

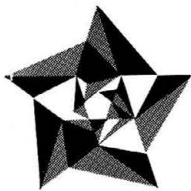
STUART DAVIS



1894-1964

STUART DAVIS MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

1894-1964



NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1965

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STUART DAVIS MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

Smithsonian Institution

Washington, D. C.

May 28 - July 5, 1965

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Chicago, Illinois

July 30 - August 29, 1965

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

New York, New York

September 14 - October 17, 1965

THE ART GALLERIES, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, California

October 31 - November 28, 1965

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CAT. NO. 12 SELF PORTRAIT 1919

FOREWORD

Within the last generation, the United States has assumed a position of world leadership in the arts. The pulse of our creative vitality beats strongly. But the visitor to the nation's capital may have little chance to feel that pulse. There has been no consistent and continuing effort to present the works of paintings and sculpture which characterize America today.

The National Collection of Fine Arts was conceived as a gallery of American and contemporary art, with Congressional authorization to foster the appreciation of the work of our country and our time. We are currently inaugurating a series of exhibits and developing our collections with the express aim of presenting an index of the range and quality of modern American art.

Inasmuch as our principal interests will be, on the one hand, American and, on the other, contemporary, it is most appropriate that the first major exhibit of our new series exemplifies both these areas.

Stuart Davis is insistently and delightfully American—not only in subject, but more profoundly in style and attitude. Yet Americanism in Davis is not provincialism or limitation; it is affirmation, a strengthening of direction and force in an art fully open to international currents.

Stuart Davis is also refreshingly contemporary. As recent trends define themselves in succession—"hard edge," "pop art," "op art," and so on—the paintings of Stuart Davis strike us as more and more timely. Probably beyond any other American painter of his generation he anticipated the vision of the present moment.

This is not to say that Stuart Davis' value lies in what he stands for; quite properly, it lies in what he actually painted. His work is a continuing source of joy and excitement. Below the surface, major forces are at work. The paintings exist on many levels, reflecting the humorist, the interpreter, the disciplined formalist, and the elusive engineer of the intuitive.

Viewing his painting, we can only hope that America will continue to provide art which is at the same time intelligent, imaginative, vigorous, and thoroughly individual—art that reflects the growth and strength of a maturing culture. We thank Stuart Davis for leaving us this insight and this inspiration.

DAVID W. SCOTT
Director
National Collection of Fine Arts

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition of 127 works by Stuart Davis marks a notable development in the history of the Smithsonian Institution. From the time of its establishment in 1846, the Institution was conceived as the repository of the national collections, though its effective development as an art gallery did not take place until the beginning of this century. In 1937 and 1938, the great donations of Andrew Mellon gave rise to the present National Gallery of Art, and the residual Smithsonian Gallery, termed the National Collection of Fine Arts, was asked to serve the nation in much the same manner as does the Tate Gallery in London. The Tate Gallery actually limits its collections to international contemporary art plus a survey of British art. The National Collection has been instructed "to encourage the development of contemporary art and to effect the widest distribution and cultivation in matters of such art"; it has been advised "to strive, through a recognition of all that is essentially indigenous in the work of our artists, to stimulate a confidence in American creative capacity."

The retrospective exhibition of the works of Stuart Davis represents an initial major effort of the National Collection to carry out these functions. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of one of our most "American" painters. In sharing the exhibition with three other art centers across the country, we hope to contribute substantially to the appreciation of Stuart Davis as one of the key figures in American contemporary art.

We extend our profound gratitude to Mrs. Edith Halpert, Director of the Downtown Gallery. Without her guidance and cooperation and the help of her staff this exhibition could not have been assembled. To Mrs. Stuart Davis go our very special thanks for her insight and sympathetic support throughout the exhibition's organization. Mr. H. Harvard Arnason, Vice President for Art Administration of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, author of the scholarly text, is also deserving of our thanks, as is Mr. Lloyd Goodrich, Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art and member of the

Smithsonian Art Commission, who gave generously of his advice and encouragement and whose assistance in the selection of the works included in the exhibition was invaluable.

It is upon the willingness of individuals and institutions to lend from their collections that the sponsors of an exhibition must finally rely. The names of the many lenders whose generosity has made this exhibition possible are given on the following pages; we thank them here.

The devoted efforts of the staff of the National Collection of Fine Arts should also be mentioned, including those of Mrs. Adelyn Breeskin, who launched the project, of Mr. Harry Lowe, Curator of Exhibits, and his assistant, Miss Abigail Booth.

The Smithsonian Institution takes pride in this occasion and hopes that this will be the first of many splendid exhibitions of American art to be presented by the National Collection of Fine Arts.

S. DILLON RIPLEY
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution

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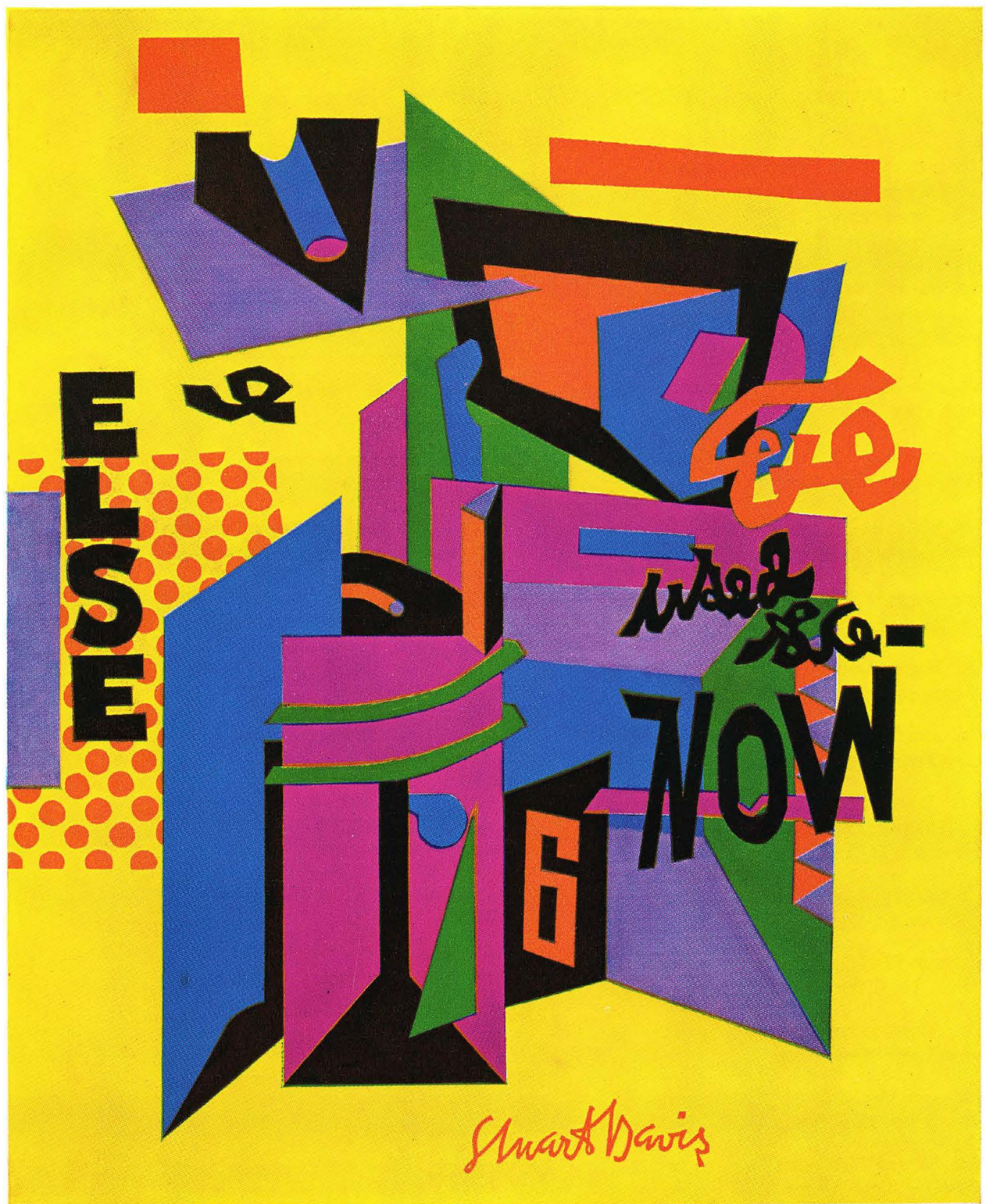
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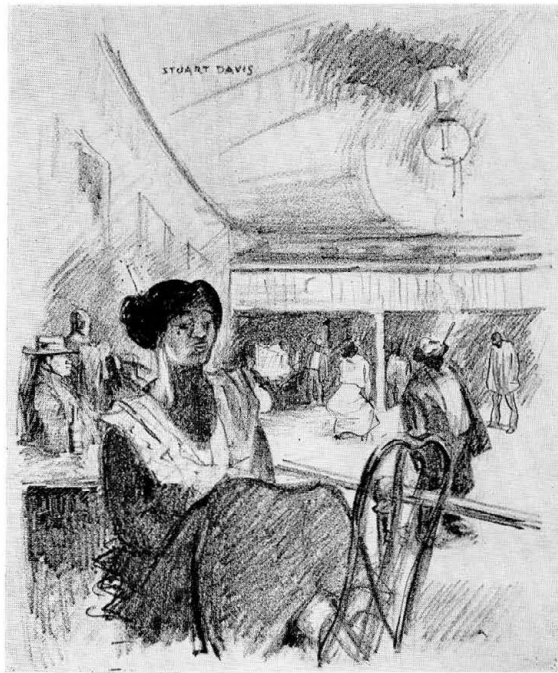
INTRODUCTION

STUART DAVIS

"In writing autobiographical sketches it is not unusual for artists to dwell on the obstacles they have had to overcome before gaining opportunity to study. But I am deprived of this satisfaction because I had none." Quite literally Stuart Davis was involved in art all his life. His parents were artists; he grew up in an environment of artists; by the time he was nineteen years old he had largely completed his formal training and was making his place as a professional artist, participating in exhibitions and working as a magazine illustrator. Since that time and until his death in 1964 his career encompassed virtually the entire span of modern art in the United States. His first friends and mentors among artists were members of "The Eight": John Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and William Glackens, then working for Davis' father, who was art editor of the Philadelphia Press. Davis received his formal training at the art school which Robert Henri established in New York in 1909, where George Bellows and Glenn O. Coleman were also enrolled.

Although Davis was associated with abstract painting in the United States from the twenties (he had painted abstractions as early as 1917), he continually described himself as a realist. While this may be in part a matter of the art-semantics on which he so often and so brilliantly expanded (he was driven into a fine frenzy by the emergence of the term "non-objective"), in large degree it is a perfectly defensible position. Henri, reacting against the contrived idealism of academic training, sent his students out into the streets to observe and to sketch the casual views and incidents of New York life—the lower the better; and from this experience Davis developed his incredible sensitivity to those minutiae of the modern American scene which add up to a total impression of the United States itself. These minutiae included not only people and places but, far more important, colors and shapes, signs and word symbols, sounds and music — the tempo of 20th-century America rather than the literal visual illusion of America. Since these were real experiences of real things and since they continued throughout his life to serve as the basis for paintings which have their own overwhelming reality within an abstract idiom, why should Davis not have called himself a realist?

The introduction is adapted from material for a forthcoming book on Stuart Davis. The author expresses his appreciation to Mr. Harry N. Abrams for permission to use this unpublished manuscript.



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"I am an American, born in Philadelphia of American stock. I studied art in America. I paint what I see in America, in other words, I paint the American scene . . ." had been quoted so often that Davis probably shuddered slightly each time he saw it printed again. It would seem to describe so succinctly and so emphatically the quality of the artist's paintings for which no parallel can be found in European painting. (What is so often overlooked is that it is also a quality for which few if any parallels can be found in American painting.) The quotation is usually presented out of context and it is forgotten that it merely prefaces a statement in which Davis insisted that no 20th-century American painter can ignore the experiments and achievements of 20th-century European painting. This is a conviction which Davis maintained from the time of the Armory Show of 1913, an event which to him was a crucial experience. Although then only 19 years old he was closely associated with and accepted as a professional by the artists who organized the exhibition. Five of his watercolors were entered, works which evidenced some influence from Sloan and Shinn but which demonstrated clearly Davis' quick perception of the immediate and transitory, his strong sense of dramatic contrasts in organization.

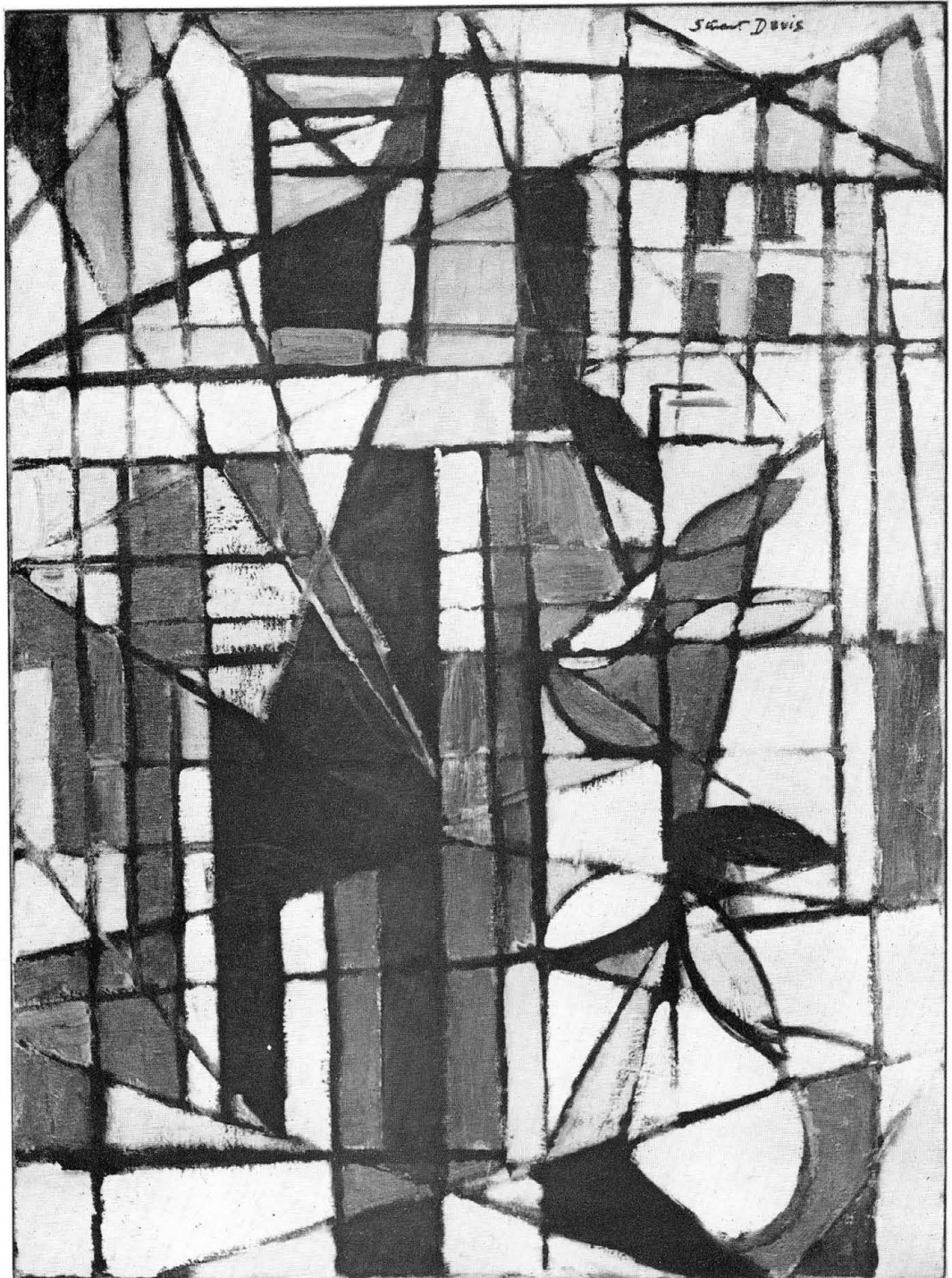
Works such as these, still embodying the romantic treatment of the everyday subject that marked the first modern revolution in American art, may serve as a point of departure in evaluating the effect on Davis of the Armory Show and his first introduction



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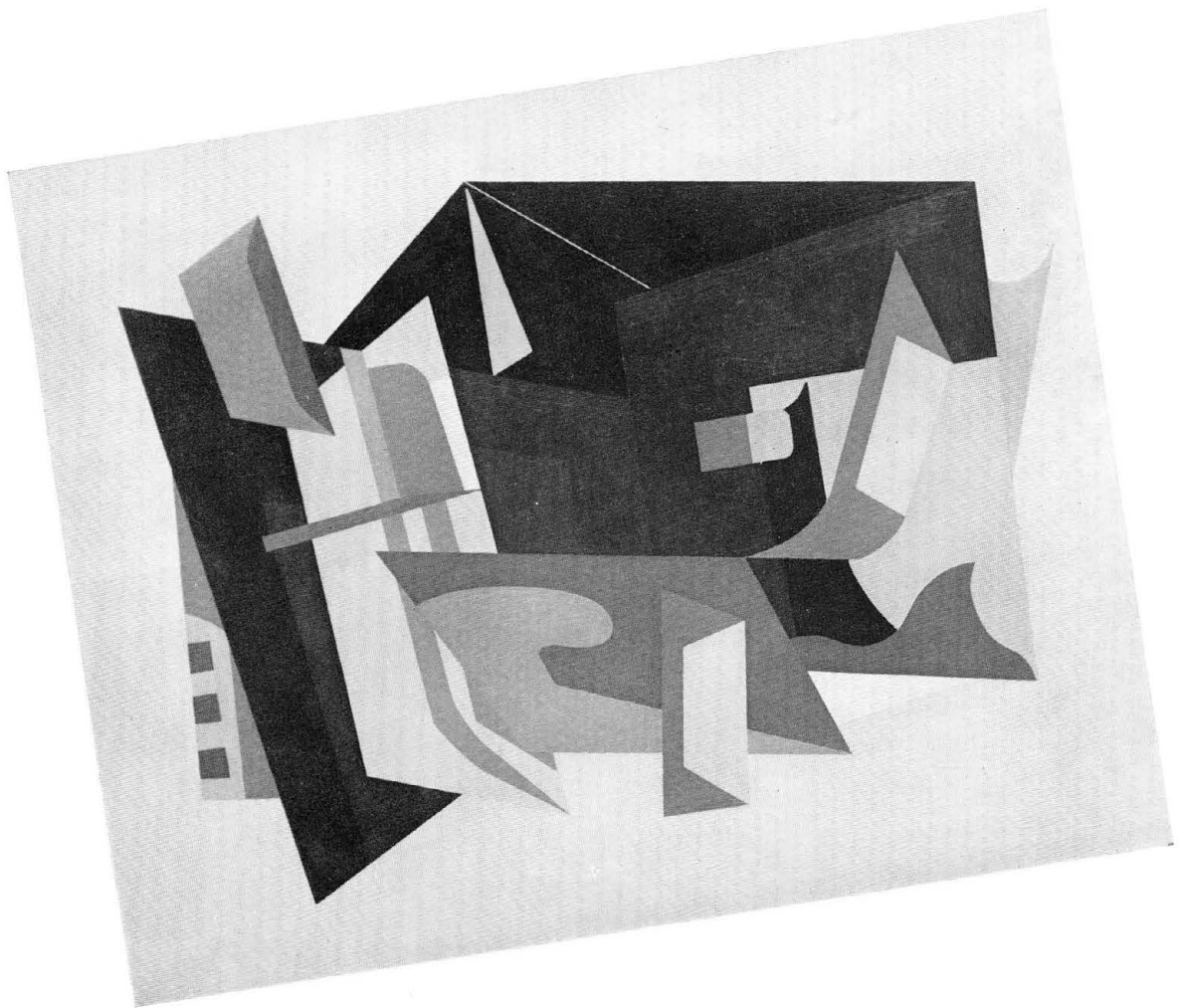
on a large scale to the post-impressionists, fauves, and cubists. He admitted to being most attracted to artists like Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Matisse, "because broad generalizations of form and non-imitative use of color were already practices within my own experience. I also sensed an objective order in these works which I felt was lacking in my own. . . ."

