

xxviiith biennale · venice · 1956

**american
artists paint
the city**

**exhibition organized by
the art institute of chicago**

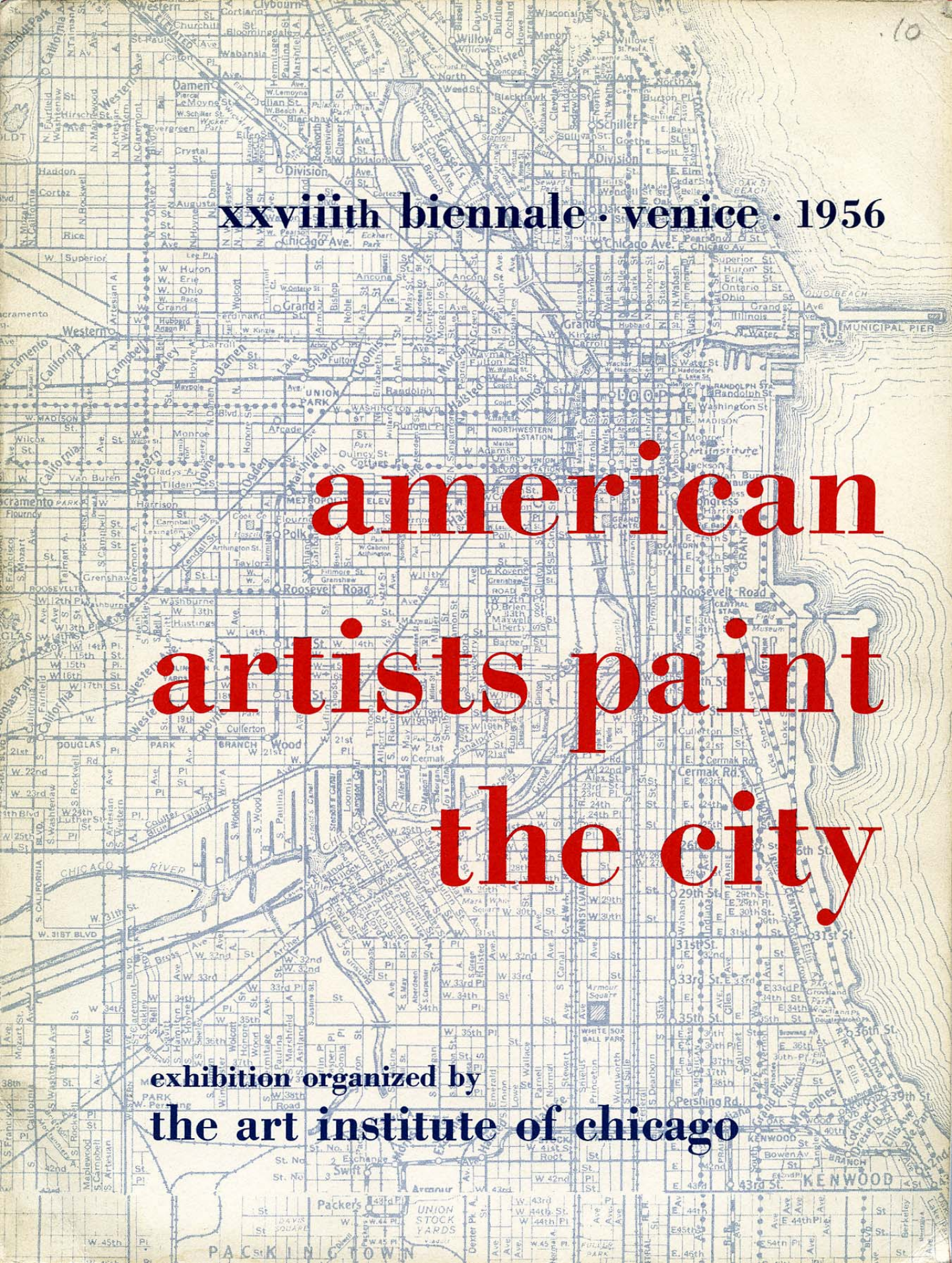




Plate 1 New York by Hedda Sterne

New York is nothing like Paris; it is nothing like London; and it is not Spokane multiplied by sixty, or Detroit multiplied by four. It is by all odds the loftiest of cities . . .

E. B. White

**american artists
paint the city**

exhibition assembled by Katharine Kuh

**Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture
The Art Institute of Chicago**

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acknowledgments

To Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Maremont we give thanks for their generosity in making this exhibition possible. Only because of the gift they contributed through the *Kate Maremont Foundation* for the American Exhibition at the Biennale, were we at the Art Institute of Chicago able to undertake the project. We are also indebted to the Museum of Modern Art for inviting the Art Institute to use their pavilion in representing the United States. In addition, the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art has graciously given us supplementary funds.

I want personally to thank two of my colleagues at the Art Institute, Daniel Catton Rich, Director of the museum and United States Commissioner to the Biennale, for his kind advice and help. To Petronel Lukens, my assistant, goes my warm gratitude for her excellent cooperation throughout. I owe much to Porter McCray of the Museum of Modern Art who has given me guidance and practical information.

To the many museum Directors, Curators, private collectors and dealers who have generously lent works to this exhibition the Art Institute of Chicago is deeply grateful. We would like to thank particularly the Whitney Museum of American Art for the largest single loan—four paintings, all of which add materially to the meaning of our theme.

K.K.

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foreword

On behalf of those who love modern art I am happy to welcome the exhibition *American Artists Paint the City*. I hope it will receive a warm reception from visitors to the Biennale. Mrs. Kuh, Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, rightly says in her introductory remarks that the "city", and especially New York, has inspired artists of the United States, offering them themes very different from those to be found in Europe: themes characteristically American. Their cities, it is true, are different from ours, but it is equally true that American painting in the last decades has acquired a personal character and a new sense of freedom which, however, does not exclude possible European influences. Though it may be difficult to define the nature of this freedom, it is easily found in the work of various artists included in the exhibition.

John Marin's personality, for instance, is unmistakable. He so deeply wanted to be objective and to reproduce what he saw; yet he felt compelled by his fertile imagination to express his enthusiasm for the dynamic world around him and to make every skyscraper a challenge to heaven. Lyonel Feininger paints buildings only to reveal the delicate harmonies of abstract space. Our own Giuseppe Stella (1880-1946) brought futuristic boldness to America, thus creating romance from large suspension bridges and miracles of construction. In this exhibition you will see four paintings by Mark Tobey (born in 1890); among them, *San Francisco Street* and *Neon Thoroughfare*. The first is a phantasy of artificial light, giving the impression of a street on another planet created from a day-dream. In the latter, the neon light itself shapes everyday realities in an American city. If we were to argue which of the two is more abstract or realistic, we would reach no conclusion, because only Tobey's changing mood is reality.

Another painter who has greatly changed his approach is Ben Shahn (born in 1898). In this exhibition his work has a somewhat primitive quality, stressing a bitter sense of humor not without a tragic streak.

The role played by Jackson Pollock (born in 1912) in molding American taste during the last decade is known to everyone. *Convergence*, an excellent example of heavily worked texture, finds its artistic justification in the actual painting itself.

An interesting characteristic of American art is the scrupulous attention often paid to pictorial textures, reflecting concern for the hand-made, carefully finished object.

In closing, I wish to mention certain other pictures which particularly impress me: *Industrial Night* by Lee Gatch, *New York City* by Corrado Marca-Relli and *New York* by Hedda Sterne. I am well aware that paintings other than those I have brought to your attention may have equal interest, but I cannot express my opinion as an art critic several months before I actually see the exhibition. I merely wish to recall happy meetings; the chats I had with Marin at Alfred Stieglitz's, arguments about the "American Scene", the interest evident everywhere in art of all kinds, both Eastern and Western, which then was and is now clearly visible in New York show windows. American art has truly come of age at a time when knowledge of the world's artistic achievements is all-embracing. To become national, and not nationalistic, even in painting, one must be acquainted with everything; one must have no foregone judgments and wear no blinkers. This holds true for America as well as for other countries, but we must admit that in this field artists of the United States are setting an example.

Lionello Venturi

Rome, December 20, 1955



Plate 2 Early Sunday Morning by Edward Hopper

american artists paint the city

One of the outstanding themes in American art today is the city, with New York the favorite model. Other large centers sometimes serve—cities like Pittsburgh and Chicago with their startling, smoke drenched silhouettes or San Francisco astride her steep hills, equally dazzling in sunlight or luminous fog. Though it is common practice to consider the Middle West more American in appearance and feeling than New York, still most artists use this, the largest metropolis, as their symbol. Despite or perhaps because of its greater loftiness and complexity, they allow it to represent the multitude of other cities in the United States, making it the cumulative symbol of urban America.

The city as source material in this country cannot be underestimated. Since almost half the population lives in metropolitan centers and since transportation and communication are fast and effective, first-hand knowledge of city life is widespread. Cacaphonous traffic, soaring architecture, mammoth factories and sprawling slums are commonplaces, but it remained for the writers and painters of America to discover new romance in these very elements.

Before this century, most Americans founded their esthetic code on European standards. They looked for age-old traditions—for serenity, peace, harmony—for shimmering perspectives and tender patina on worn walls. Instead they were met by explosive billboards, unrelenting light and the harsh percussion of modern streets.

During the last fifty years a change in attitude has taken place. We see with new eyes the brilliant shadow of a fire escape on brick walls, the mystery of night-lighted neon cities, the humor and loneliness of windows opening on each other. Our cities amaze us, outlined against both coasts or seen from a distance across the vast plains of Texas, Illinois and Iowa. The light in America, almost always brighter than in Europe, defines our surroundings with intense precision, accounting in part for the American artist's emphasis on the specific rather than the general.

American Artists Paint the City seems an appropriate theme for a group of paintings which have developed chiefly from our own roots. Since American cities differ from those in Europe both in appearance and history, our painters have tended to evolve a personal method of interpreting them. This is not to say that European influences are absent from such works, but rather that native expression is here more strongly felt.

As French painters celebrate favorite landmarks in Paris like Notre Dame or Montmartre, as Italians recreate the monuments of Rome and Venice, so American artists have gradually come to find their own images. Over and over they paint Brooklyn Bridge with its gigantic cables or the towering skyscrapers of Manhattan or the radiance of numberless city lights. These are some of their favorite subjects. But they also include the dull side of city life, sometimes describing drab buildings and poverty with poignant realism. From repeated paradoxes, from the very size and scale of America grows its art. Though our young painters frequently work in Europe, they also now take note of their own surroundings, comparing and contrasting them in a process of re-evaluation.

Artists have long painted the city. There come to mind immediately certain classic examples like El Greco's brooding view of Toledo or the neat stillness of Delft from the brush of her greatest painter, Vermeer. Venice, that fragile product of eighteenth century eloquence, was recorded almost biographically by Guardi and Canaletto. And earlier, this same city acted as background for the ceremonial paintings of Gentile Bellini, Carpaccio and finally Veronese. The three centers most often interpreted by artists, Venice, Paris and now New York, each have strong personal characteristics—Venice with its constant play of light on water and lacy architecture, Paris, surprisingly seductive for all its classical discipline and New York, if only for the sheer invention of its silhouette.

