be. Such titles evoke a personal image in the mind of the spectator, which usually differs considerably from the artist's interpretation. The representational content, as we know it, is no longer there, so that the sculpture might simply be called Composition, Assemblage or Construction.

Bolus places equal value on form and colour. One might go so far as to suggest that form in this case is colour or vice versa. This makes one suspect a more painterly approach, rather than the creation of a three-dimensional sculpture with the addition of colour. By comparison, Marini's use of colour always remains subserviant to the form.

3) Kenneth Clarke - Landscape in Art p.148
A totally different approach in the use of metal and colour is found in the sculpture of Edoardo Villa. His development can be traced from his early Rodinesque heads, to the formal curvilinear realism and the neo-abstract sculpture of 1950, and finally to the sharp and uncompromising abstraction which is typical of his recent sculpture.

In *African Rhythm* there is, for the first time, a complete abandonment of the representational content apparent in his earlier work. It shows his preoccupation with arrangements of steel rods of various lengths in an organized manner. In *Construction* (1958) he deals with a similar problem in a more simplified and restrained manner. The spikiness of this work suggests a conscious awareness of his surroundings, with the accent remaining on the vertical, and the horizontal offshoots serving to organize the space. In *Africa*, executed in the same year, Villa no longer uses tubes but two-dimensional geometrical shapes. *Growing Form* (fig. 107) displays a greater understanding of volume due to the fact that the work was originally conceived in clay. A greater feeling for organic form is achieved as one form merges subtly into the next.

Steynberg's marble *Kanteelfiguur* (fig. 109) or bronze
Jacob's Ladder (fig. 104), seem stiff and rigid by comparison. Basically they differ from Villa's because the various media require different techniques. Steynberg's sculpture suffers generally from a monotony of repetitive shapes placed at regular intervals and devoid of any inner organic relationship. The forms have been arbitrarily placed upon each other, and he does not seem to appreciate the negative spaces in relation to the positive solids. This is a perfect example of piercing solids merely for the sake of creating holes. Holes in sculpture are not dead and empty intervals between the material parts of the composition, but become a vital part of the mass, allowing one to see through the sculpture. These change their shapes continuously with the light and one's movement. It is necessary for negatives to be related to positives so that a mutual and vital relationship is achieved.

In his *Four Seasons*, executed in 1961, Villa uses different metals, such as copper, brass or bronze, with various patinas to create the relative moods as required by the various times of the year. He assimilates forms and shapes from his local environment and blends them with those of his native Italy to
produce seasonal atmosphere.

Spring (fig.119) retains some of the spiky bleak atmosphere found in Winter. The oval-shaped bud-form seems to be unfolding itself. Villa understands the elasticity of his material, and so is able to create a feeling of tension in the unfurled shapes. Towards the top they poke out tentatively into space, anticipating the explosion of Summer (fig.120), where the shapes are larger and more powerful. The entire composition in brass expands and is more freely organized than Spring with greater emphasis on open spaces, suggesting the stifling heat of summer. In Autumn (fig.121) echoes of Summer linger on in the shapes, but the advent of Winter is more assertive. The sculptor is more independent of vertical rhythm and the spiky shapes of Winter make their appearance. Finally in Winter (fig.114) the bleak black horizontal shapes contract and the pieces of metal are thin and menacing. The black patina that Villa uses intensifies the mood of winter.

Following his vast African-inspired sculpture, Villa returns to the human element rather than to the natural, and does a series of five Heraldic figures inspired by Medieval times. Instead of confining
116 WAKE Tree Form

118 GONZALEZ Hombre - Cactus No.2
himself to creating two-dimensional shapes, he now looks for bits and pieces of machinery for odd accidental shapes. These he tastefully adapts or re-shapes by re-forging them according to his requirements.