Although Davis later felt that his struggle to develop a new personal point of view in the light of the stunning revelation he had received was a long and arduous one—and no doubt it was—nevertheless the paintings of the very next years show certain startling new elements in his work. These are not only startling in the sense of representing departures from his earlier style but moreso in the degree to which they suggest his future course. Nonimitative color appears in a number of landscapes between 1916 and 1918; illusionistic depth begins to give way to the contracted color space of Van Gogh; paint texture and brush stroke take on a fauve freedom.

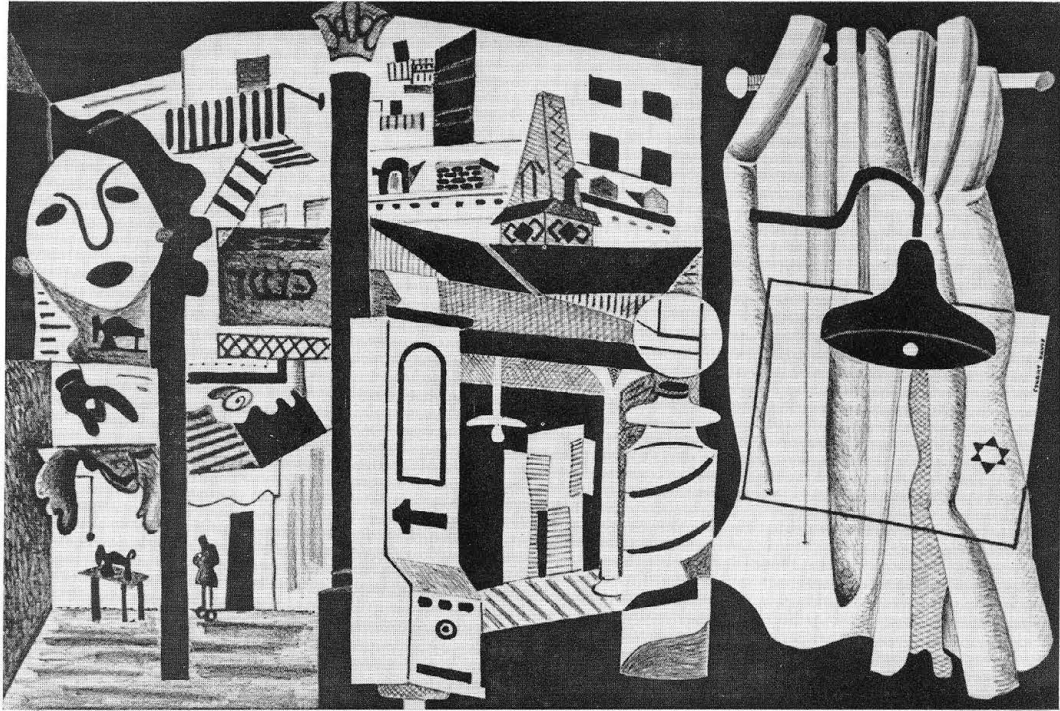
Of greatest significance at this period is a series of paintings in which the artist applies his newly found strong and arbitrary color, his sense of the brush stroke and of space organization to fragmented subject matter in which an accumulation of separate visual details is reorganized in a new reality of paint surface. The individual details are not as yet dismembered in the cubist manner (the technique might rather be equated to the flashback of the early cinema) but there is already implicit in a work like *Gloucester Tour (Multiple Views)*, 1918, the artist's mature approach to the problems of illusion, reality, abstraction(cf. *New York-Paris* # 3, 1931).

This suggests an element of Davis' art in which, it seems to me, lay one of his greatest strengths. His development was one of the most steady and consistent and logical of any modern artist. He established a point of view at an extremely early age—if he did not always have it—and despite the stylistic and technical variations normal to an artist's growth, he maintained that point of view throughout his life. It is interesting to note how often he experimented with a theme or motif, put it aside, and then years later returned to it and developed it into a major painting or series of paintings. And even more interesting is the manner in which the statement of his essential view of the world and of painting, without ever changing its basic tenets, continually grew and expanded, was variously complicated and simplified, but consistently moved toward greater clarity, power, and monumentality.

The years before 1920 saw also experiments in complete abstraction (*The President*, c. 1916, ill. p. 16) and architectural landscapes, some of which (*Garage*, 1917) in their geometric frontality and the use of lettering anticipate the Paris paintings of 1928, others (*Rocky Neck, Gloucester*, 1916) in their expressive, tilted architecture suggest the early Feininger, and still others (*House, Tree Shapes*, 1915) approach cubist landscape. The early twenties saw further cubist experiments reminiscent of Braque (*Three Table Still Life*, 1922) or Juan Gris (*Still Life*, 1922), but these seem to be isolated instances in which the artist was simply attempting to teach himself the vocabulary of the cubists.



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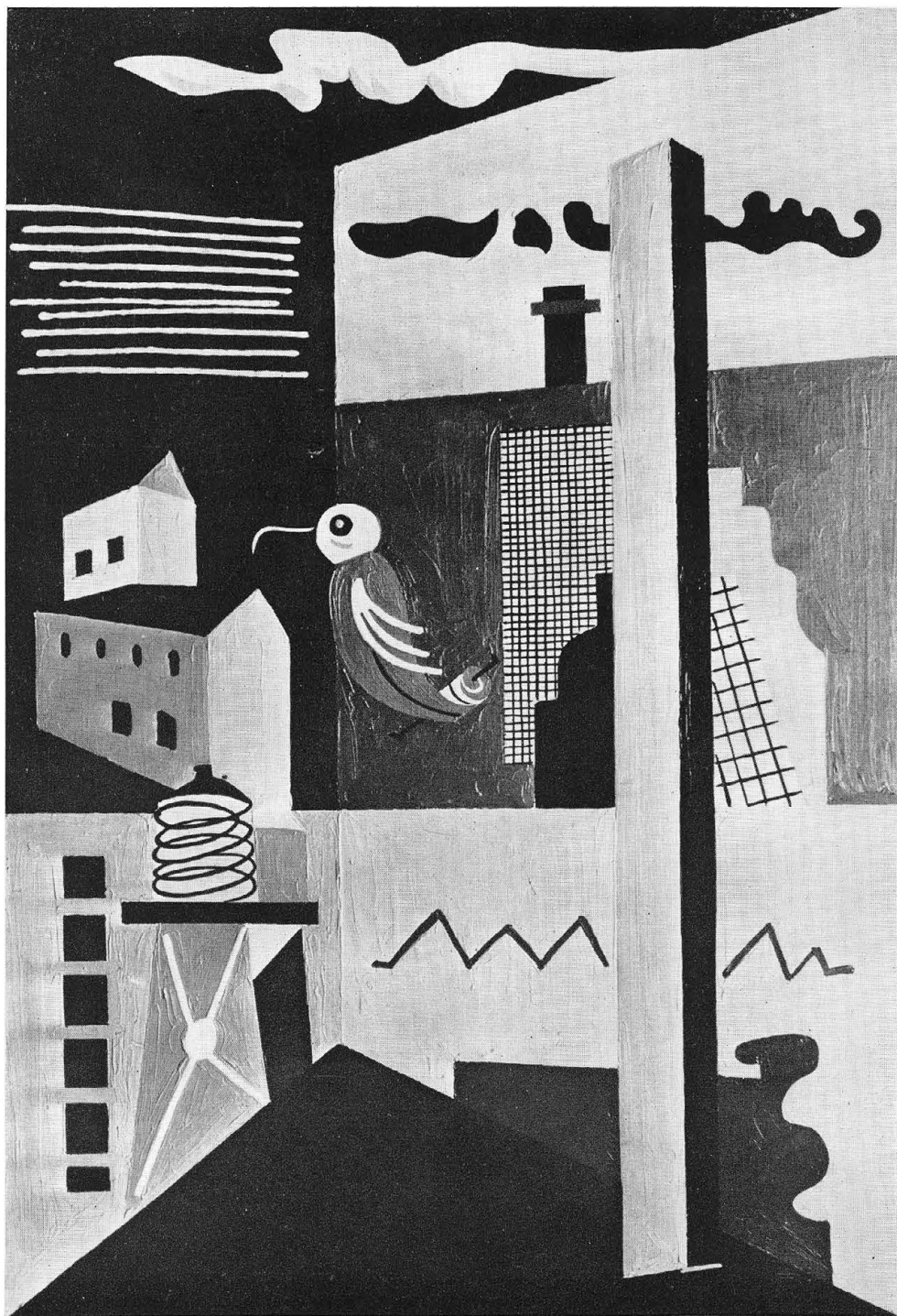
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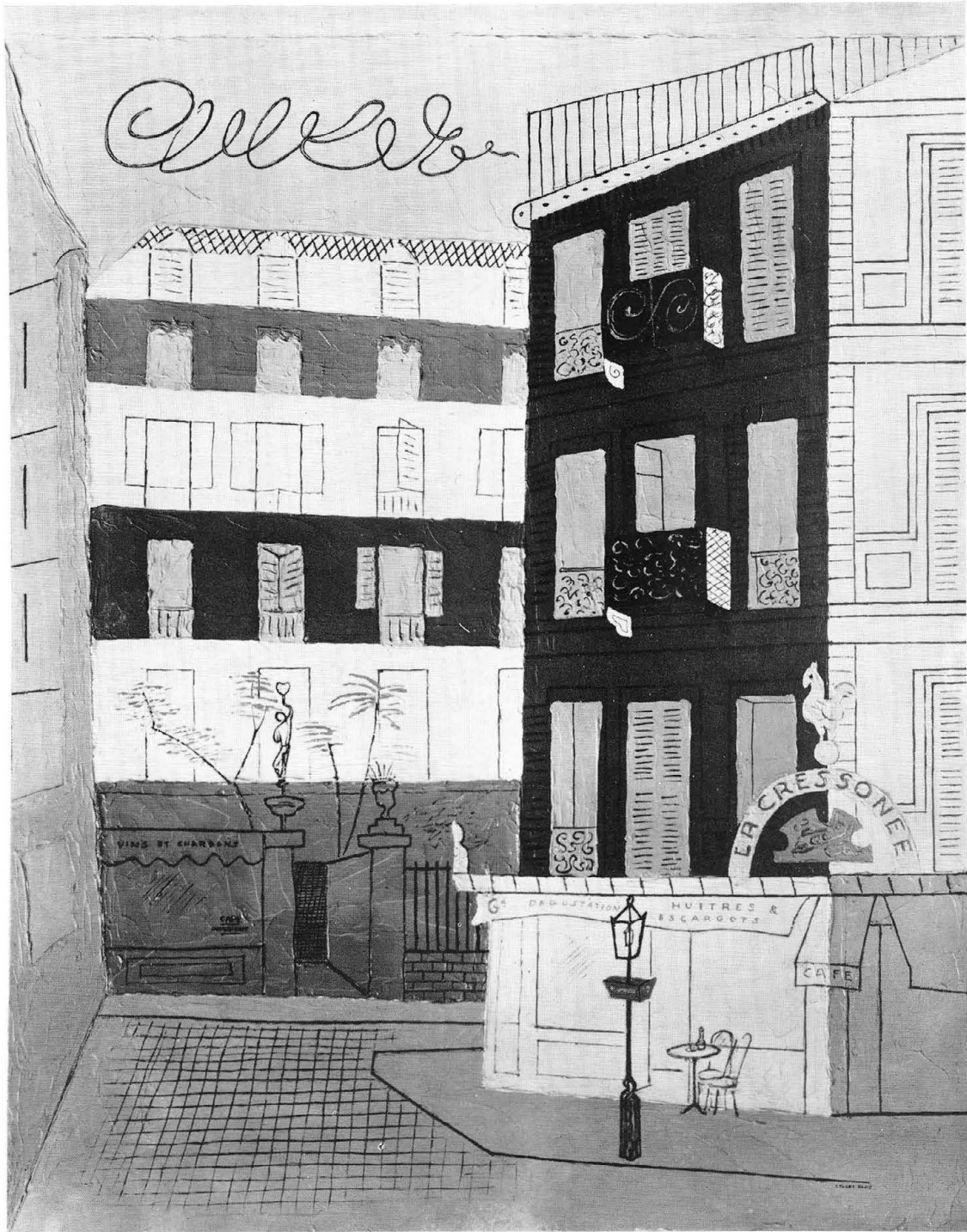
One thing is evident during this period of change and adaptation. While recognizing the great contribution which the post-impressionists, fauves, and cubists had made in establishing the identity and essential reality of the work of art itself, Davis could never, except in sporadic exercises, simply imitate their styles. His view of nature was still a harder and more literal one than theirs. Oil paintings in the manner of collages (*Sweet Caporal*, 1922, cat. no. 18, or *Cigarette Paper*, 1921, ill. p. 61) took on the character of *trompe l'oeil*. His trip to Havana in 1918 resulted in a series of freely naturalistic watercolors (*Taxi, Cuba*, 1919, ill. p. 15); his trip to New Mexico in 1923 a further series of simplified but directly seen landscapes and interiors (*New Mexican Landscape*, 1923, cat. no. 21). Nature and abstraction still constituted a problem which the artist must solve on his own terms.

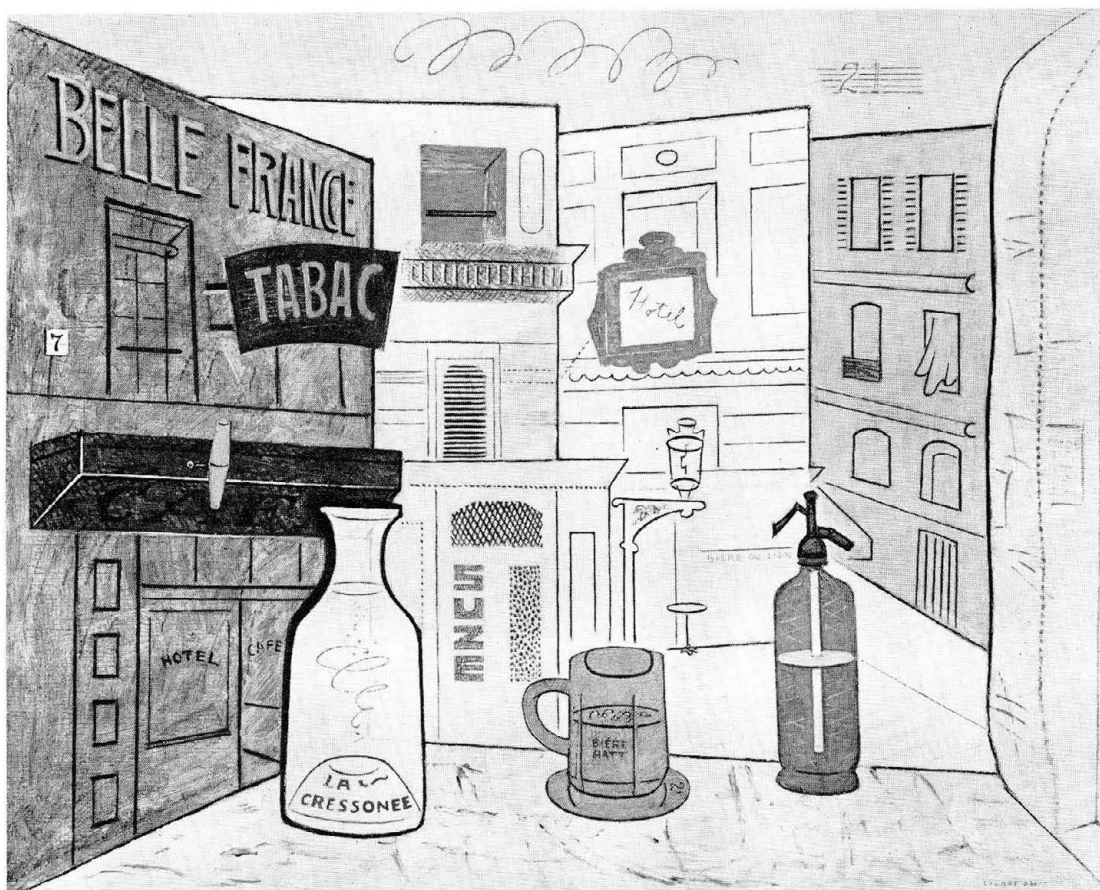
The *Eggbeater* series of 1927-28 (ill. p. 25) would seem to represent a sort of catharsis in which Davis attempted to rid himself of the last vestiges of illusionistic nature. For these Davis set up a still life including an eggbeater, an electric fan, and a rubber glove, and painted them again and again until they had ceased to exist in his eyes and mind except as color, line, and shape relationships. In these and in certain other works of the same period he achieved a degree of simplified abstraction beyond anything he was to attempt for the next ten years. He also established in the paintings certain organizational motifs which he later developed in other works. Thus the *Percolator of Contemporary Design*, 1927, already suggests the principal forms of *Owh! in San Pao*, 1951 (ill. p. 12), and of several other important works of the fifties.

It is interesting that the abstract experiments of 1927-28 should be followed immediately by the relatively representational architectural landscapes done in Paris in 1928-29. Davis' own explanation is quite simple. "The year before, in New York, I had looked at my eggbeater so long that I finally had no interest in it. I stared at it until it became just a combination of planes. But over there, in Paris, the actuality was so interesting I found a desire to paint it just as it was." Certainly the regular geometry of Paris facades needed little adjustment to turn them into geometric abstractions. The ubiquitous signs of the Paris scene, *Vins, Tabac, Café*, lent themselves to an abstract visual treatment in which the verbal significance disappeared. Aside from a few works (*Eggbeater*, V, 1930, ill. p. 25; *Salt Shaker*, 1931, ill. p. 66), the paintings executed in the early thirties after Davis' return to the United States had more in common with the Paris than with the eggbeater approach. At the same time there began to emerge as a dominant theme the fragmentation of visual reality which was first suggested in the Gloucester paintings of 1916-18.