When the American paints his own cities he is confronted, at least visually, by a new phenomenon, a great mass of structures sprawling upward and outward with little or no preliminary plan. In Europe most large metropolitan centers, having developed from medieval prototypes, follow an organized design. Radiating from fixed squares and plazas, these towns, based on the ancient idea of security, show a clarity of structure lacking in the more haphazard evolution of modern America. Here chance forces allow spontaneous but often disorganized growth to develop at a speed unheard of in the past.

In American life as in American cities there is a disturbing multiplicity, an overlay of sound, color, light and movement which unquestionably influences our artists. One feels the cumulative effect of too much—too fast—too soon. Paintings like Law-

rence's *Chess on Broadway* (Plate 3), *The City* by Gonzalez (Plate 4) and *Neon Thoroughfare* by Tobey (Plate 5) reflect this seeming chaos in different ways. However, it is Jackson Pollock who best expresses the tendency in canvases not consciously related to the city, but reminiscent of the bewildering emotions resulting from its complexity. Beneath the drip and tangle, the spot and dribble of a painting like *Convergence* (Plate 6) one senses the multi-colored rhythm of present-day America. Other artists, not so concerned with interpreting confusion, try to escape from it by concentrating on the purified essence of a scene. When O'Keeffe paints New York at night (Plate 7), she recognizes how darkness simplifies the city by removing details which overwhelm the eye in daylight. Using a consistently economic pattern, she allows variations of artificial light to pierce her forms. As Albright (Plate 9) includes and exaggerates every detail, so Mueller (Plate 8) does just the reverse. But all these artists have one thing in common—the problem of coping with the unbounded turbulence of their surroundings.

Text continued Page 16

This scene depicts a public chess room in New York where players can enjoy themselves for a small admission fee. Broadways' glaring lights can be seen through the windows.

Plate 3 Chess on Broadway by Jacob Lawrence



In America you are confronted with a power in movement, with force in reserve without end. An unbelievable vitality—a perpetual movement.

Fernand Léger



Plate 4 The City by Xavier Gonzalez

. . . Night crushes bright milk out of arclights, squeezes the sullen blocks until they drip red, yellow, green into streets resounding with feet. All the asphalt oozes light . . .

John Dos Passos

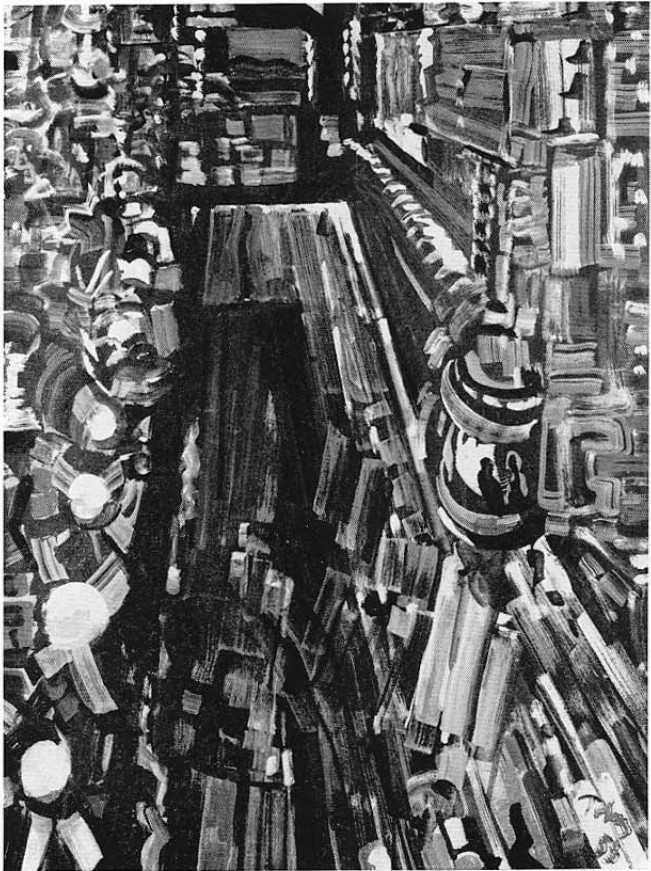


Plate 5 Neon Thoroughfare by Mark Tobey

Plate 6 Convergence by Jackson Pollock



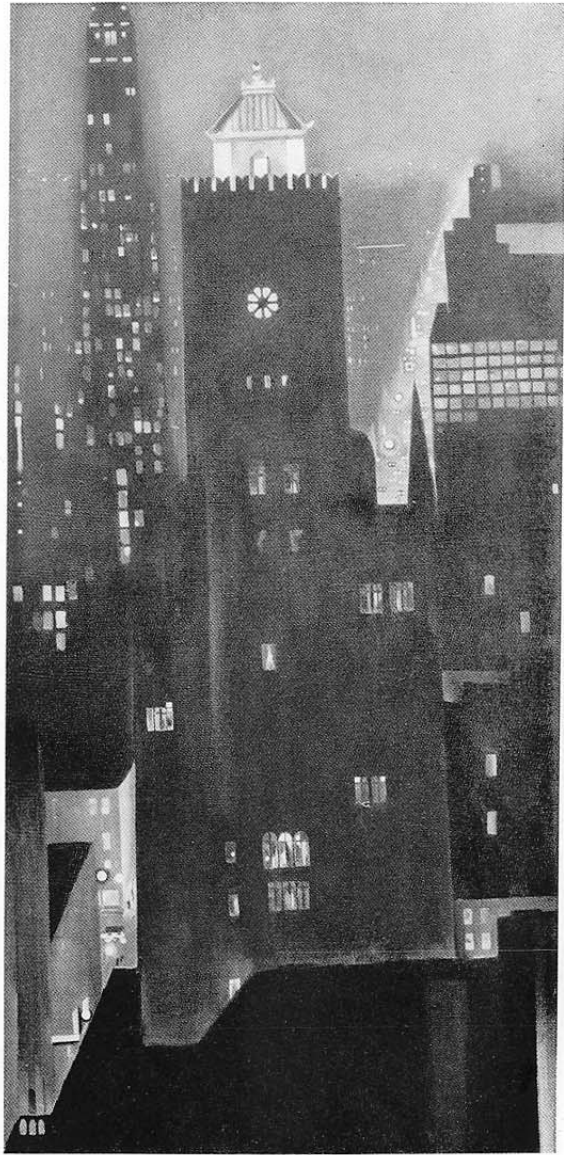


Plate 7 New York, Night by Georgia O'Keeffe

... everything about it seems to soar up with an aspirant, vertical glittering magnificence to meet the stars ...

Thomas Wolfe

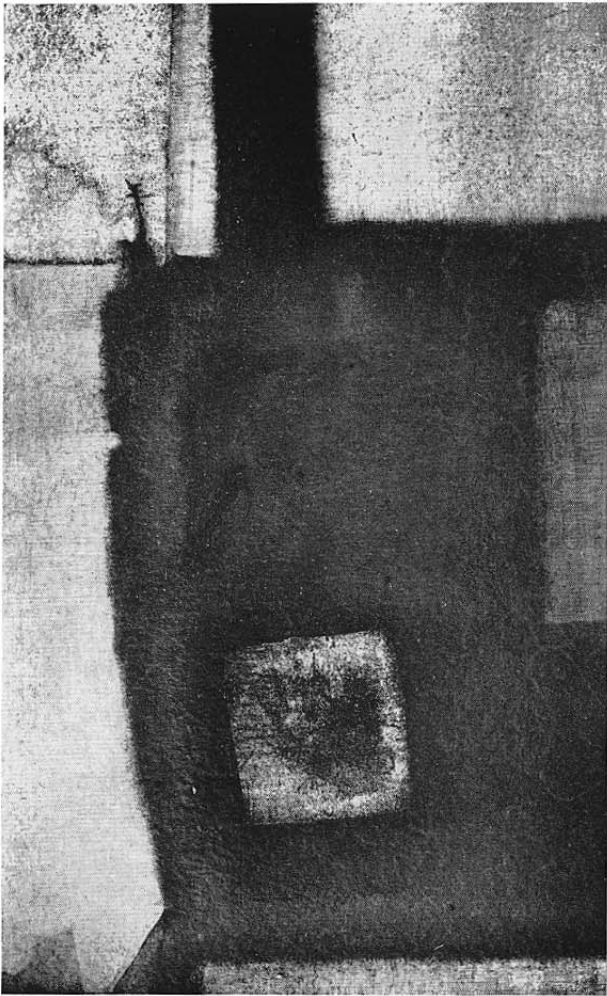


Plate 8 Night by George Mueller



Plate 9 Poor Room—There is No Time, No End, No Today, No Yesterday, No Tomorrow, Only the Forever, and Forever, and Forever, Without End by Ivan Albright

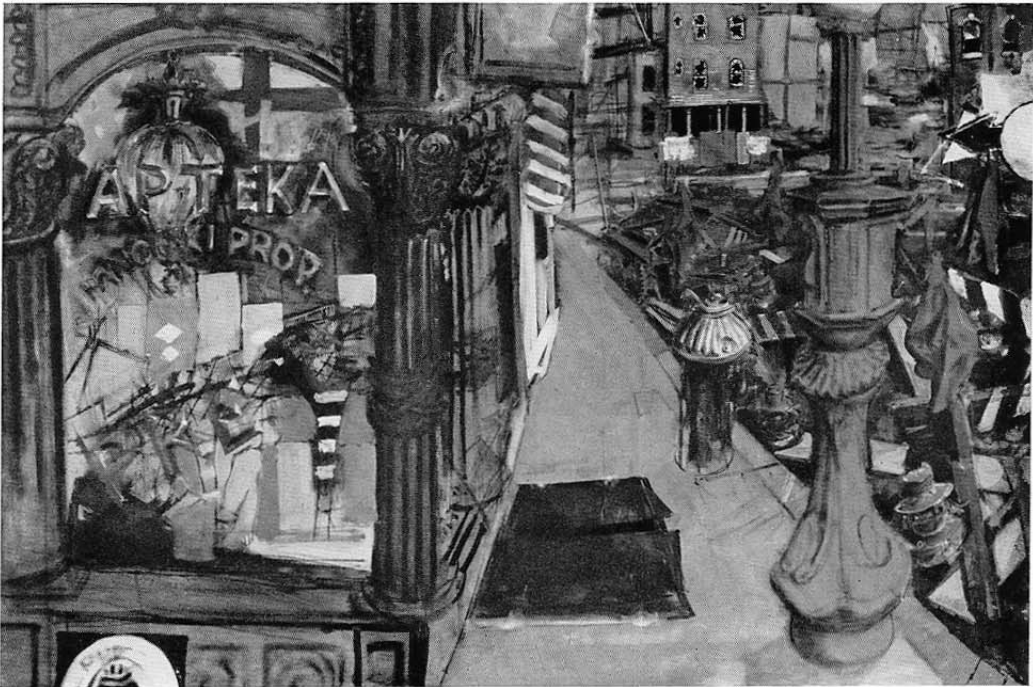


Plate 10 *Holy Name Mission* by Reginald Marsh

Most surveys of painting in the United States point up two main characteristics: realism and romanticism. Often both tendencies are combined in the same canvas, particularly in work produced during the first thirty years of this century when American painters were self-consciously turning to their own land for source material. Part of the vigorous nationalism developing at this time may have resulted from difficulties encountered by American artists in their struggle to gain acceptance both at home and abroad. Before it was possible for them to become experimental, it was necessary to discover their own heritage. Such paintings as Reginald Marsh's *Holy Name Mission* (Plate 10), Hopper's *Early Sunday Morning* (Plate 2, page 7) or *Apteka* by Levine (Plate 11) are characteristic of this search. Each tends toward an American kind of realism where specific fact is dramatically recorded but also strangely refracted by romantic overtones.

