

# BANNERS

This exhibition has been arranged as the Auckland City Art Gallery's contribution to the 1969 Auckland Festival and for exhibition at the National Art Gallery, Wellington, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The banners have been lent by Multiples Gallery, New York and have been commissioned for Multiples by the Betsy Ross Flag & Banner Company Inc. We are grateful to Mrs Marian Goodman of Multiples for her co-operation in organising the exhibition and to Mr Samuel J. Wagstaff Jnr, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Detroit Institute of Art, for his generosity in allowing the re-publication of his introductory essay to the catalogue of Multiples Gallery. The exhibition has been generously assisted by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand.

G. C. Docking, Director, Auckland City Art Gallery

## BANNERS FROM NEW YORK

"Multiplicity" in art becomes an issue today as artists become more and more involved in commercial process, particularly some of the commercial-mechanical and industrial processes and materials - vacuum forming of plastic, commercial enamelling on metal, silk screen, welded steel, stencil, plastics in general, lights of all kinds, etc. Part of today's aesthetic already overlaps the reality of mass production of the machine-made thing, and leaves the reality of personal handwriting behind. In such a situation the handmade unique piece of art is often indistinguishable from a machine-made series. Particularly in this area of the aesthetic where the artist has recognised the machine as an extension of his own ability and programmes it for aesthetic ends, he as often as not becomes planner rather than actual maker. The concept becomes more important than the execution. This presents problems to the viewer of accepting an object which is the product of an artist's mind (idea) and eye rather than of his hand. The usual ratio of effort to effect we have been led to expect is upset. To relegate responsibility of manufacture is not necessarily a sign of frivolity, particularly if the artist retains final right of okay. Art has always been what the artist decided to make it. If assistants in Giotto's shop painted an altarpiece from his design, it was signed with his name and accepted as an autograph work. Today it is not by Giotto. Many of Durer's woodcuts, Rubens' larger compositions, Canova's sculpture were the work of assistants acting under the master's order. The tradition of shop participation runs throughout western art.

We have inherited a romantic 19th century love of the unique, the rare, the handmade, which makes it relatively difficult for us to subordinate ourselves emotionally, aesthetically to anything machine-made. Ruskin wanted to do away with all machines. Machines were what art was fighting - the gallant stand of personality against encroaching art. We have progressed beyond that, but the ambiguous partnership between man and machine still makes us nervous, even though the artist has begun to show us that the products of machine and commercial processes have a personality of their own which, if allowed to be themselves, also produce an aesthetic effect. Once one gets over an inbred nostalgia for wood, bronze, marble, and terra cotta, the new materials have their own character and poignancy, purity, vulnerability, precision, whatever you need. These new media are their own message, too.

One can be blinded by bronze as automatically connoting art as one can be blinded by plastic as an impossibility. We are still not used to the machine making useless objects, though Duchamp's ready-mades gave us a glimpse of what was possible. Their arrogance when they were new must have made them hard to see. One wonders what would happen to our enjoyment of the Degas bronzes if they existed in an edition of five hundred or more. One day that gift may be presented to the world or may be demanded by it. This is not the same as casting a wrought iron Gonzales in bronze or blowing up a Nadleman in marble, even though these products of an outside "art director" also give some pleasure. One can also be blinded by uniqueness or rarity, to the extent that a cast from a small edition *does* give more pleasure than a more common sculpture. In a passage on his zinc lithos, Josef Albers describes the precision of the copying quality of machine process: "These results require the use of ruler and drafting pen and establish immodulated line as a legitimate artistic means. In this way they oppose a belief that the handmade is better than the machine-made, or that mechanical construction is antigraph or unable to arouse emotion. In this age of industrial evolution, both methods have their merits."

Multiples can be of a class by themselves, it seems to me. They need not refer to or equal some platonic prototype original but can be planned as a "run". The artist's intention is all-important. The self-conscious reproduction of an art work done with duplication in mind may sometimes be successful, but infinitely more challenging and creative, I believe, will be the situation where the artist joins in partnership with a process, whether it be a machine or moulding one, a combination of machine and handwork of craftsmen, or duplication by craftsmen alone, as has already been so successful in the production of banners. As more artists, particularly sculptors, use craftsmen to make their work for them, the duplicating of such work will embody its own perfection. The "duplicate" is the same as the "original" when so made and should be able to fill the growing desire for possession among expanding ranks of collectors.

The limitlessness of art via machines piques the imagination. The new permissions granted to artists by commercial production and materials will certainly allow them to expand the skin of the aesthetic as the bell founders of Padua made possible Donatello's equestrian bronze. Many artists plan and think on graph paper and force us to confront mechanical aspects of reality which we have up until now taken for granted as automatically outside the aesthetic. Their work approaches the stereotype, "anything undistinguished by individual marks", where only the idea remains personal, and surface, texture, finish reflect the personality of the process. Perhaps this will make us look closer, more sympathetically at the millions of commercial objects which fill our world.