Now this fragmentation was expressed in relatively flat paint and a geometric style, product of cubist exercises, eggbeaters, and Paris facades, rather than in expressionist brush and paint texture. However, the intent and the effect were logical outgrowths of the earlier experiments. The *New York-Paris* paintings of 1930 (ill. p. 24), in which the artist was assembling a series of reminiscences combined with immediate visual impressions, were the beginnings of this new essay in fragmented and reconstituted

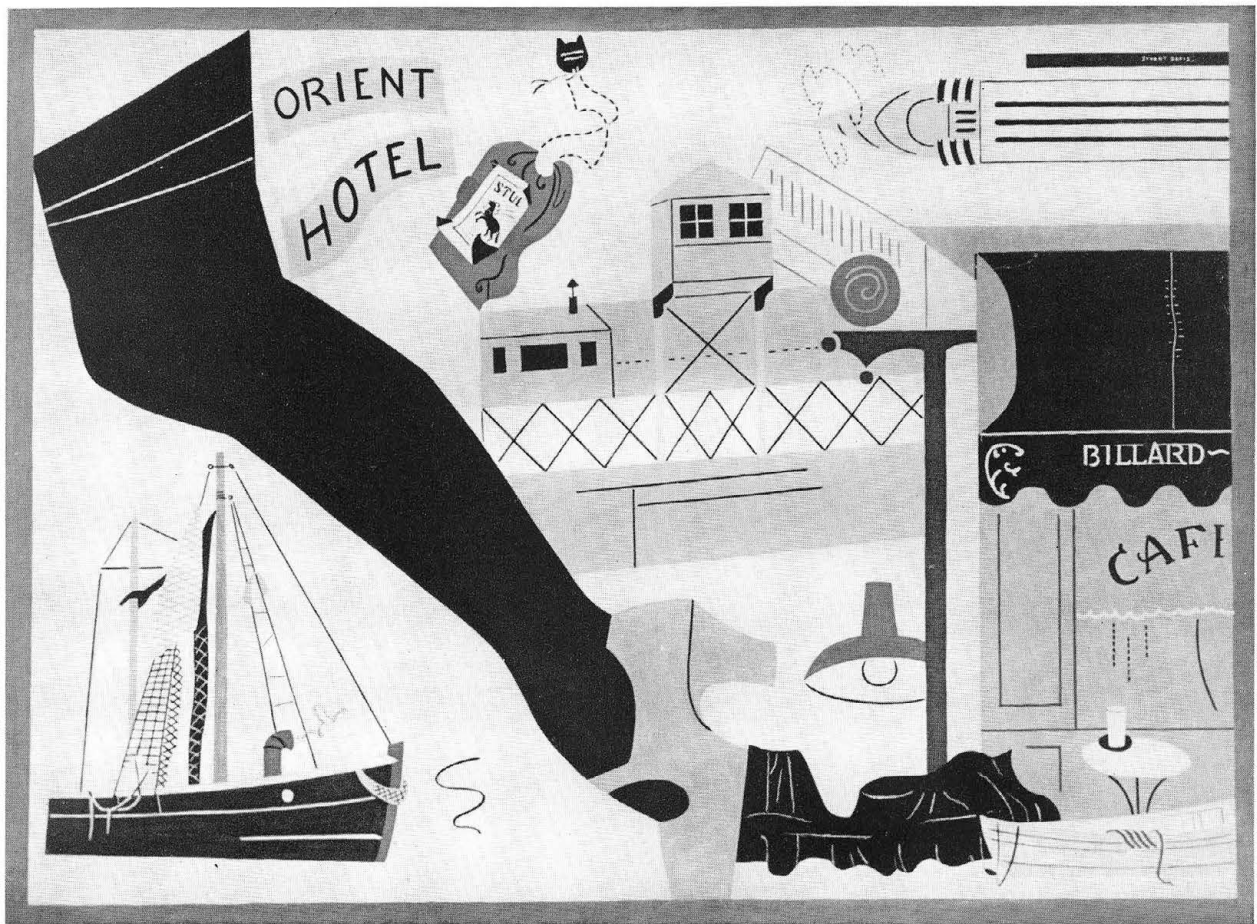




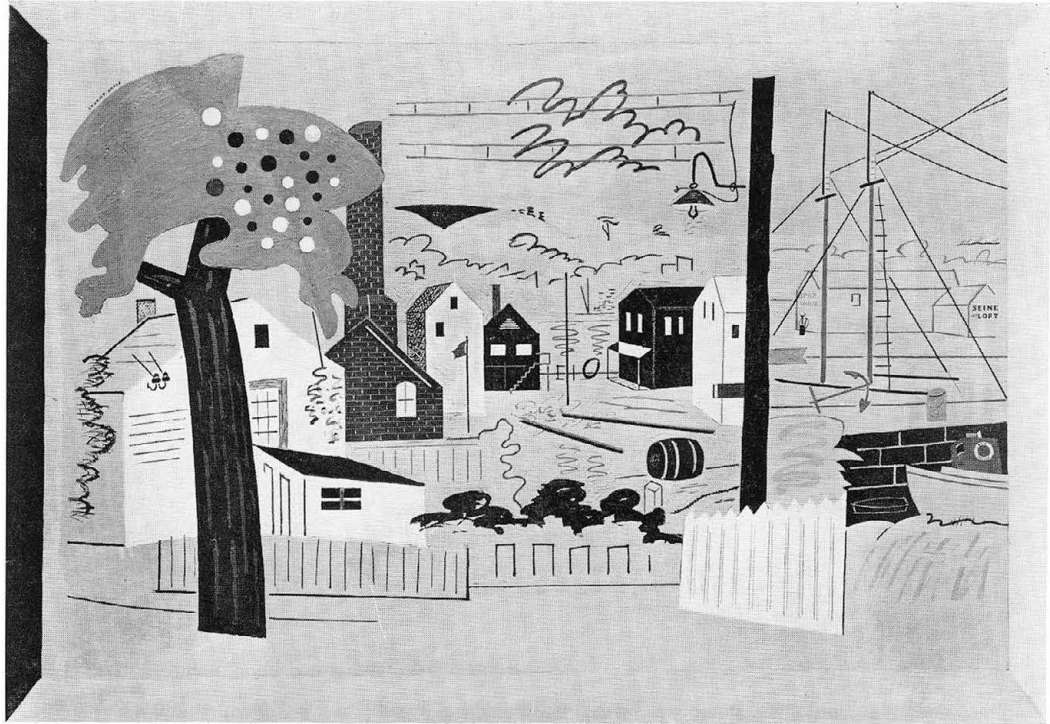


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reality, an essay which rapidly produced important works such as *House and Street*, 1931 (ill. p. 73) and the Radio City mural, *Men Without Women*, 1932 (ill. p. 50). *House and Street* was possibly suggested by a painting of Matisse (*Windshield*, 1917). (Davis also painted a *Windshield Mirror*, 1932, cat. no. 63). It is one of the earliest examples of severely divided composition, of which *Lesson #1*, 1956 (ill. p. 41), and *Pochade*, 1958, are among the last. The abrupt shift of point of view between right and left side suggests the frames of the motion picture film with the consequent mingling of simultaneous and consecutive vision.

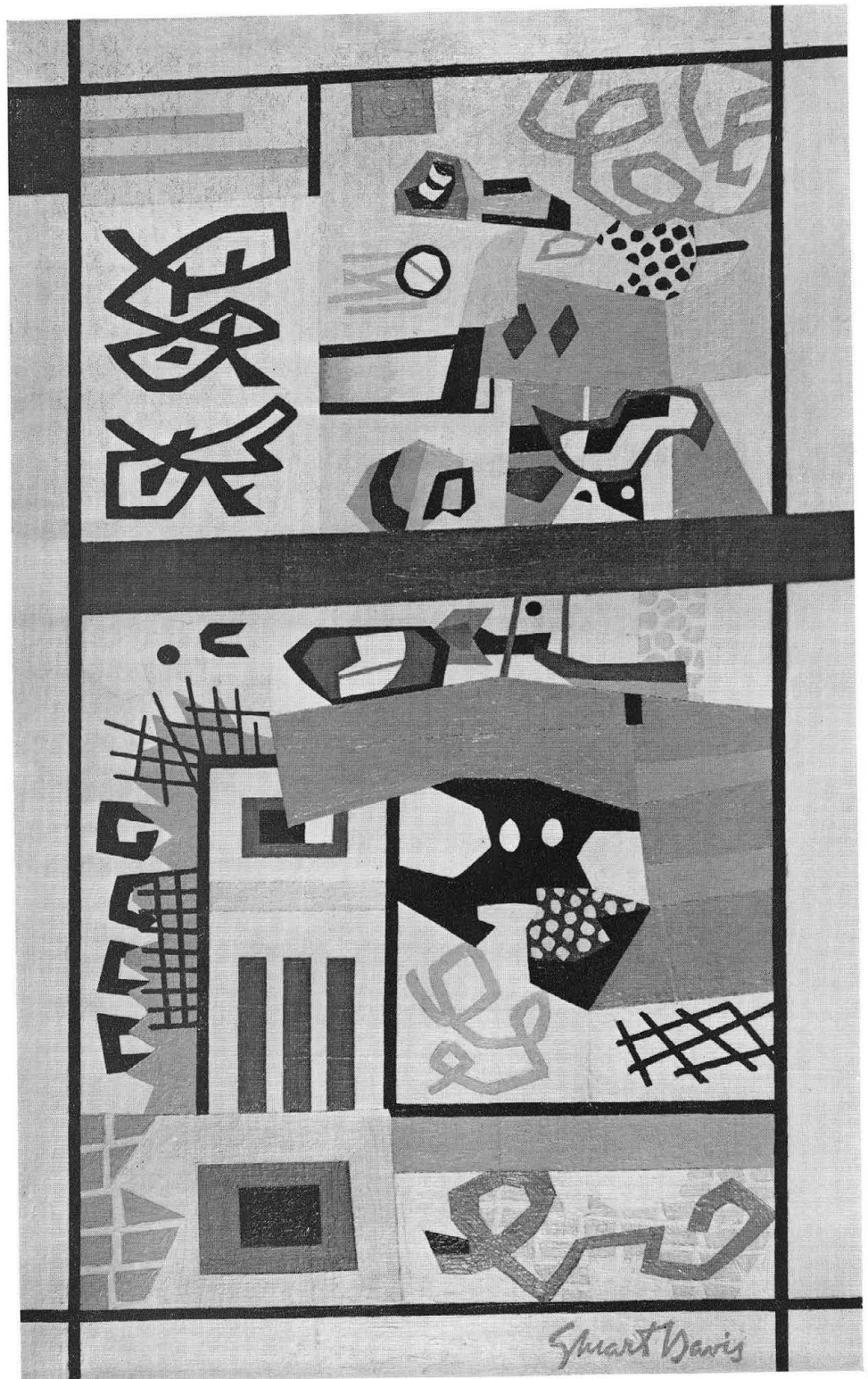
The thirties were years of hardship, the W.P.A. Art Project, and further although not very remunerative mural commissions—*Swing Landscape*, 1938 (ill. p. 53), now at Indiana University, the mural for WNYC, 1939 (ill. p. 51), and the huge (45 x 140 feet) *History of Communication*, 1939 (ill. p. 52) for the New York World's Fair, subsequently destroyed. The linear explorations of the Paris and the *New York-Paris* paintings were carried still further in a series centered on the Gloucester harbor and its sailing vessels. In some of these (*Landscape with Drying Sails*, 1931-32, cat. no. 60) color was reduced almost to a mono-

chrome. This interest in line was pushed to the point of complete abstraction in a number of paintings and drawings (*Composition with Winch*, 1931; *Cask in Rigging*, 1932; *Landscape*, 1932 and 1935; *Composition #3*, 1934) which are of the greatest importance as evidence of the artist's steady and continuing experiment with problems of abstract structure. These works helped him to clarify once and for all his thoughts on line in its relation to color and its place in the total form of the painting. The essays in abstract line anticipate some major paintings in which line plays a dominant role (*Bass Rocks #2*, 1939; *History of Communication*, 1939; *Cliché*, 1955, ill. p. 38; *Pochade*, 1958). In some of these line abstractions can be found specific motifs which are later developed into more substantial paintings (c.f. *Landscape*, 1932 and 1935, with *Tournos*, 1954, ill. p. 28).

During the thirties Stuart Davis' principal paintings continued the interplay of clearly defined if fragmented objects with geometric abstract organization. At the same time, he was making many experiments with complete abstraction, notably in terms of line drawings and paintings. His color was becoming more brilliant and in many works he was intensifying the tempo, the sense of movement, gaiety, and rhythmic beat through an increasing complication of smaller, more irregular, and more contrasted color shapes. In the earlier paintings of the thirties, we have an arrangement of clearly recognizable objects—the gas pump, the buildings, furniture, hats, cars and signs—which add up to gay and vibrant urban landscapes in which, however, the elements continue to have a hard insistence. In the works of the later thirties the object has been dematerialized into an organization of line-color shapes which mark the beginning of twenty-five years of brilliant and mature abstract painting. This does not mean that from one year to the next all specific references to objective nature were abandoned. The vast *History of Communication* mural in which the recognizable subject reasserts itself was probably conditioned by the circumstances of the commission. At another level, it might be regarded as Davis' colossal farewell to the world of visual illusion. However, the early forties also saw several paintings involving a greater or lesser degree of representation. *New York Under Gaslight*, 1941, one of the last essentially representational paintings executed by Davis, was actually a free copy of his *The Barber Shop*, 1930 (ill. p. 67). The main elements and their arrangement are the same, but in the later work everything is brightened, complicated and intensified. Almost all clear spaces are filled, lettering becomes more baroque and obtrusive, bird-like shapes fill the sky, the gas fixture now spouts flame.

In the same way, *Report from Rockport*, 1940 (ill. p. 30), although far more abstract, continues to include such recognizable objects as buildings and gas pumps. There is a strong suggestion of depth, still achieved in part by linear perspective as well as color. The tilted architectural planes at the sides lead the eye back to the garage and gas pump diminished in the distance. The strong yellow ground plane establishes the depth as a directional shape but its even intensity together with those of the other major color areas reaffirms the nature of the picture surface. This surface twists and vibrates with jagged, abstract color shapes and lines, elements which put the entire scene into violent and fantastic movement. The painting illustrates perhaps better than any other the jazz-tempo translation of the American scene into abstract color harmonies and dissonances





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which concerned Davis throughout his life and which perhaps found its most extreme expression between the *Swing Landscape* of 1938 and the *Mellow Pad* of 1945-51 (ill. p. 32). It is difficult to realize that abstract jazz symphonies of America like *Swing Landscape* and *Report from Rockport* were produced at a time when American painting was dominated by social realism and the American scene of Curry, Wood, and Benton. Davis himself seemed to have had difficulty in recalling this fact when he spoke of *Report from Rockport*: "In the old days all kinds of ideas were rampant, including the notion that you could tamper with a landscape without being immoral. In the light of that revelation I was able to execute this scene."

Report from Rockport was followed immediately by a series of brilliant abstract landscapes, *Hot Stillscape in Six Colors*, 1940 (ill. p. 31); *Arboretum by Flashbulb*, 1942 (cat. no. 77); *Ursine Park*, 1942 (ill. p. 76); and *Ultramarine*, 1943 (ill. p. 77). These are characterized by the abandonment of naturalistic visual illusion although they maintain a strong sense of landscape association. Colors are assertive reds, greens, blues, with emphatic black and white intervals. Rapid repeats of jagged shapes are stippled or hatched to create an overall broken pattern in which the individual shapes still have a strong identity. *For Internal Use Only*, 1945 (ill. p. 29), presents a vertical version of the divided composition introduced in *House and Street*, 1931. In this work arbitrary color shapes and tor-

tured linear patterns are suspended against a unified yellow ground color. All these elements—calligraphy, arbitrary and very personal color shapes, and single ground color—suggest key themes of later paintings.

During the latter forties Davis produced a series of small experimental paintings to which he gave the titles of *Pad* (in the jazz rather than the rocket-launching connotation) and *Max*, with distinguishing numbers. These eliminate all representational associative elements, with the exception of the word “Pad” and constitute abstract experiments which range from the most severely puristic vertical, horizontal geometry to the strongly expressionistic. *The Mellow Pad*, on which the artist worked intermittently between 1945 and 1951, was an attempt to develop these abstract sketches into a more monumental composition and, possibly as a result of an attempt to crowd too many separate and as yet not completely integrated color shapes and motifs into a single picture, the result is extremely dense and, if regarded in terms of pure form, not entirely satisfactory. Layer after



layer of jagged ribbon shapes writhe over a substructure of larger architectural forms to create a first impression that is both confusing and disturbing. However, Davis' paintings are never simply intellectual exercises in formal relationships. They increasingly involve a strongly expressive quality, a tremendous tension of colors and lines and space which creates for the paintings a wonderful sense of organic life. As Davis himself said of this painting: "Basic composition consists of some buildings in normal visual relationship. I worked on this painting for a number of years and developed a new sense of the meaning of invented color-shapes. Armed with this syntax I have been able to neutralize certain emotional irrelevancies in regard to purpose that were formerly frustrating." Admittedly, *The Mellow Pad* has something of the effect of a vast complication of microscopic organisms crowded together on a slide. It is as though the very excitement of the arbitrary invented color shapes had run away with the artist. That this was a necessary transition is made evident by the fact that *The Mellow Pad's* accumulation of small, densely packed individual motifs was followed immediately by the many broadly simplified monumental paintings of the fifties.

The *Pad* series also marks an important development in the use of words and phrases in the painting. In most of the earlier works, such as the Paris paintings, in which words or phrases were incorporated, these seem to be selected and scattered casually throughout the painting and to have no significance except as organizational motifs with a greater or lesser degree of associational reference. In the *Pad* paintings, however, the single word or phrase entrenched in the otherwise completely nonrepresentational organization begins to have not only a compositional but what might be called a symbolic implication. It serves as a point of departure, a theme around which the picture is constructed. The letters whether severely printed or in jagged cursive script are, of course, in themselves abstract color shapes; but beyond this they and the words which they form begin to establish the basis of a new kind of reality. It was no accident that the *Pad* paintings should be followed immediately by *Little Giant Still Life*, 1950 (ill. p. 33), and *Visa*, 1951 (cat. no. 85), in which a single word dominates the entire canvas.

In a detailed letter to Alfred Barr of the Museum of Modern Art, dated November 3, 1952, Davis discussed the genesis of the painting *Visa* and the companion work which had preceded it, *Little Giant Still Life*. The latter painting was originally suggested by a matchbox cover advertising Champion, "Little Giant" batteries, hence the title of the work. More important than the accidental association of the matchbox was the reflection on and experiment with word symbols which had been carried on principally through the *Pad* paintings of the forties. The suggestive, even hypnotic effect of a single word, carefully selected to avoid narrow associations, emerging from an otherwise completely abstract organization, inevitably led to the abstraction which was entirely dominated by the single word, in which the word became the abstraction. The illusionistic reality of the visual world of buildings, people, trees, and gas pumps had entirely disappeared from Davis' paintings. Now to the reality of picture space, color, shape, and line had been added the reality of the word, enriching the abstract organization with new vistas of symbolic association.

The repetition of the "Champion" theme within a year confirms Davis' realization that he had here achieved a new dimension in the use of words and phrases within abstract painting. In *Visa*, while the principal forms remain almost identical, there is a sort of positive-negative reversal of color. Yellow becomes red, white becomes dark green, blue becomes white. As Davis has pointed out the change in the width of the diagonal lines changes all other relations. The words "Else" and "The Amazing Continuity" emphasize the compositional and symbolic sense of motion or dynamic content. The addition of these words probably arose first simply from a desire to enrich and animate certain areas. The words selected embodied ideas and associations of change, excitement, and continuity—of significance to the artist but without disturbing specific associations for the spectator.

These two paintings are in the strongest possible contrast to *The Mellow Pad* in the large simplicity of their forms. It is this large simplicity which characterizes the monumental works of the fifties.

The organization of *Owh! in San Pao* (ill. p. 12) is one of the most exciting and successful in all of Stuart Davis' painting. The artist's own satisfaction with it can be felt in his statement: "*Owh! in San Pao* has the general compositional character of a Still Life, seen in a blasting international mood. A sense of object was achieved through the miserable jungles of subjective choice. Instead of a Utensil we see an Event." The painting has its roots in some of the *Eggbeater* paintings of 1927-28, and most specifically in the *Percolator of Modern Design*, 1927. From it there developed, with many individual variations, several of the key paintings of the fifties: *Medium Still Life*, 1953 (cat. no. 91); *Colonial Cubism*, 1954 (ill. p. 37); and *Something on the Eight Ball*, 1953-54 (cat. no. 92).

The "Else" on the left hand side and the animated script on the right are motifs originally used in *Visa* but the principal elements are entirely different. Against a plane of brilliant yellow is massed a central architecture of blue, purple, orange, black, and green geometric planes which tilt, interlock, and vibrate with structural tensions. The title, facetious to the point of wild fantasy, has a logic and appropriateness despite the ribald interpretations which the solemn art historian inevitably evoked from the artist: "The title of my painting is reasonable in the same way as the image itself. It has been scientifically established that the acoustics of Idealism give off the Humanistic Sounds of Snoring, whereas Reality always says, Ouch!" Clearly then, when the Realism has San Pao as its locale, a proper regard for the protocol of alliteration changes it to "Owh!" The painting is a blast, an explosion. "Ouch!" is real and "Owh!" is earnest.

In the painting *Rapt at Rappaport's*, 1952 (ill. p. 40), the alliterative and slangy title once more invades the actual painting, the staccato letters flashing across the lower part like the news bulletins on the former New York Times building. Large color shapes of red, blue, and black are again suspended against a unified ground color, in this case, green. Compared with *Owh! in San Pao*, the larger shapes are more flatly arranged and the whole tends toward the overall pattern which Davis explored in a number of works during the decade of the fifties. The surface is livened with a series of charac-

teristic invented shapes, the torn S or 8 ribbon, the floating white circles and rectangles, the X and star fragment, which act as directional thrusts. The rigidly vertical-horizontal cross, rectangle, and square, established in a precise geometrical relation to one another, reaffirm the total picture rectangle as well as the degree in which depth is here achieved by relations of flat and overlapping color planes.