All three paintings have to do with the less privileged side of American city life. Each delivers its message without the oblique references or double meanings so often associated with twentieth century art. But there is more here than mere factual reporting. Although human beings do not appear in two of these canvases, still they all are concerned with human psychology. The loneliness of Hopper's unpretentious street romanticizes a conformity typical of life in large American cities, while the devastation of Levine's *Apteka* (undoubtedly a Polish section in some industrial town) tells the exaggerated story of American obsolescence. In both pictures two revealing symbols appear, the fire hydrant and the barber pole.

Plate 11 Apteka by Jack Levine



One may wonder why painting in America has so often stressed the seamier side of life. For a brief period, specifically during the economic depression of the "thirties," artists were concerned with social content and used their canvases as forums for propaganda. But this hardly explains the general tendency in the United States to romanticize those prosaic details which in other countries are more apt to be overlooked. Not alone true of our painters, the most important American writers have also dissected their surroundings with microscopic intensity. Men like Dreiser, Thomas Wolfe, Dos Passos, O. Henry and Sinclair Lewis often extracted poetry from a procession of dreary details.

Plate 12 Winter Rooftops by Arthur Osver

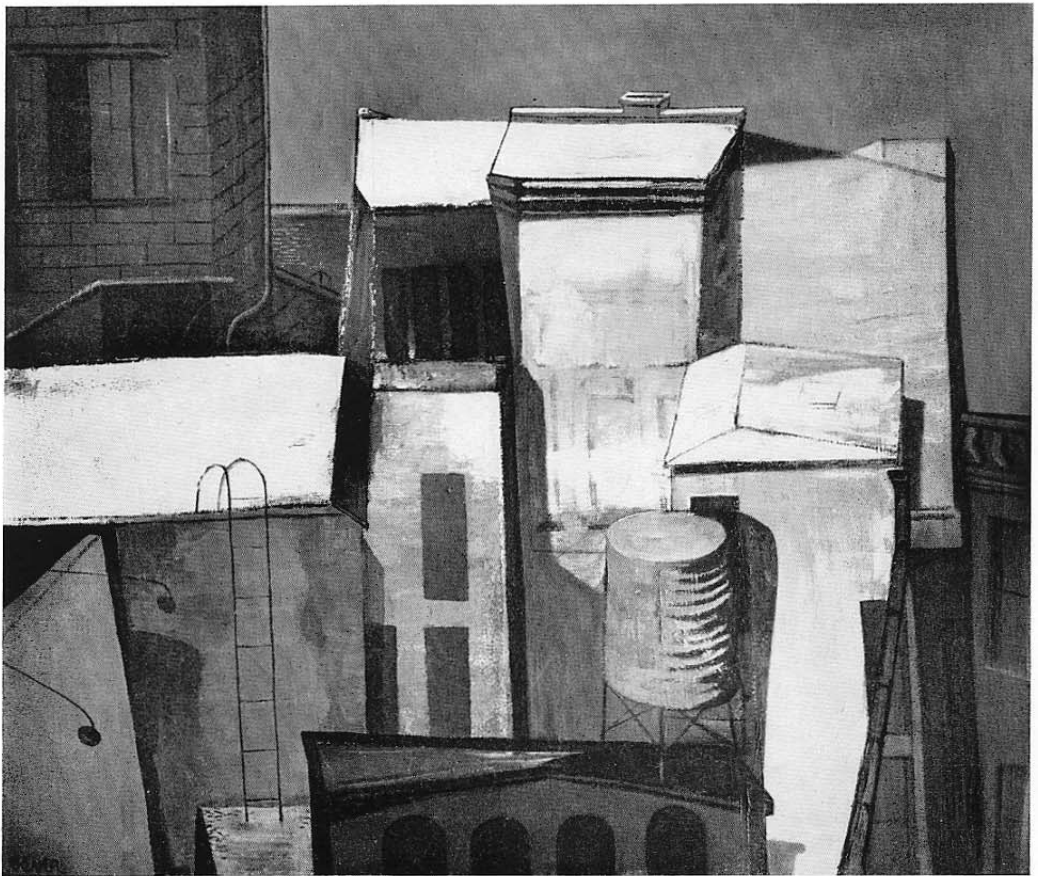
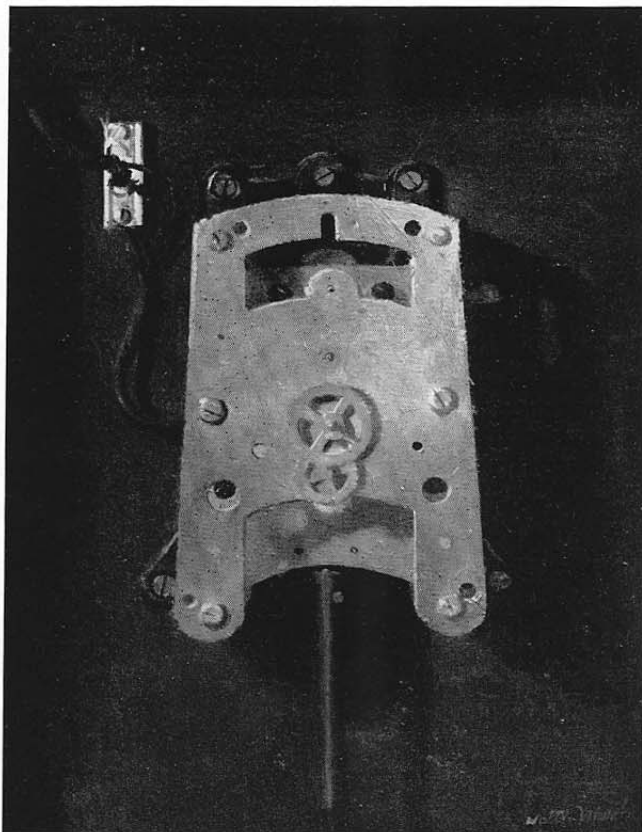


Plate 13
Time Clock by Walter Murch



Along with our painters they prided themselves on finding beauty in the most commonplace objects. This may partly explain why, of all artists in history, Van Gogh has so completely captured the imagination of America. His canvases of worn shoes, pipes and shabby bedrooms coincide with and re-inforce a way of seeing dear to the eyes of Americans. Dirty winter rooftops (Plate 12), the mechanism of a time clock (Plate 13) or messy scrawls on city walls (Plate 14) are experiences, as a rule, not associated with esthetics. But the American artists who painted these scenes, unlike their more sophisticated European forerunners, are in no sense anti-artists. Far removed from Dadaism and nihilism, they exploit such subjects because they find them revealing. Here there is no evidence of tongue in cheek, but rather an openness growing out of dedicated observation.

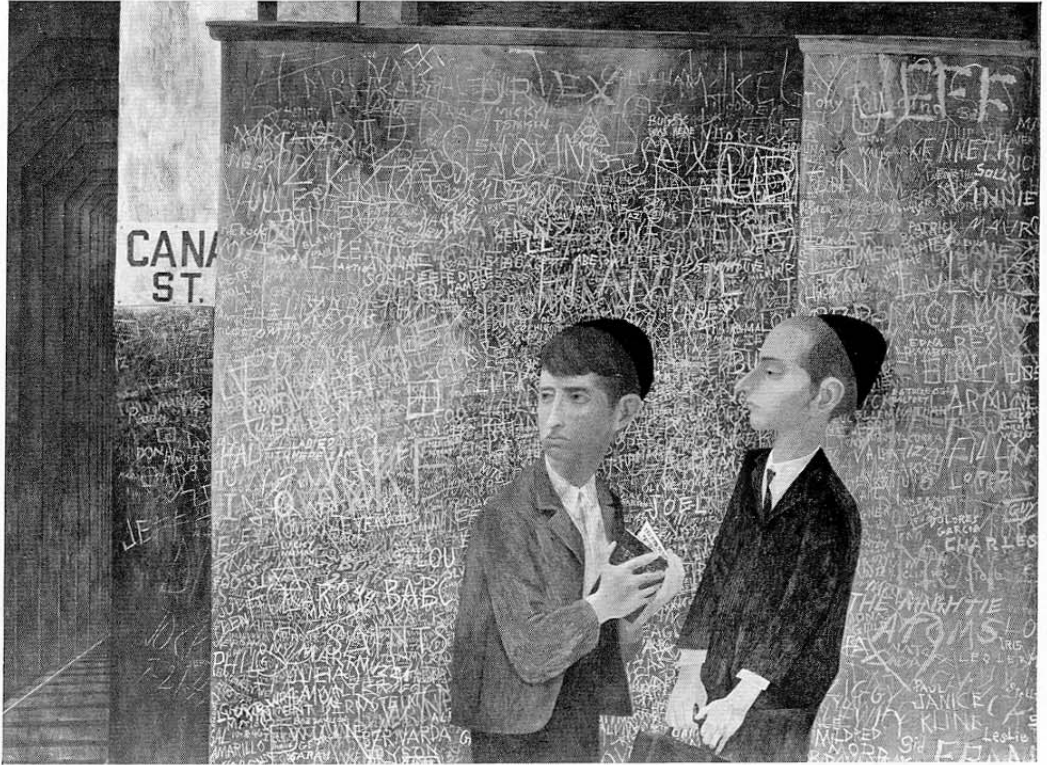


Plate 14 *Orthodox Boys* by Bernard Perlin

The fact that most American artists react strongly to the external world around them is not surprising in a country where the wonders of pioneering are still fresh in mind. Here the painter's language is often close to the awe he feels for the land itself. And there is yet much for him to discover before a real synthesis can result. Take Texas alone. In a landscape of surrealist proportions where light is so strong and space so immense, the artist is faced with a mighty competitor. While Europeans, more remote from their native beginnings, are apt to be driven back into themselves, Americans are still grappling with a pressing and immediate world. This may explain why so little authentic surrealist painting has developed in the United States, for the unconscious is apt to be neglected in times of external stress. Instead of more classical psychoanalytic content, Freudian overtones are grafted on American realism to form a kind of obsessed romanticism. Witness *Orthodox Boys* by Perlin (Plate 14), *Poor Room—There is No Time, No End, No Today, No Yesterday, No Tomorrow, Only the Forever, and Forever, and Forever, Without End* by Albright (Plate 9, page 15) or, even more characteristically, Tooker's *The Subway* (Plate 15).