Between 1962 and 1963 Villa executed a series of reliefs in copper and brass, averaging six to seven feet in height. They include a Harlequin, a Crusader and a Shield, all belonging to his Medieval period. These were followed by a further series of reliefs which he enthusiastically describes as his crescendo. He incorporates the wooden panel, column and base, giving the reliefs an independent presence in space, so that they no longer need be attached to the wall. This series includes African Masque (fig. 55), in which the colour of the sculpture is complementary to the wood.

Villa has achieved a certain success in converting the traditional relief into three-dimensional sculpture. He has arrived at a happy synthesis between his steel construction and his modelling, culminating in his African Totem (fig. 42). It is divided into eight panels representing a warrior, a chief, a king and queen, and various family groups of men, women and
115 ARNOTT  Tree

117 PEDDERSEN  Composition
children. All are integrated on the column and linked by cubistically treated planes in varying degrees of high and low relief. It is to be cast in yellow stone, and the colour and the general surface texture will provide an additional uniformity.

Among the younger generation of artists, three are concerned with non-figurative sculpture. Richard Wake's *Form in Flight* (fig.125) is concerned with the problem of conveying flight. The convoluted form has a rippling quality and a dynamic inner tension which makes it appear to hurtle through space. The sculpture has been designed so that it is able to revolve on its base, but this kind of mechanically contrived movement only seems to detract from the inherent feeling of flight. Such sculpture comes to life in the open, where the dynamism of the winglike forms is increased by the surrounding space. Wake seems inveterately shape-conscious and in striving to attain his ideal, everything which he considers redundant is axed.

This is explicit in his variation on a theme, in *Tree Forms* (fig.116). Each separate form is fascinating but exists logically without being wholly dependent on the other. In his *Tree Forms* he is faced with the same problem as Albert Newall - to relate
124  MEIER-DENNINGHOF  Gust of Wind

125  WAKE  Form in Flight
spatially three forms which need to be harmonized, despite their basic similarity. First he has confined them to the limitations of a small base, turned at right angles to one another. Tree Forms shows that this is partially successful in the accidental relationship of the two right-hand shapes. In certain respects the second attempt (fig. 38) to solve this problem is more significant. Here they grow out of the ground resembling some ancient runes. The triangular composition depends on each independent form for an overall unity and balance.

By comparison, Bruce Arnott's Tree (fig. 115) in bronze, is more organic and less symbolical than Wake's. Occasionally Arnott allows himself the luxury of a curve; more often his sculpture is mathematically constructed as in Composition (fig. 122), where the stress lies on the conceptual purity of the structure. Arnott's precision is intellectually controlled, whereas Wake's abstractions have a more romantic element.

Characteristic of Zelda Nolte's carving is her many-faceted Crystalline Form (fig. 126), arresting in its sensitivity and femininity. She occupies the middle path between Freund and Arnott. Her abstract
Bird, in crinoidal limestone, possesses a warm rhythm within its simplified masses, although the fascinating surface pattern of the stone is inclined to detract from the work as a whole.

The abstract Female Form (fig.123) by Elza Dziomba, relies on the fascination of colour and texture and also retains a strong female sensuousness despite its abstraction.
ARNOTT Composition

DZIOMBA Female Form
PORTRAITURE

One of the most revolutionary sculptures of the Modern Movement was Picasso's Head of a Woman (fig. 22) of 1909. In it he expressed the transition of cubism from painting, as applied to a three-dimensional object.

As far as the development of portraiture or the creation of a head for its own sake, within the Modern South African Movement, is concerned, Richard Wake's heads are exciting developments, beginning with his Head of an American. The tentative planes become well defined, with the stylized linear quality giving rise to a graphic clarity as in Head (fig. 128). The proud and powerful visage is framed by a "cap" of hair. In Head of a Young Woman (fig. 127) there is a similar treatment with somewhat softer transistions: the features and the prominent brow are well defined, leaving the eyes haunting and disturbing. In his bulky cement head, Prophet (fig. 130), he has used large stylized features and a stubble-like texture which has inspired the engraved surface. This stimulates one's desire to touch it, to rock it back and forth - evidently intentional. This laughter-provoking self-portrait imparts a curious feeling of
127  WAKE  /  Head of a Young Woman

128  WAKE  /  Head
fantasy, a latent sense of humour, and a dream-like lunar quality.

Some comparison can be made between Wake's heads and Arnott's Napoleanic Head (fig.137) on purely technical terms.