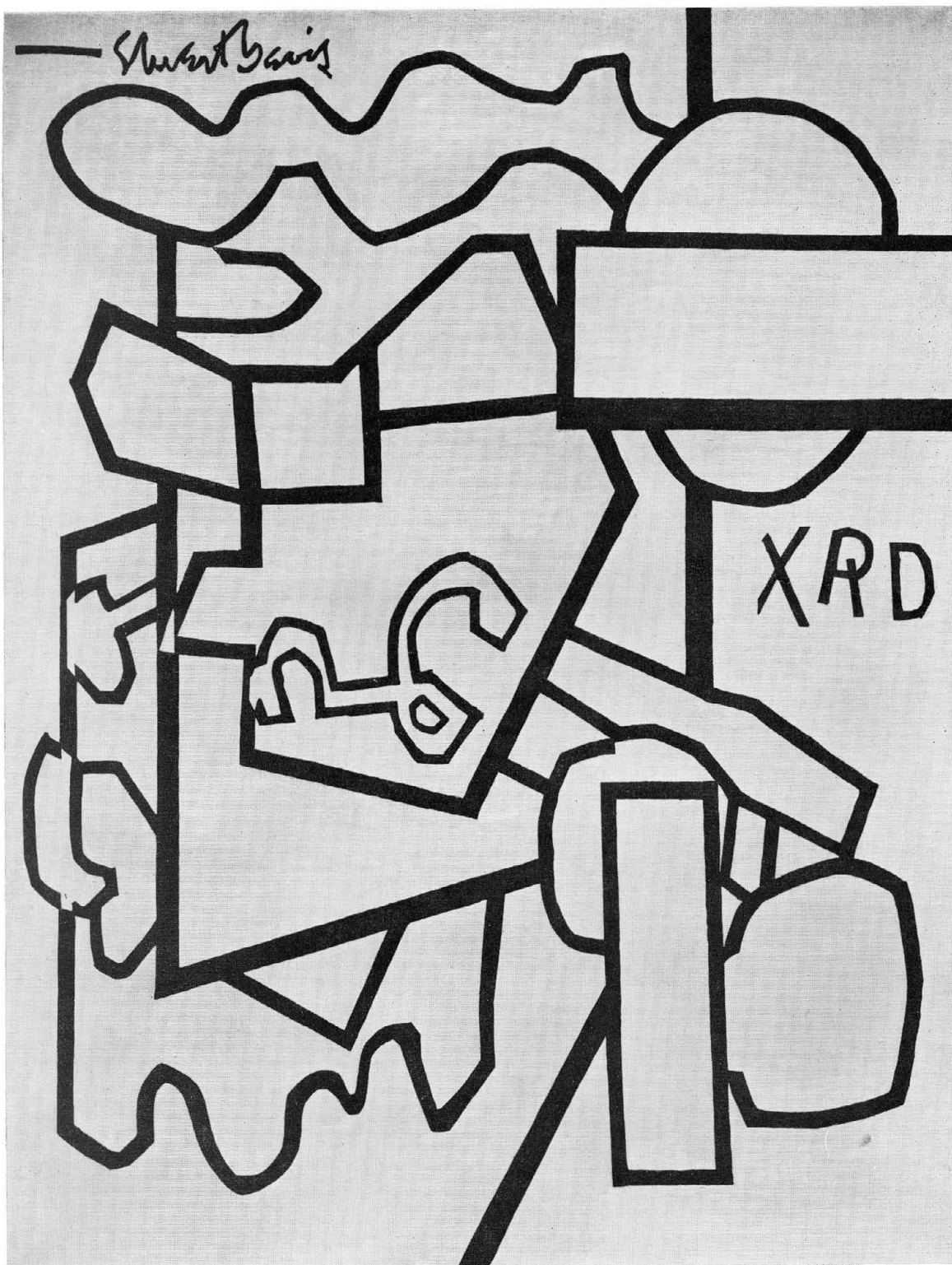
There are few if any modern artists who have used titles of paintings in as imaginative and yet as structural a manner as did Stuart Davis. At a period in the history of art when the title was generally being abandoned in favor of a simple number or the date on which the painting was finished, Davis actually added another dimension to abstract painting in his use of letters, phrases, words, numbers, and entire titles, occasionally, as here, entirely incorporated into the design of the work but usually describing and establishing the mood or tempo of the painting. Davis explained his constant use of letters and numbers by the fact that these are simply an ever present part of the world and particularly the urban world in which we live. The way in which he used them was continuing evidence of his sensitivity to that world, his ability to capture its essence and from that to create a new world, a new essence. This sensitivity had to do not only with seeing but most emphatically also with hearing. All his life the sounds of words and phrases entranced him. *Sweet Caporal*, *Percolator*, *Ultramarine*, *Shapes of Landscape Space*, *Little Giant Still Life*, *Owh! in San Pao*, *Rapt at Rappaport's*, *Seme*, *Tournos*, *Tropes de Teens*, and *Pochade*: all these suggest a variety of moods and emotions but primarily, perhaps, a sense of the ludicrous, a caustic humor, an ability to ridicule the contemporary subject from which he created the object which is his painting.

The title of the painting, *Something on the Eight Ball*, 1953-54, is, of course, one of those absurd assimilations of two diametrically opposed concepts which would naturally delight the artist. "Something on the ball" plus "Behind the 8 ball" become "Something on the 8 ball," a state of obviously complete confusion. In a letter to Henry Clifford of the Philadelphia Museum, dated April 17, 1954, Davis discussed at length the genesis of the picture. "Impulse to find the Object is product of a normal desire to find out whether anybody else is around. An anatomy of Method must supplement desire. In the last dozen years or so many powerful artists have become air-borne in a proper outward direction. No sightings of any kind of Comfort-Station have been reported so far. In a painting like this, one has stuck to the realm of the sentimental Familiar."

The painting started from a still life to which it rapidly lost any resemblance. More significant is the fact that it actually is in the line of that important series of related paintings which perhaps began with the *Percolator of Modern Design*, 1927. Its more immediate predecessors were *Owh! in San Pao*, 1951, and *Medium Still Life*, 1953 (cat. no. 91). *Something on the Eight Ball* combines the predominant yellow, the juxtaposition of block letters and brittle script in *Owh! in San Pao* with the larger, more massive color shapes of *Medium Still Life*. The former may be considered as simply an elaborated variant on the latter. However, it is fascinating to observe how the lightening of the overall color scheme, the introduction of additional details of accelerated letters and numbers changes the entire tempo, in fact, the character of the painting.



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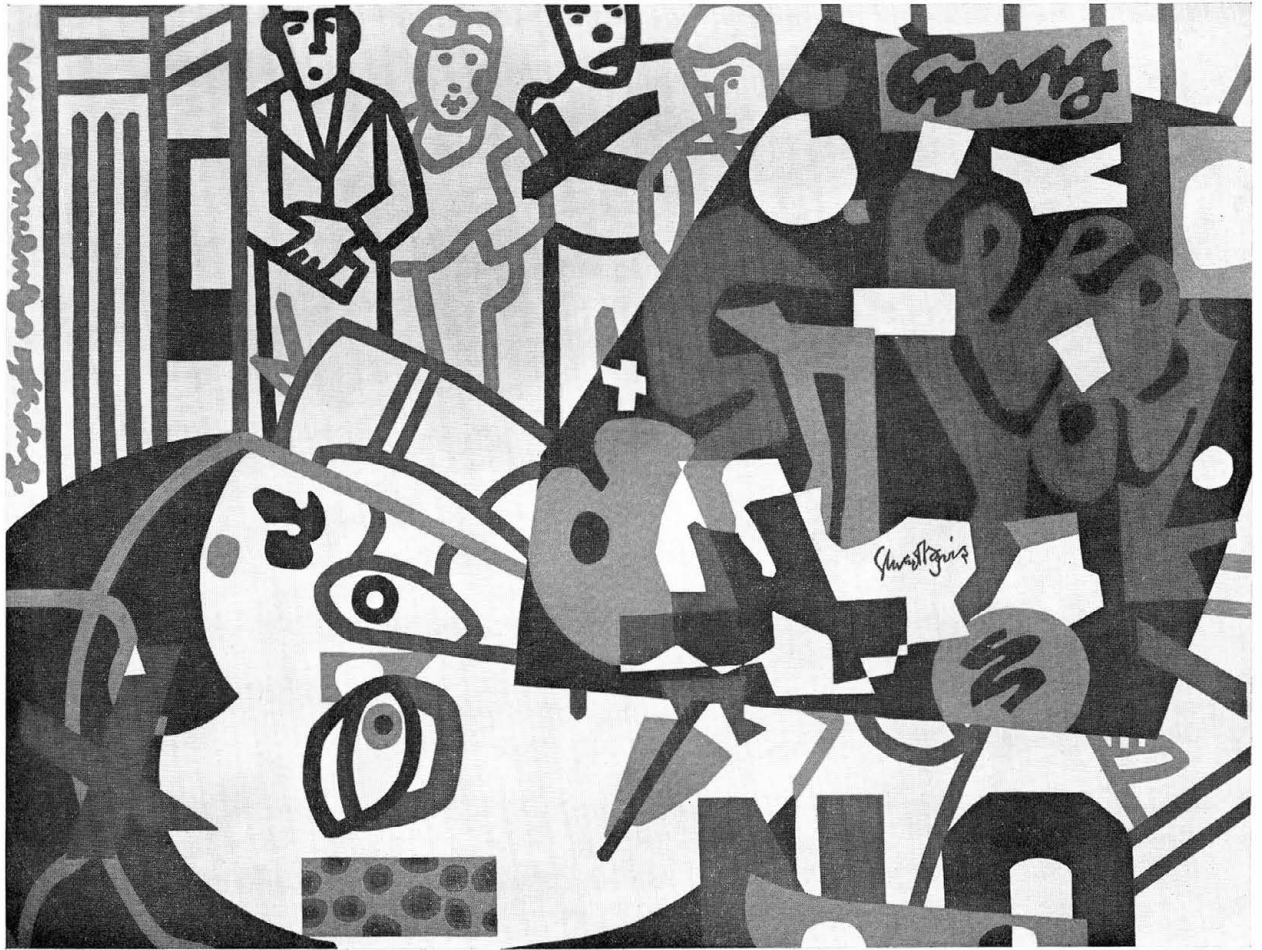
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The relative complexity and sense of overall pattern of *Rapt at Rappaport's* were developed still further in *Seme*, 1953, a work closely related in its motifs and general organization. *Deuce*, c. 1954 (ill. p. 79), explored again the horizontal divided composition, framing intricate black and white line drawing in simple areas of red and blue. *Tournos* and *Midi*, both 1954 (ill. p. 28 and p. 39) played variations on the line and pattern scheme first stated in the oil drawing, *Landscape*, 1932 and 1935, and in *Shapes of Landscape Space*, 1939 (cat. no. 69). Along with these major paintings were produced a number of small works, some of which were explorations of new ideas, some actually preliminary studies (cf. *Leroy's Shift*, 1952, cat. no. 88, and *Detail Study #1 For Cliché*, 1955, cat. no. 100, with *Cliché*, 1955, ill. p. 38; cf. *Package Deal*, 1956, cat. no. 108, with *Premiere*, 1957, cat. no. 114).

Perhaps the most significant trend of the years 1953 to 1956 was a tendency in certain key works toward a greater monumentality and simplicity. Thus a comparison of the *Study for Ready to Wear*, 1955, with the final version, *Ready to Wear*, 1955 (ill. p. 56), will reveal an enlargement of all the details. The only word in the sketch, "any," was eliminated in the oil painting.

Colonial Cubism, 1954 (ill. p. 37), is one of the largest, simplest, and most powerful organizations achieved by Davis up to this time. The colors are rigidly limited to orange-red, yellow and blue, with black and white. An enormous tension is achieved by the architectural structure of interlocking planes pulling and pushing against one another. Aside from a few irregular circular shapes and the brittle calligraphy of the signature, all the shapes have a sharp, rectilinear regularity. All lettering, words, or phrases have been eliminated with the exception of the artist's signature. This, however, has now become a most important element in the total design. Until the early forties, Davis' signature had always consisted of small, inconspicuous block letters, carefully placed to avoid intrusion into the composition. However, beginning about 1945 (see *For Internal Use Only*, ill. p. 29), the signature assumed a script form and became increasingly integrated into the actual painting. Nowhere has this been achieved more successfully than in *Colonial Cubism*.

Davis referred to this painting as having "overtones of one of the better types of Cubism without becoming too expatriate about it." It is an obvious fact often mentioned by Davis himself that the ultimate roots of his developed style are to be found in the cubism of Picasso, Braque, Gris, or Léger. However, in 1940 he said: ". . . I don't want people to copy Matisse or Picasso although it is entirely proper to admit their influence. I don't make paintings like theirs. I make paintings like mine. I want to paint and do paint particular aspects of this country which interest me. But I use, as a great many others do, some of the methods of modern French painting which I consider to have universal validity. . . ." *Colonial Cubism* is a work in which Davis was obviously rethinking some of the tenets of cubism. But a comparison of this painting with any cubist work of Picasso, Léger, or any other European cubist, will reveal how completely Davis created his own world from the cubist elements.



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In 1955 Davis completed a mural commission for Drake University entitled *Allée* (ill. p. 52). "The character of this composition was initiated in consideration of its moral function. It is seen not only as a painting, but as a wall integrant in the Color-Space simplicity of Eero Saarinen's architectural interior. Virtually all glass on three sides, the hall has a black floor and white ceiling. Through the glass one sees blue sky and red brick structures. The four colors of *Allée*, Red, Blue, Black, and White, participate in this totality." Even with the inspiration of Saarinen's chastely rectangular, classically simple structure, it is doubtful if Davis would have achieved the Mondrian-like severity of vertical-horizontal composition had not this commission come at a moment when he was concerned with one of his periodic exercises in catharsis. *Medium Still Life*, 1953, and *Colonial Cubism*, 1954, had already achieved a degree of simplification and largeness of scale from which the purist monumentality of *Allée* was a completely logical step.

The murals of Stuart Davis constitute an intriguing summation of the artist's stylistic development. The design for a mural, *New York*, 1932, was the climax of the *New York-Paris* pastiches with their accumulation of literal visual details. The Radio City mural, *Men Without Women*, 1932, continued this tendency with, however, a more logical abstract organization. *History of Communication*, 1939, was a vast abstract line drawing of representational elements. In *Swing Landscape*, 1938, could be seen the heightened tempo, the greater fragmentation of subject, which marked the late thirties and forties. The WNYC mural, 1939, like *Bass Rocks #2* of the same year, was a further effort in the direction of simplification in terms of geometric line and broad color areas. This process of simplification, after intervening alternations of complexity and simplicity, reached a climax in the mural *Allée*.

The alternation of complex and simplified organization might be stated as a rhythmic theme throughout Davis' career. His mural *Combination Concrete*, 1957 (ill. p. 54), is characteristic of the latter fifties in its return to a more complicated interweaving of irregular small and large color shapes.

The *Study for Mural—U.N. Conference Room 3*, 1956 (ill. p. 81), achieves a comparable simplicity although with entirely different means. Against a great expanse of black, heightened by rectangles of red, white, and blue, flashes a single torn ribbon shape, turning back upon itself, changing color, white against black, black against blue, red against white, as it passes through different color rectangles. The only other elements are the characteristic distorted cross of white unifying loops of the ribbon and a single flattened oval in blue; finally, but most important, the large agitated signature carrying the sense of violent motion into the upper right corner. Although this painting had certain relationships with the *Stele* (ill. p. 46) of the same year, it was essentially a unique and new design, one with exciting though, unfortunately, unrealized potentials of development.

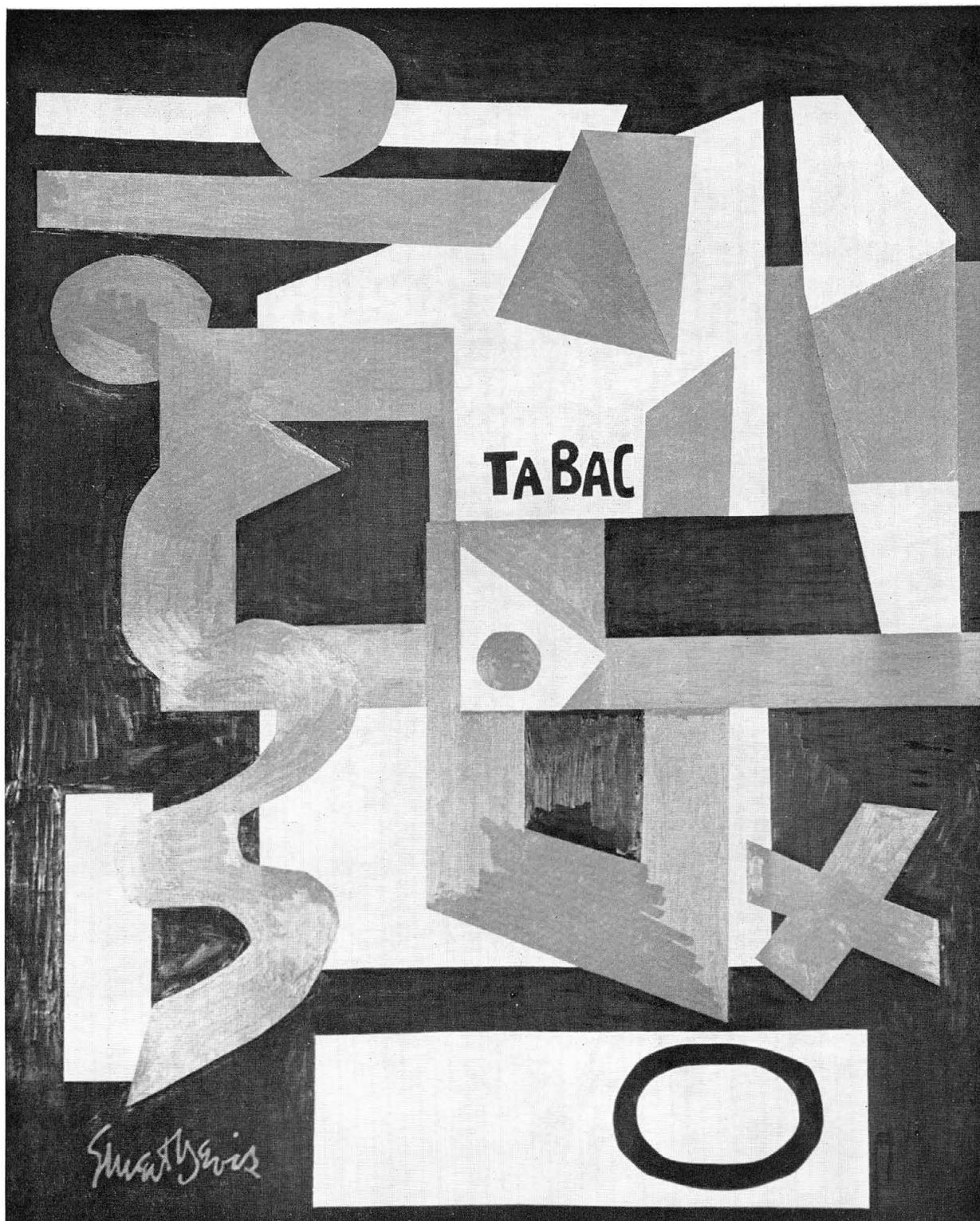
In *Stele*, Davis returned once again to the favorite composition of *Medium Still Life* and *Something on the Eight Ball* and in moving from complexity to simplicity achieved one of his most impressive paintings. The dominant color note of black brings a sense of weight and somberness to the red, green, blue, and white color shapes which

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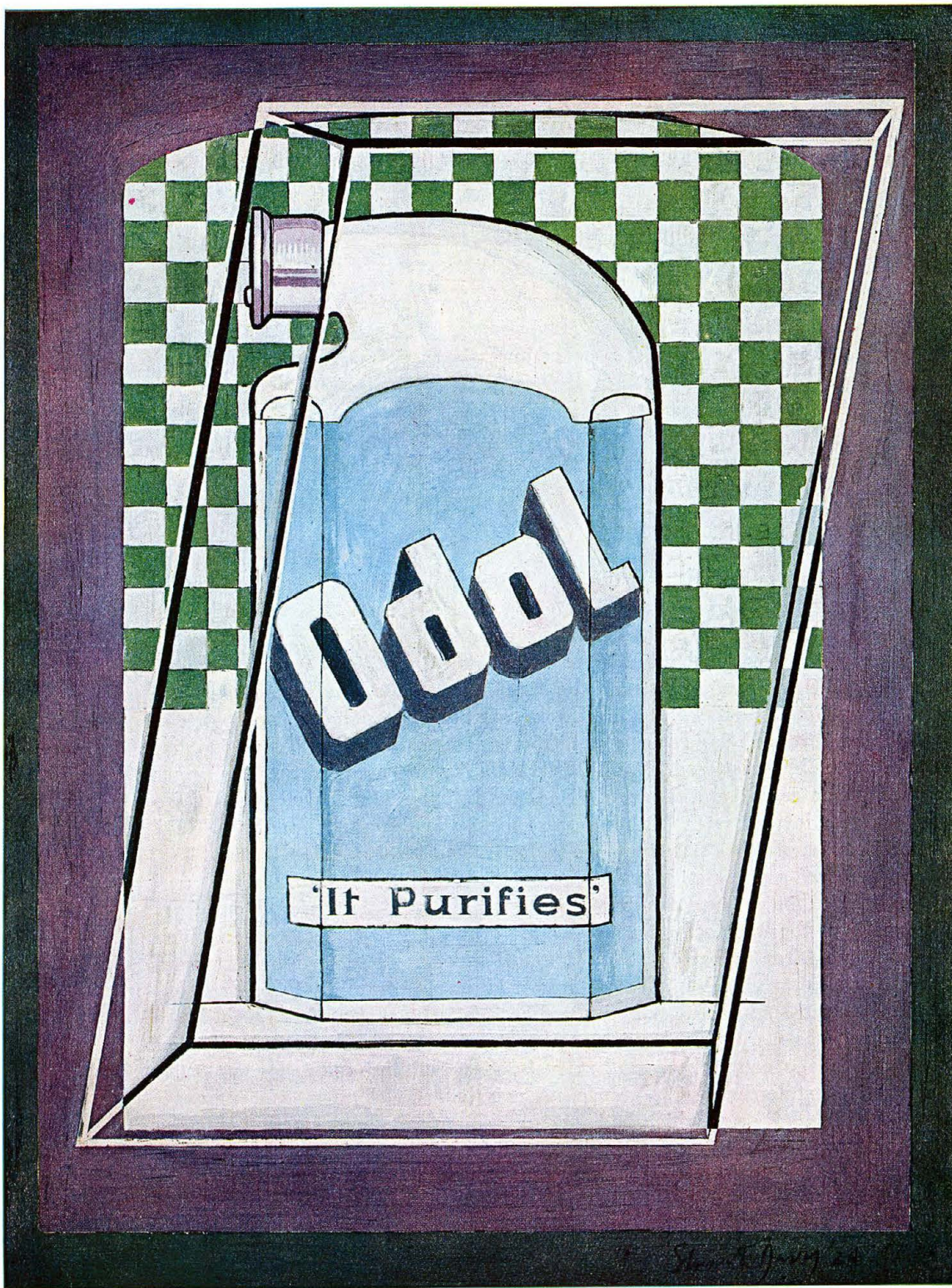


are played against it. The racy script of *Something on the Eight Ball* is eliminated and there remains only the soberly lettered word "Tabac" as a curious reminiscence of the artist's Paris days. It is, incidentally, intriguing to observe how often Davis in his later works turned again to French words and phrases. It is also intriguing though possibly coincidental to recall that one of the most severe geometric abstractions of the mid-thirties, *Cigarettes*, 1936 (ill. p. 73), was built around the same word "Tabac."