Plate 15 *The Subway* by George Tooker



Plate 16 The Brooklyn Bridge: Variation on an Old Theme
by Joseph Stella

What is fast becoming true American folklore grows out of the exuberant side of city paintings—the optimism, gaiety and vulgarity, the sense of unlimited strength. Stella's many Brooklyn Bridges (Plate 16), the brash clanging color of Stuart Davis (Plate 17), Hedda Sterne's bold contours (Plate 1, frontispiece) and the smashing power of Kline's calligraphy (Plate 18)—these are the canvases which capture some of New York's staccato excitement. It is curious that painters often identify the skyscraper, particularly at night, with the verticality of Gothic cathedrals. Both Norman Lewis (Plate 19) and Joseph Frieber (Plate 20), in canvases named Cathedral, accentuate the mystery of jewel-like luminosity. But this emphasis on the miracle of light has best been expressed by Mark Tobey who actually invented a new kind of painting called "white writing" which celebrates the iridescence of our cities. In his canvas, *City Radiance* (Plate 21), appropriately owned by the late artist Lyonel Feininger, he condenses and symbolizes all the shining lights of America. Writing of his own work recently Tobey said: "During the last fifteen years my approach has varied—sometimes depending on direct brush work—sometimes on white dynamic flashes of line married to a geometry of space . . ."

From the gridiron construction of our cities, from their strangely lighted perspectives develops a new kind of space. In fact, form often seems less important than space, since American cities, in contrast to those of Europe, are visually more alive at night than during the day. The interplay of lights snapping on and off combines with streaming traffic to transform hitherto accepted dimensions. Positive becomes negative; perspectives flatten out and up. When, in the daytime, realism returns, sunlight beats against the buildings, accentuating their contours with strong chiaroscuro.

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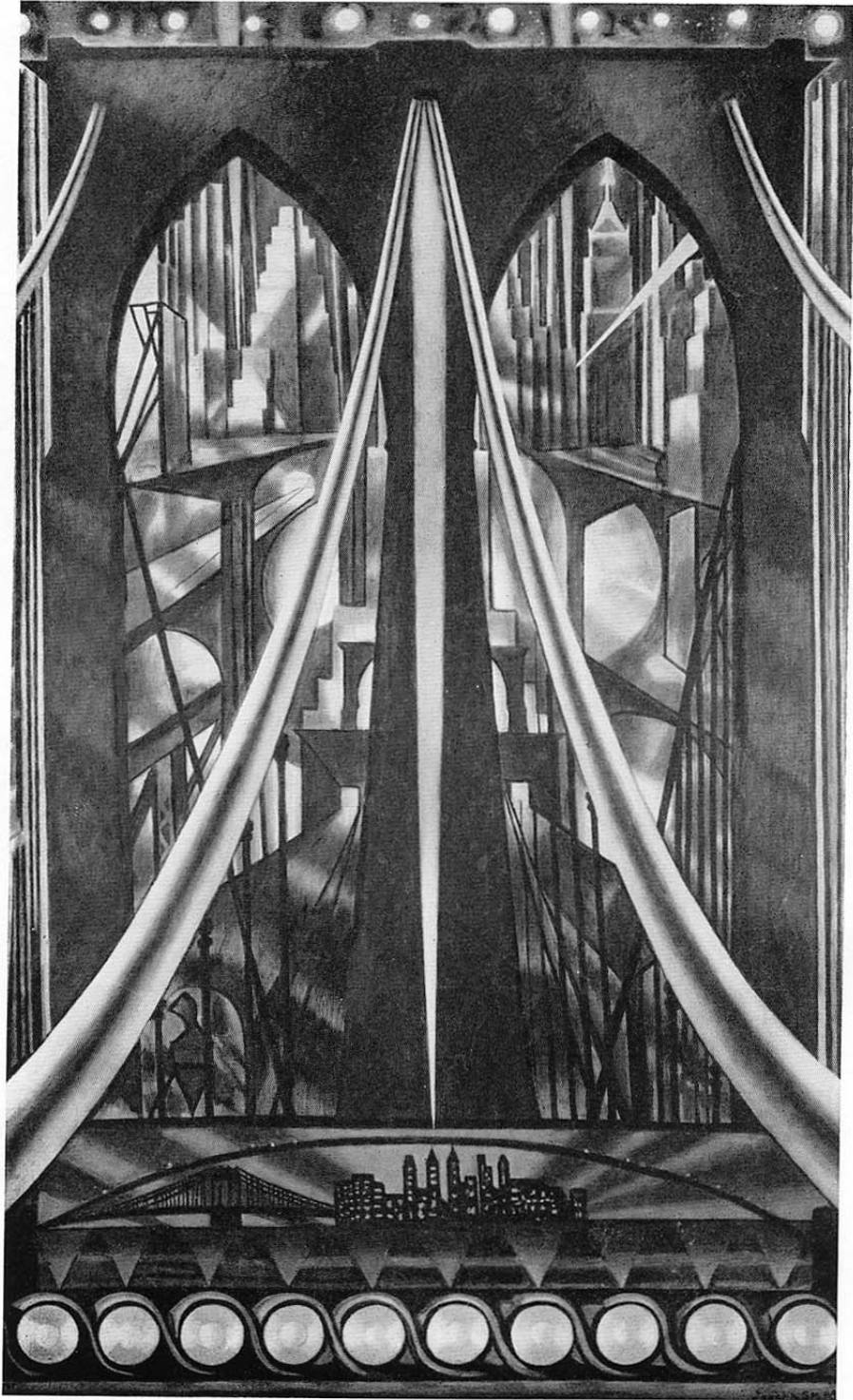




Plate 17 *Something on the 8 Ball* by Stuart Davis

In this title Stuart Davis has combined two American slang expressions, "something on the ball" and "behind the 8 ball." The first is a complimentary reference to being intelligent; the second is a term taken from the game of pool meaning "in a bad position."

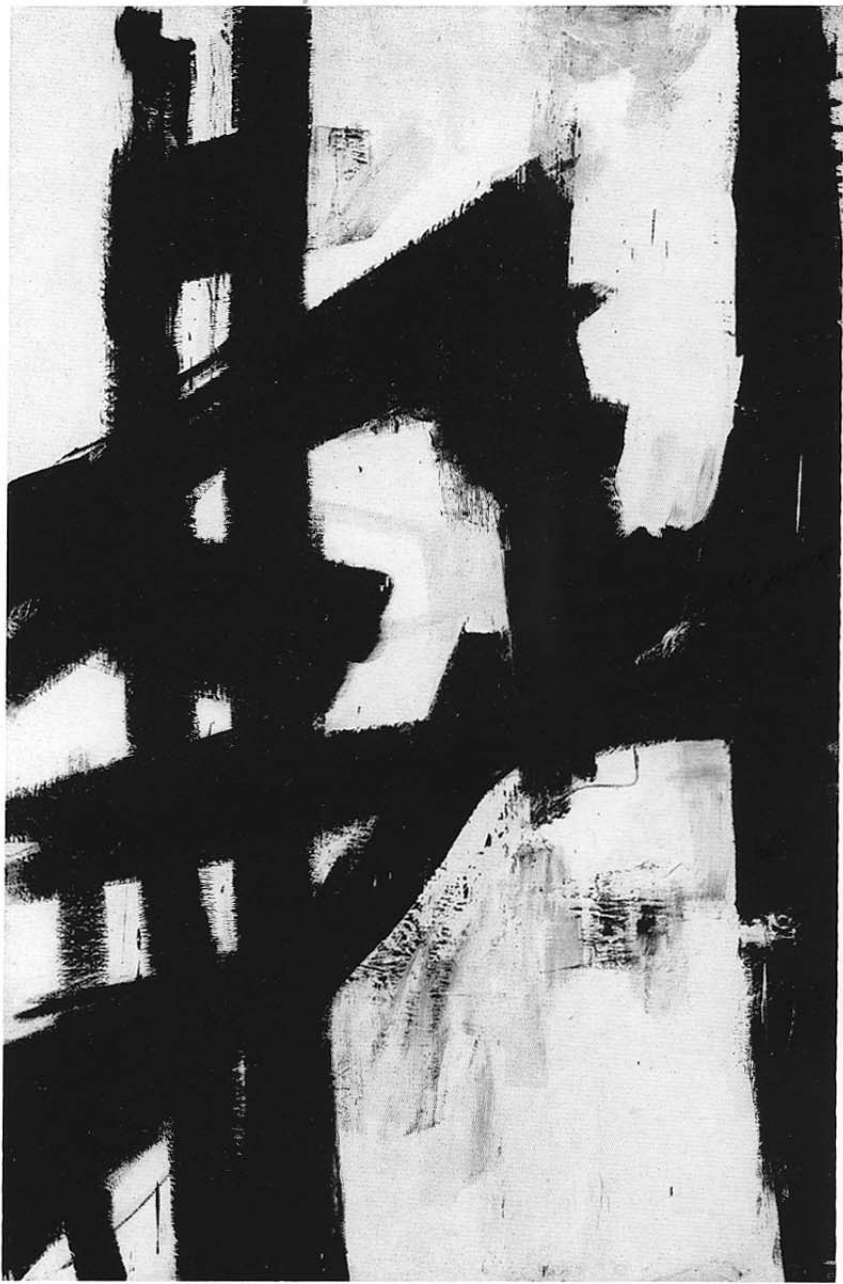
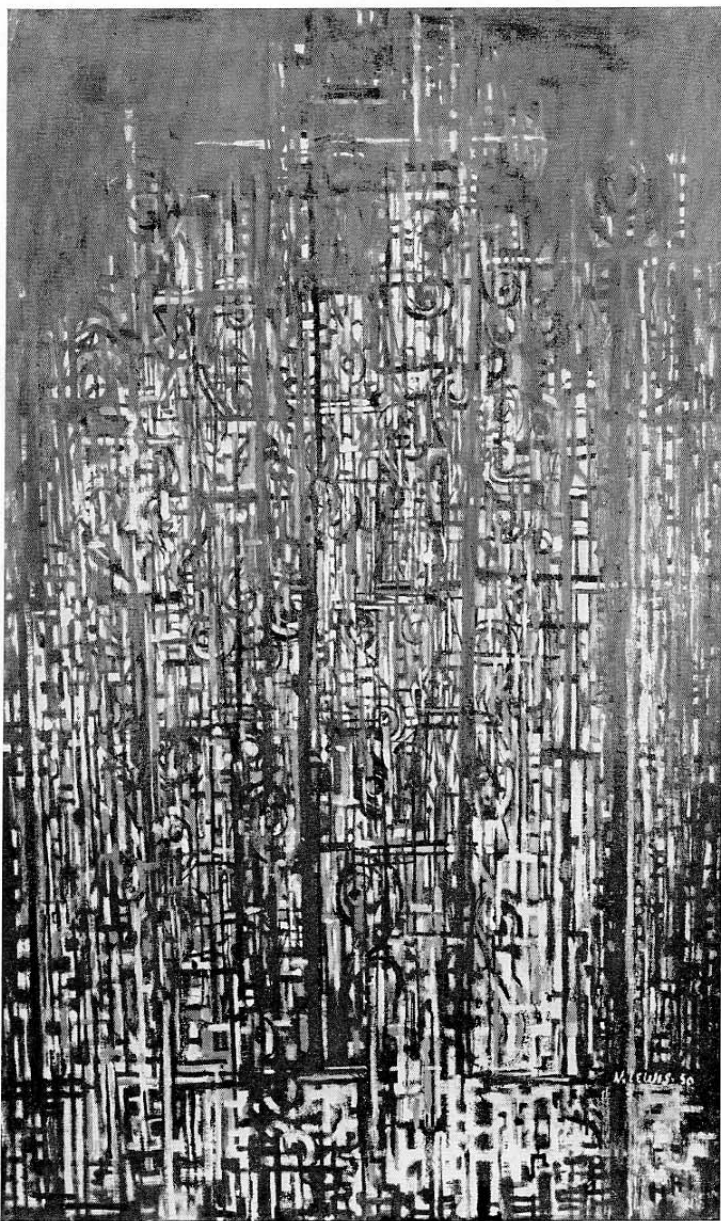