Lippy Lipshitz has produced a number of heads, among which is the impressionistically treated sensitive head of Elan (fig.142), his grandson. The delicate modelling shows the undefined features of the child, but at the same time he has also conveyed the rugged determination of a Sabra.¹

Steynberg's head of his two-year old baby daughter, Isa (fig.143), is sentimentally treated, with the shell-like ears and the fullness one finds in a baby's face. The expression conveys a mixture of laughter and tears so characteristic at that age. In the later carving of Isa one finds a demure young girl of nine - very sensitively carved in wild olive wood and with just a hint of womanhood in the ever so slightly formed breasts.

Head of a Native Girl shows a most skilfull and attractive use of the wood by Kottler. Here again

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¹) Sabra - hardy cactus found in the desert. The modern connotation is applied to a person born and bred in Israel.
142 LIPSHITZ  Elan

143 STEYNBERG  Isa
(aged 2 and 9 years)
the sculptor's understanding of humanity is dominated by the material.

Lippy Lipshitz's heads have a carefree spontaneity which the others often lack. This is evident in his polychrome Happy Prophet (fig.129) in various metal strips of copper and brass, as well as plastic putty. In Head of a Poet (fig.133), carved from colourful petrified wood, there is a blending of baroque restlessness in the treatment of the mass of hair and beard with an Old Testament air. These mystical heads, with their far-seeing eyes, convey a feeling of inner exultation.

"An inherent dualism as a creative principle"\(^2\) often characterizes the work of Dziomba. In the carving of Two Heads (fig.131), one senses the split personality of the stone and the subject constantly reiterates her concern for the complexity of human nature. It also contains a direct cubistic influence where an object, in this instance a head, is represented in such a way that it gives the impression of being seen simultaneously from different angles. In her earlier expressionistic

\(^2\) Maria Steyn-Lessing - Dziomba. Our Art Vol.II, p.35
Male Head (fig.134), which already shows traces of Cubism in the conical shape of the neck and oval head, there is a hint of tragedy as it turns away with parted lips and half-closed eyes. The carved Alabaster Head shows once again her stylized archaic treatment. Her obsession with colour in the various stones, manifests itself in the simple oval piece of green malachite, she has inserted, somewhat disturbingly, for an eye. The mass of the hair is conveyed by the natural character of the marble, contrasted by the finely chiselled classical features with brow and nose in one. Finally the head has been mounted on a stone of an entirely different nature.

The sculptural contribution of Fanie Eloff is limited to his Portrait of Kruger, Love's Sorrow (fig.136) and the stylized double portrait for his parents' tomb. Since Eloff had a private income, he could afford to be an amateur sculptor. Consequently he was never drawn into the Modern Movement, despite the fact that he was in contact with the great revolutionary artists in Paris. To be within the turmoil and to persist in remaining dogmatically conservative, seems curious. Hence, Eloff in relation to the Modern Movement in South African Sculpture,
133 LIPSHITZ Head of a Poet

130 WAKE Prophet
remains a dull and minor sculptor.

In all his figures he is shut off and committed to the representation of rhythm sedulously copying the nude. In adulation of Eloff, Dr. F.C. Bosman says: "We can see his work as realistically romantic, or as impressionist art". Bosman persists in discovering influences of Rodin and Degas in his sculpture. This seems trite and fails to convince us of Eloff's sculptural contribution to the South African tradition.