Instead of continuing in the direction toward greater simplicity and severity suggested by *Stele* and the *Study for Mural—U. N. Conference Room 3*, however, Davis reversed this trend and during the late fifties turned out paintings of greater and greater excitement and complexity. *Premiere*, 1957, has all the ordered confusion of opening day at a supermarket. *Combination Concrete II*, 1958, is a riot of shapes, colors, letters, words, and signs, flashing in and out of one another. *Lesson #1*, 1956 (ill. p. 41), is perhaps the boldest double or divided composition produced by the artist. Torn and fluttering shapes which begin again to suggest a recognizable landscape, on one side, are balanced by a great stark X on the other.

Stuart Davis continued painting energetically until the day of his death. In large numbers of small paintings, oil or gouache, he explored new ideas or re-examined older motifs for possible variant development. The major paintings of the last few years repeat in an almost rhythmic alternation his lifelong examination of simplicity versus complexity. *The Paris Bit*, 1959 (ill. p. 45), continues the highly complicated and dense organization of *Combination Concrete II*, 1958, in a nostalgic pastiche of Paris reminiscences. The references to the architectural Paris scenes of 1928 are made explicit in the hotel sign and facade on the right, the block lettered "BELLE FRANCE," moving down from the upper left hand corner, the date "28," and the word "EAU" in the lower left, as well as the coffee cup and saucer in the lower center. Other words such as the ubiquitous "pad" and "any" introduce reminiscences of other paintings of the thirties and forties while the script "unnecessary" and "eraser" suggest still further explorations of words whose sound and appearance fascinated him. *The Paris Bit* is, in terms of linear pattern and proliferation of detail, perhaps the most complicated painting of the last several years, one which in its frenzied tempo takes us back to *The Mellow Pad* of the late forties. However, the violent beat of accumulated linear details is held in a rigid control by the classic simplification of the color scheme. The painting is almost entirely composed of bright blues and reds with black accents, thus achieving an almost unique tension between controlled color shape and linear movement, between broad simplification and agitated complexity. This is a painting of extraordinary importance in Davis' later development, not only as a recapitulation of ideas and forms which had concerned him throughout his life but, more significantly, as a new organization of those ideas and forms.

International Surface I, 1960, on the other hand, is a further simplification of the themes stated in *Premiere*, 1957. Three of the last completed major paintings, *Standard Brand*, 1961 (cat. no. 120), *Contranuities*, 1963, and *Blips and Ifs*, 1963-64 (cover ill.),



provide in a climactic sense a summary of his attitudes toward form and subject. *Standard Brand* is highly simplified with four large rectangular color areas framing three favorite word signs—"pad," "complet," and "any"—now presented on a monumental scale. *Con-
tranuities*, on the other hand, while still organized in a dominant architecture of verticals and horizontals, packs many small motifs into the dense picture space. This painting also suggests possible new directions in the use of sculptural three-dimensional shapes such as a square column that dominates the left hand side. *Blips and Ifs*, one of the largest in scale of his later paintings, in a certain sense has the character of a blown-up detail from the earlier *Standard Brand*. The blocked-out words "complet" and "pad" and the cursive "any" in *Standard Brand* become enlarged fragments flowing off the edges of *Blips and Ifs*. These two paintings represent the artist's final investigation of words as abstract forms and symbols, dominating the entire picture space. The fragmentation of the words in *Blips and Ifs* heightens the sense of nonassociative abstract reality. Color shapes and rhythmic ribboned movements are simplified to a grandiose scale in which the compression of all elements reinforces the explosive tension. In contrast to *The Paris Bit*, the powerful oppositions of the colors black, white, red, yellow, and green re-emphasize the dynamic monumentality of the word patterns.

Davis left in his studio a number of unfinished paintings and drawings which are a fascinating document of his work methods and the continuing fertility of his imagination. These include, most interestingly, another experiment with the formula of *Little Giant Still Life* and *Visa*, the works in which a single word first dominated an entire canvas. Also in his studio he left many notebooks with observations and notations of ideas for possible development.

Stuart Davis is almost the only American painter of the 20th century whose works have transcended every change in style, movement, or fashion. Even during the fifties, when abstract expressionism dominated the American scene, he continued to have the respect and admiration of the most experimental new artists. With the emergence during the last few years of the so-termed "pop art" and other attempts at a re-exploration of subject, his paintings have even taken on a new significance in the history of modern American art. While his motivations differed in many ways from those of younger pop artists there can be no question about the importance of his influence on them. His early oil paintings in the manner of collage, such as *Cigarette Paper*, 1921 (ill. p. 61), are startling bridges between 19th-century American *trompe l'oeil* and certain aspects of "pop" painting. In this context, a number of paintings of the early twenties which have never previously been exhibited could take a natural place in a 1965 exhibition of "pop" painting (*Odol*, 1924, ill. p. 48).

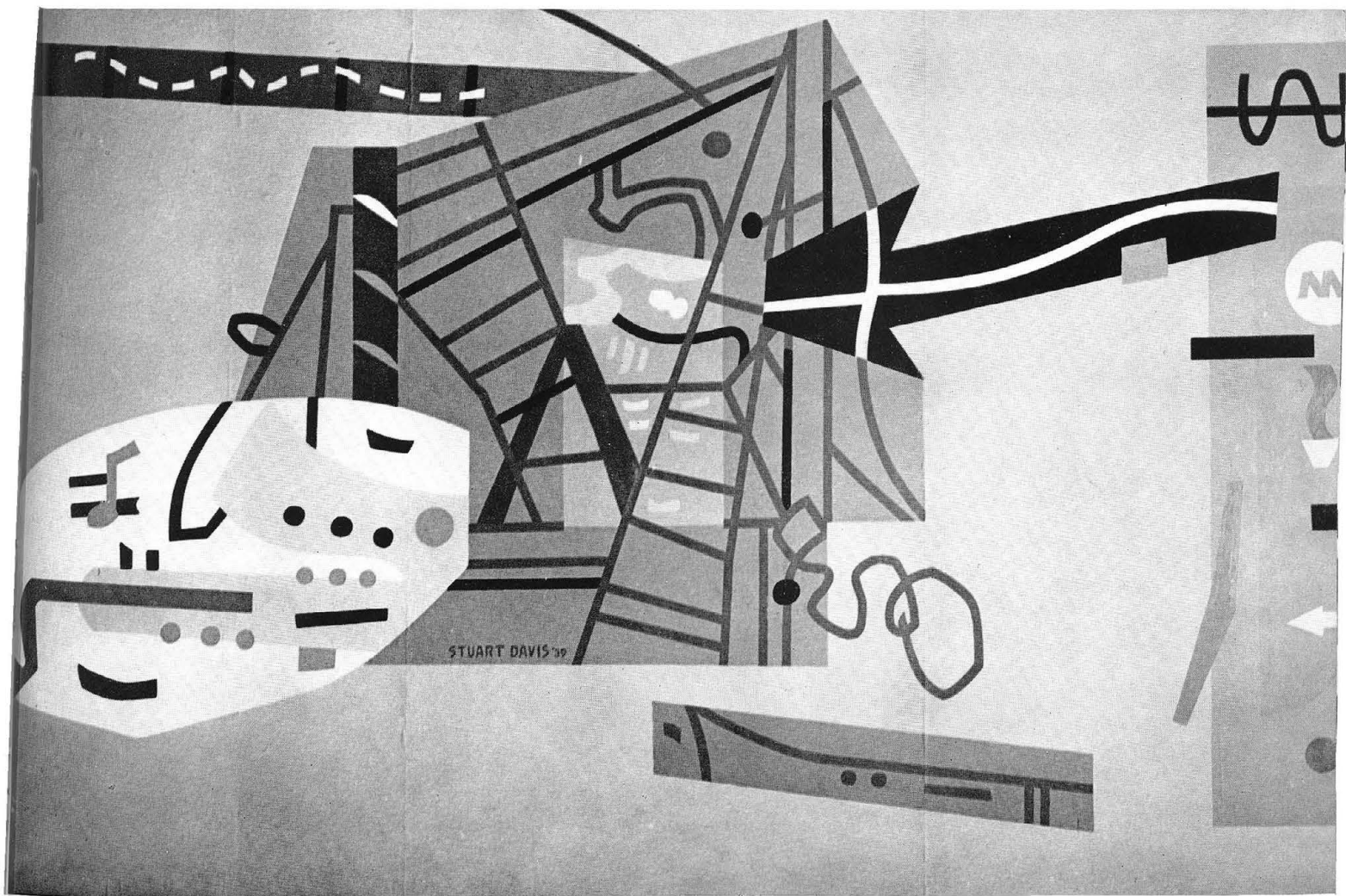
H. H. ARNASON
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

THE MURALS OF STUART DAVIS

MEN WITHOUT WOMEN 1932

The earliest of Stuart Davis' extant murals, "Men Without Women" was executed for the Men's Lounge of Radio City Music Hall in New York City and remains there to the present.





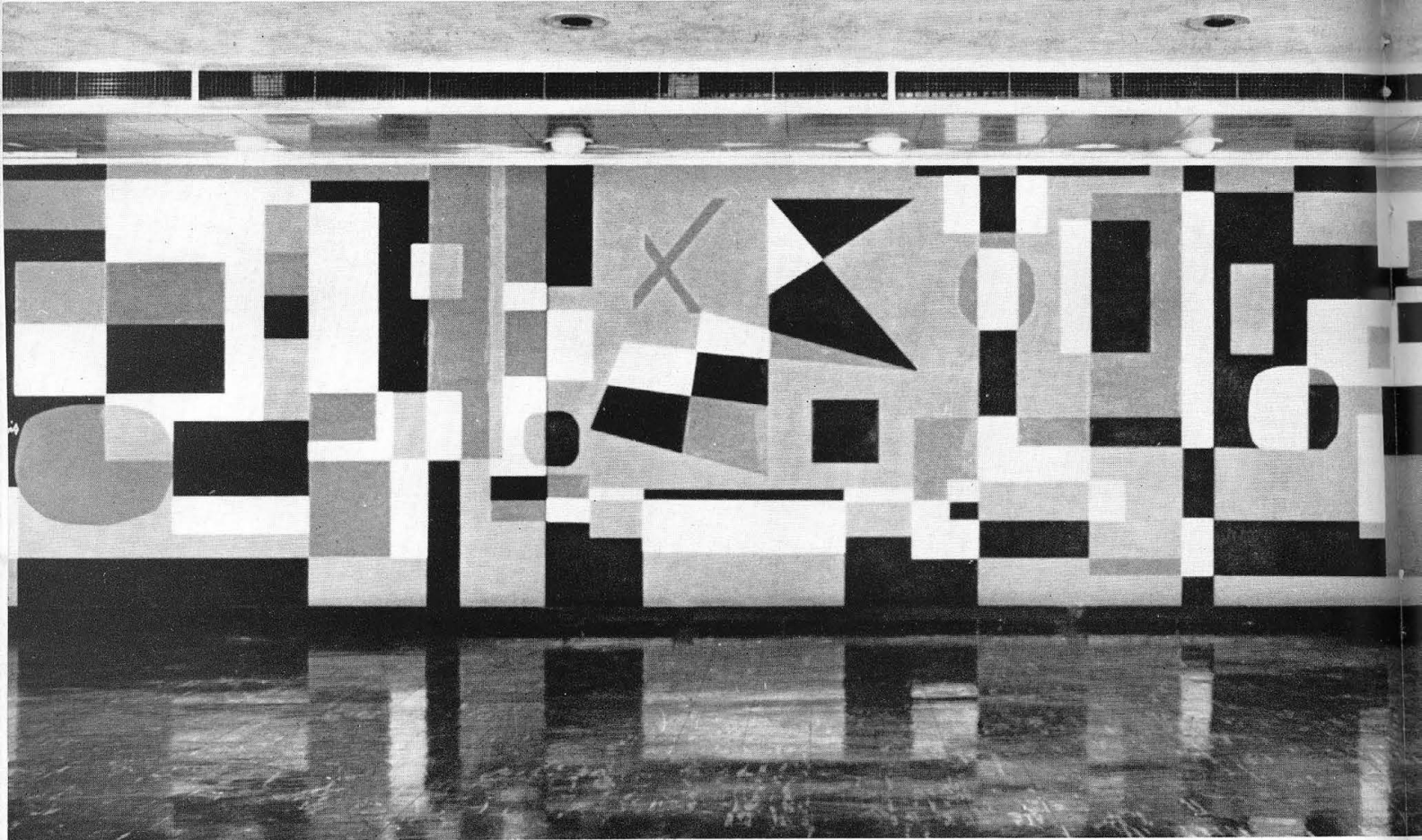
THE WNYC MURAL 1939

The second mural done under W.P.A. auspices, this was painted for Studio B at the Municipal Broadcasting Company, the New York City radio station. It remains in its original location.

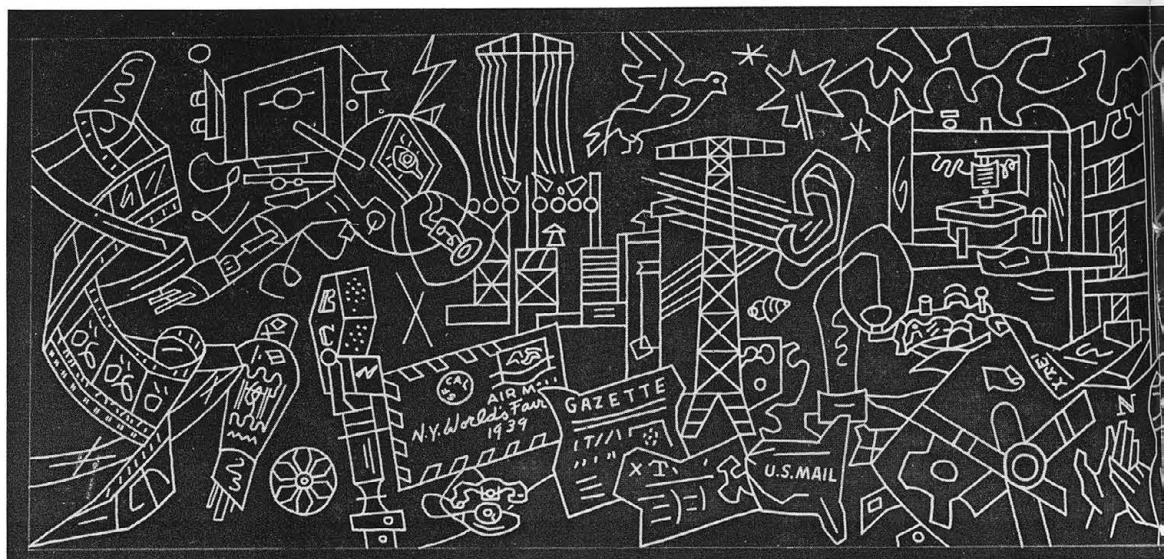
overleaf:

ALLÉE 1955

The mural was commissioned by the Gardner Cowles Foundation as a gift to Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, for its Central Dining Hall built in 1954. Davis wrote of his choice of title: "‘Allée’ is a French word meaning an alley or long vista. It is a long painting. Its length overpowered my studio and made a deep impression on my mind. Also, there is another French word with the same sound which means ‘go’. I like this association. I like the variety, the animation, the vigorous spirit which is part of college life. This feeling of energy and vigor was in my mind during the painting of the mural."



ALLÉE



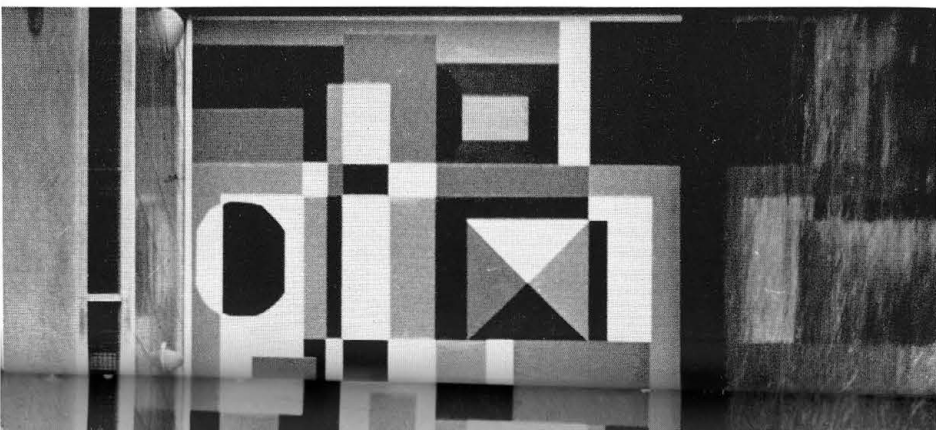
HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION 1939

This mural was executed for the Hall of Communication at the New York World's Fair of 1939. It is believed to have been destroyed when the Fair was dismantled. A scale drawing for the mural, which remained in Davis' possession, is included in the present exhibition.



SWING LANDSCAPE 1938

Executed under the W.P.A. Federal Art Project, the mural was never placed in the Brooklyn housing project for which it was intended. Through an appeal from the Indiana University Art Museum, at Bloomington, the mural was revived by Davis and installed on a 100 year loan from the federal government.



overleaf:
COMPOSITION CONCRETE 1957
Commissioned by the H. J. Heinz Company for the foyer
of its Research building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this
is the latest of Davis' completed murals.