Plate 18 New York by Franz Kline

... New York is to the nation what the white church spire is to the village—the visible symbol of aspiration and faith, the white plume saying that the way is up . . .

E. B. White

Plate 19 Cathedral by Norman Lewis



What is the chief characteristic of the tall building? And at once we answer, it is lofty . . . It must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exultation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line.

Louis Sullivan

Plate 20 Urban Cathedral by Joseph Friebert

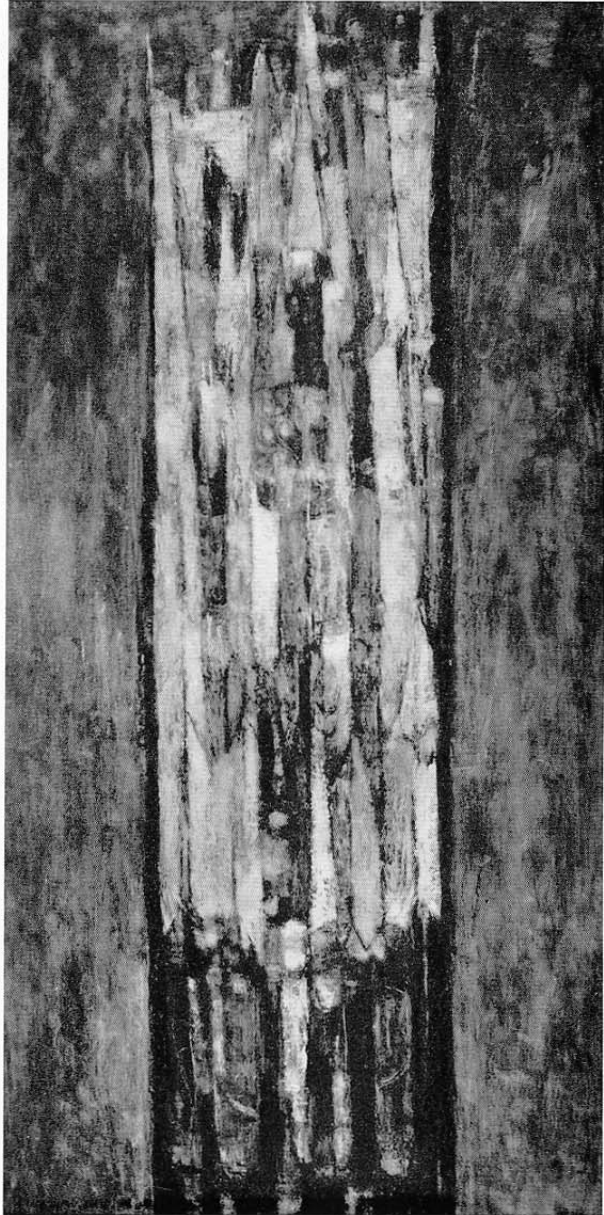
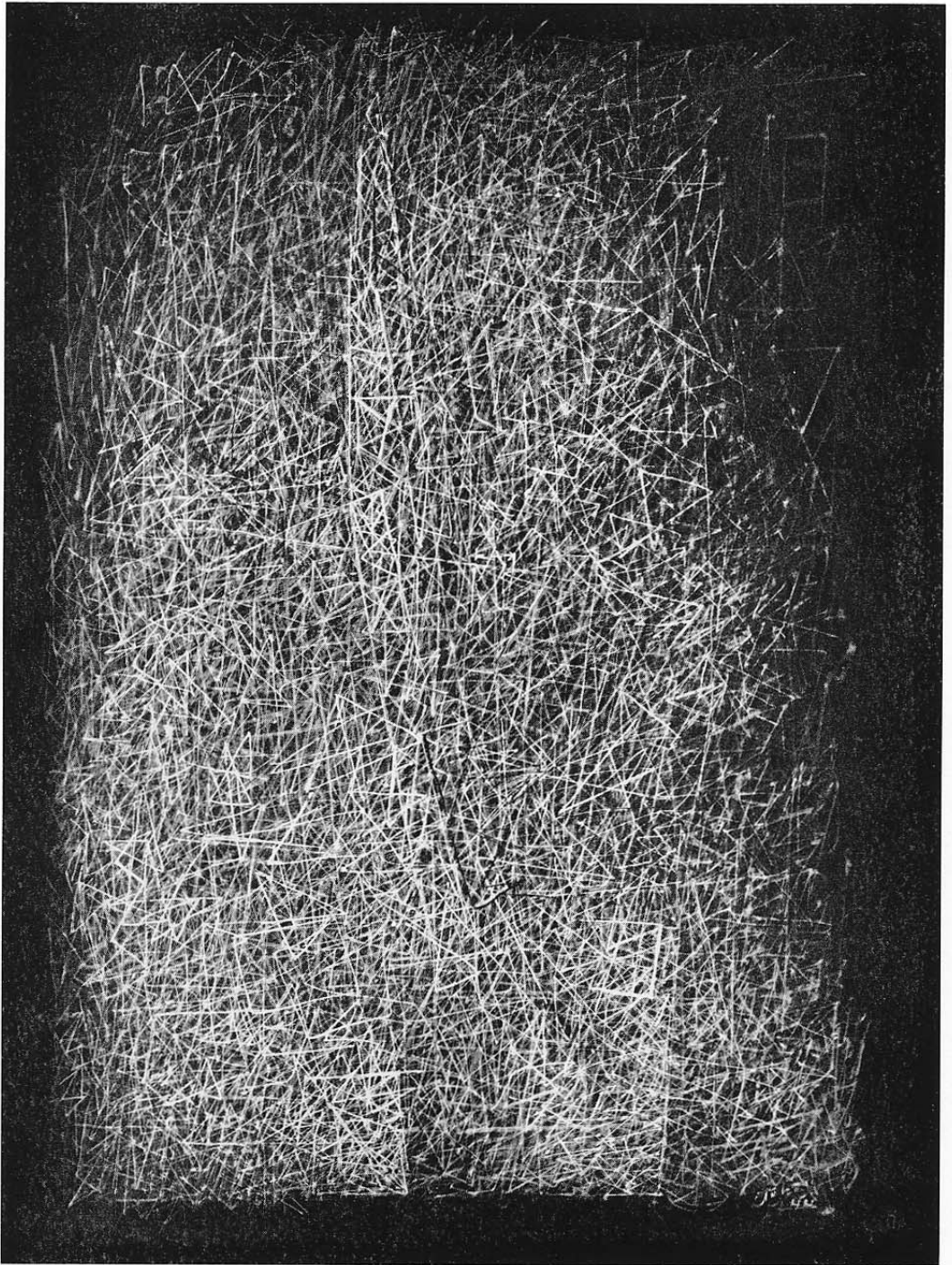


Plate 21 City Radiance by Mark Tobey



OPPOSITE

. . . The skyscraper, in the dusk, is a shimmering verticality, a gossamer veil, a festive scene-drop hanging there against the black sky to dazzle, entertain, and amaze.

The lighted interiors come through it all with a sense of life and well-being. At night the city not only seems alive. It does live. But lives only as illusion lives.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Plate 22 Industrial Night by Lee Gatch