A number of official portraits have recently been completed for the Provincial Administration Buildings in Pretoria, including portraits of Paul Kruger (fig.138) by J.B. van der Merwe; J.G. Strydom (fig.139) by Laurika Postma; J.C. Smuts (fig.141) by E.L. Bouffa; and C.R. Swart (fig.140) complete with spectacles, by Johanna Wassenaar. Sucker comments on the inclusion of realistic details in sculpture: "The realistic treatment of the detailed spectacles immediately destroys the unity, as they appear as a more or less deceptive feature from a waxwork figure. Spectacles are part of our daily reality and therefore of our

3) Dr. F.C.L. Bosman - Fanie Eloff. Our Art Vol.II, p.115
personal space extension. Since they seem 'life-like', their deceptive realism penetrates the continuity of the autonomous space of the sculpture". 4)

The sculptural contribution of Nell Kaye and Rhona Stern, who was a pupil of Kottler's for some time, lies in their innumerable realistic heads.

Kottler, like Steynberg, has perpetuated the physiognomy of some prominent South Africans. Amongst their noteworthy portraits are those of General de Wet and Sir George Gray by Kottler, and Jan Cilliers and General Hertzog by Steynberg.

There is not much in the way of religious art in South Africa, since the first settlers were against any figurative art in their Churches, except that of purely decorative and ornamental nature.

Recently the Dutch Reformed Church introduced pictorial religious themes into the precincts of the Church by commissioning a number of young sculptors.

Many contemporary South African artists have attempted, and have been inspired by, religious themes.

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An exhibition to encourage religious art in South Africa was held in which the theme was "Art and Religion". Among those who participated were Zoltan Borboreki, Nina Campbell-Quine, George Jaholkowski, Lily Sachs and Rhona Stern. The interpretation of the theme was extremely varied.

While Lily Sachs produced a modernistic *Magdalene* (fig.148), modelled in curves and planes, Nina Campbell-Quine's *A Son is Given* (fig.149) was simply another rehash of Mother and Child - the Child in the form of a cross with a head stuck on it. The formless stick-like figures and the halo of thorns were superficial and devoid of spiritual feeling.

Borboreki's *Crucifixion* (fig.147) was carved in fibreglass with a transluscent cardaverous body of Christ whose limbs were stunted and shrunken. All this was meant to increase the emotional content of the sculpture at the expense of sculptural values.

Merle Freund's subtle *Crucifixion*, carved for a church in Somerset West, combines conception and material. Instead of the conventional representation of the crucified figure, she has used the wood in such a way that the figure is the form and symbol of the Cross.
134 Dziomba  Male Head
135 Adamos  Head of a Native Girl
136 Eloff  Love's Sorrow
Bible themes are preferred by Herman Wald. His melodramatic Moses (fig. 144) displays the anger and crushing disappointment of the prophet descending from Mount Sinai and his vehement horror of their worship of the Golden Calf. Wald's Kria (fig. 145) is a lamentation of the suffering and the anguished. The prophet still holds his head high in noble defiance and the expression is one of inextinguishable pride. 5)

Lippy Lipshitz's sculpture of a gaunt Moses (fig. 146) shows him striking the rock to bring forth water in the desert. 6) There is much in Lipshitz's sculpture that has been inspired by Biblical themes, including Lot's Wife and Jacob and the Angel.

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5) The Biblical meaning of Kria is "Rend your Heart and not your Garments".

148 SACHS Magdalene

149 CAMPBELL-QUINNE A Son is Given
CONCLUSION

Material conditions are, at the present moment, extremely favourable for creative art in South Africa. Although the sculptors in South Africa have not been taken seriously and patronage has been lacking, and although their work was looked upon as a superfluous luxury or investment, there has been a sudden and fundamental change in the appreciation and patronage of sculpture, as was evidenced in the recent progressive and significant Group Exhibition of Sculpture in Cape Town.

