

# The New Materials In a New Sculpture

By Jon D. Longaker

Time was when the term sculpture referred almost exclusively to carved stone or cast bronze representations of the human form. The ancient Greeks and the Renaissance sculptors established this tradition—so firmly, in fact, that even today some sculptors carve snow white marble statues despite the fact that we know now that the Greeks painted their statues quite gaudily.

The new sculpture of today, however, includes works in various metals and combinations of metals, plastics, wire and other unclassical material, which are cast, welded, riveted and otherwise treated to resemble not only animal, but vegetable and mineral forms. Nor does this sculpture always stand still. It is often propelled, either by the wind or by electric motors.

The prototype here is an unclassical and much less respectable tradition of art history: that of the savage artists of prehistoric times, of Africa, the Pacific and the Orient, the archaic Greeks, the Etruscans and the barbaric ancestors of our European parents. To this school of modern sculpture belongs the work of Theodore Roszak (pronounced Row-zack) which went on display in the theater lobby of the Virginia Museum this week.

## Reynolds Art

An added element of interest for Richmonders, in connection with this piece of sculpture, is that it was commissioned by the Reynolds Metals Company which in 1956 gave its first R. S. Reynolds Award to three young Spanish architects for distinction in building. The Roszak status, which is entitled "Emblem of 1957," is intended to be installed in the visitors' center of the SEAT automobile factory in Barcelona which won the \$25,000 prize.

The creative use of aluminum in both the building and the sculpture factor in the award which was administered by members of the American Institute of Architects.

## Man and Work

Theodore Roszak, a distinguished American sculptor and chairman of the art department of Sarah Lawrence College, is one of the pioneers of what is sometimes called the blowtorch school of modern sculpture. Acetylene torches, rivets, solder, rasps and files are his tools, some of which are displayed in the exhibit on the accompanying panels which describe and explain his technique.

"The Emblem" is made of prefabricated aluminum stock which has been shaped through cutting, bending, riveting and welding, into bent sheets and molten strands, and later brazed

and welded into a single unified piece. (See illustration).

As a person Roszak is a quiet, unassuming man, serious and intense, not at all radical in appearance. I had the pleasure of being interviewed by him for a position some years ago, and was surprised at the contrast between the character of the man and his work.

Most of his sculpture, like the present work, makes a strong impression and asserts its own individuality, despite the great amount of similar work now being produced. Moreover, it is provocative rather than pretty; its jagged, hostile and dangerous-looking shapes, reminiscent of strange marine creatures, crab claws and carnivorous tropical plants, express danger rather than pleasure.

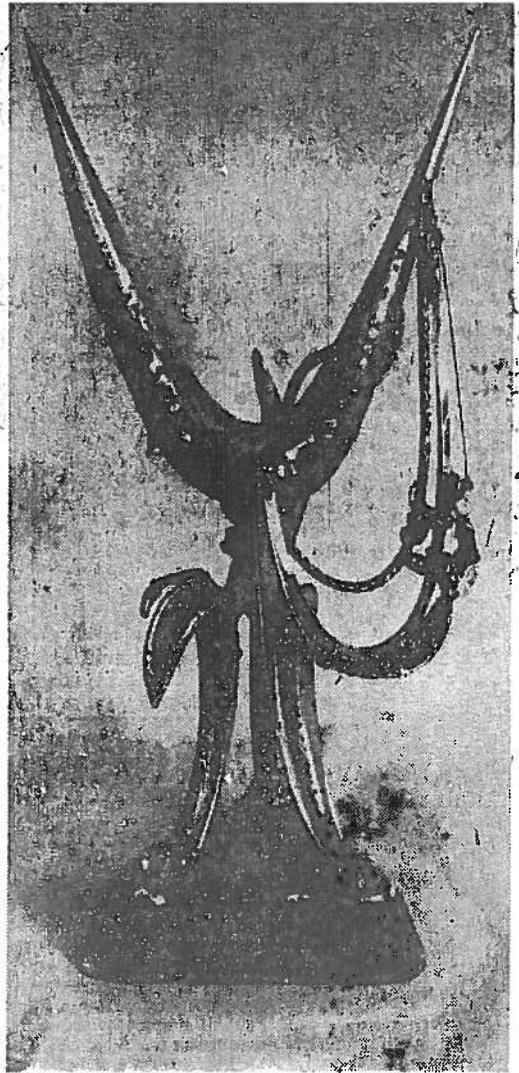
This is how Roszak feels about the modern world which, he once wrote, is "fundamentally and seriously disquieted, and it is difficult to remain unmoved and complacent in its midst."