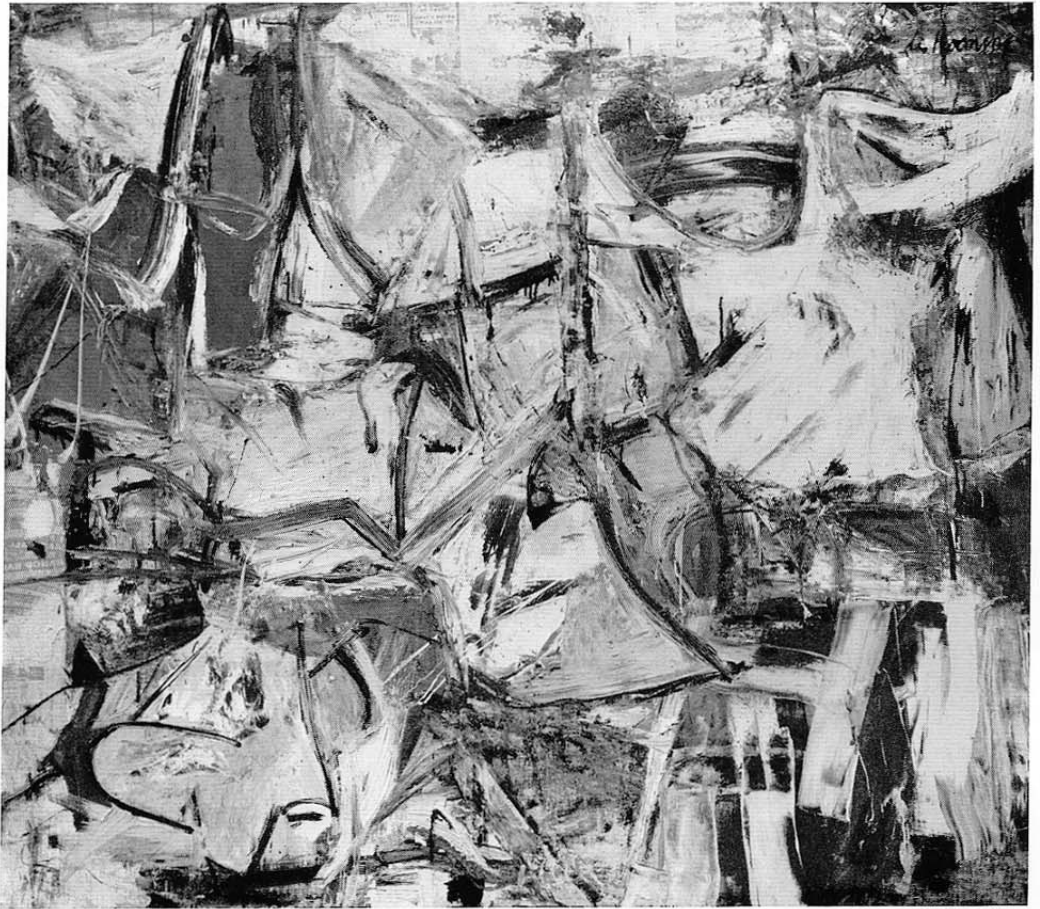


Plate 23 *Gotham News* by Willem de Kooning

If American artists paint their cities abstractly, they may be recording quite realistically what they see, for the angularity, speed and transparency of their surroundings often appear abstract when viewed out of context. Steel buildings under construction become skeletons to look through as glass windows turn into reflecting mirrors. The form of these cities lends itself naturally to abstract expression. Such paintings as Hedda Sterne's *New York* (Plate 1, frontispiece), Lee Gatch's *Industrial Night* (Plate 22) or *Something on the 8 Ball* by Stuart Davis (Plate 17, page 24) are each related to interpenetrations of light and structure. It is almost as if the European Cubists early in this century (especially Léger and Delaunay) foretold how cities in the United States would look forty years later. Léger's great masterpiece of 1918–1919, *La Ville*, pointed the way toward a new kind of city in art. In a sense he was the first to exploit the romance of mechanized vision and to introduce a kaleidoscopic process for interpreting simultaneous vision.

In most cases the American painter's approach is less sensuous than that of his Italian or French colleague. The Puritan tradition in the United States is not to be overlooked, for it has unquestionably acted in a disciplinary capacity throughout the history of American expression. Just as Gallic eroticism and sensuality have been tempered here (sometimes too cautiously) so also the excesses of modern Expressionism (found so vigorously in Germany of the "twenties" and "thirties") have been modified. Though Americans are drawn to this form of painting, they have, for the most part, never achieved the strident harshness typical of Expressionism at its best. Possibly it is the very temperance of American art which troubles Europeans. This may seem curious, since the New World is so often associated with violence and lack of restraint.

In the last eight or ten years a great change has taken place. Our artists are producing enormous canvases where discretion has been thrown to the four winds. Men like Franz Kline (Plate 18, page 25), Jackson Pollock (Plate 6, page 12) and Willem de Kooning in no sense paint city scenes but their work emerges from New York where they live. De Kooning in his abstract painting, *Gotham News* (Plate 23), does not attempt to record a composite view of Manhattan but rather gives the multitudinous reactions connected with life in this gargantua. The picture, like the city itself, seems to have no beginning, no boundaries, no end. It implies continuous growth through dissolution. Very different but nonetheless related is Franz Kline's *New York* where one structural unit is so magnified as to symbolize a whole metropolis. His ideograph-like elements are borrowed from Oriental calligraphy, an influence strong in America today. By inflating a detail to monumental proportions, appearance and meaning are transformed. One senses that these canvases by De Kooning, Pollock and Kline are intended less to be looked at than entered into. They envelop one with the same insistence as the city itself.

As might be expected in America, many of the artists in this group were not born in the United States. Frequently, because they come from elsewhere, recognition of personal characteristics in their new country is more acute. But what seems most arresting is how closely American artists, whether native born or not, are related to their own environment, how deeply they draw on their surroundings and how reliant they are on life around them for source material. Though Europeans are perhaps less familiar with contemporary art in the United States than Americans are with painting on the Continent, still a coming of age process is rapidly taking place in this country. Symptomatic is a dawning security which frees American artists both from over-dependence on Europe and over-emphasis on a narrow nationalism.

Katharine Kuh



Plate 24 American Telephone Building, New York City by John Marin

I see great forces at work; great movements; the large buildings and the small buildings, the warring of the great and the small; influences of one mass on another greater or smaller mass . . . While these powers are at work pushing, pulling, sideways, downwards, upwards, I can hear the sound of their strife and there is great music being played.

John Marin

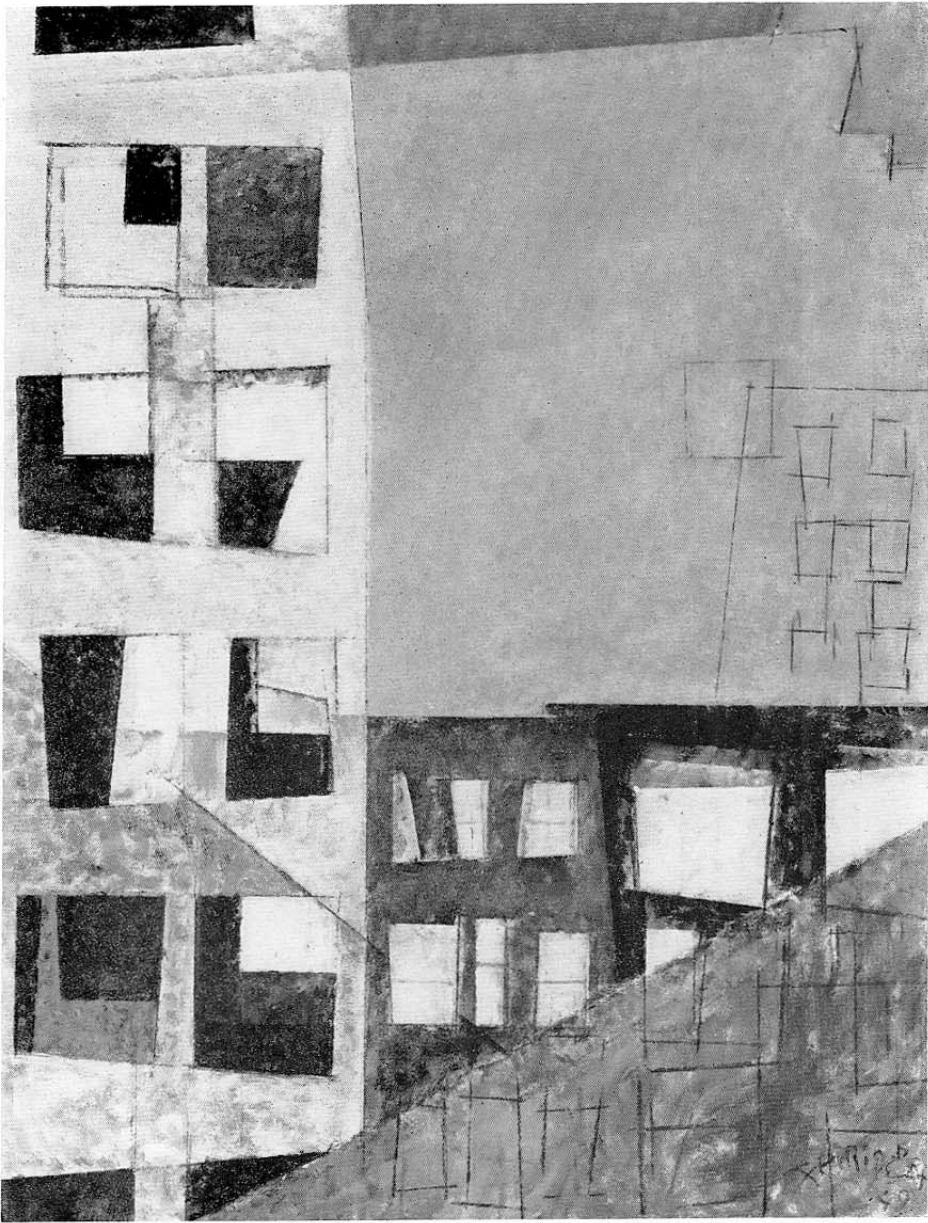


Plate 25 *Factory Windows in Manhattan* by Lyonel Feininger

In his paintings of cities, I am reminded of those of New York; the buildings of Manhattan rise resplendent carrying within their magic structures the calligraphic black lines of window ledge and pane. Man's world of the city built of stone, glass and steel—yet to Feininger a letter wherein he reads a message not only from architect and builder but from Nature herself as she surrounds and penetrates these forms now immanent, now remote.

Mark Tobey

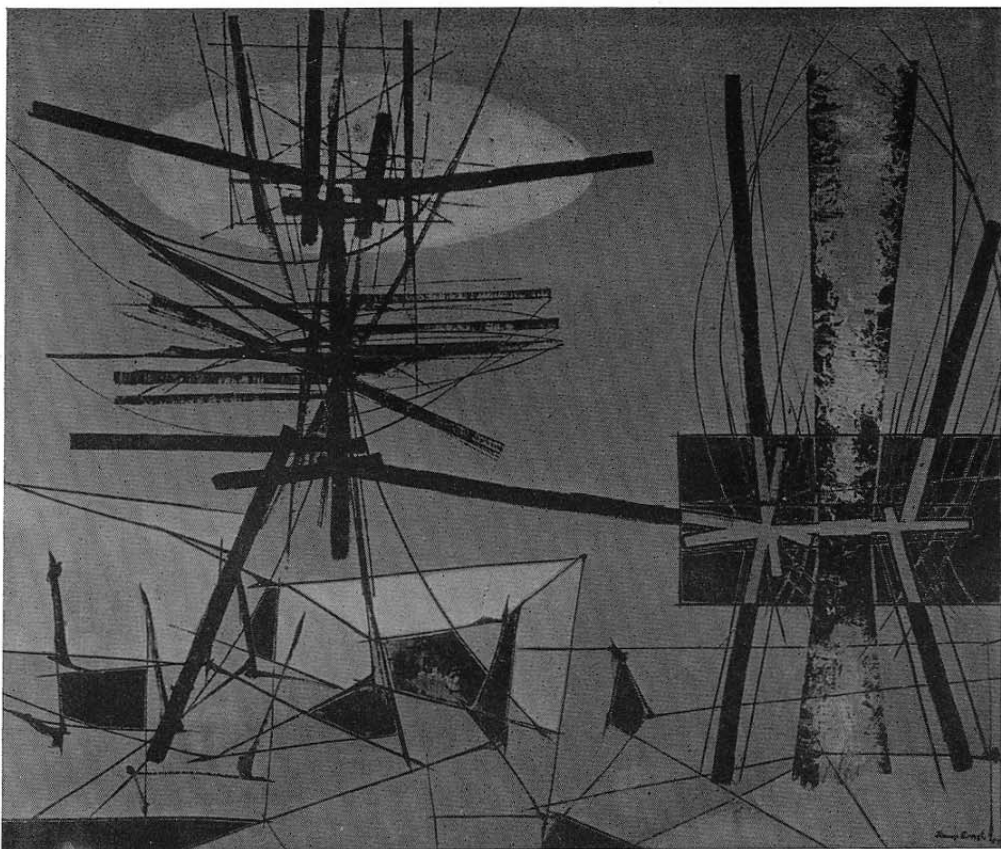


Plate 26 Absence by Jimmy Ernst



Plate 27 The Web by Charles Sheeler

*The great realist offers a final enhancement—a plus.
We get the vision of the facts as well as the facts.
Charles Sheeler*

Plate 28 Brooklyn Bridge by Herbert Katzman



Plate 29 Member of a City Cast (No. 9) by Nicolas Carone





Plate 30 Ave by Ben Shahn

Ave is a painting of the San Gennaro Festival which takes place each fall in that section of New York known as Little Italy, on Mulberry and adjacent streets. The celebration, or fiesta, like all such affairs, is a mixture of true religion and venal commerce. In the painting I have tried to capture those conflicting elements, as well as the quality of the place. The painting represents both what I have seen there and what I have felt.