Previously there had been no concerted movement constituting a South African school of sculpture, but rather individualistic contributions by older sculptors. Modern sculpture was dominated by Lippy Lipshitz who pioneered and assimilated the free experimental sculpture of the Modern Movement, the influence of the Primitive Revival, and the philosophy of Erancusi, and who strove to produce his authentic South African approach. The evolution of the Modern Movement in South African Sculpture has received its strongest impetus from the younger generation who have been able, in recent years, to further their studies in Europe.
The art of a nation can only be correctly assessed by the extent and quality of its experiment and adventure. The recent exhibition of sculpture by Arnott, Davis, Freund, Nolte and Wake proves that there is no stagnation amongst the new generation of South African sculptors, but rather an upsurge of initiative and talent. Considering the standard of art criticism, which is generally tentative, it is to the credit of these young sculptors that they have asserted themselves, showing that South African sculpture is no longer doomed to dullness and decadence.

It has been claimed that, despite the intellectual leadership and technical achievements of Western culture, its art has become either esoteric or vulgar. One might even go so far as to assert that Europe is old and Africa is new.

Professor Butler has said: "One can no longer ignore the presence of the Black Man in Africa. He is on an intellectual move, the stimulus of which is Western and industrial; his background is tribal and agrarian and his symbol is a tree not an aeroplane". 1)

1) Professor Guy Butler - The Republic in a Changing World - Lecture 7 of The Republic and the Arts.
It is impossible to predict the culmination of the European and African encounter, and what it will produce. We in South Africa are in the extraordinarily exciting position of being involved in this encounter. The conditions for the emergence of an indigenous authentic art seems to be favourable in this country, where there is a vast world of new forms and sense-data which present themselves to the European sensibility. This provides a constant inter-change of concepts, materials and sensibilities between Europe and Africa. Once we are liberated from the external pressures of the taboos fostered by our politicians, either a cataclysm or regeneration will take place.

Notwithstanding this complex shifting background, a small sculptural contribution has been made in South Africa, mostly since the last war.

It is not as yet possible to adequately assess the new generation of sculptors; but there is every hope that they will make their mark on the South African art scene.

We can only positively commend them for the tremendously stimulating effort they are making in trying to establish a significant Modern Movement in
South African Sculpture. Although the characteristics of the Modern Movement in this country fall in line with the contemporary progressive European movement, it is still not "unlike anything else from anywhere else ..... with a flavour that is of this country alone". ²)

This must still be anticipated.

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2) May Hillhouse - Painting in South Africa, Standpunte Vol. 9, 1954, p. 22
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ARNOTT, Bruce

born 1938 - in Natal
studied 1957/61 - Michaelis School of Fine Art under Lippy Lipshitz
1964 - Courtaulds Institute, London University
exhibited 1959 - Under 40's Exhibition in Cape Town
1962 - Cape Salon
1963 - Cape Salon
1963 - Contemporaries Exhibition, Pretoria
1963 - São Paulo Biennale
1964 - Group Exhibition, Wolpe Gallery, Cape Town

BOLUS, Michael

born 1934 - in Cape Town
studied 1961/62 - St. Martin's School of Art, London
1961 - Young Contemporaries, London
1961 - Holland Park Open Air Exhibition, London
1961 - International Union of Architects Congress, B.A.S.A. Section
1962 - Young British Sculptors, Madrid
1964 - Cape Town
BORBOREKI-KOVACK, Zoltan

born 1907 - in Hungary

studied
- Budapest Academy of Fine Art under Janos Vaszany
- Rome Academy of Fine Art under Prof. Ferazzi

exhibited
- in many world capitals, including London, Paris, New York

1937 - won the Grand Prix at the International Exhibition, Paris

1951 - settled in South Africa, first at the Cape and later in Johannesburg where he has since held many exhibitions

