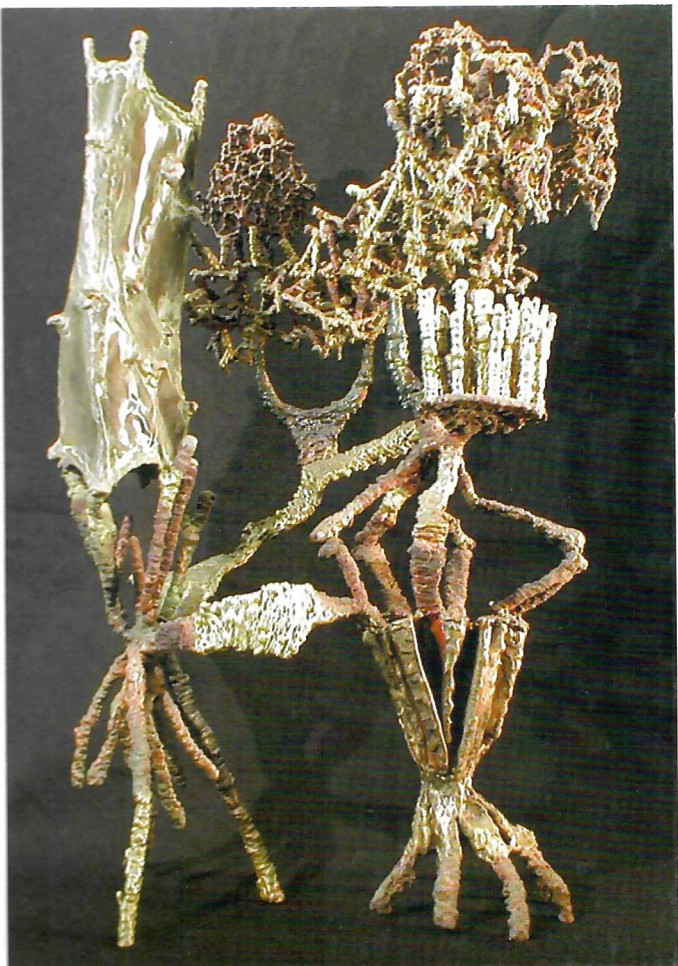


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# IBRAM LASSAW



A retrospective exhibition of works  
and photographic documents  
from the artist's studio in Springs,  
East Hampton, New York

Catalog by  
Arthur F. Jones and  
Denise Lassaw

Steve Arbury, Editor

RADFORD UNIVERSITY  
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museum  
Radford, Virginia  
February 1-March 8, 2002

Leepa-Rattner  
Museum *of Art*  
St. Petersburg College • Tarpon Springs

Tarpon Springs, Florida  
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**BRAAM LASSAW**





## FOREWORD

Steve Arbury, Director  
Radford University Art Museum

First and foremost the Radford University Art Museum would like to thank Ibram Lassaw for allowing his works to travel from his studio in New York to art museums in other states. As one of the original American Abstract Expressionists, Ibram Lassaw has secured a firm place in the history of art, and we are honored to host an exhibition of his work. Mr. Lassaw created a unique type of Abstract Expressionist sculpture that is tinged with a mystical quality derived from his study of German mystics and Zen philosophy. His sculptures are textured, metallic mazes of form and space that evoke the endless harmonies of the universe.

Gratitude is also extended to Mr. Lassaw's wife, Ernestine, for her many assistances and for her support of Mr. Lassaw's career during the last six decades. I must also acknowledge the collaborative efforts on this project by Arthur F. Jones (the RU Art Museum's Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and the curator of this exhibition), and Denise Lassaw (curator, Ibram Lassaw Studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York).

Arthur Jones first met Ibram Lassaw during the summer of 1992 while the former was a scholar in residence at the Pollock-Krasner House and Research Center in East Hampton, New York. In November of that year, Jones served as the curator of the first art gallery exhibition of Lassaw's "projection paintings" at the University of Kentucky's Center for Contemporary Art. The following year Jones returned to East Hampton where he gave a presentation on Lassaw in the 1993 Pollock-Krasner House Summer Lecture Series. Maintaining a strong interest in Lassaw's art, Jones more recently undertook another project on the artist — this one in two stages. The first stage took place in March, 2000, when Lassaw was invited to Radford University as a Distinguished Visiting Artist. Coinciding with this visit, Jones organized another "projection paintings" exhibition — but this one involved more spectator interaction with the projections. Then, receiving a Radford University Faculty Professional Development Leave for the Spring of 2001, Jones undertook additional research to plan the present exhibition and its catalog essay.

Denise Lassaw is the daughter of Ibram Lassaw. She serves as the curator of his studio where she has undertaken the project of organizing all the materials it contains, which span the artist's entire career. Growing up amidst the excitement of the New York School's art world in the 1950s and 1960s, she gleaned insights into the various events and activities of the New York School as her father (as well as her godparents, Willem de Kooning and Elaine de Kooning) rose to prominence in the art world. We greatly appreciate her perceptive insights, advice and expertise as a collaborator on this project. She has authored an insightful biographical account of her father's life and career, as well as provided materials for the selected exhibitions record, bibliography and the lists of public collections and sculpture commissions for architectural sites. She also served as an advisor and participant in the planning of this exhibition with Arthur Jones, and photographed many of the works for the catalog.

Finally, acknowledgment is extended to the following individuals and institutions for their help and contributions: R. Lynn Whitelaw, Director of the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art at St. Petersburg College in Tarpon Springs, Florida; Helen A. Harrison, Director, and Genevieve Linnehan, Assistant to the Director, of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in East Hampton, New York; RU Art Museum assistant Matthew Dowdy; and Crystal Yang.





*work in progress*

"Work in Progress," Lassaw at age 20 in his Greenwich Village studio in New York City, 1933 (cat. no. 28)





# IBRAM LASSAW'S LIFE AND ART

## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

by Denise Lassaw

Curator of the Ibram Lassaw Studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York

### **M**CHILDHOOD

My father, Ibram Lassaw, was born in Egypt in 1913. His parents had escaped from the Ukraine and were staying with relatives in Alexandria while they tried to raise funds to continue their journey to America. The outbreak of World War I delayed their arrival in New York until 1921 when my father was eight years old.

From his boyhood onward, Lassaw was an explorer of space and materials. When staying for a while in Constantinople, he became fascinated with the twisted bronze casing of exploded bombs that were left in the rubble of a building. After coming to the United States, he loved to play with clay and once made a dinosaur that he used to scare two little girls. They screamed, and Lassaw claims "that was when I realized that art was powerful" (or so the story goes). As a boy, he also read science fiction and dreamed of becoming an airplane pilot. I am sure that had space travel been a possibility, he would have dreamed of becoming an astronaut. His curiosity about nature in all her forms was (and still is) boundless. As a Boy Scout, Lassaw went on camping trips where he learned about wild nature firsthand (and when I was small, he passed this on to me by teaching me the names of all the trees – as well as how to find where the fairies danced in the grass).

One day while exploring Brooklyn, Lassaw discovered the Brooklyn Children's Museum and a clay class taught by Dorothea Denslow. At the Clay Club, and later at the Beaux Arts Institute, Lassaw became proficient in classical clay modeling, casting and working with plaster on armatures – skills that later came in handy when he made the death masks of labor organizer V. Jabotinsky in 1940 and Dylan Thomas in 1953.

### **EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN ART**

His father, Philip Lassaw, hoped that Lassaw would become an engineer and sent him to a special high

school for engineering, but it seems that once Lassaw decided that sculpture was his "work," he never wavered. Lassaw studied art history from books and by going to museums and galleries – he even created his own 33-volume encyclopedia of art history from pictures cut out of magazines. From these studies he saw that there was a progression in art forms that was dependent on available materials and technology that influenced (and were influenced by) philosophical and scientific trends. In the 1930s, Lassaw attended classes at City College – where he told me that the art history classes were a waste of his time because he already knew more than his professors were teaching.

Lassaw came to the conclusion that the sculpture of the future, his sculpture, had to move into three-dimensional open space. Simply to continue doing what had already been done so well by other sculptors was not very interesting to him. Although his primary interest was (and still is) sculpture, he has also worked with pencil, inks and acrylic on paper. One of his first pure abstractions was a color pastel that he made as a teenager in 1927 (ill. no. 1). Over the years Lassaw has made hundreds of drawings as independent art works.

### **STRUGGLES IN THE 1930s AND 1940s**

By 1933, Lassaw had moved to a cold water flat in Greenwich Village. Although the rent for the flat was only ten dollars a month, he was evicted for nonpayment. He spent the night on a park bench in Washington Square with all his possessions, including a small sculpture (*Dancing Figure*, 1929, ill. no. 2), under the bench. In the morning he met a young woman he knew who lent him ten dollars with which he rented another place. All through the difficult thirties he moved from loft to loft, barely making ends meet in the most creative ways. Living in places without electricity he learned wiring. Needing shelves and tables he learned carpentry. He was not alone in this





enchanted poverty, but belonged to a growing group of young artists who knew each other from the Clay Club, the Art Students League, the Beaux Arts Institute or just from the Village neighborhood. Many of them, such as Willem de Kooning, Balcomb Green and Philip Pavia became friends for life.

During the Depression period Lassaw was active in the formation of the Unemployed Artists Association that demonstrated at the Whitney Museum for jobs in the WPA (Works Progress Administration). He worked on the Civil Works Authority cleaning and repairing sculpture in the city; taught sculpture under the WPA at the 92nd Street YMHA and as an independent artist. He was also one of the founders of the American Abstract Artists and later, the Club. Lassaw began to keep notebooks in which he wrote ideas for future projects, materials not yet invented, quotations from interesting books and wish lists of tools or materials he thought useful. These notebooks or "Day Books" now number over 20 and many cover more than one year.

During World War II Lassaw served in the army where his skills with sculpture served him in making three-dimensional maps, and he also learned to weld. After military service, he went to Provincetown, Massachusetts, for the summer and met Ernestine Blumberg (my future mother). They have been married since 1944.

In the mid forties Lassaw played with "projection paintings," a series of hand-painted abstract slides (represented by examples in the exhibition, ill. nos. 33-36). These were painted with translucent dyes mixed with a "secret" chemical formula Lassaw had developed. A favorite story goes that late one night walking home from a meeting of The Club, Lassaw was telling Bill de Kooning about the "projection paintings," and Bill decided to come up to the loft to see them. As they sat in the dark studio filling the room with brilliant luminous colored patterns, there came a hard pounding on the door. "Open Up! This is the police!" Apparently, a policeman had seen the intense colors from the street and thought that either the place was on fire or that it was being robbed.

### **SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND ART**

Along with his interest in the natural and physical sciences, my father read widely in philosophy and religion,

especially the mystical branches of Christianity and Buddhism. He heard Buckminster Fuller speak in the Village, and he was familiar with the writings of Carl Jung, which intrigued him. In 1953 he joined a class on Zen Buddhism taught by D. T. Suzuki at Columbia University and went faithfully for several years. Many of his Day Books are filled with class notes from this time. The study of Buddhism, mythology and especially science had a great influence on the way Lassaw thought about his sculpture and his own place in the cosmic organism, which is how he began to understand existence. He wrote: "All that is, is Nature. That which you see before you is Nature. The 'abstract' artist works from Nature as much as any other artist" (Jan. 10, 1954, Day Book) and "The artist is a necessary gland in the organism which is human society" (June 13, 1955). The thought developed that human beings are not separate from nature and so the works of human beings are also the works of nature.

While Lassaw titled his works, he tried his best to be certain that the title would not interfere with the viewer's experience of the work itself. He chose titles that almost certainly would mean nothing at all to anyone. He did this because he believed that a title with a conceptual or visual reference causes the viewer to try to see in the work what the title refers to. He wrote: "We are asked to work from Nature, but at the same time we are asked for the meaning of our works. What kind of meaning does Nature have?" (1954, Day Book) and "There seems to be an idea among most people (particularly critics) that the pleasures of seeing the color-form object/art is not so lofty an experience as the pleasures of the conscious reasoning intellectual variety. That things are not as important as the knowledge about them" (Feb. 19, 1954, Day Book).

Lassaw wants his work seen as it was created, in its "thusness," its very presence, just as it is and nothing more or less. Titles are chosen from Lassaw's readings in philosophy or science, especially astronomy. Many of them are Sanskrit names from Buddhist texts, while others are named for galaxies, stars, thought processes or references to nonwestern mythology.

Many artists were exploring these same directions in philosophy and science within the context of their work. What Abstract Expressionist painters were doing in two dimensions, Lassaw was doing in three dimensions. This new way of understanding one's connection to (or actually interaction in) the world was "in the air,"





and creative people were the first to consciously or unconsciously manifest its influences.

### **METAL SCULPTURE TECHNIQUES**

Lassaw became best known for his metal sculptures, which drew patronage as well as critical acclaim – especially from the early 1950s onward. However, in published statements about his art I have sometimes encountered mistakes regarding his methods. It seems that once a writer misunderstands any aspect of Lassaw's work and it gets into a book or an article, that misunderstanding is passed on by other writers.

Since I grew up in the studio and was welding alone from the age of eight, I personally know all the techniques I describe below, as well as the philosophical angle as it applies to my father's work.

**Cage-like:** In my view, this term (which has often been used by writers to describe Lassaw's work) should only apply to several works created in the late '30s and '40s – such as the exhibition's *Star Cradle* (ill. no. 11). This sculpture consists of an intersecting steel-stock framework within which are placed rectangular sheets of plastic with biomorphic shapes painted on their translucent surfaces. Therefore, because forms are encased within steel frames, the sculpture (like some others of the period, such as *Sculpture in Steel*, *Intersecting Rectangles* and *Gravity Tension*) might be described as "cage-like."

**Direct-metal sculpture:** After 1951, when Lassaw bought an oxyacetylene torch, his metal sculptures were made by a variety of welding techniques. Some were hand-manipulated copper sheet forms covered with molten bronze and other alloys (nickel silver, phos-bronze, silicon bronze, phos-copper). Other sculptures were galvanized wire forms coated with alloys, and some were created by a very direct technique often referred to by writers as "drip."