Ben Shahn

. . . up as far as eyes could reach, at all those tiers of life, those countless cells of life, the windows, rooms and faces of the everlasting and eternal city . . .

Thomas Wolfe

Plate 31 New York City by Corrado Marca-Relli





Seen at night, heedless of real meaning, the monster aggregation has myriad, haphazard beauties of silhouette and streams with reflected or refracted light . . . The streets become rhythmical perspectives of glowing dotted lines . . .

Frank Lloyd Wright

*Plate 32
San Francisco Street
by Mark Tobey*

IVAN ALBRIGHT

Born Chicago, 1897. Lives in Chicago. Works slowly and patiently, developing with jewel-like precision a technique of super-photographic proportions. His favorite themes are connected with the decadence and dustiness of Middle Western life in the United States.

Poor Room—There is No Time, No End, No Today, No Yesterday, No Tomorrow, Only the Forever, and Forever, and Forever, and Forever, Without End 1942-56, oil Plate 9, page 15

Lent by the artist

FRED BERMAN

Born Milwaukee, 1926. Lives in Milwaukee where he teaches art. A printmaker as well as a painter, Berman explores city scenes, frequently turning realistic store façades into semi-abstract compositions. *White City*, characteristic of his most recent work, stresses the eerie radiance of American cities.

White City, 1955, oil

Lent by the artist

NICOLAS CARONE

Born New York, 1917. Lives in Connecticut near New York. A subtle Expressionist, Carone uses subdued color to suggest unexpectedly agitated surroundings. Frightening faces, expanding and contorted, have been his chosen subject for several years.

Member of a City Cast (No. 2), 1954, oil

Member of a City Cast (No. 9), 1954, oil Plate 29, page 37

Lent by Stable Gallery, New York

STUART DAVIS

Born Philadelphia, 1894. Lives in New York. In exuberant abstract canvases epitomizing the gayer side of American life, Davis depends chiefly on blazing color, humor and the written word. With a technique well suited to his subject, he evokes the vibrating noise of cities in the United States.

Something on the 8 Ball, 1953-54, oil Plate 17, page 24

Lent by Philadelphia Museum of Art

WILLEM DE KOONING

Born Rotterdam, Holland, 1904. Lives in New York. Came to the United States in 1926 and worked as a house-painter. Was shown in a large one-man exhibition in the Venice Biennale of 1954. A leading avant-garde artist, he has recently turned from powerful interpretations of female nudes to more abstract canvases where sensuous color and shapes are fused into a new kind of Expressionism.

Gotham News, 1955, oil Plate 23, page 30

Lent by Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

JIMMY ERNST

Born Cologne, Germany, 1920. Lives in New York. Came to the United States in 1938. Son of the Surrealist artist, Max Ernst, he paints chiefly abstract canvases in which taut lines act as foils for space and distance. Recently he has experimented with the mysteries of black on black.

Absence, 1955, oil Plate 26, page 34
Lent by Nancy S. Davis, New York

LYONEL FEININGER

Born New York, 1871. Lived in New York. Died 1956. Taught at the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1924. In 1924 joined Jawlensky, Klee and Kandinsky to form the exhibiting group known as The Blue Four. Since 1937 lived in the United States where he repeatedly painted the shimmering verticality of New York City.

New York Architectural Composition, 1940, oil

Factory Windows in Manhattan, 1949, oil Plate 25, page 33
Lent by Willard Gallery, New York

Spell, 1951, oil
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Kunstadter, Highland Park, Illinois

JOSEPH FRIEBERT

Born Buffalo, 1908. Lives in Milwaukee. Paints dark, glowing canvases where dusk seems always impending. Friebert projects both melancholy and mystery on his city views, allowing sharp points of colored light to shine through heavy pigment.

Urban Cathedral, 1954, oil Plate 20, page 27
Lent by the artist

LEE GATCH

Born Baltimore, 1902. Lives in New York. In small, incandescent canvases Gatch has developed highly personal symbols to interpret the land he lives in. Inventing new shapes and color harmonies with poetic refinement, he is apt to understate the impact of his surroundings.

Industrial Night, 1948, oil Plate 22, page 29
Lent by Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

New York, 1955, oil
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Rosenthal, New York

XAVIER GONZALEZ

Born Almeria, Spain, 1898. Lives in New York. One of America's best known art teachers, Gonzalez is drawn to the shining sea forms of Cape Cod no less than to the shining steel of New York.

The City, 1949-55, oil Plate 4, page 10
Lent by Shore Studio Gallery, Boston, and by Grand Central Moderns, New York

EDWARD HOPPER

Born Nyack, New York, 1882. Lives in New York. Hopper paints native subjects, frequently stressing ordinary daily scenes. These he transforms into stark compositions where hard light, brash color and the loneliness of American life are unequivocally depicted.

Early Sunday Morning, 1930, oil Plate 2, page 7
Lent by Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

JOHN HULTBERG

Born Berkeley, California, 1922. Lives in New York. A young artist who has recently achieved considerable recognition, Hultberg is primarily an Expressionist. He allows heavy contours and bold contrasts of dark and light to suggest the unbounded space of America.

Airport, 1952, oil

Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Daniel E. Schneider, New York

HERBERT KATZMAN

Born Chicago, 1923. Lives in New York. Katzman's emotional canvases are drenched in color. His pigment, applied richly and with great verve, turns daily scenes like Brooklyn Bridge into strongly romantic expressions.

Brooklyn Bridge, 1951, oil Plate 28, page 36

Lent by Mrs. Edith G. Halpert, New York

FRANZ KLINE

Born Lehighton, Pennsylvania, 1911. Lives in New York. One of America's most controversial artists, Kline usually limits his palette to black and white. He paints with extraordinary power and spontaneity, borrowing from Oriental calligraphy to suggest city structures.

New York, 1953, oil Plate 18, page 25

Lent by Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

Third Avenue, 1954, oil

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Friedman, New York

JACOB LAWRENCE

Born Atlantic City, 1917. Lives in Brooklyn, New York. A young Negro artist, Lawrence frequently uses his own people as subjects. With strident color and staccato shapes he extracts pathos, suffering and gaiety from life in Harlem and the South.

Chess on Broadway, 1951, gouache Plate 3, page 9

Lent by Victor S. Riesenfeld, New York

JACK LEVINE

Born Boston, 1915. Lives in New York. Levine is concerned with human beings from all walks of life as they participate in the American scene. His large, many-peopled canvases expose the foibles of this country with sardonic realism.

Apteka, 1947, oil Plate 11, page 17

Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Michael Watter, Philadelphia

Gangster Funeral, 1952-53, oil

Lent by Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

NORMAN LEWIS

Born New York, 1909. Lives in New York. Self-taught, Lewis tends toward a subtle technique where suggestion replaces representation. Melting and evasive forms are characteristic of both his drawings and paintings.

Cathedral, 1950, oil Plate 19, page 26

Lent by Willard Gallery, New York

LOREN MacIVER

Born New York, 1909. Lives in New York. A feminine painter, MacIver chooses images closely related to fantasy, and this despite the fact that her source material is frequently prosaic. Typical is her painting of a battered window shade included in this exhibition.

The Window Shade, 1948, oil

Lent by Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C.

CORRADO MARCA-RELLI

Born Boston, 1913. Lives in East Hampton, Long Island, near New York. For the past few years Marca-Relli has been experimenting with collage. Working on large surfaces with muted color, he fashions strange interlocked figures which evoke nameless secret emotions.

New York City, 1953, oil Plate 31, page 39

Lent by Stable Gallery, New York

BORIS MARGO

Born Wolotshisk, Russia, 1902. Lives in New York. Working mainly with abstract compositions, Margo exploits the interweaving lights and structures of large cities. Through dark silhouettes he juxtaposes speeding forms. An inventive print-maker, he is also distinguished as a painter.

City Lights, New York, 1955, oil

Lent by Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

JOHN MARIN

Born 1870, Rutherford, New Jersey. Died 1953. Lived in Maine. America's most noted modern water colorist, Marin is best remembered for his scenes of New York City, New Mexico and the sea. With a speedy, shorthand technique he recorded the sparkling confusion and soaring sweep of Manhattan.

Municipal Building, New York, around 1910, water color

Lent by Wildenstein & Co., New York

American Telephone Building, New York City, 1926, water color Plate 24, page 32

Lent by John Marin, Jr.

REGINALD MARSH

Born Paris, 1898, of American parents. Lived in New York. Died 1954. Both draughtsman and painter, Marsh's consuming interest was the tougher side of American life. For him Bowery bums, intertwined bodies on Coney Island beaches and tawdry crowds thronging New York streets were true Americana.

Holy Name Mission, 1931, oil Plate 10, page 16

Lent by Fine Arts Department, International Business Machines Corporation, New York

GEORGE MUELLER

Born Newark, New Jersey, 1929. Lives in Newark. This, the youngest artist in the group, is perhaps also the gentlest. Depending on dark colors, merging forms and a surface of enamel-like transparency, Mueller conjures up a world of tenuous mysticism.

Night, 1955, mixed media Plate 8, page 14

Lent by David A. Prager, New York

WALTER MURCH

Born Toronto, Canada, 1907. Lives in New York. Murch specializes in small canvases where single objects drawn from everyday life become symbols of America. Though a realist, he invests such prosaic still lifes as sewing machines and time clocks with romance.

Time Clock, 1954, oil Plate 13, page 19
Lent by Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

Born Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, 1887. Lives in New Mexico. An immaculate painter, O'Keeffe reduces her Western landscapes, flower forms and views of New York City to their simplest possible denominators. Married to the late distinguished photographer, Alfred Stieglitz, she exhibited her work for years in his famous gallery.

New York, Night, 1929, oil Plate 7, page 13
Lent by The Downtown Gallery, New York

CHARLES OSCAR

Born Danbury, Connecticut, 1923. Lives in New York. In his earlier work Charles Oscar was influenced by both Renaissance and Japanese art. He feels that now, however, his chief concern is with the life and products—the mood—of urban America.