DAVIS, John William (Bill)

born 1933 - in Assam (British India)
- educated in Cape Town

studied 1951/53 - Michaelis School of Fine Art under Lippy Lipshitz

1955/56 - Rijks Normale School, Amsterdam, under J. van Tongeren
- Rijks Akademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, under Prof. P. Gregove and V.P. Esser

exhibited 1952 - Kimberley
1961 - Group Exhibition, Amsterdam
1962 - Amstelveen, Holland
1963 - Lidchi Gallery, Cape Town
1963 - Cape Salon
1964 - Worcester
1964 - Group Exhibition, Wolpe Gallery, Cape Town
DZIONBA, Elza

born 1908 - in Berlin
        1933 - settled in Johannesburg

studied
        - Technical College of Art, Berlin, under Prof. Becker
        - La Grande Chaumière, Paris

exhibited 1936 - Empire Exhibition, Johannesburg
            1938 - Cape Town
            1945 - with Jean Welz, Johannesburg
            1950 - Venice Biennale
            1952 - International Sculptors' Exhibition, Arnheim
            1953 - Tate Gallery, London

BLOFF, Stephanus (Fanie)

born 1885 - in Pretoria
        - spent most of his life in Paris except for three intervening periods during World War I

died 1947

exhibited
            1944 - in Pretoria after his death
            - awarded Medal of Honour by South African Academy for Arts and Science

FREUND, Herle

born 1939 - in Bloemfontein

studied 1957/60 - Michaelis School of Fine Art
            under Lippy Lipshitz
            1960/61 - Staatliche Kunsakademie, Dusseldorf, under Manfred Sieler
exhibited 1962 - Cape Salon
1963 - Art: South Africa To-day, Durban
1964 - Fame and Promise, Johannesburg
1964 - Group Exhibition, Wolpe Gallery, Cape Town

HENDRIKZ, Willem de Sanderes

born 1910 - in Brandfort, Orange Free State, d. 1959
studied - architecture at the Witwatersrand University
- London School of Art under John Skeaping
1944 - art education at Columbia University, U.S.A.
1950/51 - Amsterdam and Copenhagen

exhibited 1934 - London
1935 - Johannesburg
1945 - Johannesburg
1947 - Pretoria
1947 - wood figure of Ghandi purchased by Indian Government
1951 - International Exhibition of Sculpture at Sonsbeck, Holland

JAHOLKOWSKI, George

born 1914 - in Baku, Russia
studied - art and architecture at Warsaw, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Hammersmith School of Art in London
1955 - settled in Cape Town and studied at Michaelis School of Fine Art under Lippy Lipshitz

1958 - Cape Town, and has held many subsequent exhibitions in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town

KOTTLER, Moses

born 1896 - Russia

studied - Bezalel Art School, Jerusalem
- Munich Academy of Arts

1915 - settled in South Africa

1929/32 - study tour of Europe

1932 - returned to Johannesburg

exhibited 1936 - Empire Exhibition, Johannesburg

1948 - Tate Gallery, London

1948/50 - Overseas Exhibition of South African Art
- Leicester Galleries, London
- Goupils, London Group

1951 - Jewish Art Exhibition, Cape Town

1952 - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary, Cape Town

KUMALO, Sydney Alex

born 1935 - Johannesburg

studied - Polly Street Centre under Cecil Skotnes
- later under Edoardo Villa

exhibited 1957 - in four-man show at Helen de Leeuw Gallery, Johannesburg

1958 - Lidchi Gallery, Johannesburg
1960  - Group Show at Milner Park Union Pavilion
1960  - Fame and Promise, Johannesburg
1963  - Art: South Africa To-day, Durban

DE LEEUW, Gerard

born  1912  - in Amsterdam, Holland
1933  - settled in South Africa

studied  1948  - in Holland, France, England

exhibited  1948  - awarded medal for sculpture by South African Academy
1956  - 1st Quadrennial Exhibition of South African Art

LIPSHITZ, Lippy

born  1903  - in Lithuania
1908  - came to South Africa

studied  1922/26  - under Meyerowitz at newly-established Michaelis School of Art
1927/32  - under Antoine Bourdelle, Paris

exhibited  1936  - Empire Exhibition, Johannesburg
1948  - International Art Club, Turin and Rome
1948/50  - Overseas Exhibition of South African Art, Tate Gallery, London
1950  - Venice Biennale
1951  - Jewish Art Exhibition, Cape Town
1952  - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
1952  - International Sculpture Exhibition, Arnheim, Holland
1956  - Venice Biennale
1956  - 1st Quadrennial Exhibition of South African Art, Cape Town
1958  - Venice Biennale
1958  - São Paulo Biennale
1959  - Smithsonian Institute, New York
1961  - São Paulo Biennale
1963  - Retrospective Exhibition, Johannesburg
1963  - São Paulo Biennale
1964  - Venice Biennale
1964  - Awarded medal by South African Academy