**Drip method:** This process, which Lassaw invented, involved a meditative process of moment-by-moment fusing of molten bronze drops (or drops of another alloy) into each other. This is similar to the building of a stalagmite in a cave by the constant dripping of water carrying limestone sediment. The bronze does not actually "drip," but is laid down one molten drop or mound at a time in a very controlled manner. The artist can control the diameter of the mound by the

heat of the flame and the size of the rod, and by understanding the nature of each alloy. Some alloys melt in a very fluid manner; others are like a sticky or gritty lava. The process lends itself to an intuitive state of mind in which the variations in the way an alloy melts, the diameter of rod that is being used, the color of the metal and the shapes of the spaces between the welded forms come into play; each aspect of the action is appreciated and minutely acted on by the artist. There may be some inspiration in the beginning, like a passage in contrapuntal music or the shape of a passing cloud, but once the work is begun it is all direct-action sculpture. There is no drawing, no planned outcome, no known size or shape to aim for – the work is aimless and creates or "suggests" itself, telling the artist when it is finished. This is a process in which the artist's technical abilities and meditative inspiration merge on the subconscious level.

**Armatures:** Armatures or supportive structures are not used in Lassaw's direct welding technique; he had used them in some pre-welding works such as *Milky Way* from 1950 (ill. no. 14) in which a wire armature was covered with plastic-composition paste. The wire structures in later welded works are coated with bronze to add strength, texture and color, but are not hidden inside as an armature would be. In a few sculptures the wire structure is partially covered with copper shapes, partially exposed and bronze coated, but in sculptures that are all copper covered with bronze, the copper sheet itself supplies the physical strength of the work.

**Self Color:** Lassaw prefers to work with the "self-color" of the natural material. He has used acids and alkaloids to create blue colors in the metal – as seen in *Counterpoint Castle* (ill. no. 15), for example – but he prefers to use the metal's own color. Bronze can be pale yellow or a smooth red golden, nickel silver is silver colored and very smooth, phos-copper has a rough brown reddish color and steel is black and rough. Each metal adds to the palette of the sculptor. Lassaw's sculptures are intended to be bright, colorful and reflect light.

### **RECOGNITION AND SELF FULFILLMENT**

Lassaw never sold any art works until 1951, after being invited by Samuel Kootz to be represented by his New York gallery. Following the sale of a welded metal sculpture to Nelson Rockefeller, purchases by the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and other museums followed.



Along with other successes, he was also one of five American Artists to be included in the 1954 Venice Biennale in Italy. Ample evidence of the attainment of art world recognition is provided by his exhibition record (which covers a period of nearly seven highly active decades), inclusion of his work in numerous important public collections and an extensive list of published sources on his art.

Nonetheless, making art, in and of itself, was always Lassaw's greatest success. Enduring struggle as an artist during the 1930s and 1940s, he was still compelled to

create pure abstract sculpture, never hesitating to go forward – even in a world not ready to support his type of art. Lassaw never doubted his vision that the future direction of sculpture was into “open space.”

Someone once called Ibram Lassaw the “happiest sculptor” in New York and I think this might be true. Gallery representation has come and gone, but all these years he has been pursuing the exploration of space as it pleases him, through hard times and good times regardless, remaining true to his own Muse. For an artist, I don't think you can ask for more.



Lassaw and Willem de Kooning at the latter's studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York; c. mid-late 1960s (cat. no. 30)





# IBRAM LASSAW

## DEEP SPACE AND BEYOND

by Arthur F. Jones

Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Radford University Art Museum

### THE ARTIST

Originality, intuitive action in the creative process and the unity of matter and spirit are important issues in the work of Ibram Lassaw (b. 1913), an important innovator within the development of open-space sculpture in America. Lassaw was a founding member of the American Abstract Artists in 1936 and in 1949 the organizational meeting of The Club was held in his New York studio. He was closely associated with New York School painters, such as Arshile Gorky (1904–48) and Willem de Kooning (1904–97), and was a neighbor of Jackson Pollock (1912–56) and Lee Krasner (1908–84) in Springs, New York.

Lassaw's rise to prominence began in the early 1950s, when he succeeded in selling his work. International recognition as one of America's most renowned sculptors soon followed. Lassaw's philosophy of art was first discussed in detail in an article he wrote for the *American Abstract Artists Yearbook* in 1938. This essay, titled "On Inventing Our Own Art," laid out the basic tenets of Lassaw's artistic convictions to which he remains attached even today. At age 88, Lassaw still creates art.

### MUSIC AND ABSTRACT ART

Lassaw likes to tell an anecdote about Beethoven, who when asked to explain the meaning of a piano sonata he had just played, answered by sitting down and playing it again. Just as in pure music, the meaning of Lassaw's art is intended to be literally what it is – what the viewer sees. According to Lassaw, the Sanskrit term, *tathata* ("suchness") applies well to his work in this respect. He also feels that there is something much more profound in art than can be expressed in ordinary language.<sup>1</sup>

Lassaw considers abstract art to be like a work of music remarking: "If I could obtain just some of the profundity of the music of Bach, I would be very happy." He has always made art with serious music

playing in the background. His work is thereby affected by musical harmony. Lassaw was also personally acquainted with John Cage, who was known to have literally played the sculptor's metal pieces by striking them with metal rods.<sup>2</sup>

Among the most important influences on Lassaw's thinking as an emerging abstract artist during the early 1930s were Moholy Nagy's and R. Buckminster Fuller's concepts involving open-space design. He was also strongly affected by the works of other modernists, such as Jean Arp (1887–1966), Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), Naum Gabo (1890–1977), Julio González (1876–1942), Antoine Pevsner (1886–1962) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), among others.

Lassaw's development might appear to have followed a linear progression from earlier representational works as a teenager, to abstracted figures by the late 1920s, to pure abstraction by 1933; however, a signed abstract pastel (ill. no. 1) predates the earliest fully abstract sculpture by several years. Therefore, the onset of Lassaw's interest in pure abstraction can be documented as early as his teen years, in the late 1920s.

According to the artist, this early pastel work was experimental in process. Lassaw recalls that he began by applying a ground in black paint. Then, before it was thoroughly dry (while it was still receptive to other materials), he worked pastel into it – fusing the pastel to the paint. This experiment in technique created interesting textural qualities, while also providing a fixative for the pastel. A link might be seen between the application of color here and Lassaw's later attempts to fuse color into three-dimensional forms.

### "DEEP SPACE" IN SCULPTURE

Despite his close ties with important New York School painters, Lassaw's main commitment in art has always been an exploration of "deep space" in sculpture. His emphasis on open space allowed the eye to enter



works visually. This idea in three-dimensional art evolved in constructivist sculpture simultaneously with a preference for “flatness” in 20th-century painting. From a modernist perspective, painting should not create a three-dimensional illusion of reality. Conversely, from Lassaw’s perspective as a sculptor, “the ‘space’ of painting is not to be confused with that of sculpture” because his constructivist works could be entered non-illusionistically with two eyes as real space.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, there has been a longstanding rivalry between painters and sculptors. During the High Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci (whose main artistic direction was painting) wrote about the issue in his notebooks, concluding that the artistic achievements of the painter were on a loftier plane. Although Lassaw was much more intrigued with three-dimensional space, he did not feel a need to compete with the painter. In 1938, he said: “The crystallized concepts that determine sculpture and painting are dissolving.” Throughout his career, Lassaw has also been prolific in making flat, two-dimensional art – although his main emphasis was sculpture until very recently.<sup>4</sup>

Lassaw’s earliest nonrepresentational sculptures in the 1930s were plaster-over-wire biomorphic forms that combined a constructivist design principle to involve the viewer within the work’s interior open space (ill. nos. 7–8). Other sculptures of the late 1930s and 1940s utilized a more open-cage framework – some favoring geometry or combining surrealist biomorphism with formalist geometry. In keeping with the constructivist practices of others he admired, Lassaw became intrigued with the use of new materials for constructing sculptures, such as the use of acrylic plastic and steel in *Star Cradle* from 1949 (ill. no. 11). The rectangular format of this work might remind the spectator of a window – a theme important to some modern painters from Matisse to Motherwell. As in some other works by Lassaw done within the decade preceding *Star Cradle* (such as *Sculpture in Steel*, *Intersecting Rectangles* and *Gravity Tension*), two steel frames that contain other material within them are intersected at 90-degree angles. Though it was not the artist’s conscious intention, the steel framework used in these works might be compared by the spectator to rectangular supports traditionally used for paintings. Because the frames are intersected, however, the viewer’s eye is directed toward a sculptural interior space.

Rectangular caged works of the 1940s evolved toward softer non-geometric formats, as seen in *Milky Way* from 1950 (ill. no. 14) and later direct-metal welded sculptures, such as *Counterpoint Castle* from 1957 (ill. no. 15). Many of the direct-metal sculptures were wire-like forms overlaid with molten metal. These works, like *Milky Way*, straddle between a biomorphic and a geometric approach within an open structure. Visually entering Lassaw’s three-dimensional world, viewers imagine going on a journey that shrinks them down and draws them into the sculpture’s core as “space travelers.” When the viewer’s eye arrives at the sculpture’s center, he or she can imagine looking outward from the sculpture’s interior. This concept of traveling in space runs through Lassaw’s sculpture throughout most of his career.

When discussing the deep space idea in his sculpture, Lassaw likes to tell a story about Wu Tao-tzu (an eighth-century Chinese painter from the Tang Dynasty), who, according to legend, entered a doorway into one of his painted landscape scenes. Wu invited the Emperor to follow him, offering to show him far greater wonders inside, but when the Emperor approached the painting he could not locate the door to the inside. In the meantime, Wu had disappeared into his painting and was never seen again.

### **UNITY OF SMALLNESS AND LARGENESS IN SCULPTURE**

Exploring the interiors of an open-space sculpture might spark thoughts of imaginary travel into the vastness of the universe, where stars and planets do not take up as much space as does the void. The opening up of a sculpture’s interior to pull the viewer’s eye into its microcosmic core was also, in part, a denial of the solidity of objects (as in atomic structure) – acknowledging that things are not as solid as they appear. In his 1947 *Day Book*, Lassaw wrote that “condensing atoms of a man’s body to leave no unfilled space would leave a hardly visible speck.”<sup>5</sup>

A concept expressed throughout much of his work involves the unity of a vast cosmos and a miniature universe that mirror one another. For example, a sculpture by Lassaw might not be perceived only by looking upon its exterior boundaries from different sides to grasp its completeness as a sculptural form. The other way (the artist’s preference) involves visually penetrating the





exterior and entering the work with the eye to investigate its minute interior spaces. In Lassaw's work, parallel macrocosmic and microcosmic worlds are interpenetrating aspects of an inseparable whole in which the small and large unite as one.

Although his sculptures can only be experienced from the outside and traveled internally only through the imagination, Lassaw always hoped to make larger sculpture – big enough for viewers to enter and really experience from the inside. On a few occasions, he created works that were large enough to require him to climb into in order to weld, but most of Lassaw's sculptures were too small to actually step into.

### **COLOR AND "PAINTING IN SPACE"**

*Shadow Box with Painted Shapes* from 1939 (ill. no. 10) demonstrates an attempt to fuse color with sculptural structure – painted wood, wire and electric light. Unlike the geometric forms in the 1927 pastel (ill. no. 1), those used in *Shadow Box* relate more to biomorphic surrealism. The viewer's eye is drawn to the interior of the gray box by the use of these color shapes.<sup>6</sup>

Noting that color has always been an important element in three-dimensional art since ancient times, Lassaw wanted to reclaim color as an element of modern sculpture. Even art critic Clement Greenberg did not see color as a "pure" element to be claimed by painting alone. To reclaim color for modern sculpture, Lassaw used various experimental methods to permanently unite colors and materials. Realizing that throughout history a major problem with sculpture is that colors do not endure if a work is placed outdoors and exposed to the elements, most of Lassaw's sculpture was intended for indoors. If placed outside, much of his delicate sculpture might eventually corrode, change color and fall apart.<sup>7</sup>

The concern for color in Lassaw's welded metal sculptures might be likened to that seen in works by color-field painters who fused color and canvas surface as one, such as Mark Rothko (1903–70), Helen Frankenthaler (b. 1928) and Morris Louis (1912–62). Lassaw built up molten alloys of varied hue to form the metal as the color itself, including its variations. Unlike using color in painting, Lassaw's sculptures executed by this method were even more unified as one material's "self color." In his words: "The forms and colors are one . . . [just as] in nature – the colors of the tree

trunks, . . . leaves, and people; they're all colors . . . inherent in the three-dimensional shapes themselves." Considering color as an innate quality of sculpture, Lassaw has focused on "the reality of what happens before me. . . . Red copper, rusted iron, corroded green bronzes, bright gold, lead, chromium, silver and all colors of mineral and gem stones play their parts."<sup>8</sup>

Whereas Julio González conceived sculpture as "drawing in space," Lassaw likes to describe his sculptural works as "painting in space." This concept, which might be applied to both his art-making process and to the art itself, should not be misunderstood as meaning that the sculptor wanted to go so far as to imitate painting. Indeed, nothing could be further from his intentions. Although some analogies might be drawn with painting (as the term, "painting in space" suggests), Lassaw's use of color occurs sculpturally, often within open-space constructions that are intended to involve spectators in "deep space." In reference to such metal sculpture, Lassaw has said: "When I melt metal, it's fluid . . . ; that is what it has in common with paint." In *Counterpoint Castle* (ill. no. 15) Lassaw applied a painterly application of molten self-colored metals along with the chemical treatment of other areas to create blue.<sup>9</sup>

Aside from Lassaw's view of sculpture as "painting in space," a related concept involved three-dimensional abstract configurations of pure light as captured in midair by 3-D photography. In 1968, Lassaw set up lights in his studio, opened the shutters of his 3-D camera for a long exposure and then moved the lights. The resulting double slide, when looked at in a 3-D viewer, captures the illusion of sculptural light-shapes in space (ill. no. 22).

