

journals, was Robert Smithson. He lost his life at the age of 35 in a plane crash near the site of his new earthwork, *Amarillo Ramp*, in Texas on July 20, 1973. But Smithson never sacrificed his art or the challenging, evolutionary nature of its possibilities from taking a place in the future revolution of this country's esthetic sensibilities, now heading toward the environment and our cultural identity.

I am intentionally setting up this dialectic between Morris and Smithson to draw attention by way of contrast, to what I think is an astonishingly clear example of that archetypal rift between hostile brothers. Whether in the case of Morris and Smithson, as representative of actual opposing personalities, or more to the point, in their differing approaches to the problems and solutions of art as realized in their works, a definite polarity existed and exists between them which is having its effects on the present and future course of art in this country.

We are fortunate in one respect though, because the public has been given the opportunity to simultaneously observe, and then begin to contemplate the nature of this basic ideological conflict at the heart of the cultural dilemma, that major American artists are coming to grips with in recent years. An exhibition of Smithson's work with "Mirror Displacements" has also just opened at the John Weber Gallery at 420 West Broadway.

Right now, however, I intend to concentrate on Morris' exhibition, and not try to delve into how his mirror piece at the Sonnabend Gallery relates or differs from Smithson's. Such a formidable task would require a far deeper reflective process on my part than is possible within the confines of a

plumb bobs, hang in a perpendicular alignment to the floor. They bracket off a narrow, vertical space for the viewer to look through, and see the vertical strip of black tape on the walls at either end of the space containing the conically-tipped copper poles. Suspended a few inches above the floor, the poles sway a bit if a draft of wind passes through the room.

Although Morris' interest in presenting this stylized, somewhat didactic lesson in how to establish a true vertical is probably attributable to his rather tentative interest in the mysterious Nazca lines on the desert floor in coastal Peru, (since the Nazca Indians did invent the plumb bob), one cannot ignore the distinctly phallic shape of these copper pieces by Morris. Nazcan erotic pottery certainly exerted just as much, if not more, of an effect on Morris' imagination than the theoretical and esthetic problems posed by the geometric and organic configurations of the Nazca lines.

An article in the *National Geographic* (May, 1975), showed photographs and documentation about the work of the German-born mathematician, Maria Reiche, with the Nazca lines. Her chartings, dedicated fieldwork and efforts to preserve and fathom the secrets of the line for over 25 years proved to me at any rate that this one woman understand the true "level" of a heroic endurance test far better than any of the many American male artists who've only made relatively comfortable and brief treks into the deserted and abandoned wealth of knowledge in thousands of years of Amerindian civilization and culture. I would have preferred to read Ms. Reiche's more ex-

#### Robert Morris work at Sonnabend Gallery

juvenate the surface of this earth, instead of continuing to drive in the polemic wedge still deeper until the world is totally split apart?

Morris' sense of insular oneupsmanship, by rendering the plumb bobs into four separated and

verticals, there are four bronze horizontal objects, with a surveying-type curved level tube inserted into an open circle in each massive shape. They are suspended from the ceiling at two different heights. The first and third are hung higher

positions in relation to the other steel frames. When you finally do see your own head at the very end of the eightfold, receding dimensions reflected in your field of vision, you'll only see the back of your own head. The other alternative is to simply go look in one of the mirrors on the walls. But

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## Who Says Mondrian Had No Children

#### APRIL KINGSLEY

One of the basic tenets of Neoplasticism was the demand that art be universal—endlessly extensible, infinitely applicable. It was, perhaps, an irrational idea, this notion of making the world over after reason, but it has had far-reaching consequences. Mondrian is rarely ever named along with the other Big 3 twentieth century influences—Picasso (for form), Matisse (for color) and Duchamp (for content)—but he should be, for we see living proof of the viability of his line around us every day in the galleries.