**McALLISTER, Patricia Margaret**

**born** 1932  - Bulawayo
**studied** 1950/52  - Natal Technical College
- Goldsmith's College, London University under Harold Parker
  1961/62  - Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome, under Prof. Fazzini
**exhibited** 1960  - Johannesburg
  1962  - Rhodes National Gallery, Salisbury

**MAURICE, Louis**

**born** 1917  - in Cape Town
**studied**  - received no formal training but was encouraged by Lippy Lipshitz
1952/53 - Slade School, London

1953 - "Young Artists from Commonwealth"

1953 - Contemporary British Sculpture Exhibition, London

1955 - Arts Festival, University of Witwatersrand

1956 - 1st Quadrennial of South African Sculpture

1962 - Cape Town

- one work on permanent exhibition, Battersea Gardens, London

Meyrowitz, H.V.

born 1900 - in Leningrad, Russia, d.1945

1925 - settled in South Africa, appointed director of Michaelis School of Fine Art

studied - Berlin State School of Art under Prof. Hitzberger

Mitford-Barberton, Ivan

born 1896 - in Glen Avon, Somerset East

studied - Royal College of Art, London, under Derwent Wood and Henry Moore

exhibited 1948/50 - Overseas Exhibition of South African Art

- Cape Town

- Johannesburg
M'VUSI, Selby

born 1929 - in Pietermaritzburg
studied - Indaleni Art School, Natal, under Alfred Ewan and Alan Atkins
exhibited 1956 - 1st quadrennial of South African Art

- three annual exhibitions of Natal Society of Artists
- at present in Ghana

NOLTE, Zelda Maria

born 1929 - in Cape Town
studied 1948/51 - at the Kunstgewerbeschule, Zurich
exhibited 1960 - 2nd quadrennial of South African Art

1962 - Association of Arts Gallery, Cape Town
1962 - Cape Salon
1963 - São Paulo Biennale
1963 - Contemporaries Exhibition, Pretoria
1963 - South African Flora in Art Exhibition, Cape Town
1964 - King George V Gallery, Port Elizabeth
1964 - Group Exhibition, Wolpe Gallery, Cape Town
OLLEMANS, Frieda

born 1915 - in Bloemfontein
studied 1937/39 - the Slade, London
exhibited 1948 - South African Exhibition at Tate Gallery, London
      1952 - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town

POSTMA, Laurika

born 1903 - in Bethulie, Orange Free State
studied - in Munich under Prof. Bleeken
      - in Berlin under Milly Steger
      - in Brussels under Prof. Oscar Jespers
      - in Holland under Prof. Ingen Hoers
exhibited 1952 - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
      - Pretoria

POTGIERER, Hendrik Christoffel

born 1916 - Bethlehem, Orange Free State
studied - Witwatersrand Technical College under James Gardner
exhibited 1952 - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
      - Johannesburg
      - Pretoria
SACHS, Lily

born 1914  - Johannesburg
studied  - Witwatersrand Technical College under Maurice van Essche
          - Witwatersrand University under Willem Hendrikz
          - in Paris under Andre Lhote
          - in Johannesburg under Moses Kottler
exhibited 1962  - "Art and Religion" at Gallery 101, Johannesburg

SITHOLE, Lucas

born 1931  - Springs, Transvaal
studied  - Polly Street Centre under Cecil Skotnes and Sydney Kumalo
exhibited 1963  - "Work" at Gallery 101, Johannesburg
1964  - Fame and Promise, Johannesburg