## Moving Art

"The Emblem" is characteristic of his style, straightforward and frank, at once carefully modeled and roughly manipulated. The polished points of the two horns (of our dilemma, perhaps) are encrusted and draped with delicate, almost diaphanous strands of metal. Whether the spiked forms suggest hostility or, as the sculptor has written, "an invocation, a reverence for life," is a subjective matter. Perhaps they are both.

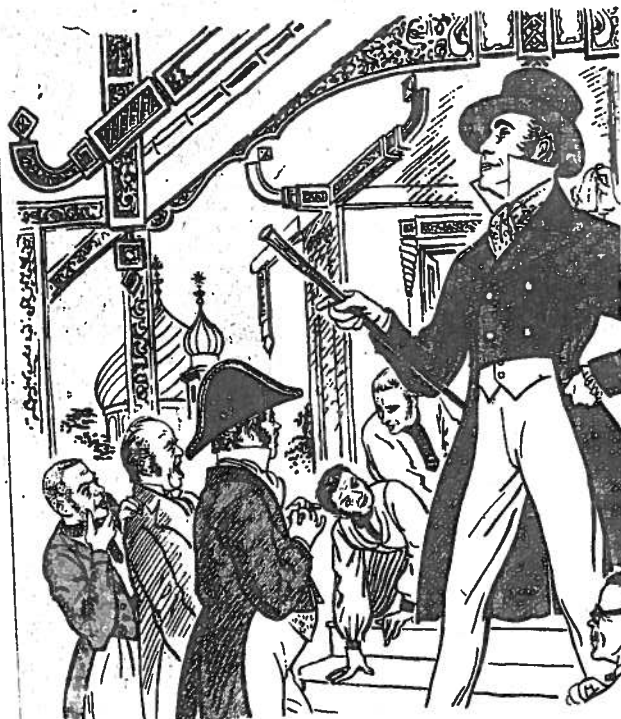
The thinner, curvilinear forms, Roszak continues, act not only as a foil for the larger and more aggressive forms, but "metaphorically they suggest the mantle, drape or veil which are symbolic of both honor and humility".

These provocative shapes are assembled with an eye to being seen from all sides, and the artist has guaranteed its being so viewed by mounting it on a revolving base turned by an electric motor. Technically, then, as well as in form and content, the work is thoroughly contemporary and may well become "The Emblem of 1957."



Theodore Roszak's 'Emblem of 1957,' currently on display in the theater lobby of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sunday, Oct. 13, 1957



Hansford Rowe, center, playing the title role in the Virginia Museum Theater's production of Gogol's classic burlesque of officialdom, 'The Inspector General,' is re-

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In 1956 the Reynolds Metals Company, in memory of its founder, R. S. Reynolds, established the R. S. Reynolds Memorial Award, to be presented annually to the architect or group of architects who make the most significant contribution to the use of aluminum in the building field. The Award consists of a \$25,000 prize and an expressly commissioned sculptural emblem. The American Institute of Architects administers the Award, with the winners selected by a jury of Institute members. The sculptor of each annual emblem is chosen from a list recommended by the A.I.A. in consultation with museum directors.

Three young Spanish architects were the recipients of the first Award, for the visitors' center and employees' dining hall of an automobile factory in Barcelona. The emblem (4) was executed by the distinguished American sculptor, Theodore Roszak, as an expression of the basic ideas of aspiration and honor. Roszak commented on the finished sculpture as follows:

"The upward thrust of the forms is intended as an invocation, a reverence for life, and the thinner, curvilinear strands not only act aesthetically as a visual foil for the larger and more aggressive forms, but metaphorically they suggest the mantle, drape or veil which are symbolic of both honor and humility."