It's possible to trace lines from Mondrian to Hoffman's floating rectangles, through Barnett Newman or Ad Reinhardt, Michael Loew and Giorgio Cavallon of the American Abstract Artists to Frank Stella, Kenneth Noland, Budd Hopkins or David Novros in 60s painting or Sol Lewitt and Don Judd in 60s sculpture and, from there, directly into Conceptual art (Douglas Huebler's current show at the Sperone, Westwater Fischer Gallery being the case in point). In

fact, when you really sit down and think about it, Mondrian's gutsy attacks on the canvas edge may well have provided the unconscious liberating impulse for Abstract Expressionism's explosion of Cubism's tight, vignettted scaffolding so timorously withdrawn from the picture's edge.

Hans Hofmann (there is currently an excellent exhibition of some of his work from 1948-1952 at the uptown Emmerich gallery) and the American Abstract Artists were the bastions of abstraction in America during the 30s. While Hofmann moved about, from purely abstract dripped and smeared paintings as early as 1940 to more readable abstract subject matter, the A.A.A., as they were known, maintained a purity of purpose and a dedication to Neo-plastic principles that never flagged. Thus is was always respected even though the emerging vanguard of the 40s felt it wasn't aggressive or ambitious enough to fulfill the needs of the time. Hofmann features isolated geometrical forms and he uses red, yellow and blue predominantly (when he isn't working

in the black-and-white range so popular at the end of the 40s), but his structure is essentially Cubist and his paint handling essentially expressionist. The ever-present greens in his paintings are also expressionist, in that they clash maximally with the reds and purples to create chromatic dissonance. The Hofmann show is very well selected. While duller, more impacted paintings generally characterize these years of Hofmann's oeuvre, we are treated to a wider variety of open, free-wheeling, exuberant paintings, that are close in feeling to the wonderful expansiveness of his late work than one would have expected.

Giorgio Cavallon, who at 72 seems to be entering a phase that might be likened to Indian Summer, is working with renewed vigor. His painterly geometrical abstractions at the A.M. Sachs gallery until May 13th have none of the reticence or hesitancy that made his last show so poignant. Now, softly brushed whites of varying degrees of purity courageously obliterate brilliant

*Continued on next page*

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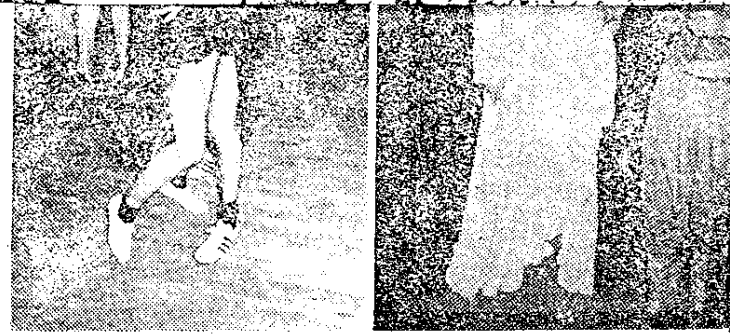
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ilinear units we are to imagine existing behind or before the picture plane. In these works Loew is carrying out the illusionistic implications of the diagonal action in his other paintings.

Douglas Huebler's work is based in implication and imaginative extension. Like Sol Lewitt, to whom he seems to me to be the closest in the Conceptual art "school," he takes Mondrian's idea that the work of art is only an expendable example of what might ideally exist in its fullest dimension in the real world to one of its ultimate conclusions. Whether he's taking photos of people to "document everyone alive" or randomly selecting possible "look-alikes," or he's drawing a dot and saying that it's really a line receding at a 90° angle from the picture plane toward infinity, it's the same thing. He's making specifics into universals, and in the process, he is able to reduce the universe to the dimensions of a page of drawing paper. In his best pieces he establishes an equilibrium between the possible and reality that is both axiomatic and amazingly down to earth (pragmatic).

My favorite piece in his show of drawings at Sperone-Westwater-Fischer is the one dated 1969-1976 with a lot of dots above the following text: "During that instant when any single point represented above is focused upon at the eye level of its percipient, it functions as the vanishing point for various aspects of the architectural ambiance within which it appears; simultaneously its perception dis-equilibrates the field of points of which it is an integral part." I like it especially because of its architectural reference and the connection that makes with Neo-plastic doctrine.