COURTESY TIME, INC.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION



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DIMENSIONS ARE IN INCHES. HEIGHT BEFORE WIDTH.
OIL PAINTINGS ARE ON CANVAS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

CATALOGUE

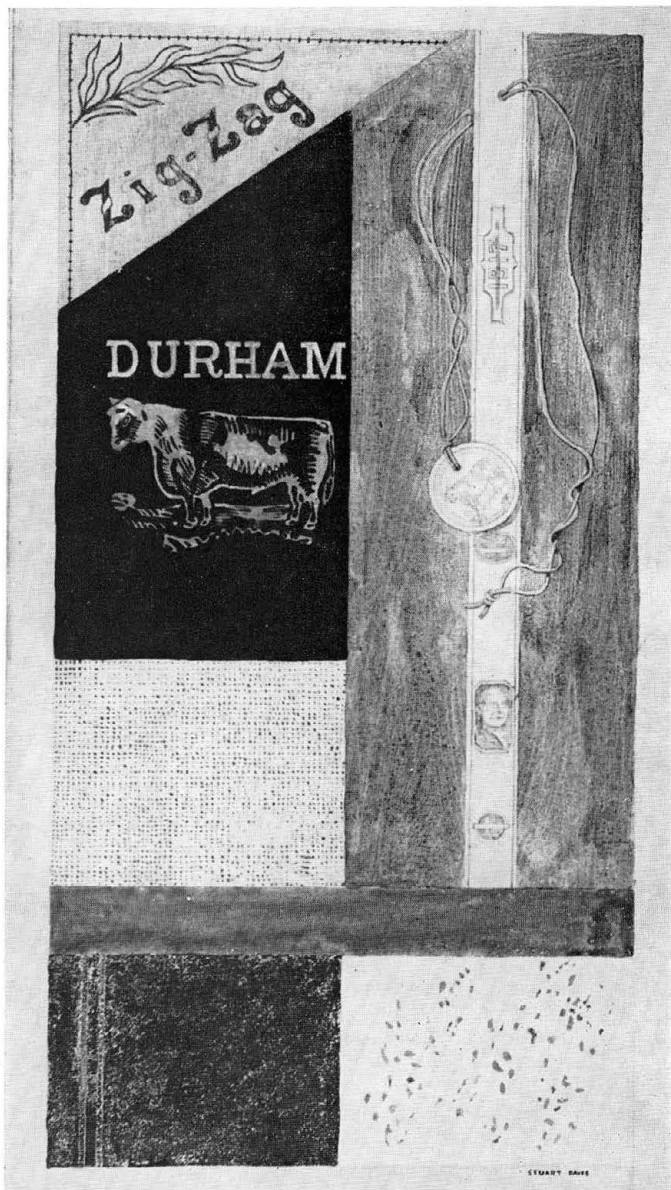
WORKS OF ART ARE LENT TO THE EXHIBITION BY THE DAVIS ESTATE, COURTESY OF THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

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|---|---|--|---------|----|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | 1 | PORTRAIT OF A MAN | 1911 | 7 | ROCKPORT BEACH | 1916 |
| | | Watercolor 14¾ x 10¾ | | | Oil 30 x 24 | |
| | | LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION | | | <i>Illustrated</i> | |
| 2 | 2 | THE DOCTOR
(or ROMANCE) | 1912 | 8 | GLOUCESTER TERRACE | 1916 |
| | | Watercolor 11 x 15 | | | Oil 38 x 30 | |
| | | <i>Illustrated</i> | | | | |
| 3 | 3 | BABE LA TOUR | 1913 | 9 | BOATS, GLOUCESTER | c. 1917 |
| | | Watercolor 15 x 11 | | | Oil 18½ x 22¾ | |
| | | | | | LENT BY MRS. EDITH GREGOR HALPERT | |
| 4 | 4 | NEGRO DANCE HALL | 1915 | 10 | Untitled (Havana landscape) | c. 1919 |
| | | Crayon 23¾ x 19¾ | | | Watercolor 17¾ x 23¾ | |
| | | <i>Illustrated</i> | | | | |
| 5 | 5 | HOBOKEN | 1915-16 | 11 | TAXI, CUBA | 1919 |
| | | Watercolor and ink 24 x 18 | | | Watercolor 18 x 23 | |
| | | | | | <i>Illustrated</i> | |
| 6 | 6 | THE PRESIDENT | c. 1916 | 12 | SELF PORTRAIT | 1919 |
| | | Oil 36 x 26¾ | | | Oil 23 x 19 | |
| | | LENT BY THE MUNSON-WILLIAMS-PROCTOR
INSTITUTE | | | <i>Illustrated</i> | |
| | | <i>Illustrated</i> | | | | |

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| <p>13 TIOGA, PA. 1919
Oil 24 x 30
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY</p> <p>14 ITLKSEZ 1921
Collage and watercolor 22 x 16
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION</p> <p>15 LUCKY STRIKE 1921
Oil 33½ x 18
LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
GIFT OF THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY,
INC.</p> <p>16 CIGARETTE PAPER 1921
Watercolor on canvas 19 x 14
LENT ANONYMOUSLY
<i>Illustrated</i></p> <p>17 BULL DURHAM 1921
Oil 30¼ x 15¼
LENT BY THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART,
EDWARD JOSEPH GALLAGHER III MEMORIAL
COLLECTION
<i>Illustrated</i></p> <p>18 SWEET CAPORAL 1922
Watercolor and oil 20 x 18½</p> <p>19 BLUE STILL LIFE 1922
Oil 50 x 32</p> <p>20 INTERIOR 1923
Oil on board 20 x 16</p> | <p>21 NEW MEXICAN LANDSCAPE 1923
Oil 22 x 32
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART</p> <p>22 STILL LIFE WITH MAP 1923
Oil 40 x 32
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY</p> <p>23 75 WATT 1924
Oil on board 24 x 18
<i>Illustrated</i></p> <p>24 ODOL 1924
Oil on board 24 x 18
<i>Illustrated in color</i></p> <p>25 RIGGING 1924
Watercolor and crayon 17¼ x 13½</p> <p>26 ROSES IN GLASS BOWL 1924
Oil on board 24 x 18</p> <p>27 STILL LIFE WITH LEAVES 1924
Oil on board 18 x 24</p> <p>28 HEAD OF JAMES JOYCE c. 1925
Ink 12¾ x 9¼</p> <p>29 THE BLUES 1925
Gouache and ink 11¼ x 9¼
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY</p> |
|--|---|



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17

- 30 EARLY AMERICAN
LANDSCAPE 1925
Oil 19 x 22
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART
- 31 STILL LIFE 1925
Ink 14¼ x 21
LENT BY MR. JOHN GORDON
Illustrated
- 32 SUPER TABLE 1925
Oil 48 x 34
Illustrated
- 33 BOAT LANDING 1926
Gouache 14 x 17
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION
- 34 EGGBEATER NO. 1 1927
Oil 27 x 38¼
LENT BY THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
- 35 EGGBEATER NO. 2 1927
Oil 29¾ x 36
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART
Illustrated
- 36 HOTEL FRANCE 1928
Lithograph; edition of 30 13¾ x 11
- 37 PLACE DES VOSGES NO. 1 1928
Oil 21 x 28¾
LENT BY THE NEWARK MUSEUM

38 PLACE DES VOSGES NO. 2
1928

Oil 26 x 36

LENT BY DR. AND MRS. MILTON LURIE
KRAMER

39 PLACE PASDELOUP 1928

Oil 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{1}{4}$

LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART

Illustrated

40 RUE DE L'ECHAUD 1928

Oil 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36

LENT BY MR. AND MRS. OTTO L. SPAETH
Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and
New York only

41 RUE LIPPE 1928

Oil 32 x 39

LENT BY MR. AND MRS. BARRY R. PERIL

Illustrated

42 ARCH #1 1929

Lithograph; edition of 30 9 x 13

43 CAFÉ, PLACE DES VOSGES
1929

Oil 29 x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$

LENT BY MRS. EDITH GREGOR HALPERT

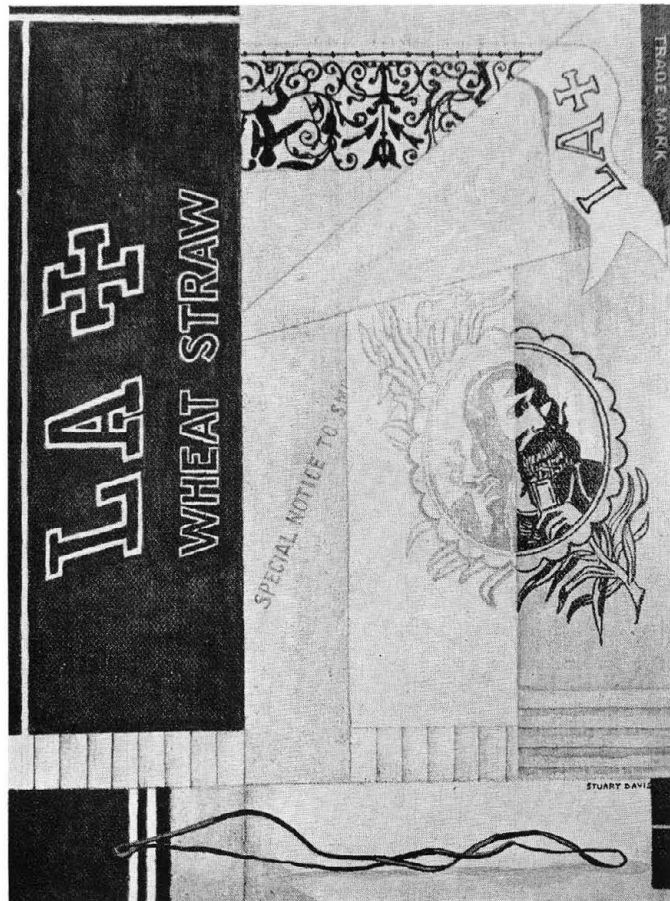
44 COMPOSITION (1863) c. 1930

Gouache 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 28

LENT BY MR. AND MRS. BURTON TREMAINE

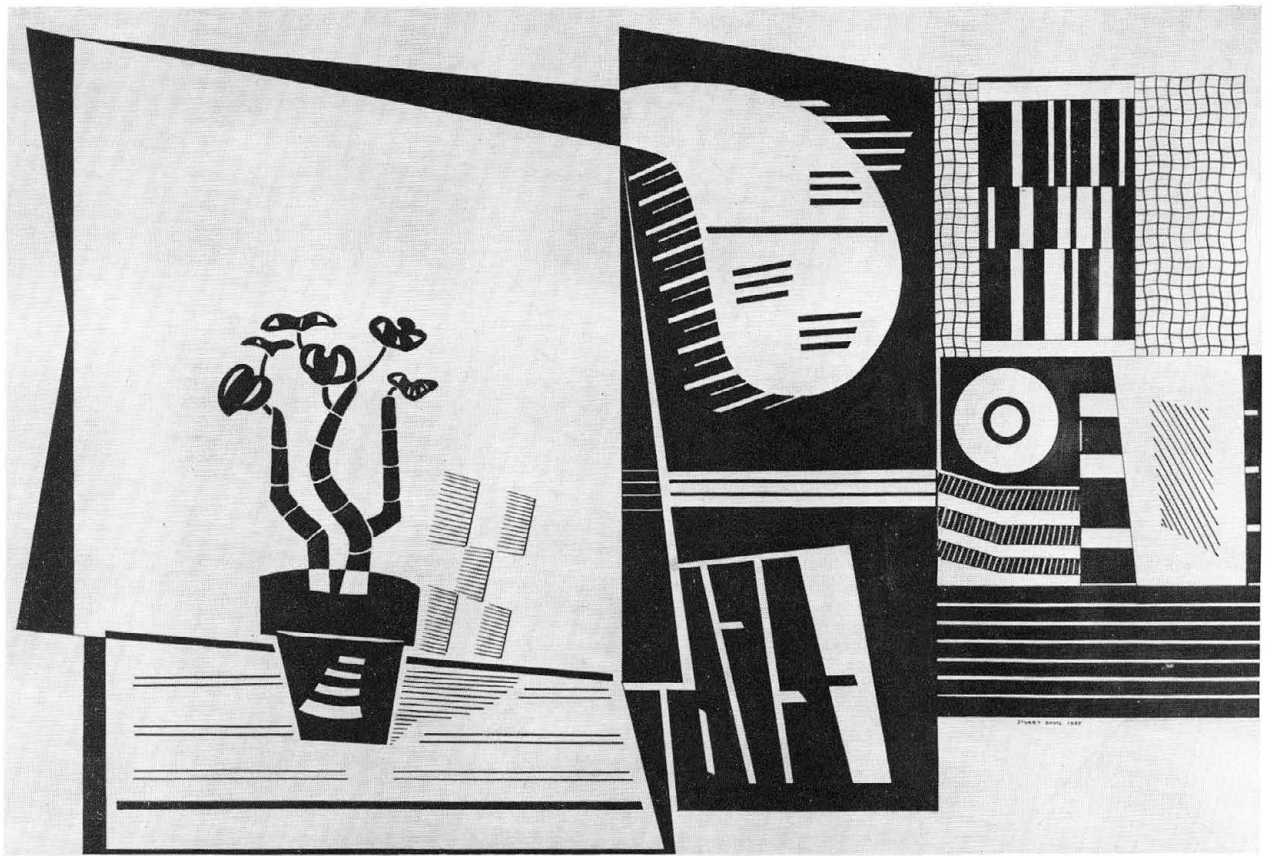
Illustrated

Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and
New York only



16

- 45 EGG BEATER, V 1930
Oil 50% x 32%
LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER FUND
Illustrated in color
- 46 MANDOLIN AND SAW 1930
Oil 26 x 34
LENT BY THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
- 47 NEW YORK-PARIS NO. 1 1930
Oil 38% x 51%
LENT BY THE SCHOOL OF ART GALLERY,
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
Illustrated
- 48 SUMMER LANDSCAPE 1930
Oil 29 x 42
LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Illustrated
- 49 THE BARBER SHOP 1930
Oil 35 x 43
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. ROY R. NEUBERGER
Illustrated
- 50 BARBER SHOP CHORD 1931
Lithograph; edition of 25 13% x 19
- 51 ARTIST IN SEARCH OF A MODEL 1931
Gouache 11 x 19
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY
Illustrated
- 52 GARAGE LIGHTS 1931
Oil 32 x 42
LENT BY THE MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
Illustrated
- 53 HOUSE AND STREET 1931
Oil 26 x 42%
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART
Illustrated
- 54 LAWN AND SKY 1931
Oil 18% x 22%
LENT BY THE JAMES A. MICHENER FOUNDATION
COLLECTION
- 55 SALT SHAKER 1931
Oil 50 x 32
LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
GIFT OF MRS. EDITH GREGOR HALPERT
Illustrated
- 56 SUMMER TWILIGHT 1931
Oil 36 x 24
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. LAWRENCE A.
FLEISCHMAN
Illustrated
- 57 TELEVISION 1931
Gouache 10% x 18
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. LAWRENCE A.
FLEISCHMAN
- 58 THEATRE ON THE BEACH 1931
Lithograph; edition of 25 10% x 15



31

59 TREES AND EL 1931
Oil 25 x 32
LENT BY THE HENRY GALLERY, UNIVERSITY
OF WASHINGTON

61 TOWN WITH BOATS 1932
Oil 21 x 30
LENT BY MRS. O. LOUIS GUGLIELMI

60 LANDSCAPE WITH DRYING
SAILS 1931-32
Oil 32 x 40

62 SIXTH AVENUE L 1932
Lithograph; edition of 25 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$
Illustrated

63

63 WINDSHIELD MIRROR 1932

Gouache 15½ x 25

LENT BY THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Illustrated

64 BASS ROCKS 1934

Silk screen; edition of 100 8¾ x 11¾

65 COMPOSITION # 4 1934

Brush and gouache 21¾ x 29¾

LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
GIFT OF ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER

66 COMPOSITION # 5 1934

Brush and ink 22 x 29¾

LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,
GIFT OF ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER

67 CIGARETTES 1936

Gouache 9¾ x 19

LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY

Illustrated

68 THE TERMINAL 1937

Oil 30 x 40

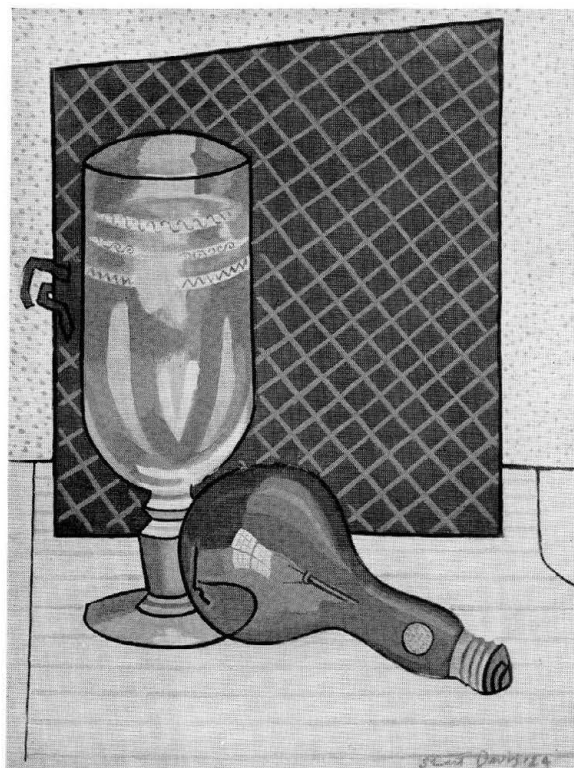
LENT BY THE JOSEPH H. HIRSHHORN
COLLECTION