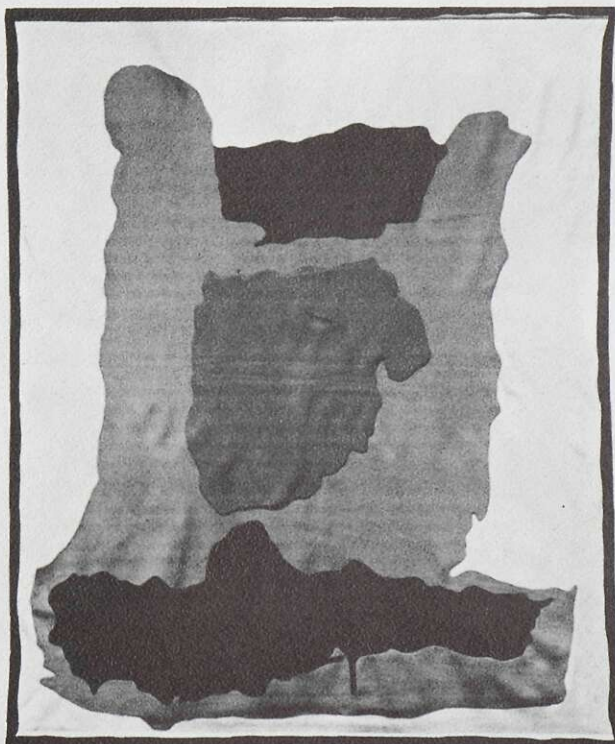
The artist is bored by repeating himself, but there is more demand for his work than ever before. Art could become commodity under incessant repetition if there were too much difference between intention and realization. A large part of the artist's problem today is to get process and craft to meet his standards, unlike the situation which also exists where many artists believe that the process can do it better than they can by hand. In any case, it seems a healthy open-ended situation when artists move into new media, consult the Yellow Pages and give the lie to Wyndham Lewis of some 40 years ago that "the perfectly novel inventive forces that contemporary science and technique suggest are not used in art".

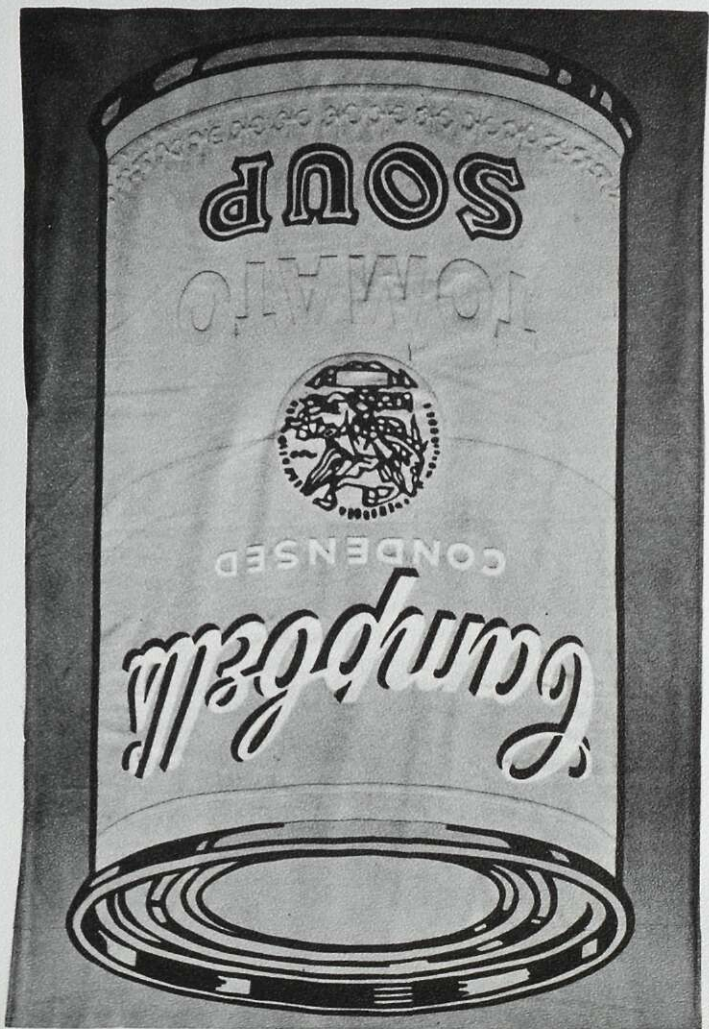
SAMUEL J. WAGSTAFF JNR.