STAINBANK, Mary

born 1899  - in Bellair, Natal
studied  - Durban School of Art
          - Royal College of Art, London, under Sir William Rothenstein
exhibited 1936  - Empire Exhibition, Johannesburg
1948  - Exhibition of South African Art, Tate Gallery, London
1953  - Rhodes Centenary Festival, Bulawayo
1960  - 2nd Quadrennial of South African Art
1963  - Art: South Africa To-day, Durban
STANFORD, Cynthia

born 1918
- Cape Town

studied
- Natal University Art School under Prof. Oxley
- Witwatersrand Technical College under James Gardner

exhibited 1952
- Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town

1956
- 1st Quadrennial of South African Art

1958
- Cape Town

1960
- Cape Town

STERN, Rhona

born 1917
- Johannesburg

studied
- Witwatersrand University
- the Slade, London
- under Moses Kottler

exhibited 1952
- Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town

1955
- Royal Institute Summer Salon

1956
- Royal Academy, London

1960
- Contemporary Transvaal Art

1960
- 2nd Quadrennial of South African Art

STEYNBERG, Coert

born 1905
- Hennopsrivier, Transvaal

studied 1925/27
- Grahamstown Art School

1928/30
- Royal College of Art, London, under Prof. Ledward and Henry Moore
exhibited 1948 - South African Exhibition at Tate Gallery, London
1951 - Johannesburg
1952 - International Open Air Exhibition at Arnheim, Holland
1952 - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
1952 - Venice Biennale
1953 - Rhodes Centenary Exhibition, Bulawayo
1954 - Venice Biennale
1956 - 1st Quadrennial of South African Art
1960 - Contemporary Transvaal Art

VAN HEERDEN, Johan

born 1930 - in Bethal, Transvaal
studied 1952 - Bloemfontein Technical College
1952 - in Paris under Eduard MacAvoy
1956 - at La Grande Chaumiére, Paris, under Ossip Zadkine
exhibited 1956 - Guggenheim Art Exhibition, Paris and New York
1956 - 1st Quadrennial of South African Art
1957 - São Paulo Biennale
1958 - Venice Biennale
1959 - São Paulo Biennale
1960 - 2nd Quadrennial of South African Art
1960 - Contemporary Transvaal Art
VAN WOUW, Anton

born 
1862 — in Driebergen, Holland, d. 1945
1890 — settled in South Africa
1937 — awarded a medal by South African Academy

studied — Rotterdam Academy, Holland

VILLA, Edoardo

born 
1920 — in Bergamo, Italy
1943 — came to South Africa as prisoner-of-war

studied — School of Art and Academy under Minotti, Barbieri and Lodi
— at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan
— at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome

exhibited 
1947 — Johannesburg
1947 — Annual Exhibition of South African Academy
1948 — Annual Exhibition of South African Academy
1949 — Annual Exhibition of South African Academy
1952 — Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
1956 — 1st Quadrennial of South African Art
1956 — Venice Biennale
1957 — São Paulo Biennale
1957/58 — Included in Travelling
Exhibition of South African Artists, U.S.A.
1958  - Venice Biennale
1959  - Fame and Promise, Johannesburg
1959  - São Paulo Biennale
1960  - Contemporary Transvaal Art
1960  - Open Air Exhibition, Joubert Park, Johannesburg
1963  - São Paulo Biennale
1964  - Venice Biennale

VINCENT, Nancy

born  1895
studied  - Cape Town
         - Cape Town School of Art
         - Cape Town Technical College
         - the Slade, London, under Prof. Henry Tonks and Howard Thomas
         - Westminster School of Art under Frank Dobson
         - Chelsea School of Art
         - Paris
         - Rome

exhibited 1952  - Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Exhibition, Cape Town
         1956  - 1st Quadrennial of South African Art
         - Royal Academy
         - Walker Art Gallery
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<td>Staatliche Akademie den Bildenden Kunste, Stuttgart, under Prof. Otto Heim</td>
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Poster for Group (6) Exhibition

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