Two pretty faces and Divine in sequins and a huge black hairdo



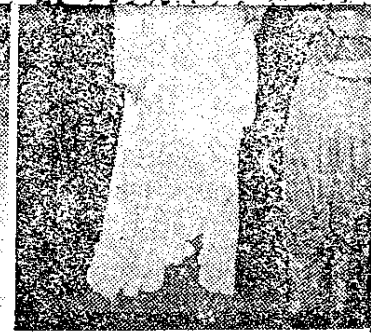
Anna and Zora in typical cigarette girl costumes

ty of other people who made it to Roseland for the party.

One pretty face belonged to John Finello, 30, who is an executive at Wrangler Wranch. Another pretty face belonged to John's friend Frank Carbonell, 26. Frank, who wore very short cut jeans and a brown shirt, had never been to Roseland before, and he thought the place was "fabulous."

Roseland looked lovely. In fact, it was nothing less than spectacular.

Two more pretty faces belonged to Al and Aurelia Santiago. Al works at Bloomingdale's and Aurelia works at *Newsweek*, and both brother and sister had the



was a small "Floucci" label. Sam, who says he is 38, though he doesn't look a day over 25, was delighted with the party and the huge ballroom. "It's a terrific place," he said.

Anna Conley, 24, and her friend Zora were the cigarette girls, and even though they didn't sell many cigarettes, they enjoyed the party enormously. Clad in your typical cigarette girl costumes, the girls couldn't get over the Roseland ballroom. "It's fabulous," said Anna.

"Lots of people get married here," added Zora.

**Winking Shoes**

No account of the bash would be complete without mentioning Tony Colaiuti, 20, who lives in Manhattan. Tony wore black tie, tails, and very short, tight black pants. He wore white sneakers and ankle-length black socks. A violinist and graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, Tony thought the party "decadent," which he meant as a compliment.

While it may have been decadent, it was the kind of affair you could bring your mother to (assuming she didn't mind thick clouds of marijuana smoke) and that is exactly what Daniel Veal did. His mother, Christina Veal, who lives in Rome, wore a spectacular feather hat, designed by Daniel's friend Ross Perri. Daniel, Christina and Ross just couldn't stop dancing.

There is a display case in the foyer of Roseland containing shoes that belonged to such famous dancers as Ray Bolger, June Havoc, Dan Dailey, and Chita Rivera. The old shoes seemed to smile and wink at the departing guests and it was no wonder. They felt right at home at "Puttin' on the Ritz."

Photos by Allen Tanenbaum

## Who Says

Continued from previous page

passages of red, blue, yellow and orange. The brightly colored planes, on the other hand, hold their ground firmly. Cavallon grinds and mixes his own pigments so all his colors are cleaner and more vibrant than seem possible with commercial tube pigments.

Cavallon, a true Abstract Expressionist despite his allégiance to Neo-plasticism, gives us paintings which are the visible residue of the processes of their making. The initial effect of seeing perfectly legible, brightly colored rectilinear planes partially submerged in a soft sea of white brushstroke passes in a few moments. Suddenly the paintings seem so densely packed with changes and nuances they feel impenetrable. Then one learns to take them slowly, to let them reveal their innumerable secrets in time. You can go back through the paintings in your mind, recreating the paths and steps of their creation among the pentimenti and

palimpsests the artist lays down like clues in a mystery.