Sizes are given in inches, height before width. All the banners have been published in editions of twenty and have been lent by Multiples Gallery Inc, 929 Madison Avenue, New York.

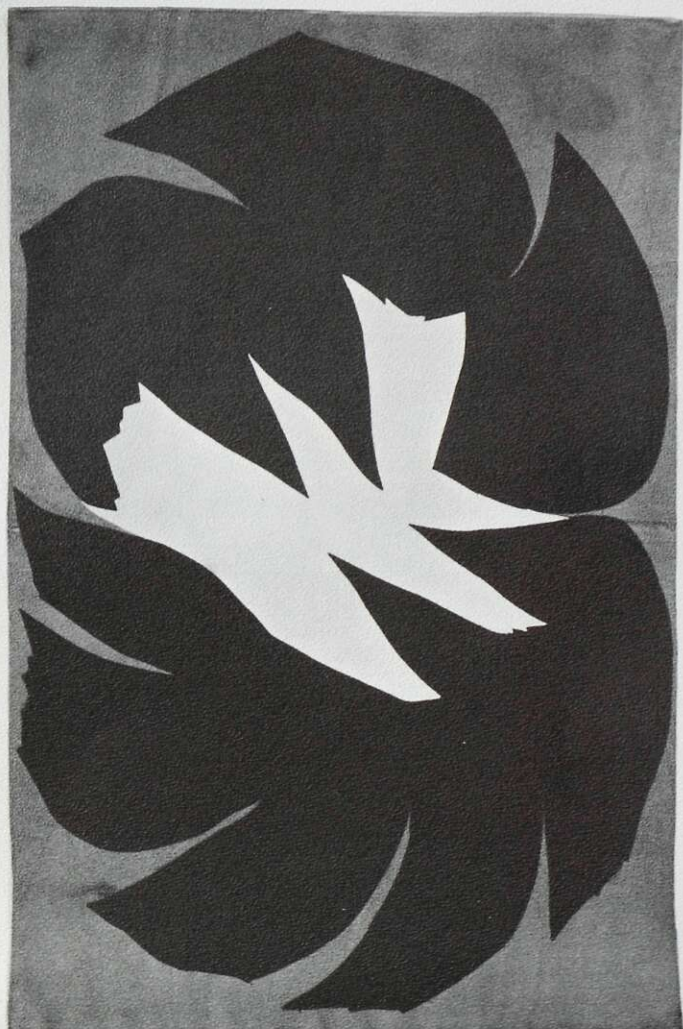
- 1 JIM DINE, born Cincinnati, Ohio 1935  
Boots 60 x 60
- 2 HELEN FRANKENTHALER born New York 1928  
60 x 72
- 3 ROBERT INDIANA born New Castle, Indiana 1928  
Love 60 x 60
- 4 NICHOLAS KRUSHENICK born New York 1929  
No.1 90 x 58
- 5 ROBERT KULICKE born Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1924  
12 x 12
- 6 GERALD LAING born Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1936  
88 x 56
- 7 ROY LICHTENSTEIN born New York 1923  
Moonscape 84 x 48
- 8 MARISOL (ESCOBAR) born Paris 1930  
78 x 60
- 9 GEORGE ORTMAN born Oakland, California 1926  
No.1 89 x 58
- 10 HENRY PEARSON born Kingston, North Carolina 1914  
72 x 72
- 11 MIRIAM SCHAPIRO born Toronto, Canada 1923  
49 x 58
- 12 ERNEST TROVA born St. Louis, Missouri 1927  
Falling Man 72 x 72
- 13 WILLIAM WALTON born Jacksonville, Illinois 1909  
71 x 59
- 14 ANDY WARHOL born Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1930  
89 x 60
- 15 TOM WESSELMANN born Cincinnati, Ohio 1931  
No.2 60 x 72
- 16 JACK YOUNGERMAN born Louisville, Kentucky 1926  
89 x 60
- 17 ADJA YUNKERS born Latvia 1900  
71 x 48
- 18 LARRY ZOZ born Des Moines, Iowa 1936  
80 x 64

FRANKENTHALER





WARHOL



YOUNGERMAN

**BANNERS**  
**SYNNERS**  
**BANNERS**

*Design and Typography: Hamish Keith  
 Printed by Wakefield Press Ltd, Auckland*

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 1969.  
**BANNERS FROM NEW YORK**





YOUNGERMAN



WARHOL

**BANNERS**

**SUNNY**

**BANNERS**

*Design and Typography: Hamish Keith  
Printed by Wakefield Press Ltd, Auckland*

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 1969.  
**BANNERS FROM NEW YORK**