Another idea extends beyond the inner space of his sculpture on a much larger scale into the vast outer space of the universe. Lassaw (who always liked to read science fiction, as well as books on real science) visualized a work of art of the future made by a space vehicle with tanks of compressed gases that would glow under ultraviolet light. Spaceships might release jet streams of neon gas in shapes of various colors – extending 100,000 miles in all directions.<sup>10</sup>

### **ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM AND INTUITION**

Although Lassaw accepted the term *Abstract Expressionism* to describe a movement (that included himself, de Kooning and Pollock, among others), he



did not consider himself an expressionist because this word might suggest an artist whose work is highly personal and angst driven. He was never interested in "self-expression," but thought about his art more along the lines of a scientist who explores new theories about the workings of the universe. Lassaw sees himself as an integral part of nature. Thus his actions may be described as nature working to become sculpture. Approaching his material and techniques through his intuition allows the expression of his art to find its form as nature.<sup>11</sup>

Lassaw remembers once sitting in a New York cafeteria with Gorky, de Kooning and other artists talking about art for hours. Suddenly Gorky looked very serious and said: "We must confess!" What he meant, according to Lassaw, was that art, like a Rorschach test, proclaims your innermost structure. "It was later that the term 'Abstract Expressionism' was coined, but that was what Gorky meant, what was implied."<sup>12</sup>

One of Lassaw's favorite quotations comes from the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976): "The artist must attune himself to that which wants to reveal itself and permit the process to happen through him." Heidegger's statement, according to Lassaw, essentially sums up the essence of what Abstract Expressionism is all about. In 1952, Lassaw remarked: "It would be better to think of art as a process that is started by the artist. . . . If successful, the work starts to live a life of its own, a work of art begins to work." From his perspective, works of art were "never finished, but only begun."<sup>13</sup>

In his own words, Lassaw defined Abstract Expressionism as "using your instincts, not having a preconceived idea that you are trying to project, but you start and let your work lead you." Similarly, art critic Harold Rosenberg explained that the *action painter* "no longer approached his easel with an image in mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him." According to Lassaw: "You can change your mind as you keep working, and you say, . . . this looks better than what I thought I might be doing. You accept what is happening because instinct is really in some way superior to your intellect."<sup>14</sup>

Whether the term Abstract Expressionism should be applied to sculpture is problematic to some art critics,

but not to Lassaw, who traces the origins of Abstract Expressionism in both painting and sculpture back to the 1930s. Lassaw sees this development as simultaneous in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, and he does not think that sculpture was influenced by painting:

The idea that sculptors have been influenced by Abstract Expressionist painters is incorrect. It is not as though painters happened first and then some kind of abstract expressionism in sculpture came into being. We've been sitting together and talking for years.<sup>15</sup>

One of the major reasons why some critics question the idea of Abstract Expressionism in sculpture has to do with the issue of *time* as applied to an art-making process. Lassaw said: "The process can take longer to go through, but it's still the same process. It's using your feelings and your instincts, and without making plans beforehand."<sup>16</sup>

Lassaw recalls that he has never based abstract sculptures on preconceived ideas, but some of his early three-dimensional pieces (prior to the 1950s when he turned toward direct-metal processes) resemble sketches found in his studio. The two-dimensional rendition of the biomorphic forms of *Shadow Box with Painted Shapes* (ill. no. 9) is a good example. It did not serve as a preliminary study for the 1939 sculpture (ill. no. 10) because it postdates the constructed version. In this case, the sculpture apparently inspired the drawing. Pencil sketches from the 1940s suggest Lassaw's use of preliminary studies for sculptures (for example, compare ill. nos. 12-13 with ill. no. 11). He explains the sketches, however, as *visual thoughts* rather than as careful plans for specific three-dimensional works.

Welded sculptures from the 1950s onward seem less connected to ideas expressed in rough sketches, but finished drawings and paintings (such as those in the exhibition: ill. nos. 23-32) reveal weblike, labyrinthine or biomorphic designs. In this respect, despite their two-dimensional qualities, they often closely resemble Lassaw's metal sculptures. Like the sculptures, his paintings and drawings of this period were initiated through a process of intuitive action (sometimes called *automatism*, a term Lassaw dislikes being applied to his art because he thinks it suggests a mindless process).





## COMPARISONS WITH POLLOCK AND "ACTION"

When attempting to place Lassaw within the context of Abstract Expressionism, some writers mistakenly suggest that his sculpture was influenced by Abstract Expressionist painting, at times going so far as to suggest that he appropriated Jackson Pollock's "allover" composition and "drips." After such notions are set in print, other publications restate them. For example, in one book on Abstract Expressionism, Lassaw's sculpture is discussed in a chapter titled "After Abstract Expressionism," noting that his works became "more labyrinthine and encrusted with dribbled metal after 1950 in response to Pollock's catalytic style."<sup>17</sup>

When considering the possibility of Pollock's influence, the first issue to tackle should be whether similarities in style and method are really there. If not, the question of influence is moot. Lassaw's sculptures tend to be gentler and more poetic in feeling, as well as smaller in scale, than are most of Pollock's paintings. With regard to non-representation, Lassaw was among the earliest Abstract Expressionists to firmly commit himself along this line during the early 1930s. He was doing abstract work long before Pollock. The two artists did not share a medium, and the so-called "drip" of Lassaw is a very different creature from that of Pollock.

Although careful analysis reveals that Lassaw's art was not closely related to Pollock's, both shared ideas in common regarding the creative process. For example, according to Lassaw: "The work is a 'happening,' something independent of my conscious will. The unconscious mind undoubtedly is a participant in the process. The work uses the artist to get itself born." He also said: "While I am welding a sculpture, no conscious ideas intrude themselves into the work." Similarly, Pollock said: "When I am *in* my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. . . . the painting has a life of its own." That they both worked from an intuitive mind is true, but neither of them invented that state of mind.<sup>18</sup>

Pollock, when asked about the control he had over his intuitive process, answered: "I don't use the accident — cause I deny the accident." Lassaw, when asked about this issue, answered: "Although it is impossible to foresee the exact result of a spontaneous process,

the artist can choose to accept or reject the result." While a stone carver cannot put back something cut away by mistake, Lassaw has suggested that "in welding . . . you can change anytime." Although with welded sculpture Lassaw admits that change is a more time-consuming process than in painting. Yet, he also said that he has rarely made changes when welding.<sup>19</sup>

About 1950, Lassaw recalls that he was making an open-space sculpture with a curve and angle. When not completely satisfied with its appearance, he changed it slightly. After making the change, however, he decided: "It was much better before I changed it . . . when I did it without much thinking." As he kept reworking the metal, it would eventually work out as he continued to rely on his "sensibilities and instinct."<sup>20</sup>

Lassaw accepted the Rosenberg-coined term "action painting," and even reapplied it to his own three-dimensional work by calling it "action sculpture." In his emphasis on "action," Rosenberg referred to the painter's canvas as an "arena in which to act." Similarly, in 1968, Lassaw said: "In the arena of the studio there takes place a collaboration of materials, tools, unconscious forces, ego and other factors."<sup>21</sup>

Despite his reference to "action," however, Lassaw's working method while welding did not involve dangerously flinging molten metals through the air — as is also evident when looking at his delicate looking and elegant work. Lassaw's methods varied from applying molten metal over constructed forms to building entire sculptures one molten drop at a time — introducing alloys of differing colors as the work progressed.

## MULTIPOSITIONAL ART AND THE "PROJECTION PAINTINGS"<sup>22</sup>

An unusual concept that developed in Lassaw's art involved a multipositional format that counteracted the traditional idea of a work's top, bottom and sides. Although this concept is not unique to Lassaw's art alone, it is unusual within art history. Except for kinetic sculpture (with which Lassaw had a very brief involvement), most art by him and others has a set, static position. Lassaw began to make multipositional sculptures in 1979. These sculptures, which were stable (rather than kinetic), could be rearranged by rotating them into varied set poses (ill. no. 18). The idea of multiple positions extended beyond Lassaw's sculptures. Predating them in the 1940s were small paintings on



glass that, when projected, yielded eight different possible formats because they could be rotated into four positions on both sides of the glass.

Lassaw's "projection paintings" are miniature Abstract Expressionist paintings that, when shown through a slide projector, metamorphose into monumental colored light images (ill. nos. 33–36). The projected images may have triggered ideas applicable to Lassaw's later thoughts about the use of color in metal sculpture in the 1950s.

The first series of "projection paintings," done on 2 x 2 inch glass slides, was made between 1946 and 1949. Around the time of their creation, he projected them for a group of artists during a summer visit to Provincetown, Massachusetts. He also shared them in his New York studio with a small number of close friends, such as painters Willem de Kooning and Paul Jenkins (b. 1923). In 1948 Lassaw also painted some larger lantern projector glass slides, which were used as a background setting for the models in a fashion show, but these works are lost. In 1992, a new series of 2 x 2 inch works was begun after an approximately forty-three year lapse since setting aside the earlier ones, and since then Lassaw has occasionally worked with this process further.<sup>23</sup>

Although the "projection paintings" might have importance within the history of Abstract Expressionism, few art scholars have given them sufficient attention, nor has the general public known of their existence. They were not conceived as marketable gallery art, but as experimental works. At the time when he first made them, Lassaw recalled thinking they seemed very "alive" and "in a sense, . . . looked more like Abstract Expressionism than regular painted paintings." In 1947, he wrote in his Day Book that "glass slides of mine are just as much nature as nature of some artists."<sup>24</sup>

Lassaw's intuitive technique of executing the "projection paintings" involved dripping or brushing dyes over the surfaces of the glass, at times etching over dyed areas with a needle to make designs. The works are ephemeral, existing only as colored light when projected on surfaces. When projected to a large size the images actually become more detailed and the color remains clear and vibrant.

Lassaw's tiny paintings expand into light and pure color as they are projected. On a wall, they might become very large images encompassing sections of

ceiling and/or floor. Like his sculptures, which seem to pull the viewer into their cores, the "projection paintings" visually absorb viewers. They are capable of being larger and more enveloping of the spectator than were the largest paintings of the Abstract Expressionist era. Anticipating "happenings" of the late 1950s and 1960s, the "projection paintings" (when shown in the 1940s using a single projector), encouraged interplay with viewers who literally carried the projected colors into space.

Although they date back to the 1940s, there have only been two formal art gallery showings of the "projection paintings." The first one was held at the Center for Contemporary Art at the University of Kentucky in 1992. It featured 20 works. The second showing was in 2000, when a Radford University audience had an opportunity to see 41 of the original painted slides projected – and move about in the space between the projected images and their projection source.<sup>25</sup>

An audience-interactive idea was enhanced though the use of ten projectors during the presentation at Radford University. The ten images were projected horizontally, side by side, on the gallery walls so as to surround the audience in the manner of a panorama. The images were also projected large enough to cover part of the floor, as well as the nine-foot high gallery walls, and some images were projected in corners on two walls. In this context, they enveloped three-dimensional architectural spaces and allowed viewers to literally enter them. The result was a dazzling visual feast that motivated the audience to become highly interactive with the projected colors (ill. nos. 37–38). Even Lassaw was amazed, and remarked: "I have never seen my 'projection paintings' presented in such an exciting format. It was one of my most memorable experiences."<sup>26</sup>

Many of the "projection paintings" resemble forms viewed through a microscope. Their biomorphic aspect relates them to abstract styles of Surrealism. Other images might conjure associations with space travel or stars and galaxies observed through a telescope. As colored light images, Lassaw also compares his "projection paintings" to the stained glass windows of Gothic churches. In the twelfth century, Abbot Suger likened the supernatural effect of light emanating from stained glass to a sacred revelation of the divine spirit. While the colored light effects of the





“projection paintings” might evoke similar associations with spirituality, to Lassaw the universe itself is “God,” including stars, planets, all matter, space and light.<sup>27</sup>

The “projection paintings” may be described as simultaneously the smallest and largest Abstract Expressionist paintings produced in the history of the movement. A concept of unity is suggested by these concurrently large and small sizes, and the physical material of the painted glass slide is inseparable from its application to a projected energy form.<sup>28</sup>

### **PHILOSOPHY, JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER VERBAL THOUGHTS**

Lassaw’s art might be better understood (aside from its “suchness”), when considered in relation to the artist’s knowledge of many subjects, ranging from Eastern philosophy to the ideas of German mystics, such as Meister Eckhardt (c.1260–c.1328), to writings in psychology by Carl Jung.

Despite an interest in Buddhism and other world religions, Lassaw does not refer to his art as *spiritual* because he draws no division between the material world and any supernatural realm. In the case of the “projection paintings” just described, a relationship to Zen Buddhism, as well as Jung’s writings, might be suggested to illustrate the point. When projected, the tiny “projection paintings” are no longer physical material but expanded beams of colored light. The chemical dyes on glass project as light energy. This exemplifies Lassaw’s belief in the oneness of matter and spirit. As in Eastern philosophy, the notion of separateness is an illusion.

According to Lassaw, “matter spirits” and “it isn’t a question of duality, where the spiritual world is beyond, is superior to the so-called natural world – and that jives in with their ideas of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism in particular.” The title of a sculpture in the exhibition, *Not Two* (ill. no. 5), relates to this concept also. Lassaw says: “The spirit does not exist by itself. It’s a verb. It’s the action – the workings of matter – that spirits. . . . I don’t think of the soul as a ‘spook’ that comes out of the body. . . . I think the actual physical matter of the body, . . . every cell, every part of the body, contributes to the body spiriting.”<sup>29</sup>

Jung’s book, *Psychology and Alchemy* (which Lassaw read), discusses the ancient alchemist, Zosimos, in a section titled “Spirit in Matter.” Lassaw has noted a

comparison between the ideas of Zosimos and what he was doing, but denies direct influence because he was conducting his own experiments before reading about Zosimos. Like an ancient or medieval alchemist, Lassaw sought to transmute through the manipulation of materials, creating in his art what might be perceived as “philosophical gold.”<sup>30</sup>

Lassaw has expressed the opinion that modern artists, like earlier alchemists, have something of the same point of view: “In using their imagination, . . . their colors and forms and textures, . . . especially in Abstract Expressionism, they brought out from the deepest levels of their minds things that they had not consciously thought of beforehand.” Such Jungian ideas about the collective unconscious were in the air and many Abstract Expressionists were aware of them – even if they did not read such books (as Lassaw frequently did).<sup>31</sup>

Reflecting a more rational and verbal side of Lassaw is a drawing from 1954 that was formed entirely out of a seemingly free association of words (ill. no. 39). The word-drawing does not fit within mainstream art trends of the time it was made, the 1950s. It does, however, anticipate later developments – such as “word works” by conceptual artists of the 1960s. Its grid-like composition is comparable to a crossword puzzle. The scaling of the color letters yields a push-pull effect on the two-dimensional picture plane, causing the spectator to rhythmically arrange linked words in a variety of possible ways. For example, one possible arrangement (somewhat based on the scale of letters and the connection of words up and down) is STARS EVER EXPANSION SPACE STELLAR TIME MOMENT, etc. A multitude of other choices exist, however. Denise Lassaw recalls inscriptions by her father written in colored pencil on the walls and doors of the artist’s 12th Street loft in New York. Photographs dating from the mid 1950s confirm her recollections (ill. no. 40).