Late Edition, 1955, casein Plate 33, page 47
Lent by Bill Nichols, New York

ARTHUR OSVER

Born Chicago, 1912. Lives in New York. His favorite subjects are the chimneys, roofs and smoke stacks of American cities. These he paints with the same affection Frenchmen are apt to lavish on Notre Dame or Sacré Coeur. A recent trip to Italy has softened Osver's style and tempered his realism.

Winter Rooftops, 1946, oil Plate 12, page 18
Lent by Fairweather-Hardin Gallery, Chicago, and Grand Central Moderns, New York

BERNARD PERLIN

Born Richmond, Virginia, 1918. Lives in New York. Influenced by Ben Shahn, this young artist paints with romantic overtones. Despite a certain lyricism, his work is concerned with social comment. Since living in Italy recently, his subjects seem less incisive, his technique more evanescent and tender.

Orthodox Boys, 1948, tempera Plate 14, page 20
Lent by The Trustees of The Tate Gallery, London

JACKSON POLLOCK

Born Cody, Wyoming, 1912. Lives in East Hampton, Long Island, near New York. Pollock is famous for rich web-like pigment dripped on huge canvases. Compulsive and limitless, his paintings reflect both the accidental beauty and furious intensity of life in the New World.

Convergence, 1952, oil Plate 6, page 12
Lent by Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

BEN SHAHN

Born Kaunas, Lithuania, 1898. Lives in New Jersey, near New York. Came to America as a child, settling with his family in Brooklyn. One of America's foremost painters, Shahn's work was shown in a large exhibition at the Venice Biennale during 1954. Interested in social content, he is apt to see the world around him with compassionate if indignant eyes.

Ave, 1950, tempera Plate 30, page 38

Lent by Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

CHARLES SHEELER

Born Philadelphia, 1883. Lives in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York. Known both for his paintings and photographs, Sheeler has always been interested in portraying the mechanistic side of American life. A frank realist, he chooses to organize his city and factory scenes with classical restraint.

Golden Gate, 1955, oil

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Web, 1955, oil Plate 27, page 35

Lent by The Downtown Gallery, New York

JOSEPH STELLA

Born in Italy, 1880. Died 1946. Moved to the United States at the age of twenty. During a visit to Europe in 1909 he came in contact with Futurism and Cubism, both of which greatly influenced his work. Particularly famous for his innumerable paintings of Brooklyn Bridge, he also specialized in industrial scenes and interpretations of New York City. His compositions, based on daring foreshortening, suggest the sweep and scale of a great metropolis.

The Brooklyn Bridge: Variation on an Old Theme, 1939, oil Plate 16, page 23

Lent by Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

HEDDA STERNE

Born Bucharest, Roumania, 1915. Lives in New York. At one time a semi-Surrealist who drew on images from her European past, Hedda Sterne has in recent years become more interested in the external world of America. She paints bold canvases where the structure and whirling speed of New York are counter-posed.

New York, 1955, oil Plate 1, frontispiece

Lent by Betty Parsons Gallery, New York

MARK TOBEY

Born Centerville, Wisconsin, 1890. Lives in Seattle. Much interested in Oriental art and calligraphy, Tobey concentrates on small pictures which evoke the mysteries of nature and city life. For him the grandiose mountains of the West and the luminosity of New York are equally absorbing. He has been one of the prime influences on younger American artists.

San Francisco Street, 1941, gouache Plate 32, page 40

Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts

City Radiance, 1944, tempera Plate 21, page 28

Lent by Mrs. Lyonel Feininger, New York

Inner City, 1945, oil

Lent by Kenneth Parker, Janesville, Wisconsin

Neon Thoroughfare, 1953, tempera Plate 5, page 11

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Rosenthal, New York

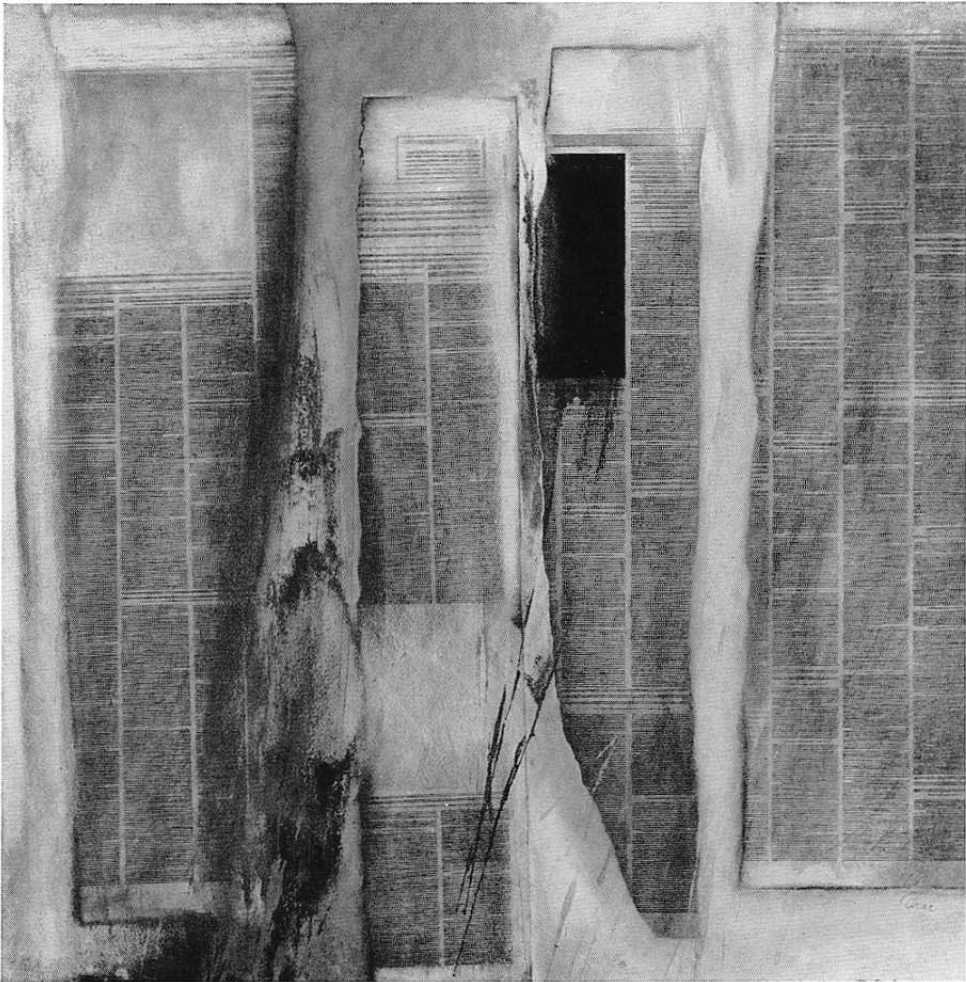
GEORGE TOOKER

Born Brooklyn, New York, 1920. Lives in Brooklyn. Somewhat influenced by European Surrealists like Magritte and Delvaux, Tooker tends toward magic realism. His tightly painted compositions are concerned with psychic states resulting from the stress of life around him.

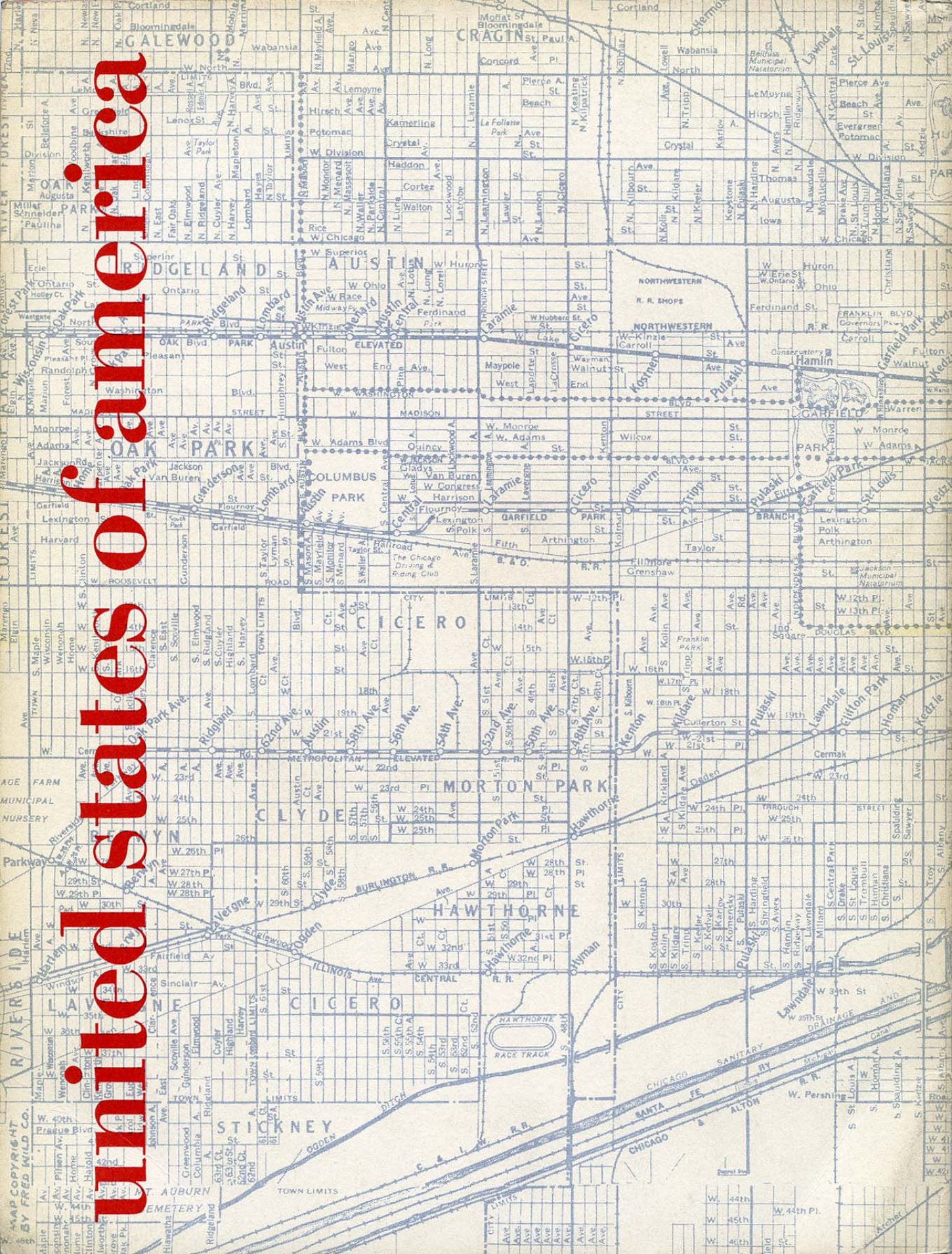
The Subway, 1950, egg tempera Plate 15, page 21

Lent by Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Plate 33 Late Edition by Charles Oscar



United States of America



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