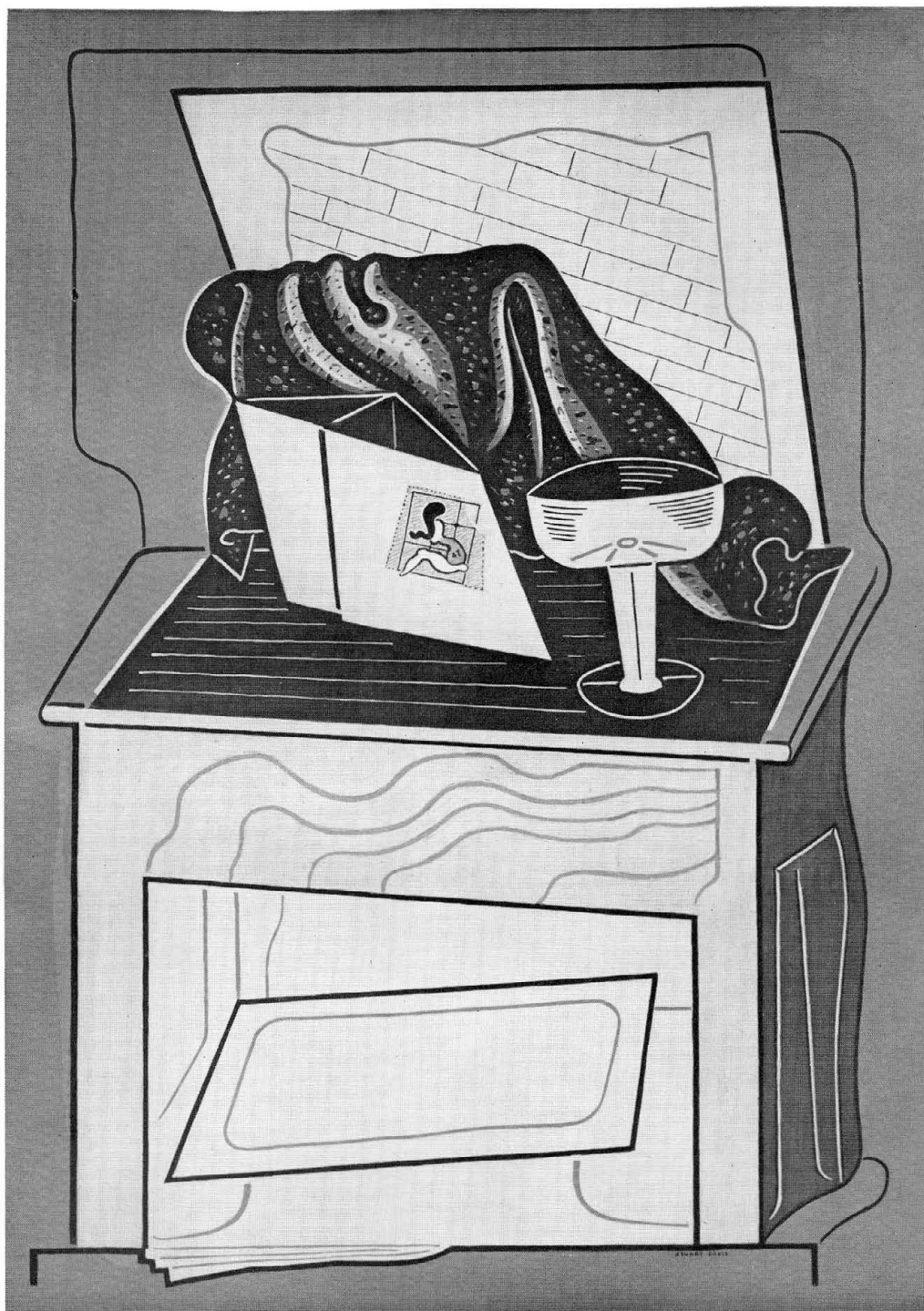
Illustrated

69 SHAPES OF LANDSCAPE
SPACE 1939

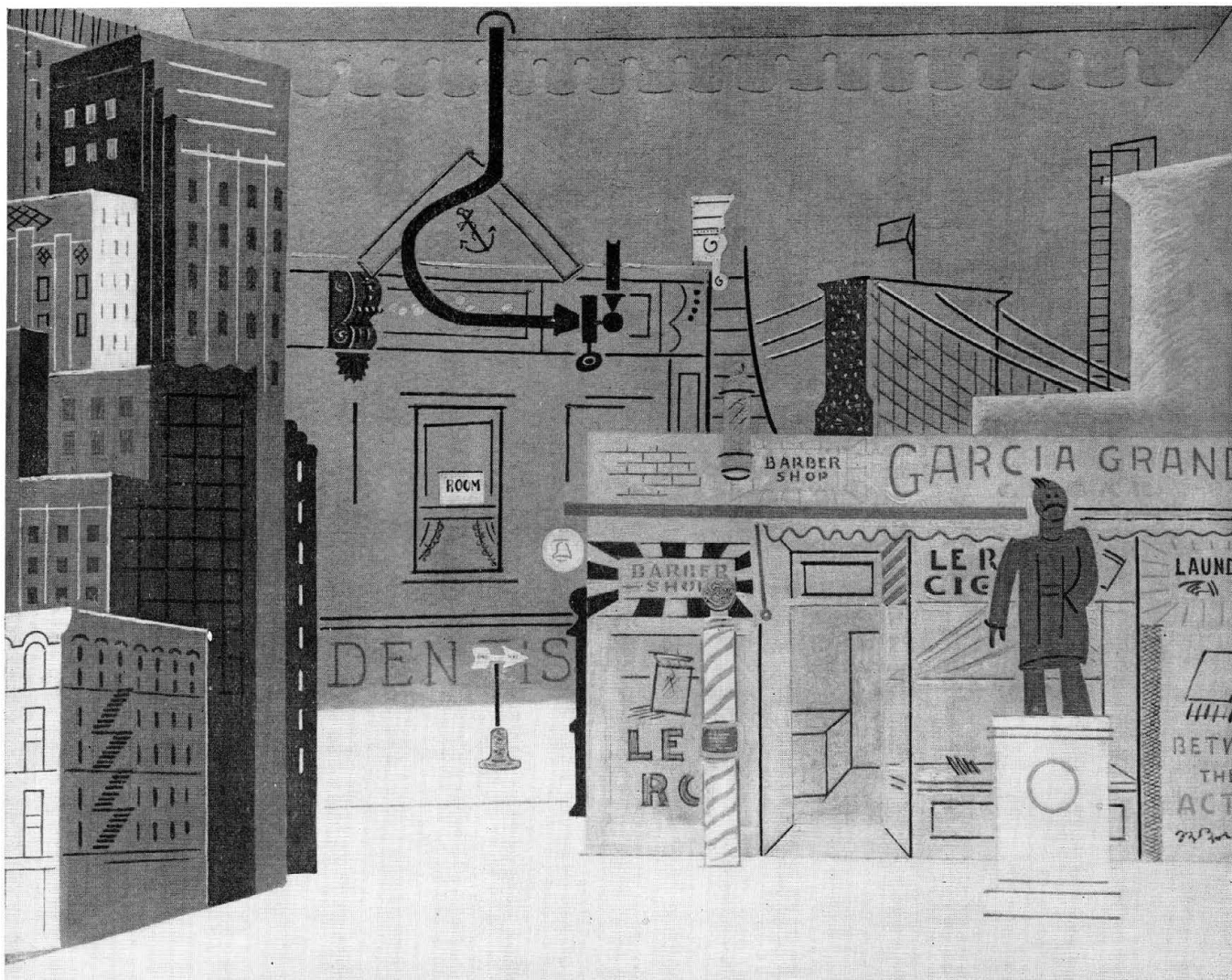
Oil 36 x 28

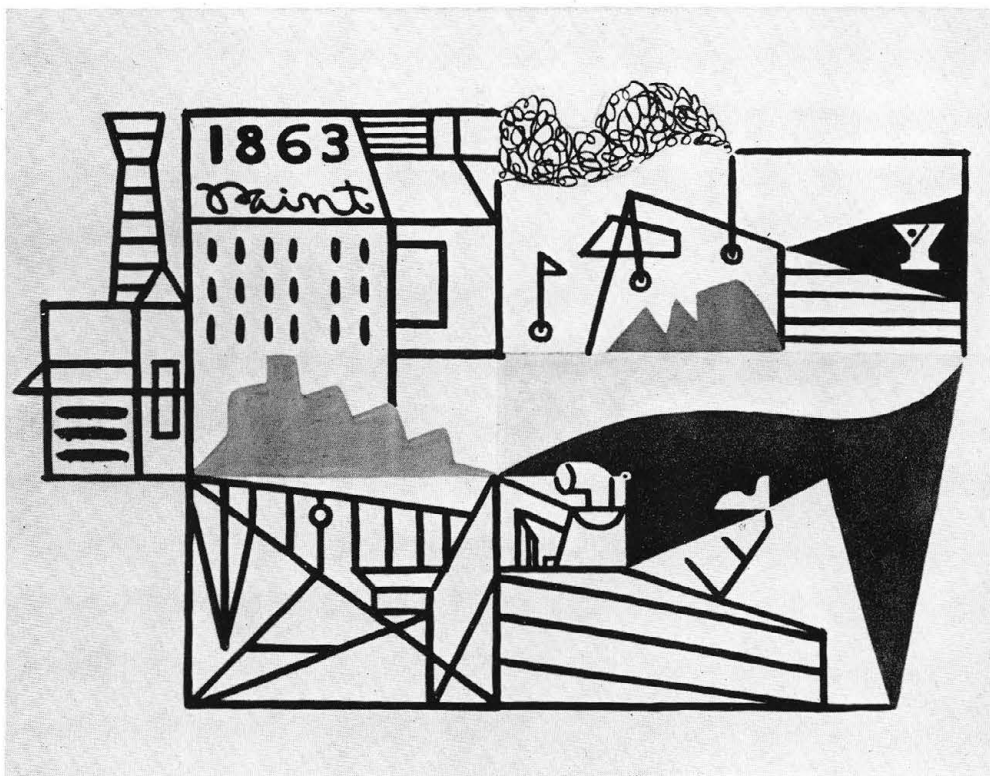
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. ROY R. NEUBERGER











44

- 70 STUDY FOR "HISTORY OF
COMMUNICATION" 1939
Ink 15 x 34

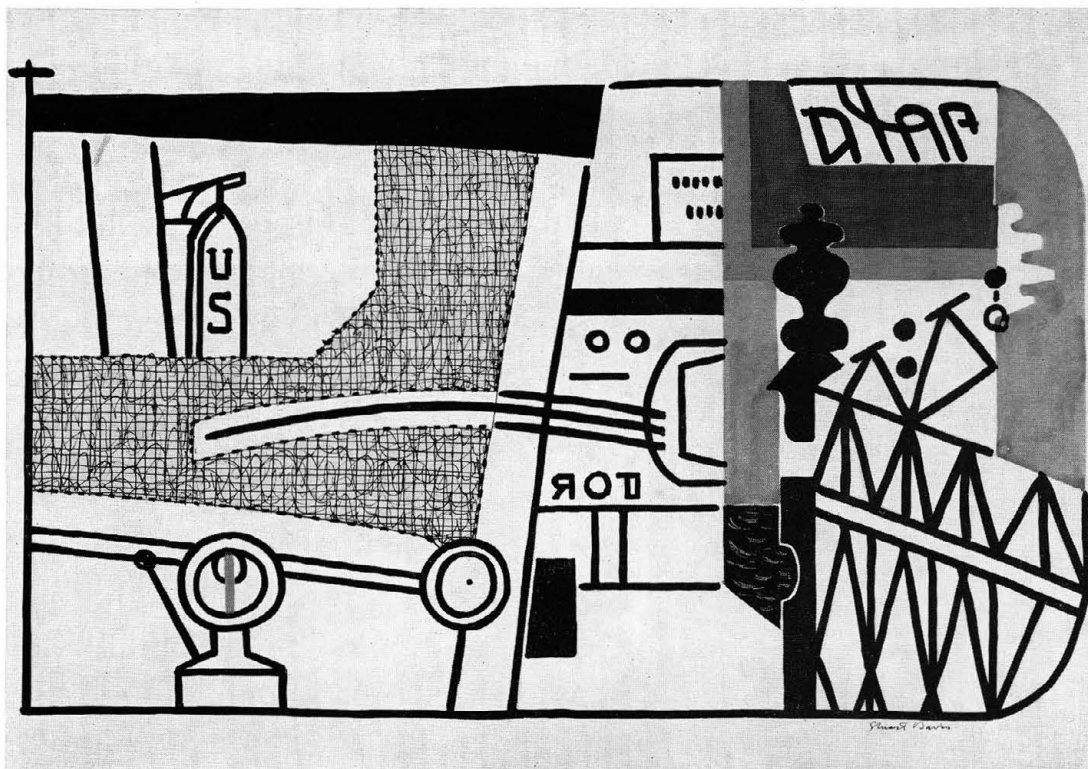
- 71 HOT STILLSCAPE IN SIX
COLORS 1940
Oil 36 x 45
LENT BY MRS. EDITH GREGOR HALPERT
Illustrated

- 72 RADIO TUBES 1940
Gouache 22 x 14
LENT BY THE ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLECTION OF AMERICAN ART AT TEMPE

- 73 REPORT FROM ROCKPORT 1940
Oil 24 x 30
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. MILTON LOWENTHAL
Illustrated

- 74 TREASURE HUNT 1940
Ink and gouache 10 x 18 1/4
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION
Illustrated

- 75 A N A 1941
Gouache 16 1/2 x 16
LENT BY THE GALLERIES OF CRANBROOK
ACADEMY OF ART



63

76 THE FOUNTAIN 1941
Gouache 11½ x 15¼
LENT BY RANDOLPH-MACON WOMAN'S
COLLEGE

77 ARBORETUM BY
FLASHBULB 1942
Oil 18 x 36
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. MILTON LOWENTHAL

78 FLYING CARPET 1942
Rug made by V'Soske, Inc. from Stuart Davis
design 84 x 120
LENT BY JOSEPH E. SEAGRAM & SONS, INC.

79 URSINE PARK 1942
Oil 20 x 40
LENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MA-
CHINES CORPORATION
Illustrated

80 ULTRAMARINE 1943
Oil 20 x 40
LENT BY THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF
THE FINE ARTS
Illustrated



- 81 FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY 1945
Oil 48 x 28
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. BURTON TREMAINE
Illustrated
Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and New York only
- 82 THE MELLOW PAD 1945-51
Oil 26 x 42
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. MILTON LOWENTHAL
Illustrated
- 83 PAD NO. 4 1947
Oil 14 x 18
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. MILTON LOWENTHAL
- 84 LITTLE GIANT STILL LIFE 1950
Oil 33 x 43
LENT BY THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Illustrated
- 85 VISA 1951
Oil 40 x 52
LENT BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, GIFT OF MRS. GERTRUD A. MELLON
Exhibited in New York only
- 86 OWH! IN SAN PAO 1951
Oil 52½ x 41½
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Illustrated in color
- 87 EYE LEVEL 1951-54
Oil 17 x 12
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION
- 88 LEROY'S SHIFT 1952
Oil 12 x 8
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY
- 89 RAPT AT RAPPAPORT'S 1952
Oil 52 x 40
LENT BY THE JOSEPH H. HIRSHHORN FOUNDATION, INC.
Illustrated in color
- 90 IVY LEAGUE 1953
Silk screen; edition of 132 6 x 9
LENT BY MR. HARRY LOWE
Illustrated
- 91 MEDIUM STILL LIFE 1953
Oil 45 x 36
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION
- 92 SOMETHING ON THE EIGHT BALL 1953-54
Oil 66 x 53
LENT BY THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART
Exhibited in Chicago and New York only
- 93 DEUCE c. 1954
Oil 25½ x 41½
LENT BY THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF MRS. E. S. HELLER
Illustrated



74

94 COLONIAL CUBISM 1954

Oil 45 x 60

LENT BY THE WALKER ART CENTER

Illustrated

96 TOURNOS 1954

Oil 35% x 28

LENT BY THE MUNSON-WILLIAMS-PROCTOR
INSTITUTE

Illustrated in color

95 MIDI 1954

Oil 28 x 36%

LENT BY THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM

Illustrated

97 ALLÉE 1955

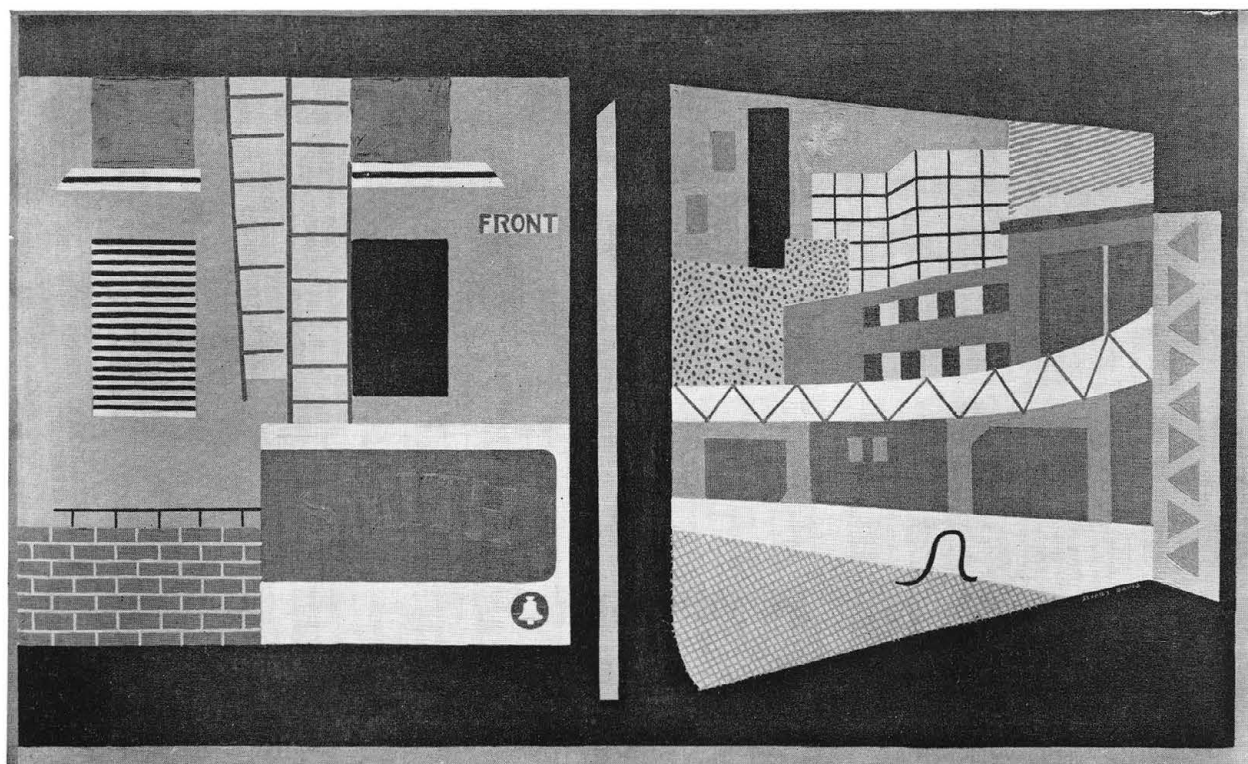
Oil 92 x 392

Signed, center left: Stuart Davis
lower left: Ass't Jim Benton

LENT BY DRAKE UNIVERSITY

Illustrated

Exhibited in Washington only



53



67

- 98 COLOR SKETCH FOR
DRAKE UNIVERSITY
MURAL 1955
Gouache 8¼ x 35
- 99 CLICHÉ 1955
Oil 56¼ x 42
LENT BY THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM
MUSEUM
Illustrated
- 100 DETAIL STUDY #1 FOR
"CLICHÉ" 1955
Gouache 12½ x 15
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. LEONARD M. BROWN
- 101 GLOUCESTER SUNSET 1955
Gouache 12½ x 17½
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. IRVING BROWN
- 102 OUTSIDE 1955
Oil on linen 14 x 18
LENT BY THE MILWAUKEE ART CENTER, GIFT
OF MR. AND MRS. HARRY LYNDE BRADLEY
- 103 READY TO WEAR 1955
Oil 56¼ x 42
LENT BY THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO,
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. SIGMUND W. KUN-
STADTER AND GOODMAN FUND
Illustrated in color
- 104 STUDY FOR A DRAWING
1955 or 1959
Silk screen; edition of 100 7¼ x 7¼
- 105 STUDY FOR MURAL—U. N.
CONFERENCE ROOM 3 1956
Oil 28 x 70
LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION
Illustrated
- 106 LESSON #1 1956
Oil 42 x 60
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. CHARLES B.
BENENSON
Illustrated
Exhibited in Washington and New York
only
- 107 MEMO 1956
Oil 36 x 28
LENT BY THE SARA ROBY FOUNDATION
Illustrated
- 108 PACKAGE DEAL 1956
Gouache 20¼ x 18
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. CHARLES B.
BENENSON
Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and
New York only
- 109 DETAIL STUDY #1 FOR
"PACKAGE DEAL" 1956
Wash 13 x 9¼
LENT BY MR. LEO S. GUTHMAN
- 110 TROPES DE TEENS 1956
Oil 45 x 60
LENT BY THE JOSEPH H. HIRSHHORN FOUN-
DATION, INC.
Illustrated



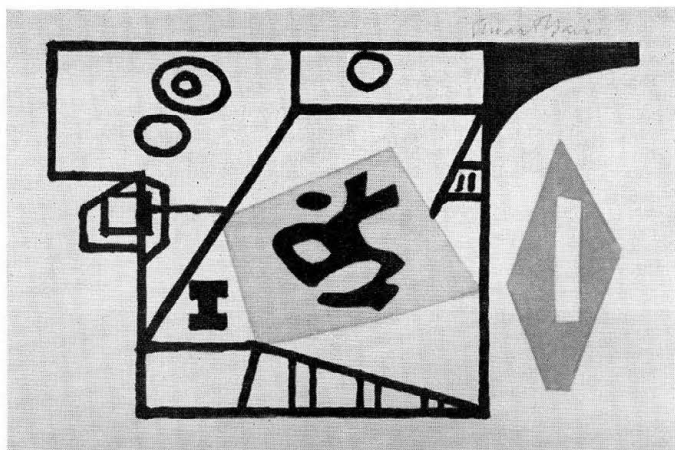
68

75





80



90

- 111 STELE 1956
Oil 52 x 40
LENT BY THE MILWAUKEE ART CENTER
Illustrated

- 112 WATER STREET 1956
Gouache 14 x 23
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. CHARLES B. BENENSON
Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and New York only

- 113 DETAIL STUDY FOR "CLICHÉ" 1957
Color lithograph; edition of 40 14½ x 12½
LENT BY THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY

- 114 PREMIERE 1957
Oil 58 x 50
LENT BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART, ART MUSEUM COUNCIL PURCHASE
Exhibited in New York and Los Angeles only