Appearing unrelated to any other works by the artist, the word-drawing was apparently taken seriously enough by Lassaw to sign and date it. Although unusual within the body of Lassaw’s art (which was usually based more on instinct), a drawing of words does not conflict with the artist’s philosophical nature, his interest in the written word as an active reader or his verbal recordings in notebooks. Furthermore, it illustrates the artist’s experimental nature and nonconformist tendency – perhaps even toward his own aesthetic norm. In these respects, the drawing relates to his other works very well.



Furthermore, despite the use of hand-printed letters, the constructed arrangement of the words resembles the pure abstract configurations in the exhibition's 1956 drawing (ill. no. 24), as well as the arrangement of metal forms in *Counterpoint Castle* from 1957 (ill. no. 15).

Conversely, while Lassaw's main commitment in sculpture was to "deep space," the degree of openness in form varied considerably within his broad stylistic range.

#### NOTES

- 1 Ibram Lassaw, interview by Arthur Jones, Springs, NY, 4 September 1992.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Lassaw's quotation is from Dorothy C. Miller ed., *12 Americans* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1956), 65.
- 4 Impaired vision in recent times has made it too difficult, if not dangerous, for Lassaw to engage in welding. He has, however, continued to make art in other ways, such as drawing and painting. The 1938 quotation is from Ibram Lassaw, "On Inventing Your Own Art," *American Abstract Artists Yearbook*, (New York, 1938).
- 5 Ibram Lassaw, interview by Arthur Jones, Springs, NY, 27 July 1992.
- 6 Although a drawing related to *Shadowbox with Painted Shapes* is dated May 1940 (ill. no. 9), the sculpture has the date 1939 inscribed on the back, and records in the artist's studio substantiate this date. Gregory Gilbert cites other illuminated box sculptures of this period by Moholy Nagy, Nathan Lerner and Robert J. Wolff. Gregory Gilbert, "Ibram Lassaw," in Joan Marter, *Beyond the Plane: American Constructions, 1930-1965* (New Jersey State Museum, 1983), 73.
- 7 Exceptions, however, would be outdoor sculptures related to architectural commissions, such as *Pillar of Fire*, a 1953 commission for the facade of Beth El Temple in Springfield, Massachusetts.
- 8 The first quotation in the paragraph is from Ibram Lassaw, interview by Arthur Jones, Springs, NY, 8 May 1992; and the second is from Miller, *12 Americans*, 65.
- 9 Lassaw's quotation is from the interview, 8 May 1992.
- 10 Lassaw claims that this idea emerged in the 1940s or 1950s (Interview, 4 September 1992).
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Heidegger's quotation is cited in Ibram Lassaw, "Perspectives and Reflections of a Sculptor: A Memoire," *Leonardo*, vol. 1 (1968): 361. Lassaw's quotation is from Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt, eds., *Modern Artists in America*, 1st Series (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1952), 12.
- 14 Lassaw's quotations in the paragraph are from the interview, 8 May 1992. Rosenberg's quotation is from Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News*, 51, no. 8 (December, 1952): 22.
- 15 Quotation from a panel discussion held by the magazine *It Is* in Feb. 1965.
- 16 Interview, 8 May 1992.
- 17 David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Thames and Hudson 1990): 191.
- 18 Lassaw's first quotation in the paragraph is from Lassaw, "Perspectives and Reflections of a Sculptor: A Memoire," 361. The second Lassaw quote is from Miller, *12 Americans*, 64. Pollock's quotation is from "My Painting," *Possibilities I*, no. 1 (Winter, 1947-48): 79.
- 19 Pollock's quotation in this paragraph is from William Wright, "An Interview with Jackson Pollock," in Francis O'Connor, *Jackson Pollock*, vol. 4 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 251. Lassaw's quotation is from the interview, 8 May 1992.
- 20 Interview, 8 May 1992.
- 21 Rosenberg's quotation is from his essay "The American Action Painters," 22. Lassaw's quotation is from Lassaw, "Perspectives and Reflections of a Sculptor: A Memoire," 361.
- 22 The "projection paintings" were discussed earlier in my essay in the brochure for the University of Kentucky exhibition of "projection paintings," *Ibram Lassaw: Projection Paintings - A World Premier Gallery Event* (Lexington, KY: Center for Contemporary Art, University of Kentucky, 1992).
- 23 The fashion show that used "projection paintings" was conceived of as a form of fashion theater by Sam Friedlander Productions in "Fashion Showplace of the Nation." The show lasted about a week beginning on Tuesday, June 8, 1948. Lassaw was credited by name in a printed program for the event.
- 24 The first Lassaw quote in the paragraph is from Ibram Lassaw, interview by Arthur Jones, Springs, NY, 24 June 1992. The second quote is from the interview, 27 July 1992.
- 25 The first gallery exhibition was held on November 1, 1992, but it was preceded by an art performance at the University of Kentucky (*An Abstracted Life*, by Diana Heyne) which also included some of the "projection paintings."
- 26 Letter from Lassaw to Arthur Jones, 20 March 2000.
- 27 Interview, 8 May 1992.
- 28 It might be argued that the idea of enlarging small abstract images can be traced back earlier to animated films by Hans Richter (1888-1976) and other artist filmmakers. For example, Len Lye (1901-80) was painting abstract forms on film in the 1930s. These experimental films, however, were kinetic works to be briefly experienced by viewers. Furthermore, the repetitious process of making the films had less in common with painting on a singular canvas than did Lassaw's approach to executing a "projection painting" on a single sheet of glass.
- 29 Interview, 4 September 1992.
- 30 Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* (New York: Pantheon books, 1953), 34, 231-232 and 283-293.
- 31 Lassaw quotation from the interview, 4 September 1992.

When Lassaw made drawings and paintings, he wanted to avoid the illusion of spatial depth. And yet, the spectator might sometimes view Lassaw's art differently than the artist intended. Because of the proportioning of linear elements, spatial illusions in his two-dimensional work (e.g., ill. nos. 24-26) sometimes rival the real space of his sculpture (e.g., ill. no. 14-15). In final analysis, Lassaw's work is best explained in terms of *art* and is not bound by any rules or regulations.



## OVERVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition features ten sculptures (representing each decade from the 1930s through the 1990s). The earliest sculpture is *Shadow Box with Painted Shapes* (1939) – constructed primarily from cut and painted wood with an interior light to illuminate colored biomorphic shapes within a box. Later constructed sculptures include such materials as plastic, stainless steel, copper, brass, bronze, nickel silver and various alloys.

Besides sculpture, the exhibition includes 17 works on paper or canvas. Ranging in date from 1927 to 2002, these two-dimensional works are in the media of pen and ink, pastel, acrylic paint, colored pencil, watercolor marker, lithography and inkjet reproductions of “projection paintings” from the 1940s (originally 2" x 2" paintings on glass intended for viewing via slide projector). Completing the show are some photographic documents of historical interest.

Although modest in scale, the show offers a comprehensive overview. At the same time, it provides a fresh examination of the artist's work in relation to the Abstract Expressionist movement. Unique to this selection of Lassaw's art and its range of media are the inclusions of the “projection paintings” and other generally unfamiliar works (such as drawings related to sculpture and a signed 1956 drawing constructed out of words).

### CATALOG

All dimensions are in inches, with the height listed first. All entries are works by Ibram Lassaw unless stated otherwise.

#### Three-Dimensional Works

1. *Shadow Box with Painted Shapes*, 1939 (refurbished 1979), painted wood and metal with electric light illumination, 14 x 20.
2. *Star Cradle*, 1949, plastic and stainless steel, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 16 x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ .
3. *Counterpoint Castle*, 1956–57, bronze and copper, 38 x 26 x 19.
4. *Sui Shih*, 1961–62, various alloys, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 19 x 13.
5. *Not Two*, 1964, nickel silver, copper, brass, 14 x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10.
6. *Abode of Time*, 1976, red brass and bronze, 17 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ .
7. *Sothis*, 1983, bronze, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 18 (multi-positional).
8. *Vikridita*, 1989, various alloys, 15 x 19 x 13.
9. *Erato*, 1991, various alloys, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 13 x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
10. *Labyrinth B*, 1995, copper and brass, 13 x 8 x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

#### Two-Dimensional Works

11. *Untitled*, 1927, pastel on cardboard, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ .
12. *Untitled*, May 1940, color pencil on paper, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 11.
13. *Untitled*, 1949, color pencil on paper, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 8.
14. *Untitled* (word-drawing), 1956, color pencil on paper, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ .
15. *Untitled*, 1956, pen and ink on paper, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ .
16. *Untitled*, 1966, pen and ink on paper, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ .
17. *Amaze*, 1970, pen and ink on paper, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 30.
18. *Continuity #1*, 1979, color lithograph, 22 x 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
19. *Red Flood*, 1985, acrylic on paper, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ .
20. *Vortex A*, 1995, acrylic on paper, 25 x 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ .
21. *Vortex B*, 1996, acrylic on paper, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
22. *Untitled*, 2001, watercolor marker on paper, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ .



23. *Untitled*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 24.
24. *Projection Painting*, No. 9, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof 2/2, 14 x 14 (image size).
25. *Projection Painting*, No. 26, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof 2/2, 14 x 14 (image size).
26. *Projection Painting*, No. 29, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof 2/2, 14 x 14 (image size).
27. *Projection Painting*, No. 32, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof 2/2, 14 x 14 (image size).

#### Photographic Documents

28. "Work in Progress," Lassaw at age 20 in his Greenwich Village studio in New York City, 1933 (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
29. Lassaw with *Milky Way*, 1950 (photograph: Maurice Berezov)
30. Lassaw and Willem de Kooning at the latter's studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York; c. mid-late 1960s (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
31. Lassaw in his studio, 1989 (photograph: Beryl Bernay)
32. Lassaw in his studio (with *Equinox*, 1962-63, behind), December, 2001 (photograph: Denise Lassaw)
33. "Dancing Figure 1929" from Lassaw's "First Sculpture Book" (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
34. *Dancing Figure*, 1929, graphited plaster (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
35. *Blue Figure*, 1930, plaster (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
36. *Torso*, 1931, plaster (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
37. "Figure 1933" from Lassaw's "First Sculpture Book" (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
38. Lassaw's *Plaster Sculpture # 6: Pot Jumping Through Hoop*, 1935 (destroyed, photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
39. Lassaw's *Plaster Sculpture # 7*, 1936 (destroyed, photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
40. Lassaw's constructed sculpture, *Sing Baby Sing*, 1937 (destroyed, photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
41. First American Abstract Artists Exhibition, New York City, 1937. Lassaw's *Plaster Sculpture # 7*, 1936, in foreground; Lassaw's *Sing Baby Sing*, 1937, in center rear of picture (photograph: Ibram Lassaw)
42. Newspaper clipping from February 27, 1949, for an exhibition at the Museum of Non-objective Painting in New York City that included Lassaw's 1941 sculpture, *Construction in Steel*, (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
43. Unfinished sketch inscribed: "Rotating concentric rectangles," 1946, graphite pencil on paper (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
44. Sketch, inscribed "Mar. 8" (recto) and "1947" (verso), graphite pencil on paper, late 1940s (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
45. Interior of Lassaw's studio at 6th Avenue and 12th Street in New York City, c. mid 1950s (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
46. Wall with hand-printed inscriptions in Lassaw's studio at 6th Avenue and 12th Street in New York City, c. mid 1950s (photograph: courtesy Lassaw studio)
47. *Light Construction in Space*, 1968, left and right images from stereoscopic slide (photograph: Ibram Lassaw)
48. Lassaw welding, 1993 (photograph: courtesy of Arthur Jones)
- 49-60. Lassaw's "projection paintings" presented at an audience-interactive event at Radford University on March 16, 2000. Ten projected images were connected horizontally, side-by-side, on the gallery walls so as to surround the audience in the manner of a panorama. (photographs: Steve Arbury)





## SELECTED EXHIBITION RECORD

### 2002 (through April)

*Four Distinguished Abstractionists: Ibram Lassaw, Stanley Boxer, Jimmy Ernst and Robert Nakian*, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

*Ibram Lassaw: Deep Space and Beyond – A Retrospective Exhibition of Works from the Artist's Studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York*, Radford University Art Museum (travels in April to the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art at St. Petersburg College in Tarpon Springs, Florida)

### 2001

*Abstraction: 6 Perspectives*, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY

*Abstraction 60 years/60 Artists*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*Remembering – A Hampton's Art History, Part One*, Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY

*Benefit for children in El Salvador*, Red Barn Atelier, Southampton, NY

Anita Shapolsky Gallery, NYC

*In Context: An Intimate View – Syd Solomon & His Circle of Friends*, Sarasota Artsentry Inc., Sarasota, FL

Gallery Rood, East Hampton, NY

### 2000

*Art for Art's Sake – Credo of the 50's*, Anita Shapolsky Gallery, NYC

*Dealers Choice: 8th Annual*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*Fifties and Sixties Works on Paper*, Gallery Rood, East Hampton, NY

*Annual Artists of the Springs*, Invitational Exhibition, Springs, East Hampton, NY

