

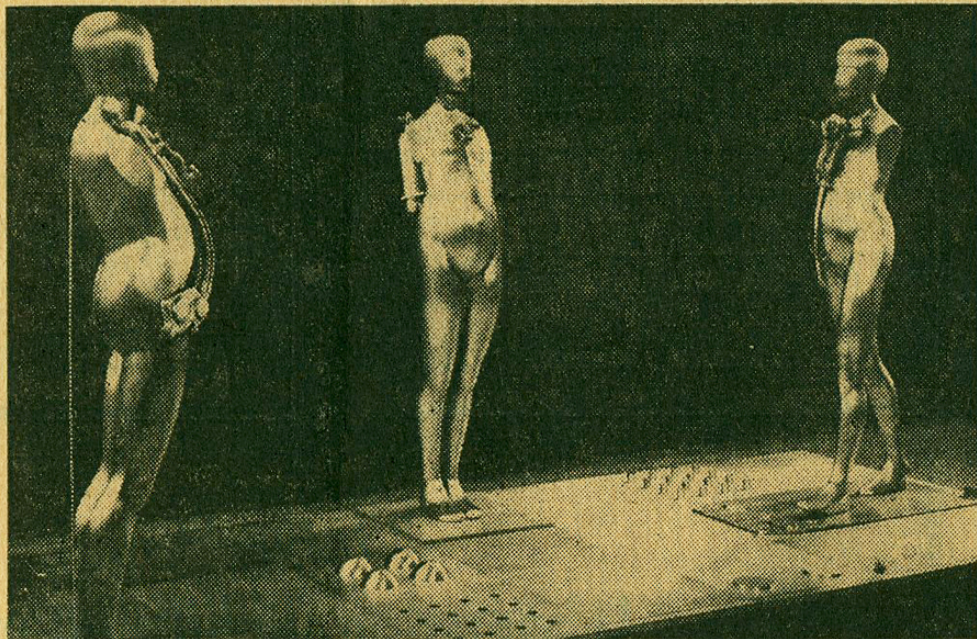
Art: Big and Wide-Ranging Annual Opens at Whitney Museum

By HILTON KRAMER

THE 1966 Annual Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which is devoted to sculpture and prints, is a very large show—larger than a count of its 148 sculptures and 66 prints might suggest. For some of the sculptures on view are, physically, the largest ever shown at a Whitney Annual, and the range of styles embraces a wider spectrum of taste than even past exhibitions in this series—always immensely eclectic—have attempted. The result is a show that clearly favors new ideas, young talent and audacious departures, but one that manages at the same time to overfill the Whitney's long-standing loyalty to a large number of well-known artists of indifferent accomplishment.

Certainly the most striking aspect of the exhibition is the sheer space allotted to some relative newcomers to the sculpture scene in this country. Ernest Trova's bronze, "Large Landscape," with three standing figures, is 14 feet long and said to weigh two tons. Ronald Bladen's huge white painted box, tipped at an angle just off the floor, measures 16 by 8 by 8 feet. Tony Smith's steel construction, "Amaryllis," stands 11 1/3 feet high. And there are a good many other works in the show of similar scale and character.

The show also affords a generous view of the widespread effort now being made



Walker Art Center-Eric Sutherland

ON EXHIBITION: "Large Landscape," bronze sculpture by Ernest Trova, displayed in 1966 annual showing of sculpture and prints at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

to incorporate color as an integral part of sculptural construction. Indeed, enlarged but simplified structure, vivid color and a free-handed use of mixed media (including electric lights, fabrics, formica and found objects) dominate large sections of the exhibition.

Yet traditional carving and modeling as well as the conventional modernist forms of constructed sculpture, in both

metal and wood, are very much in evidence. The newer styles of huge, blunt structures and colored forms steal the limelight at times, but they by no means have exclusive claim on esthetic quality.

One odd and somewhat distorting aspect of the show is the fact that certain older figures—one thinks of Alexander Calder, Reuben Nakian and Jacques Lipchitz partic-

ularly—are not represented at anything like their true strength. It would have been illuminating to have included a Calder stabile as large, say, as the Smith or Bladen works; as it is, the context of the exhibition makes Calder seem slighter than he actually is.

But a first view of an exhibition as crowded and various as this one can only be just that—a first view in which the show as a whole

tends to crowd out a close examination of individual merits. What is unmistakable even on a first view, however, is that two new conditions at the Whitney have altered the annuals.

First, there has been a badly needed infusion of new and younger blood in the curatorial staff, and this has led to a more informed sense of what is actually going on in sculpture at the present time. And second, the Whitney's more ample new quarters at Madison Avenue and 75th Street afford the museum, for the first time, the requisite space to mount an exhibition equal in size to the aspiration now prevailing among our most ambitious sculptors. Whatever doubts one may have about the actual accomplishment of these sculptors—doubts that will be discussed in a subsequent article on this year's annual—the fact remains that the current exhibition represents that accomplishment more faithfully than has usually been the case with Whitney annuals in the past.

Beginning with this exhibition, which goes on view to the public today, the Whitney will remain open one hour later than usual. Its hours are now 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. weekdays and noon to 6 P.M. Sundays. The annual is on view through Feb. 5. There is an admission charge of 50 cents.

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