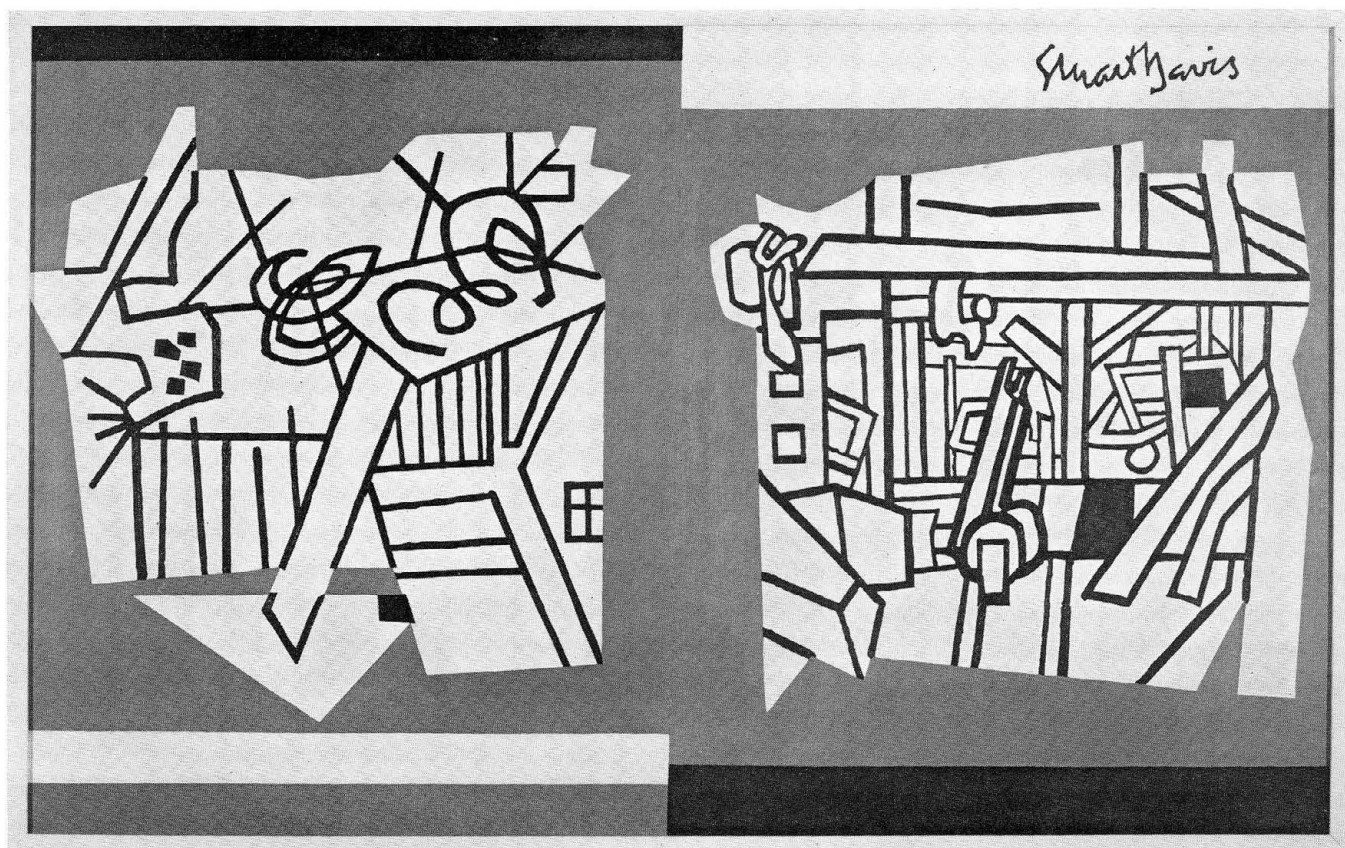
- 115 STUDY FOR THE MURAL, "COMPOSITION CONCRETE" 1957-60
Oil 43 x 20
LENT BY THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION

- 116 THE PARIS BIT 1959
Oil 46 x 60
LENT BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, GIFT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE WHITNEY MUSEUM
Illustrated in color

- 117 STANDARD STILL LIFE #3 1959
Casein 22 x 16½
LENT BY MR. ARTHUR H. GOODMAN

- 118 WAYS AND MEANS 1960
Oil 24 x 32
LENT BY DR. AND MRS. HERBERT J. KAYDEN
Exhibited in Washington, Chicago, and New York only

- 119 ANYSIDE 1961
Oil 28 x 42
LENT BY MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR R. FREEMAN
Illustrated

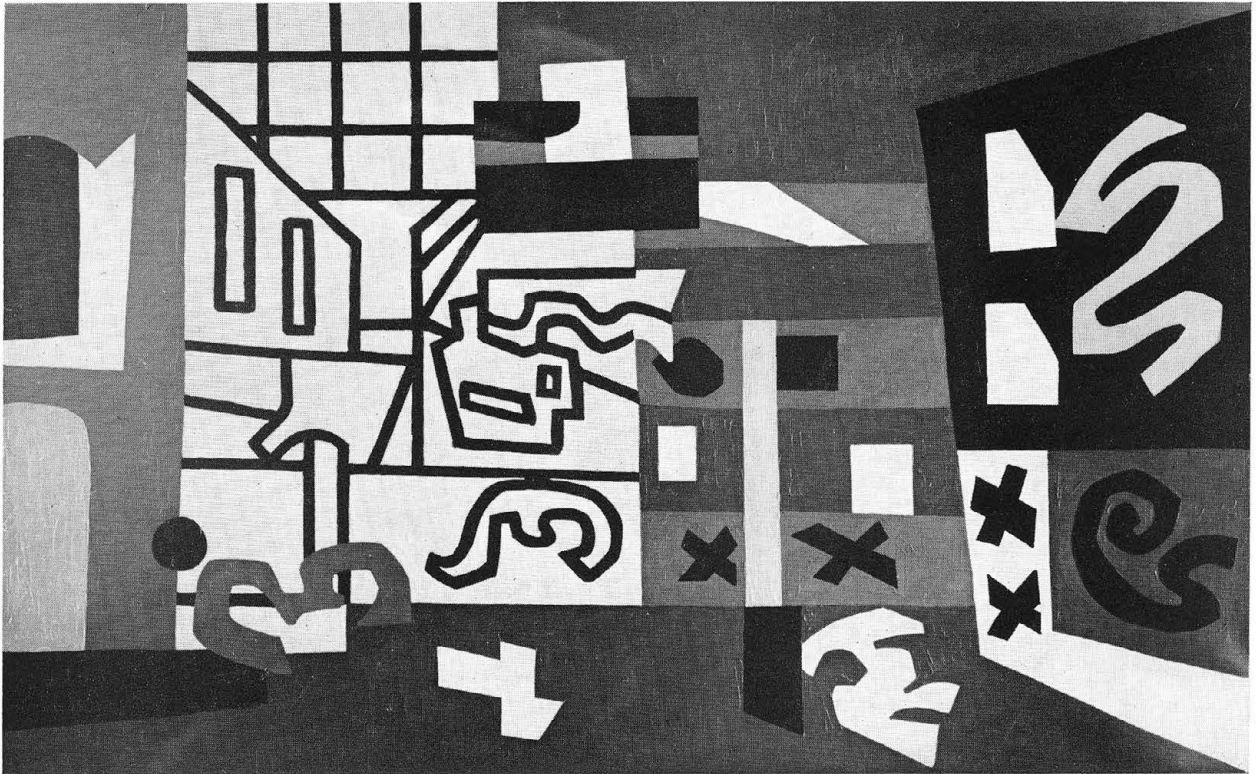




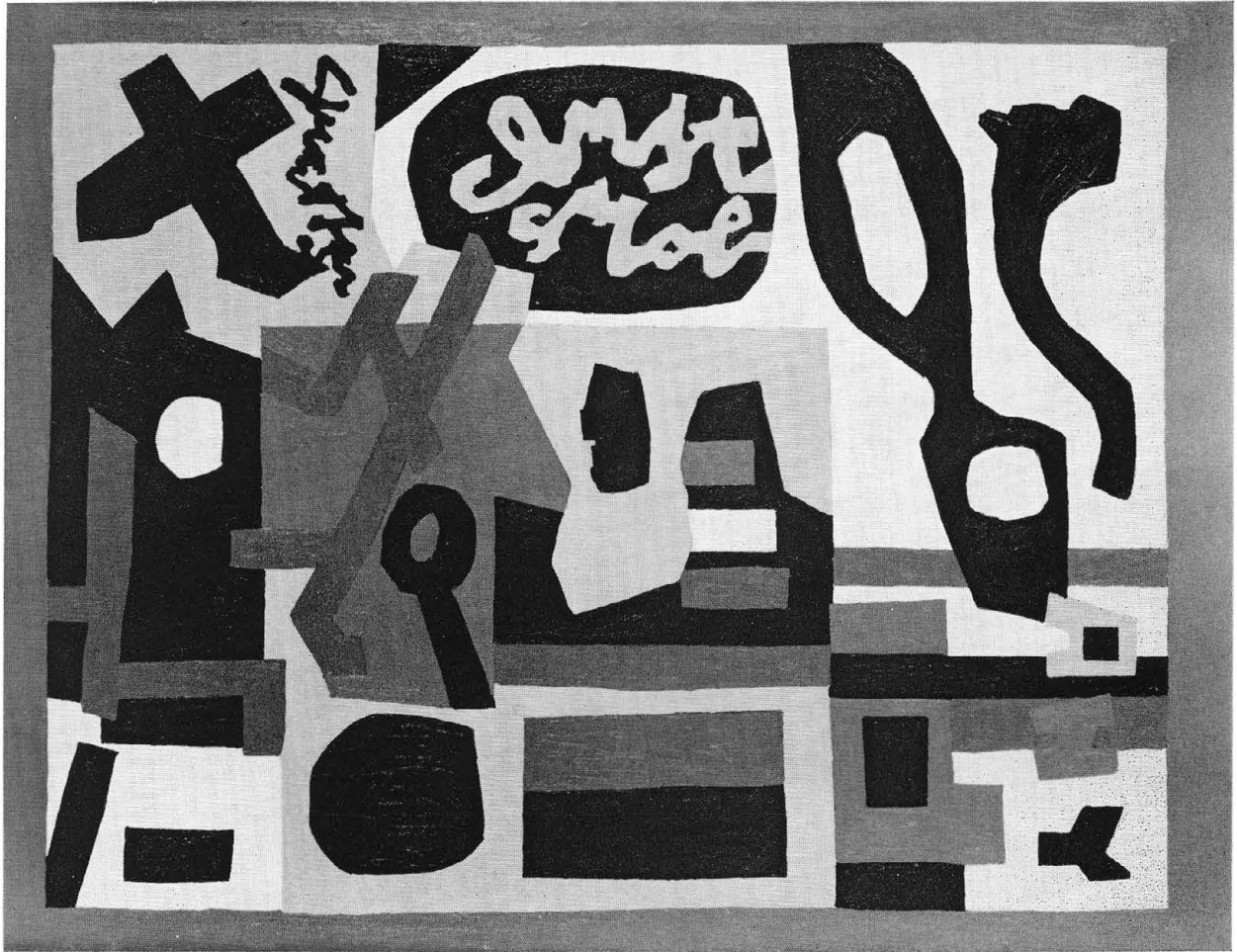


105

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|---|--|
| <p>120 STANDARD BRAND 1961
 Oil 60 x 46
 LENT BY THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS
 Exhibited in Washington and New York
 only</p> | <p>124 PUNCH CARD FLUTTER # 3
 1963
 Oil 24 x 32</p> |
| <p>121 TWILIGHT IN TURKEY 1961
 Oil 14 x 18</p> | <p>125 BLIPS AND IFS 1963-64
 Oil 71 x 53
 <i>Cover illustration</i></p> |
| <p>122 UNFINISHED BUSINESS 1962
 Oil 36 x 45
 LENT BY THE LANE COLLECTION</p> | <p>126 Untitled 1964
 Tempera on canvas 45 x 56</p> |
| <p>123 LETTER AND HIS ECOL
 c. 1963
 Oil 24 x 30½
 LENT BY THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF
 THE FINE ARTS
 <i>Illustrated</i></p> | <p>127 Untitled (unfinished) 1964
 Tempera and tape guidelines on canvas
 54½ x 41½
 127a Also four sketches</p> |



119

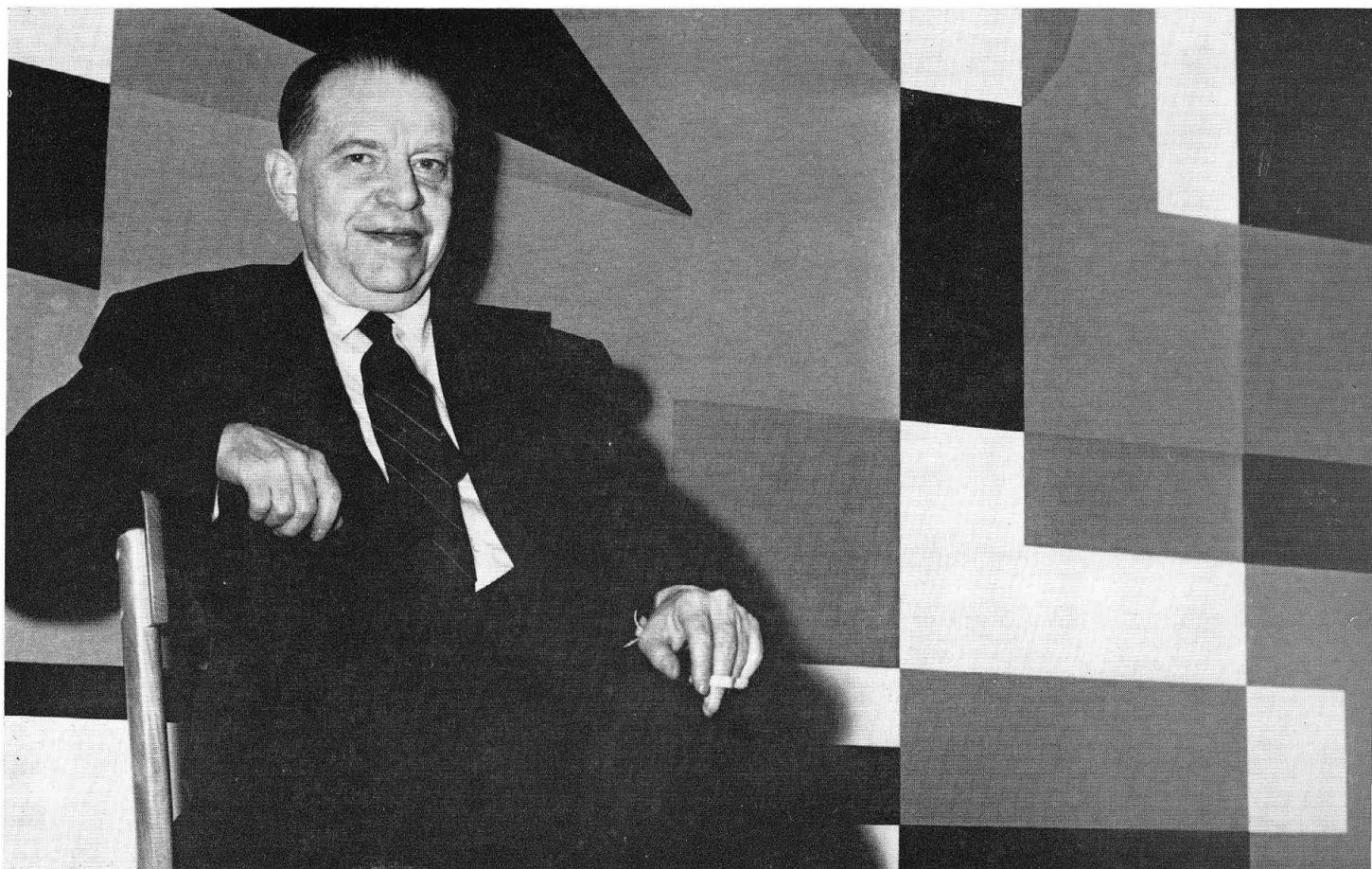


123

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF STUART DAVIS' LIFE AND WORK

- 1894 December 7: born in Philadelphia; father, Edward Wyatt Davis, art director of the *Philadelphia Press*, to which Sloan, Glackens, Luks, and Shinn contributed during the 1890's.
- 1901 Family moves to East Orange, New Jersey.
- 1908-10 Attends East Orange High School.
- 1910-13 Leaves school to study with Robert Henri in New York. Early association with Sloan, Glenn O. Coleman, Kenneth H. Miller, and Glintenkamp. Exhibits with the Independents.
- 1912 Ends formal education.
- 1913 Covers and drawings for *The Masses*.
Cartoons for *Harper's Weekly*.
Leaves Henri's studio.
Exhibits five watercolors in the Armory Show (New York and Chicago).
Establishes studio on Seventh Avenue in New York.
Summers in Provincetown, Massachusetts.
- 1915 Summers in Gloucester, Massachusetts, to which he returns almost yearly until 1934.
- 1916 Leaves *The Masses*.
Exhibits with the Independents.
- 1917 First one-man show, Sheridan Square Gallery, New York.
- 1918 World War I service as a map-maker with special commission under the Army Intelligence Department preparing materials for the peace conference.
Trip to Havana, Cuba, to recover from a severe case of Spanish influenza; with Coleman.
One-man show at the Ardsley Gallery, Brooklyn.
- 1920-23 Contributes portrait drawings to *The Dial*.
- 1923 Summers in New Mexico.
- 1925 One-man show at the Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

- 1927 First one-man show at the Downtown Gallery, New York (Mrs. Edith Gregor Halpert becomes his dealer); shows at the Downtown Gallery thereafter. *Eggbeater* series begins.
- 1928 May: purchase by Mrs. Juliana Force of the Whitney Studio Club of two paintings enables him to go to Paris.
- 1929 Late August: returns to New York from Europe.
Late summer spent at Gloucester.
One-man show at the Whitney Studio Galleries, New York.
- 1930 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
One-man show at the Crillon Galleries, Philadelphia.
- 1931-32 Teaches at the Art Students League, New York.
- 1932 Mural for Radio City Music Hall, New York.
Participates in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, mural exhibition.
One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
- 1933 December: enrolls in the Federal Art Project. (In 1935 the Project was incorporated into the Works Progress Administration.)
- 1933-39 Active with the Artists' Union and, after 1935, with the Artists' Congress.
Murals under the W.P.A.
- 1934 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
- 1935 Editor of *Art Front*, published by the Artists' Union.
- 1936 National Secretary of the Artists' Congress.
- 1938 National Chairman of the Artists' Congress.
Mural for W.P.A.; installed at Indiana University, Bloomington.
October 12: marries Roselle Springer of New York.
- 1939 Mural for the Hall of Communication of the New York World's Fair (subsequently destroyed).
Mural done under W.P.A. for the Municipal Broadcasting Company, New York (radio station WNYC).
- 1940 Resigns from the Artists' Congress.
- 1940-50 Teaches at the New School for Social Research, New York.



- 1941 Retrospective exhibition held by the Cincinnati Modern Art Society and Indiana University.
- 1943 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
- 1944 Wins the Pepsi-Cola Exhibition Award.
Wins honorable mention at the Carnegie Institute International Exhibition, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 1945 Retrospective exhibition held by the Museum of Modern Art.
Wins the J. Henry Schiedt Memorial Prize at the 140th Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.
- 1946 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
One-man show at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland.
Included in the American painting exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London, England.
- 1947 Wins the Hallowell Prize of the St. Botolph Club, Boston, Massachusetts.
- 1948 Wins the Norman Wait Harris Bronze Medal and Prize at the 59th American Water Color and Drawing Exhibition of the Art Institute of Chicago.
Wins the Second Purchase Prize at the La Tausca Pearls exhibition, Riverside Museum, New York.
- 1950 Wins the John Barton Payne Medal and Purchase Prize of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.
- 1951 Visiting art instructor at Yale University.
Included in the first Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil.
Wins the Ada S. Garrett Prize at the 60th Annual American Painting and Sculpture Exhibition of the Art Institute of Chicago.
- 1952 One-man show at the American Pavilion of the XXVI Biennale, Venice, Italy.
One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
Wins a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship.
April 17: birth of only child, George Earl Davis.
- 1954 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
- 1954-64 Member of the directing faculty of the Famous Artists Painting Course, Westport, Connecticut.

- 1955 Mural for Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.
- 1956 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
Exhibits at the XXVIII Biennale, Venice.
Elected to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
Wins honorable mention at the 151st Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
- 1957 Retrospective exhibition organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, in collaboration with the Des Moines Art Center, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.
Wins the Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts) Fine Arts Award for Painting.
Mural for the H. J. Heinz Company Research Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 1958 Included in the Primera Bienal Interamericana, Mexico.
Wins the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York) International Award.
- 1959 Included in the American National Exhibition in Moscow, U.S.S.R.
- 1960 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
Wins the Guggenheim International Award for the second time.
- 1961 Wins the Witkowsky Cash Prize of the Art Institute of Chicago.
- 1962 One-man show at the Downtown Gallery.
Wins the Fine Arts Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects.
- 1964 Wins the Joseph E. Temple Gold Medal of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
Wins the Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Medal and Prize of the Art Institute of Chicago.
June 24: dies in New York of a heart attack; survived by his wife and son, his mother, Helen S. Davis, the sculptress, and his brother, Wyatt Davis, the photographer.
December 2: the United States Post Office Department issues the Fine Arts commemorative postage stamp designed by Davis.

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