*Ibram Lassaw and Bill King*, The Red Barn Gallery, Southampton, NY

*American Abstract Artist 1930-2000*, Hillwood Art Museum, Brookville, NY

*Drawing & Sculpture 2000*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*Avant Garde of the Fifties and Now*, Rood Gallery, East Hampton, NY

Group Exhibition, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL  
*Ibram Lassaw: Projection Paintings* (audience interactive event), Radford University, Radford, VA

### 1999

*Abstraction: 5 Perspectives*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*American Century of Art and Culture, 1900-2000, Part 1*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*Sculpture of the 20th Century*, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, NY

*Another Form: Drawing Into Sculpture*, New York Studio School, NYC

### 1998

*Artists of The 50's: The Development of Abstraction*, Anita Shapolsky Gallery, NYC

*Sculpture To Wear*, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL  
*The Centennial Opens*, Parish Art Museum, Southampton, NY

*Seen and Scenes*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Route of Abstraction*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*Special Collection*, Anita Shapolsky Gallery NYC  
*Master Art Workshop*, Fine Arts Gallery, Southampton College, Long Island University, Southampton, NY

### 1997

*New Possibilities 1997*, Staller Center for the Arts, SUNY at Stony Brook, NY

*Ibram Lassaw: Sculpture & Drawing*, Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

*Dark Images*, Parrish Museum, Southampton, NY


### 1996

*American Abstract Artists 60th Anniversary Exhibition*, James Howe Fine Arts Gallery, Kean College, Union, NJ

*Two Dimensions and Three*, Ibram Lassaw, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

*Pioneers of Abstract Art, American Abstract Artists, 1936-1996*, Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, City University of New York, NYC





*American Vanguard*s, Nassau Community Museum of Art, Garden City, NY  
Philharmonic Center for the Arts, Naples, FL  
*Small Works of Art*, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

**1995**

Solo show, Harmon Meek Gallery, Naples FL  
*Early Works*, Albert Kotin, Ibram Lassaw & Kyle Morris, Anita Shapolsky Gallery, NYC  
*75 Years of Collecting*, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY  
*Living Legends*, Millennium Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
ACA Gallery, NYC  
*The Reach of Abstraction*, Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, NY

**1994**

Baruch College, NYC  
Provincetown Association Show, Provincetown, MA

**1993**

Chicago International Art Expo, Chicago, IL  
*The Second Dimension: Twentieth Century Sculptors Drawings*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

**1992**

Anita Shapolsky Gallery, NYC  
Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL  
*Paths to Discovery: the New York School*, Sidney Miskin Gallery, Baruch College, NYC  
Bronx Museum, Bronx, NY  
*American Vanguard – Jackson Pollock and Friends*, Stuart Levy Gallery, NYC  
*Exploration of Space, Sculpture by Ibram Lassaw*, Century Club, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS  
*An Abstracted Life* (an art performance by Diana Heyne that included Lassaw "projection paintings"), University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY  
*Ibram Lassaw: Projection Paintings – A World Premier Gallery Event*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

**1991**

Solo show, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL  
Solo show, Manny Silverman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
Benton Gallery, Southampton, NY  
*What Modern Was: Design 1935-1965*, IBM Gallery, NYC  
*The Nude: Drawings of the Figure by New York School Artists circa 1930-1950*, Twinings Gallery, NYC

**1990**

*A Salute to the Signa Gallery*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Sculptura in America*, Sassi Museum, Matera, Italy  
*American Abstraction 1930-45*, The Patricia & Phillip Frost Collection, National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC  
*The Coming of Age of American Sculpture: The First Decade of the Sculptors Guild, 1930-1950s*, Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY  
Solo show of sculpture and drawing, Sid Deutsch Gallery, NYC

**1989**

*American Abstract Artists*, National Museum of American Art, Frost Collection, Baruch Art Gallery, NYC

**1988**

*Space Explorations*, a Retrospective at Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
Solo show, Vered Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
Solo show, Benton Gallery, Southampton, NY  
*Drawings on the East End*, Parrish Museum, Southampton, NY  
*A Look Back, 1957-1962*, New York Studio School Exhibition, NYC  
*Looking into Three Dimensions*, Museum of History and Art, Anchorage, AK  
*The Impact of Surrealism in American Art, Convulsive Reality*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

**1987**

*The Machine Age Art in America*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA  
Solo show, Benton gallery, Southampton, NY  
Solo drawing show, Vered Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
*50th Anniversary Print Portfolio 1987*, American Abstract Artists, James Howe Gallery, Kean College of New Jersey, Union, NJ

**1986**

Solo Exhibition, Benton Gallery, Southampton, NY  
*Space Sculpture*, Solo Exhibition, Sid Deutsch Gallery, NYC  
*Jung and Abstract Expressionism, The Collective Image Among Individual Voices*, Hofstra Museum, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY  
*American Abstract Artists 50th Anniversary Exhibition*, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY



*The Machine Age in America*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (lent by Sheldon Art Gallery, Lincoln, NE)  
*Elders of the Tribe*, Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, NYC

### 1985

*Eight Modern Masters*, Amarillo Art Center, Amarillo, TX  
Solo shows, Rio de Janeiro, Brazilia, Salvador and Bahia, Brazil  
*Flying Tigers*, Exhibition, Brown University, Providence, RI, and Parrish Museum, Southampton, NY  
*Third Dimension Show*, Fort Worth, TX  
*Fifty Years – WPA-AAA*, Washburn Gallery, NYC  
*Constructions in America*, Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI, and University of Maryland Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD  
*The East Hampton Star 100th Anniversary Portfolio: Works by 52 Contemporary Artists of the Region*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Sculptural Expressions: Seven Artists in Metal & Drawing 1947-1960*, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY  
*The Hampton Artists Visit Hempstead*, Fine Arts Museum of Long Island (FAMLI), Hempstead, NY

### 1984

*The Third Dimension*, Sculpture of the New York School, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*Sculptors Drawings*, from the Whitney Museum of American Art Permanent Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*The Hampton Scene, Then and Now*, Alex Rosenberg Gallery, NYC  
*Ordinary and Extraordinary Uses, Objects by Artists*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

### 1983

*Beyond the Plane, Constructions in America, 1930-1965*, University of Maryland Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD, and Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI  
*Eight New York Sculptors – 1940-1955*, Zabreskie Gallery, NYC  
Vered Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
*The Sculptor as Draughtsman, Selections from the Permanent Collection*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

*Five from the Hamptons*, Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL  
*Abstract Painting & Sculpture in America (1927-44)*, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA; San Francisco Museum, San Francisco, CA; and Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*Ibram Lassaw: Detwiller Visiting Artists, Sculpture and Drawings 1938-1983*, Lafayette College, Easton, PA  
*Guild Hall Selections From the Permanent Collection*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

### 1982

*Lassaw, Drawings and sculpture 1/6/82*, Phoenix Gallery, Washington, DC  
*Poets & Artists of the Region Collaborating*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Five Distinguished Alumni – WPA Federal Art Project*, Hirschhorn Museum, Washington, DC, and Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Museum Collection*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ  
Solo Show, Phoenix Gallery, Washington, DC  
Lafayette College Exhibition, Easton, PA  
*25 Artists*, Phoenix Gallery, Washington, DC  
*Abstraction in Action, American Abstract Artists show*, City Gallery, NYC

### 1981

*Sculpture & Their Related Drawings*, Marisa del Re Gallery, NYC  
*An American Choice*, Collection of M.K. Steinburg Newman, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC  
*East Hampton – New York*, Knoedler & Co., NYC  
*Phoenix II – Inaugural Exhibition*, Phoenix Gallery, Washington, DC  
*American Abstract Artists Transitions*, Summit Art Center, Summit, NJ

### 1980

*17 Abstract Artists of East Hampton – The Pollock Years, 1946-56*, Zabreskie Gallery, NYC, and the Parrish Museum, Southampton, NY  
*East Hampton – New York*, Knoedler & Co., NYC  
*American Sculpture*, Gifts of Howard and Jane Lipman, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists – The Early Years*, Sid Deutsch Gallery, NYC



  
**1979**

*Vanguard American Sculpture* – Traveling Exhibition, State Museum of New Jersey, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ; Ackland Art Center, Chapel Hill, NC; Joslyn Art Center, Omaha, NE; Oakland Art Museum, Oakland, CA; and Witte Memorial Museum, San Antonio, TX

Solo show at Yares Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ  
*American Art of the 20th Century*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

*Autour de Jackson Pollock*, American Cultural Center, Paris, France

*The Language of Abstraction*, Marilyn Pearl Gallery, NYC; Betty Parsons Gallery, NYC; and Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY

*Works from the 30s and 40s*, Marilyn Pearl Gallery, NYC

*Works from the 50s, 60s and 70s*, Betty Parsons Gallery, NYC

Marchand-Parson Gallery, Shelter Island, NY  
*Vanguard American Sculpture 1913–1939*, national touring show, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

**1978**

*Sculpture, A Study in Materials*, Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY

*Twentieth Century American Drawings*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

*From the Guild Hall Art Collection, In Honor of Harold Rosenberg*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

*Art on Paper*, Weatherspoon Annual Exhibit, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC

**1977**

*Ibram Lassaw, Survey 1967–1977*, Zabriskie Gallery, NYC

Washburn Gallery, NYC

*New York WPA Artists, Then and Now*, Parsons School of Design, NYC

University Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

**1976**

*7+5 Sculptors in the 1950's*, The Art Gallery, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

*The Golden Door: Artist Immigrants 1876–1976*, The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC

*American Welders 1950's–1960's*, Zabriskie Gallery, NYC

*Advocates of Abstraction: The American Abstract Artists 1936–1943*, Downtown Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

*Two Hundred Years of American Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

*Heritage of Freedom: A Salute to America's Foreign-born Artists*, Heckscher Museum, NY

*1976 Sculpture Invitational*, Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY

**1975**

*Artists of the Hamptons*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

*Sculpture – American Directions 1945–75*, National Collection of the Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

*Art 75, 75th Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, PA

**1974**

*Contemporary American Sculpture* (lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art), Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, FL

*Exhibition of the Work of Candidates for the Art Awards*, National Institute of Arts & Letters, NYC

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Betty Parsons Gallery, NYC

*Then and Now, Artists of the Region*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

*Contemporary Outdoor Sculpture Show*, Suffolk Museum, Stony Brook, NY

*Four Artists From the Hamptons*, Brookwood East Art Gallery, Islip, NY

**1973**

*Lassaw Retrospective Exhibition*, Hecksher Museum, Huntington, NY

*American and European Sculpture of the 1940's*, University Art Gallery, University of California, Berkeley, CA

*21 Artists Over Sixty*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, Washburn Gallery, NYC

*Jewelry as Sculpture as Jewelry*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA



**1972**

*Exhibition of Medallions*, Rose Art Museum, Duke University, Durham, NC  
*Drawing in Space: 19 American Sculptors*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, NY  
*North Carolina Invitational Exhibition*, Duke University, Durham, NC  
*Sculpture and the Indoor Garden*, Horticultural Society of New York, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Exhibit 1972*, Fairleigh Dickson University, NJ

**1971**

Solo show, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Art from the Chase Manhattan Bank Collection*, Finch College Museum of Art, Finch College, NYC  
Berenson Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands, FL  
Show with Hedda Sterne, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Jewelry 71 – Contemporary Jewelry*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada

**1970**

*Drawings*, solo show, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN  
*Modern Sculpture*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE  
*The Summer Place*, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY  
*Recent Acquisitions*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*Artists of Suffolk County, The Abstract Tradition*, Hecksher Museum, Huntington, NY  
Benefit exhibition, Sculpture Center, NYC

**1969**

Solo show of drawings, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA  
*W.P.A. Sculpture*, Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY  
*American Sculpture of the 1960's*, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI  
*20th Century Art from the Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection*, Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
*New American Painting and Sculpture – First Generation*, Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
Solo show of drawings, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA  
*North Carolina Sculpture Invitational*, Duke University, Durham, NC

**1968**

*Three Charter Members*, Eliscu, Lassaw, Swarz, Sculpture Center, NYC  
*Hemisfair*, San Antonio, TX  
*The Sculpture of Ibram Lassaw*, Gertrude Kassel Gallery, Detroit, MI  
*Sculpture Now*, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Brookhaven, NY  
*Painting & Sculpture of the Thirties*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Guggenheim Museum, NYC  
*Alliance in Art*, Washington, DC  
Sculpture Garden, Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY  
*Recent Works by Three Sculptors*, Bonnell, Lassaw, Pavia, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY


**1967**

*Jewelry by Painters & Sculptors*, Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY  
Sachs Gallery, NYC  
*Famous American Artists exhibit, Festival of the Arts*, Southampton College, Southampton, NY  
Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*Government Art Projects* – traveling show, Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
Exposition Internationale de Sculpture Contemporaine, EXPO 67, Montreal, Canada

**1966**

*Seven Decades 1895–1965, Cross Currents in Modern Art*, New York Galleries, NYC  
*Drawings U.S.A.*, – traveling show, St. Paul Art Center, St. Paul, MN  
American Embassy, Damascus, Syria  
*Art of the United States 1670–1966*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Biennial of Sculpture, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*Yesterday and Today 1936–1966, American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
*Sculpture & Painting Today, Selections from Susan Morse Hilles Collection*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA  
Solo show, Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY  
*James Brooks, Ibram Lassaw and Hans Namuth*, Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY





*61st Annual Exhibit of Painting and Sculpture,*  
The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,  
Philadelphia, PA  
*Biennial of Sculpture,* Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC  
*American Art Today, ART 75,* Drexel Institute of  
Technology, Philadelphia, PA  
*Major Northern California Sculpture,* Norman  
Hunter Gallery, San Anselmo, CA  
Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, PA

**1965**

*Critic's Choice: Art Since World War II,* Kane  
Exhibition, Providence, RI  
*United States Sculpture of the Twentieth Century,*  
Musée Rodin, Paris, France  
*International Exhibition of Art,* Israel Museum,  
Jerusalem, Israel  
Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, TX  
Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI  
Museum of Contemporary Crafts  
*Show of Painting and Sculpture at the White House,*  
Washington, DC  
*Painting and Sculpture Today,* Herron Museum of  
Art, Indianapolis, IN  
*Contemporary American Painting & Sculpture,*  
University of Illinois, Urbana, IL  
*The Works of Ibram Lassaw and Robert Broderson,*  
Duke University, Durham, NC