Michael Loew's paintings (at the Landmark Gallery until May 14th) have an even stronger initial impact than Cavallon's because of the optical effects of their hard-edged color, but they too take time to see. At first they look like brightly colored patterns or good design. The subtleties have to be noticed, in somewhat the same way that distinctions between colors of black have to be made in a late Reinhardt painting in order to perceive its structure. Loew's seemingly symmetrical, rhythmically repeated lines and planes are really quite asymmetrical and unpredictable. In "Oderedo," for instance, three main horizontal bands with diagonal stripes are separated by two wide bands with vertical striping. Some of these stripes almost link up vertically with those of the narrow bands to create a sense of continuity from top to bottom; others don't. The top and bottom-most narrow bands each contain one diagonal unit of a different hue than exists anywhere else in the painting, but this isn't obvious at first. Most importantly, the way the mid-range reds and blues of the planes are distributed, you only get isolated vertical red panels in the center, one above the other, where they form an axial core for the picture. This stress, however subtle, provides the essential hierarchical element with which to mitigate the patternizing effect of the overall configuration of repeated stripes.

New to Loew, who has been working with tonally close-valued, widely separated hues for the past few years, are his white paintings. The isolated, stamped ribbons of color floating on these white grounds seem like vapors of air.

Huebler is the humanist of Conceptual art. He uses these simple diagrams that he's been making since 1968 to stimulate ideas, emotions, and esthetic experiences on a wide range of levels, just as he does in his more visually complex "Duration," "Location" and "Variable" pieces. He moves from the serious to the humorous, the existential to the sexual, the sublime to the silly and back again. For instance, in his most recent book of *Selected Drawings 1968-1973*, published by Sperone, there are three blank pages with

the following texts, one on the bottom of each: "In front of the above surface will occur at least one human act that has always been considered unspeakable"; "For the entire time that the reader reads these words he or she will exist free from history"; and "This surface may never again be the subject of perception." The book is only \$10, and since the ideas are the same no matter how they're presented, I'd recommend it to anyone interested in Douglas Huebler, the finest, in my opinion, of all the so-called Conceptualists.

of some minors and impersonating a police officer. He had been accused of showing some picture-books to two 15-year-old youths after telling them he was a cop. "The mother said I fooled around with one of them," he explained. "Actually he fooled around with me."

### Italian Fashion

Music for the "celebrity bash" was provided by The Salsoul Orchestra, all 35 of them, and among the pieces they played was "Tangerine," their very own hit song. Those especially impressed by Salsoul were Andy Warhol, the artist; Cheyenne, the photographer and Vogue model who is author of *I Am Cheyenne*, and Jungle Gardenia, who wore a lovely green-and-black flowered formal dress. Jungle is a hair stylist. The party is "just great," he said. "Except I just lost my contact lens."

Some people wouldn't think of Meakin Pipkin as a "pretty face," but he certainly stood out in the crowd. Meakin was celebrating "Italian Fashion Week" in his own special way. He wore white sneakers with red-and-white sweat socks, white knee-length shorts cuffed and held up with white suspenders, a green shirt and a white tennis cap with long white peak. He wore thick horn-rimmed eyeglasses. The red, white and green color combination was, presumably, the link with Italian fashion.

### Cigarettes, Cigarettes?

Sam Overton, who is a secretary at a Manhattan office, wore one of those new disposable paper jumpsuits that come from Italy. It carried "Exxon," "MG" and "Lancia" emblems and fit like an

# Puttin' on the Ritz

GREGORY BATTCOCK

The press releases promised "more pretty faces" than anyplace ever. And that's exactly what you got. In fact, there were more pretty faces than you could shake a stick at.

Billed a "celebrity discotillion," and called "Puttin' on the Ritz," it was the latest New York party designed by George-Paul Rosell. And, while many of the "art, show business and fashion personalities" failed to show up, there were plen-

ty of some minors and impersonating a police officer. He had been accused of showing some picture-books to two 15-year-old youths after telling them he was a cop. "The mother said I fooled around with one of them," he explained. "Actually he fooled around with me."

Miguel Vargas, and his sister, Janet, were especially impressed by the music. Both deliberately dressed down for the occasion; Miguel wore a grey flannel suit and his sister wore a red wool dress, and the simplicity was almost blinding in the midst of the general flamboyancy.

### Morals Charge

Divine, the actress, wore white sequins and a huge black hairdo. Peter Martin, proprietor of



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