

EXTRACT FROM  
**THE LONDON TIMES**

1785

INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU  
 184, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

29 APR 1964

2598  
*Falling Man in the Art of  
 Mr. Ernest Trova*

The paintings of Mr. Ernest Trova at the *Hanover Gallery, St. George Street, W.1*, all follow a single theme—the “falling man”. But do not imagine the slow, graceful ballet of the free-fall parachutist, because Mr. Trova’s fall is the controlled fall of a faceless, armless, and colourless dummy, bound up in the tight patterns of the machine, allowed only so much space to plunge, and unable to register any kind of emotion at the antics he is made to perform. In some canvases wires run from his head and his feet over pulleys, further restricting his movement, so that he might be no more than the helpless participant in some perfectly ordered but apparently meaningless scientific experiment.

Mr. Trova is a young American painter who had his first exhibition only last year, and this is his first appearance outside the States. Although this year he is taking part in a “Pop” art survey exhibition in California, his connexion with “Pop” art as we know it would appear to be slight. His ironical treatment of the machine and man’s relationship with it brings him nearer in spirit to the Mechanist works of Duchamp and Picabia.

And again his pictures have a tightness of organization and a meticulous pre-

N.Y. Herald Trib. 2.1.1963

Ernest Trova (Pace, 9 W. 57th); A solitary figure accompanied by directional symbols appears in each canvas in the “Falling Man Series,” the first New York show by a self-taught St. Louis artist. The figure, an unconcerned, standing man in profile, is repeated in circular motifs, falling forward in circles or in arcs of circles, sometimes head first on a diagonal, sometimes seeming to bounce back as from a trampoline. He is usually painted in latex against backgrounds of different colors; occasionally he is a cut-out stitched to the canvas. This stylish work is bold, bright, decorative and suggests something ominous—like a man falling.

cision of execution which is very far removed from the assumed scruffiness of Rauschenberg, the brashness of Jim Dine or the vast, pale and rather flaccid images of Rosenquist. He makes no use, for instance, of the “projection” techniques which American “Pop” painters (and some English ones, too) have borrowed from bill-board advertising.

Thus in spite of the rather bleak view of the human condition hinted at in the first paragraph, many of Mr. Trova’s paintings are beautifully conceived and executed. His sense of design is strong and sure. The canvases in which rhythmic repetition of the dummy-silhouette has been used to build up huge “rose-window” and “arch” patterns, are less interesting, perhaps, than those, such as “Falling Man No. 1” and “Falling Man No. 12”, in which the dummy actually appears to be caught up in the motion of a machine, and the geometrical forms framing or dividing the picture space seem both to play their part in controlling the dummy’s fall, and also to retain their coherence as abstract patterns. Mr. Trova’s dummies are pale, sometimes unpainted, and the surrounding planes sombre, although broken occasionally by a ring, cross or arrow of fluorescent red.

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A Londoner Ltd. Publication

Date - 8 MAY 1964

**HANOVER GALLERY.** One might think that the paintings of Ernest Trouva were designed to illustrate the dangers of the “population explosion”. The figure of an armless man, dressed in some sort of casual space-suit or bathing costume, is repeated in circles or to outline a square, is used to form arches without triumph or is shown slipping down the slope of progress. Legs may be interlocked for a spinning pattern, or raised in the air as a manikin stands without understanding on his head. The ambience approximates to that of pop art, which always has its tragic side as it transposes images from a civilisation which is about to cover Southern England with dormitories and is busy replacing the bookshops and pubs with offices; and, indeed, if one thinks of it in another way, Mr. Trouva’s manikin might be an escapee from a curious advertisement for underwear. The total impact of this series, painted in 1963, is anticipation of reinforcements of the fantastically probable.

The artist was born in St. Louis in 1927 and his work is represented in the New York Museum of Modern Art. (Closing May 12.)

crimson—and comments: *Salud!* We say: *Olé!* Through March 6.

**ERNEST TROVA**—Pace, 9 West 57th. Sleek, factory-made sculptures suggest that, since man has fathered machines, machines may one day manufacture men. “Falling Man” is Trova’s theme; armless human figures form the bodies of sports cars, the axles of wheels, and meet on aluminum metal-scapes to propagate the species through a kissless tangle of tubes. Through Feb. 27.

**LARRY POONS**—Green, 15 West 37th. New paintings by Op Newcomer Larry Poons, 27, whose huge red and yellow canvases seem to oscillate like a chaotic crowd of jelly beans doing a slobbery

MARCH 1965.