**1964**

*Art Between the Fairs,* Whitney Museum of  
American Art, NYC  
James David Gallery, Coral Gables, FL  
Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
White Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
F.A.R. Gallery, NYC  
Whitney Museum of American Art Annual Exhibition  
of Contemporary American Sculpture, NYC  
National Gallery, Washington, DC  
Solo show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Artists Select,* Finch College Museum of Art, NYC  
*Carnegie International,* Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA  
*Direct Metal Sculpture of the 50's and 60's,*  
Zabriskie Gallery, NYC

**1963**

*Sculptors of Our Time,* Washington Gallery of  
Modern Art, Washington, DC  
Bundy Gallery, Waitsfield, VT  
Cleveland Museum of Art, OH  
*U.S. Government Art Projects, Some Distinguished  
Alumni –* traveling exhibition  
Solo show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
Group Show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
Solo show, Duke University, Durham, NC  
*Art Today,* Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis, TN  
*American Abstract Artists Annual,* East Hampton  
Gallery, NY  
*10 Diverse Approaches to Sculpture,* Suffolk  
Museum, Stony Brook, NY  
*Sculptors Choice,* East Hampton Gallery, NY

**1962**

*Art Since 1950,* Seattle World's Fair, Seattle, WA  
Ringling Museum, Sarasota, FL  
*American Abstract Artists Annual,* IBM Gallery, NYC  
*157th Annual Exhibition of American Painting and  
Sculpture,* Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,  
Philadelphia, PA  
Museum of Modern Art Lending Collection, NYC  
*Annual Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings,*  
Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

**1961**

*University of Illinois Biennial,* Urbana, IL  
*Pittsburgh International,* Carnegie Institute,  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Museum of Modern Art Lending Collection, NYC  
Kalamazoo Art Center, Kalamazoo, MI  
*International Exhibition of Modern Jewelry  
1890-1961,* Goldsmith's Hall, London,  
United Kingdom

**1960**

*150 Years of American Sculpture,* Westbury, NY  
*Paths of Abstract Art,* Cleveland Museum of Art,  
Cleveland, OH  
Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris, France  
Providence Art Club, Providence, RI  
*Distinguished Visiting Faculty,* Watkins Gallery,  
American University, Washington, DC  
Solo show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
Signa Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
*American and European Artists,* Kootz Gallery, NYC



**1959**

*American National Exhibition*, Moscow, USSR  
*Documenta II*, Kassel, Germany  
Birmingham Museum of Art, works on loan from  
Kootz Gallery, NYC  
Signa Gallery, East Hampton, NY  
*Painters, Sculptors, Architects of the Region*, Guild  
Hall, East Hampton, NY

**1958**

American Pavilion, Brussels's World's Fair, Brussels,  
Belgium  
*Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Painting and  
Sculpture*, Pittsburgh, PA  
Solo show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Three American Sculptors* (with Hare and Ferber),  
Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*The Artists Vision*, Signa Gallery 1948-1958,  
East Hampton, NY  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside  
Museum, NYC  
*Festival of the Arts*, University Art Gallery, Notre  
Dame, IN  
*Whitney Annual*, Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC

**1957**

*São Paulo Biennale*, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Whitney Annual*, Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC  
Solo Retrospective, Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology, Cambridge, MA  
Signa Gallery 2nd exhibition, East Hampton, NY  
*Artists of the Region*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY  
*14 paintings and Sculptures*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, The  
Contemporaries, NYC  
*Incantations* - group show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Panels Choice 1957*, North Carolina Museum of Art,  
Raleigh, NC  
*6th Annual Exhibition*, Stable Gallery, NYC

**1956**

*Twelve Americans*, Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
*Modern Art in the United States*, Tate Gallery,  
London, United Kingdom  
*International Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture*,  
Musée Rodin, Paris, France  
*Art for Two Synagogues*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Whitney Annual*, Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC  
*New Forms in Door Ornamentation*, Yale & Town, NYC  
*Dedication of the Silvermine Guild of Artists*,  
New Canaan, CT

*1st Exhibition of Lower East Side Artists*, NYC  
*5th Annual Exhibition*, Stable Gallery, NYC

**1955**

*The New Decade*, Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC  
*Salute to France*, Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France  
*Biennial*, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL  
*New Sculpture*, Arizona Art Foundation, Scottsdale, AZ  
*American Abstract Artists*, New School, NYC  
*A Decade of Modern Painting and Sculpture*, Kootz  
Gallery, NYC  
*New Artists of the Region*, Guild Hall, East  
Hampton, NY  
*Japan America Abstract Arts*, Japan  
*4th Annual Exhibition*, Stable Gallery, NYC

**1954**

Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy  
*61st Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, Art Institute  
of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
*Twentieth Century Drawing*, Yale Art Gallery,  
Yale University, New Haven, CT  
Solo show, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside  
Museum, NYC  
*3rd Annual Exhibition*, Stable Gallery, NYC

**1953**

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Hacker Gallery, NYC  
*Painting and Sculpture at the New School*, NYC  
*Painting/Sculpture*, Tanager Gallery, NYC  
*2nd Annual Exhibition*, Stable Gallery, NYC

**1952**

*Sculpture of the Twentieth Century*, Museum of  
Modern Art, NYC  
Lassaw, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*French and American Painting and Sculpture*, Kootz  
Gallery, NYC  
*An Exhibition of Contemporary Religious Art and  
Architecture*, Union Theological Seminary, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, New Gallery, NYC  
*Invitation to South America*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American  
Art, NYC  
University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE

**1951**

*Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, Museum  
of Modern Art, NYC  
*Tradition and Experiment in Modern Sculpture*,  
American Federation of Arts, NYC





*Intimate Media*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Direct Metal Sculpture*, Sculpture Center, NYC  
*Resumé of the 1950-51 Season*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Summer Souvenirs*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*Lassaw*, Kootz Gallery, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists – American, English and Danish Abstract Artists*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
*Sculpture in Metal*, Sculpture Center, NYC  
*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA

#### 1950

*American Abstract Artists Traveling Show*, Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris, France  
Galleria Dell'Arte Moderne, Rome, Italy  
Den Frie Udstillings Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
New Gallery, NYC  
Watkins Gallery, American University, Washington, DC  
*Things to Come*, Laurel Gallery, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, New School for Social Research, NYC  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC

#### 1949

*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Bennington College, Bennington, VT  
*Watercolor and Sculpture*, Laurel Gallery, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
Clay Club, NYC  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC

#### 1948

*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
Wilmington Museum, Wilmington, DE  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Chinese Gallery, NYC  
*Spring Exhibit*, Clay Club, NYC  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC

#### 1947

*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
*7th Annual Exhibition*, Federation of Modern Painters & Sculptors, Wildenstein Gallery, NYC  
Clay Club, NYC

#### 1946

*Sculpture Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
*47 sculptors*, American-British Art Center, NYC  
Clay Club, NYC

#### 1945

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC  
Clay Club, NYC

#### 1944

Brandt Gallery, Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC  
Art of This Century Gallery, NYC

#### 1943

American Fine Arts Gallery, NYC  
Art of This Century Gallery, NYC  
Museum of Non-objective Painting, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Brant Gallery, NYC

#### 1943

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, American Fine Arts Galleries, NYC  
Art of this Century Gallery, NYC

#### 1942

Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

#### 1941

Radio Station WNYC, NYC  
*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC

#### 1940

American Fine Arts Gallery, NYC  
World's Fair (Triangles), Queens, NY

#### 1939

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, Riverside Museum, NYC  
Beloit College, Beloit, WI  
Clay Club, NYC  
William Rockhill Nelson Museum, Kansas City, MO

#### 1938

*American Abstract Artists Annual*, American Fine Arts Gallery, NYC  
Henry Art Galleries, University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Palace of Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA  
William Rockhill Nelson Museum, Kansas City, MO





Art Institute, Milwaukee, WI  
 Clay Club, NYC  
*Sculptors Guild Show*, NYC  
 Contemporary Arts Center, NYC

**1937**

*American Abstract Artists 1st Annual*, Squibb Gallery  
 (Squibb Building), NYC  
 Clay Club, NYC

**1936**

Sculpture Exhibitions (Concrete Abstractions),  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC  
 Springfield Museum, Springfield, MA  
 Clay Club, NYC

**1935**

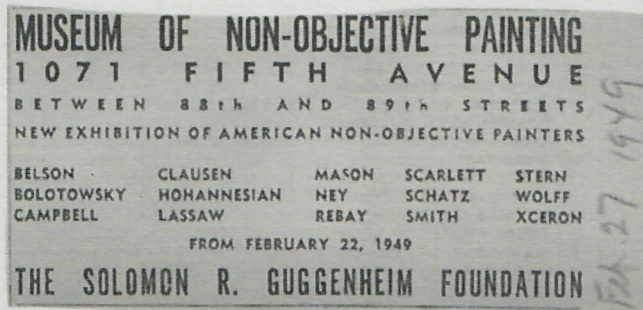
Whitney Museum of American  
 Art, NYC  
*125th Annual Exhibit*, Connecticut Academy  
 of Fine Arts, Harford, CT

**1934**

Contemporary Art Gallery (*Torso*), NYC  
 Dudensing Gallery, NYC  
 Clay Club, NYC

**1933**

Contemporary Arts Gallery (*Dancing Figure*), NYC



Newspaper clipping from February 27, 1949, for an exhibition at the  
 Museum of Non-objective Painting (cat. no. 42)





Interior of Lassaw's studio at 6th Avenue and 12th Street in New York City, c. mid 1950s (cat. no. 45)





## MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
Andrew Dickson White Art Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
Baltimore Museum of Art, MD  
Birla Museum, Calcutta, India  
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY  
Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA  
Chase Manhattan Bank Collection, New York, NY  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC  
Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY  
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel  
Long Island Hall of Fame – Sculpture Garden, Stony Brook, NY  
McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX  
Metalcraft Corporation, Chicago, IL  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA  
Museum of International Art, Sofia, Bulgaria  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ  
Newark Museum, Newark, NJ  
Peggy Guggenheim's "Art of this Century," Venice, Italy  
Philharmonic Art Galleries, Naples, FL  
Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI  
Sheldon Art Gallery, Lincoln, NE  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC  
University of California Museum, Berkeley, CA  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC  
Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT  
Washington University, St. Louis, MO  
Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS  
Williams College, Williamstown, MA  
Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA





Lassaw in his studio, 1989 (cat. no. 31)

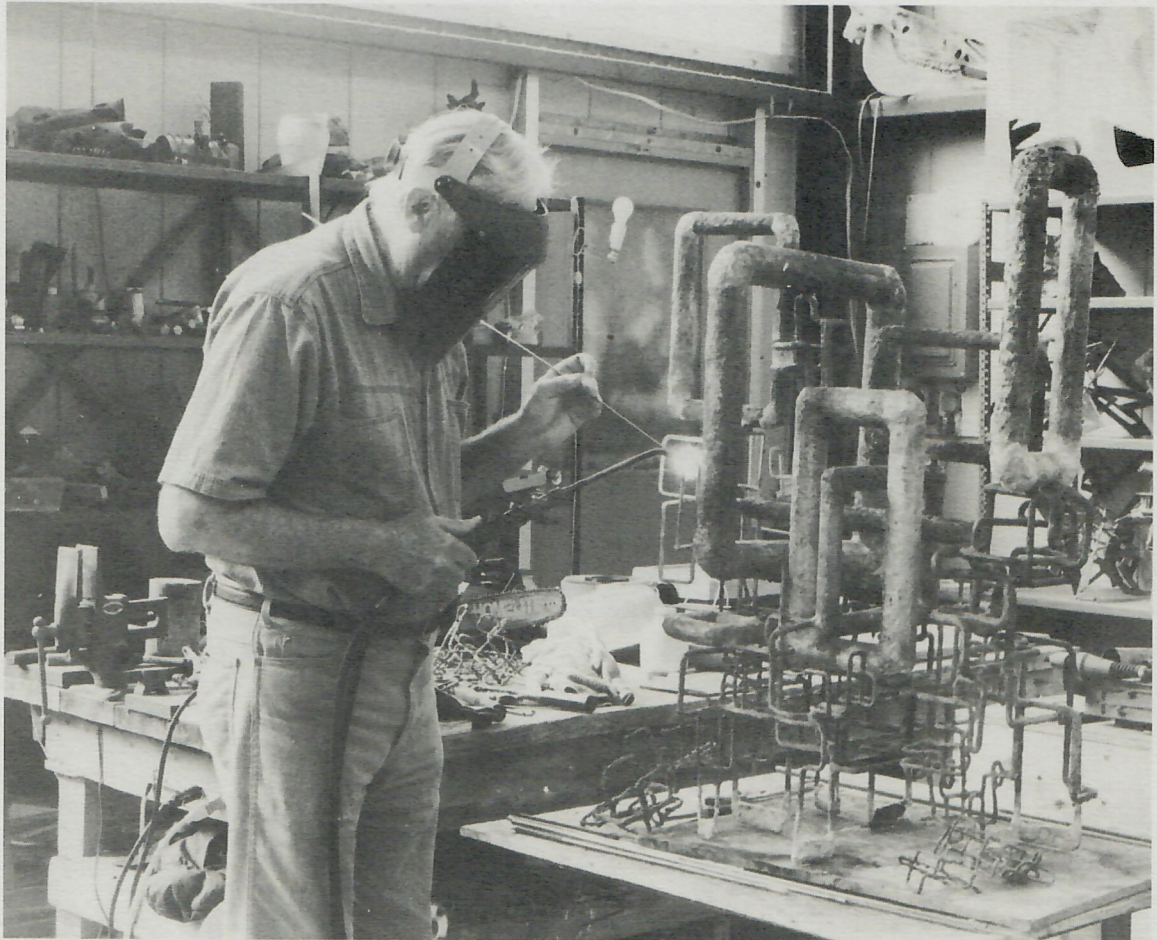




## SCULPTURE COMMISSIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL SITES

Beth El Temple, Springfield, MA  
Beth El Temple, Providence, RI  
Temple of Aaron, St. Paul, MN  
Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue, Port Chester, NY  
House of Theology for the Franciscan Fathers,  
Centerville, OH  
Philip Johnson's Glass House, New Canaan, CT

Office of Mrs. Ira Haupi, *Seventeen Magazine*  
Editor, NYC  
Washington University, St. Louis, MO  
New York Hilton Hotel (Avenue of the Americas),  
New York, NY  
Yale and Towne, New York, NY  
Rockefeller Center, New York, NY



Lassaw welding, 1993 (cat. no. 48)





Lassaw in his studio (with Equinox, 1962-63, behind), December, 2001 (cat. no. 32)





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**Lastly, the artist himself will be given the last word in this selected bibliography:**

In addition to the artist's ability to speak for himself in person, numerous audiotape and videotape recordings of the artist (including interviews, such as a 1973 video interview with Hermine Freed) are available at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in East Hampton, New York. Arthur Jones also has in his possession numerous videotape interviews that he conducted with the artist between 1992 to 2001. In addition, by the year 2000, Marika and Thomas Herskovic had produced 27 video recordings on New York School artists. Several of their productions featured (or even focused) on Lassaw speaking about his art and other subjects.





1. *Untitled*, 1927, pastel on cardboard (cat. no. 11)







2. Dancing Figure, 1929, graphited plaster (cat. no. 34)


1

Dancing Figure 1929  
 Black Graphited Plaster 9" high.  
 Sold about 6 to 8 plaster casts, Two or three through Contemporary Arts Gallery - Emily Franco.  
 Exhibited at Dudensing Gallery.  
 One cast extant. Coll. artist. damaged.

Memory of earlier work  
 Head of young man  1928

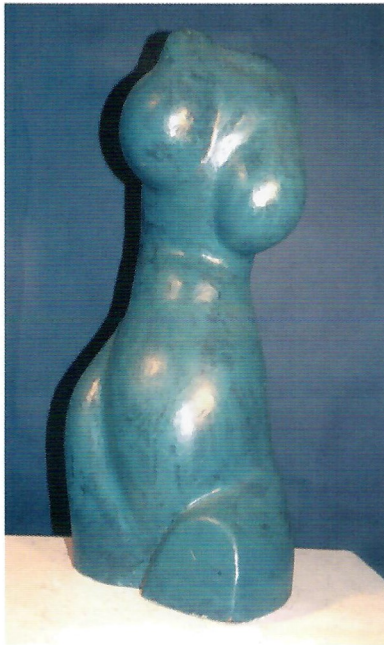
1929 Model in Plastiline  
 a construction in space  
 a precursor of later direction.



Scheherazade  
 Female head 

"Eve" standing nude with snake

3. "Dancing Figure 1929" from Lassaw's "First Sculpture Book" (cat. no. 33)

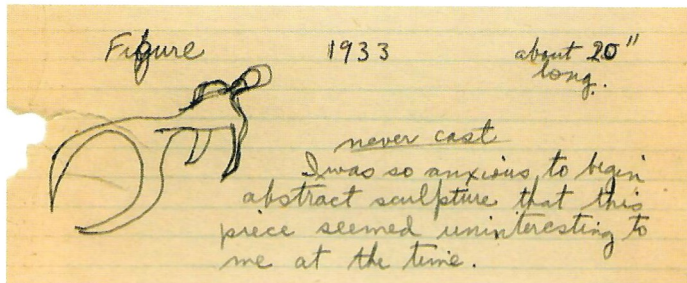


4. Torso, 1931, plaster (cat. no. 36)

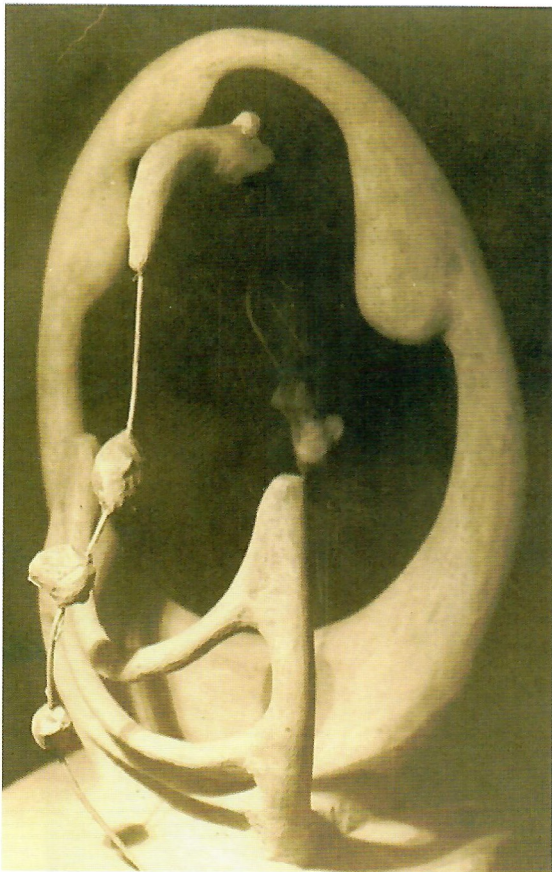


5. Blue Figure, 1930, plaster (cat. no. 35)

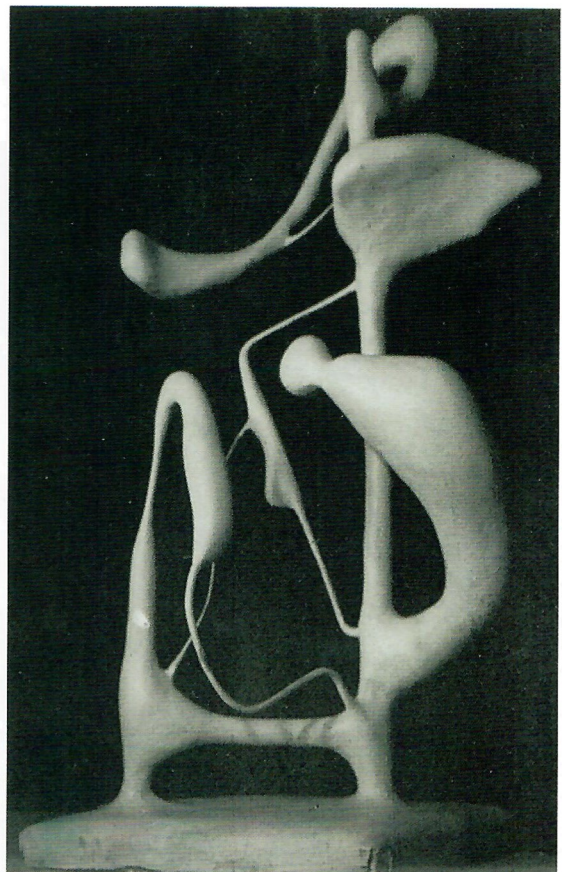




6. "Figure 1933" from Lassaw's First Sculpture Book (cat. no. 37)

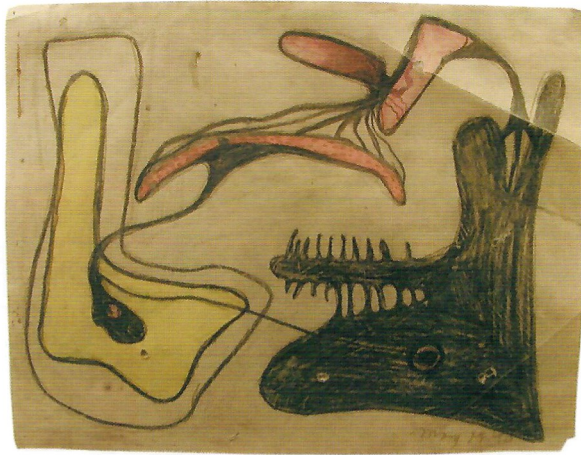


7. Lassaw's Plaster Sculpture # 6: Pot Jumping Through Hoop, 1935 (destroyed, cat. no. 38)



8. Lassaw's Plaster Sculpture # 7, 1936 (destroyed, cat. no. 39)



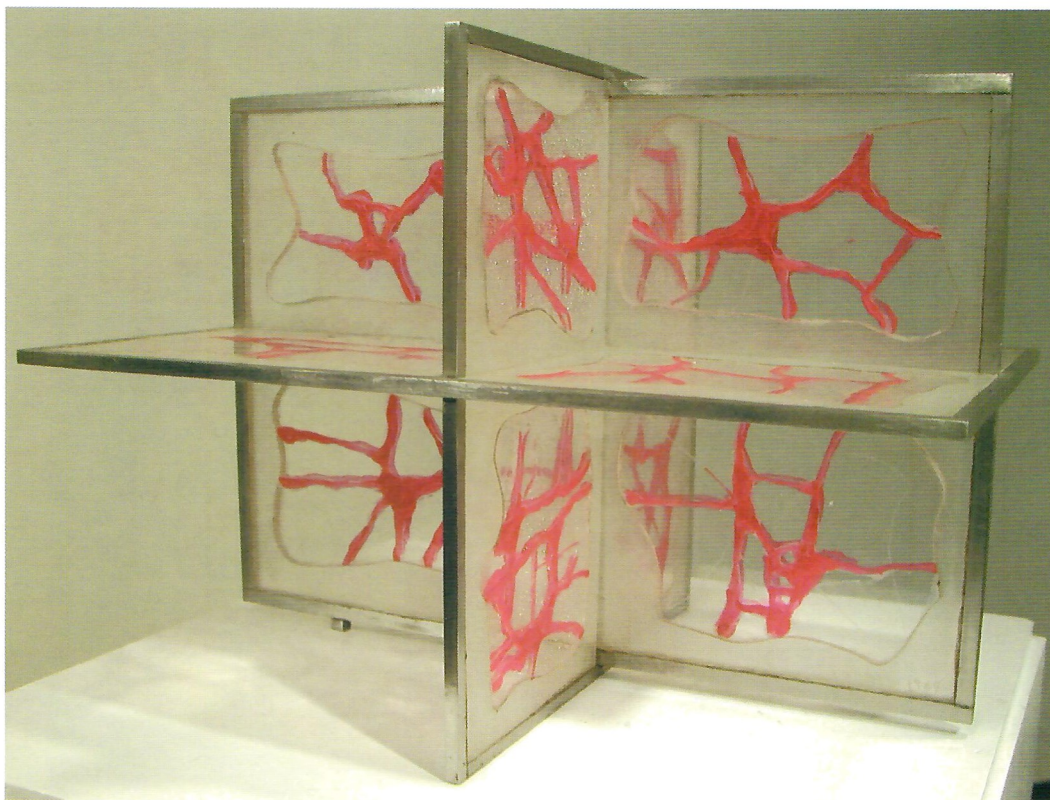


9. *Untitled*, May 1940, color pencil on paper (cat. no. 12)

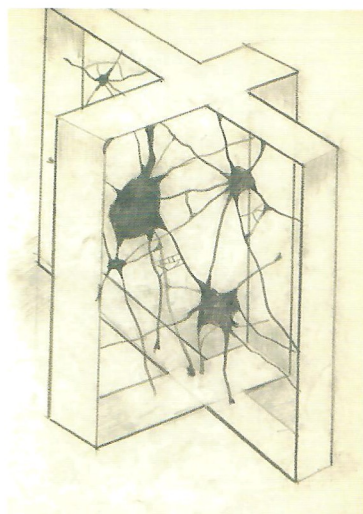


10. *Shadow Box with Painted Shapes*, 1939 (refurbished 1979), painted wood and metal with electric light illumination (cat. no. 1)

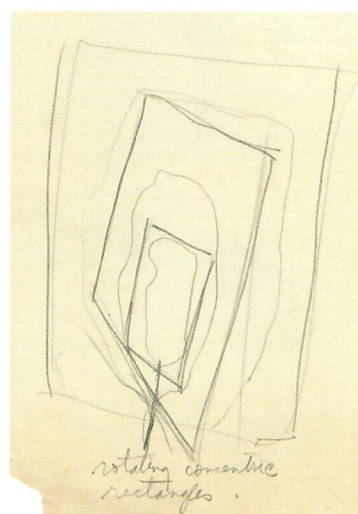




11. *Star Cradle*, 1949, plastic and stainless steel (cat. no. 2)



12. Sketch, March 8, 1947, graphite pencil on paper (cat. no. 44)



13. Unfinished sketch inscribed: "Rotating concentric rectangles," 1946, graphite pencil on paper (cat. no. 43)





14. Lassaw with *Milky Way*, 1950 (cat. no. 29)





15. *Counterpoint Castle*, 1956–57, bronze and copper (cat. no. 3)



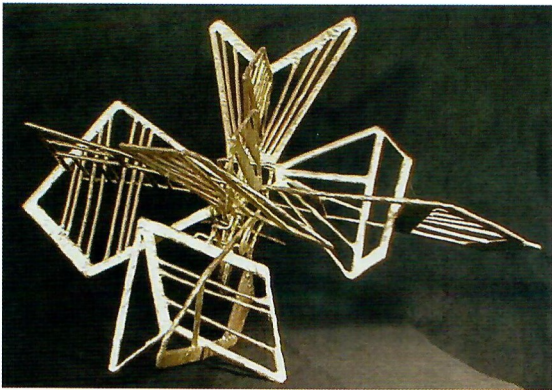


**16.** *Not Two*, 1964, nickel silver, copper, brass (cat. no. 5)

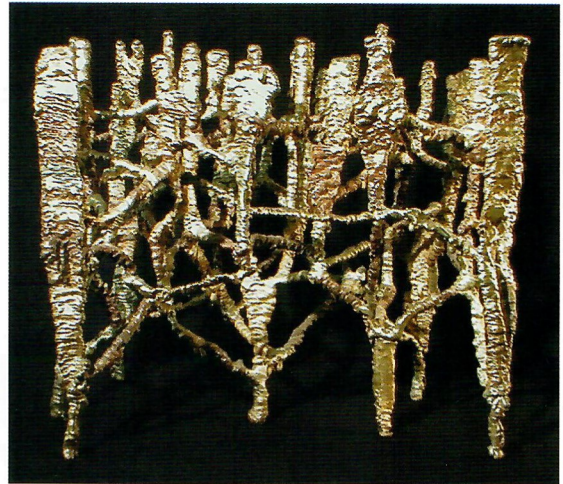


**17.** *Abode of Time*, 1976, red brass and bronze (cat. no. 6)

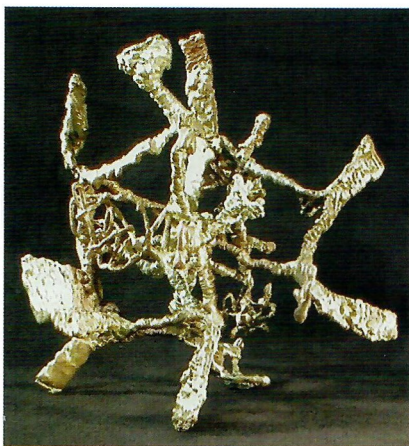




18. Sothis, 1983, bronze (cat. no. 7)



19. Vikridita, 1989, various alloys (cat. no. 8)



20. Erato, 1991, various alloys (cat. no. 9)



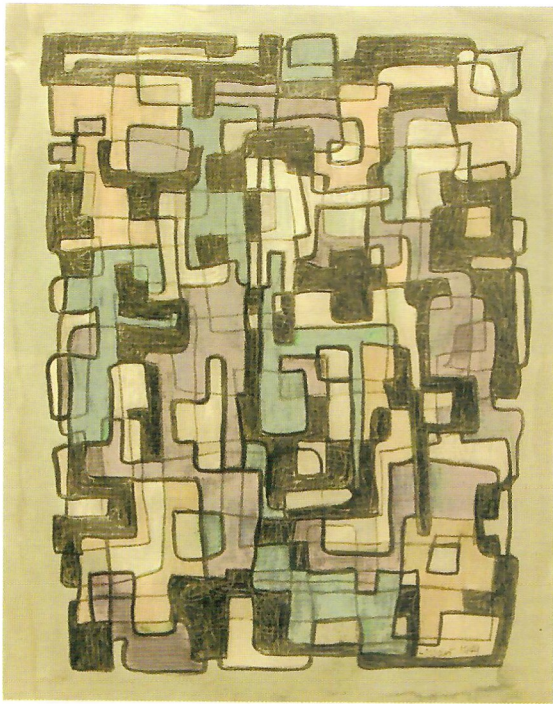
21. Labyrinth B, 1995, copper and brass  
(cat. no. 10)



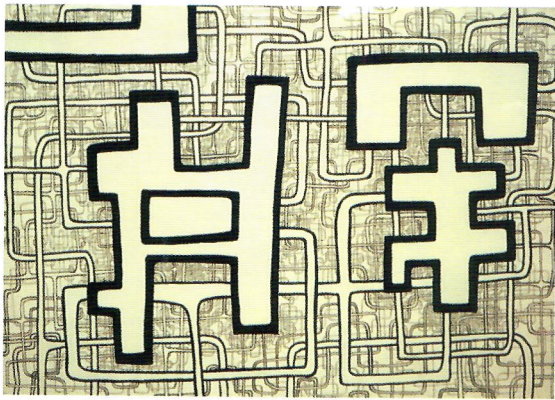


**22.** *Light Construction in Space*, 1968, left and right images from stereoscopic (3-D) slide (cat. no. 47)

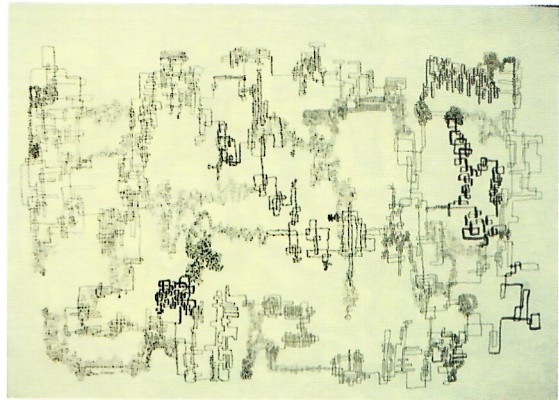




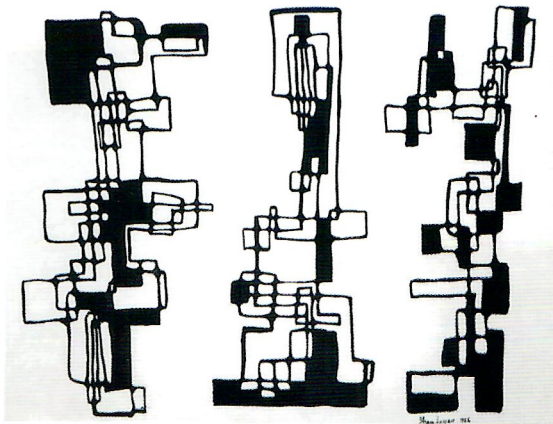
**23.** *Untitled*, 1949, color pencil on paper (cat. no. 13)



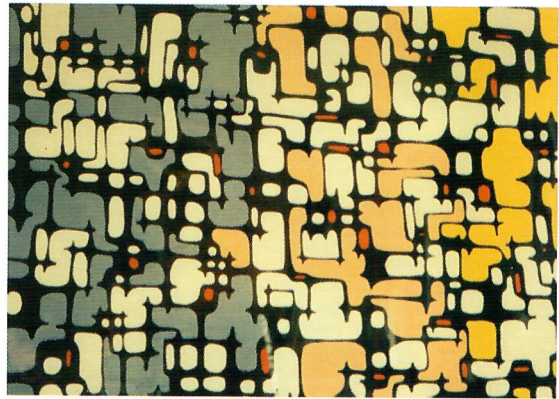
**26.** *Amaze*, 1970, pen and ink on paper (cat. no. 17)



**24.** *Untitled*, 1956, pen and ink on paper (cat. no. 15)



**25.** *Untitled*, 1966, pen and ink on paper (cat. no. 16)

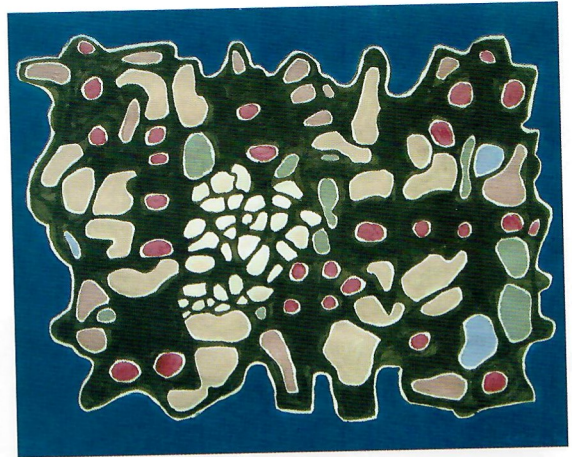


**27.** *Continuity #1*, 1979, color lithograph (cat. no. 18)

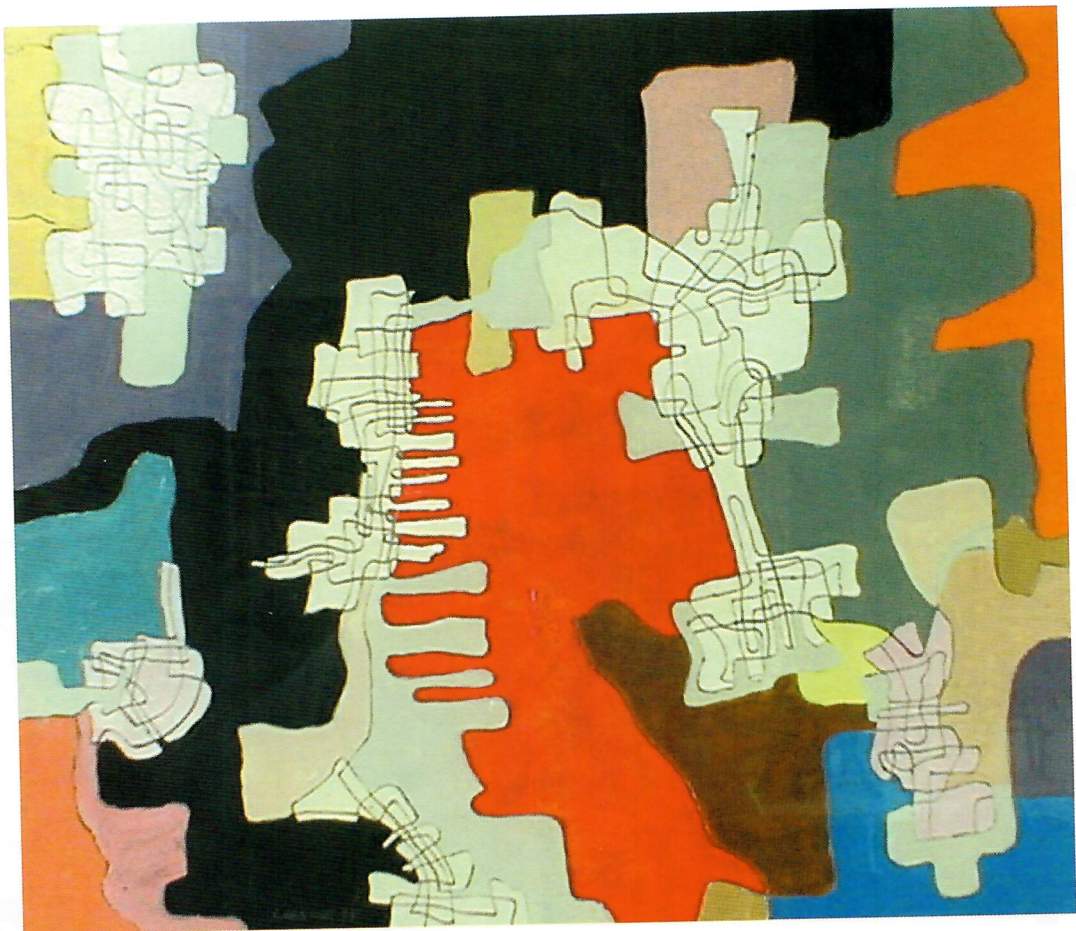




**28.** *Vortex A*, 1995, acrylic on paper (cat. no. 20)

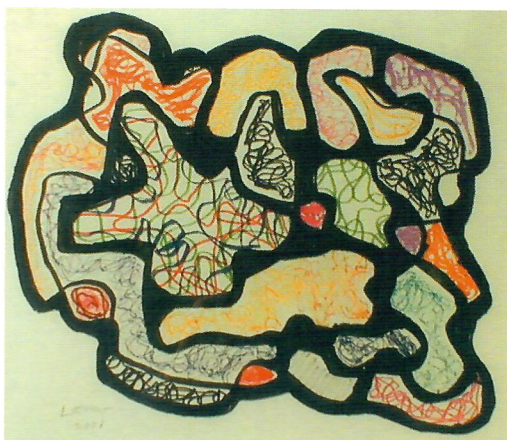


**29.** *Vortex B*, 1996, acrylic on paper (cat. no. 21)



**30.** *Red Flood*, 1985, acrylic on paper (cat. no. 19)





31. *Untitled*, 2001, watercolor marker on paper (cat. no. 22)

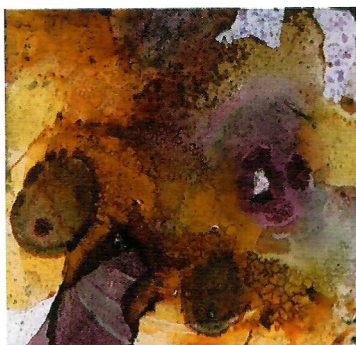


32. *Untitled*, 2001, acrylic on canvas (cat. no. 23)

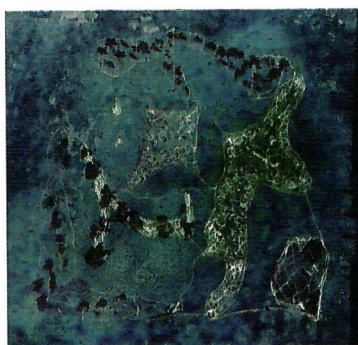




**33.** *Projection Painting, No. 9*, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof (cat. no. 24)



**34.** *Projection Painting, No. 26*, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof (cat. no. 25)



**35.** *Projection Painting, No. 29*, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof (cat. no. 26)



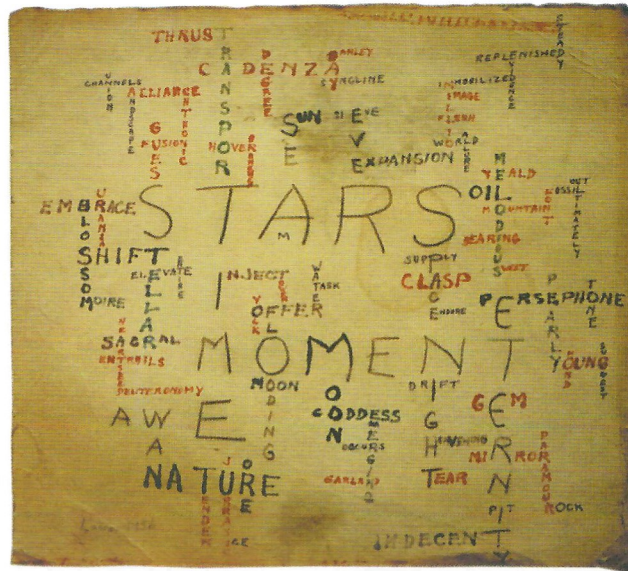
**36.** *Projection Painting, No. 32*, 2002, inkjet print (from original 2 x 2 color dye on glass projection painting, c.1946-49), signed artist's proof (cat. no. 27)





**37–38.** Lassaw's "projection paintings" presented at an audience-interactive event at Radford University on March 16, 2000. Ten images were projected horizontally, side-by side, on the gallery walls so as to surround the audience in the manner of a panorama. (cat. nos. 49–60)





39. *Untitled* (word-drawing), 1956, color pencil on paper (cat. no. 14)



40. Wall with hand printed inscriptions in Lassaw's studio at 6th Avenue and 12th Street in New York City, c. mid 1950s (cat. no. 46)



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