Museum Members will have an opportunity to see the Roszak sculpture, with its sketches and working drawings, when it is shown from October 11 through November 24 in the Theatre Gallery, in a display organized by the American Federation of Arts.

Virginians may well be proud that a firm long identified with their State has given such an incentive to present-day architects and sculptors. It serves as yet another indication of the Old Dominion's continuing artistic growth and cultural maturation.

#### GALA PERFORMANCE

The Richmond Dance Society's second season will open auspiciously on November 1 at 8:30 P.M. with a return engagement, by popular demand, of Melissa Hayden and André Eglevsky, two of the ballet world's most brilliant luminaries. As in their dazzling performances at the Museum Theatre last Spring, they will be accompanied by two assisting dancers in a program of highlights from the classic ballet repertoire.

For the last few years Hayden and Eglevsky have been closely identified with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet Company, both as virtuosi in the great classic *pas de deux* and as leading dancers in the wide repertoire presented by that group. Their incomparable skill and grace has earned them an enviable international reputation for perfection. Members who do not have season subscriptions are advised to purchase single admissions, at \$2.50 each, well in advance of the performance. Reservations will be held at the Museum Box Office until 8:15 P.M. on performance night.

The Seventeenth Virginia Artists Rotating Exhibition, featuring the paintings of Horace Day, T. Kenneth Rowe and Bell Worsham, opened on September 6 and will continue on display through November 3 in the Virginia Artists Gallery.

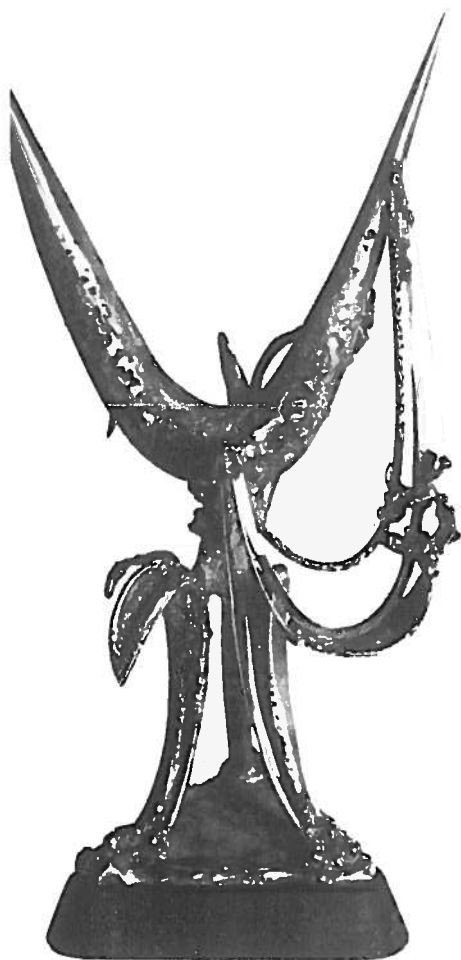
Horace Day, Virginia artist and educator, was born in Amoy, China. Following five years of study at the Art Students League of New York with Kimon Nicolaides, Kenneth Hayes Miller and Boardman Robinson, he became artist-in-residence at Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement; subsequently he became Director of the Herbert Institute of Art in Augusta, Georgia, and began painting the romantic "Low Country" of South Carolina and Georgia which, with the Virginia countryside, has become his best-known subject. In 1941 he married Virginia artist Elizabeth Nottingham, and with her joined the Art Department of Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, where he is now Professor of Art. Mr. Day has exhibited in every major museum in America, and has had a number of one-man shows in both New York and Virginia.

T. Kenneth Rowe, a native Virginian, graduated from Richmond Professional Institute, having studied with artist Marion Junkin. Worden Day and Theresa Pollak. Following Army service in World War II, and visits with Brancusi, Christian Berard and Picasso, he attended Cooper Union in New York, studying with Morris Kantor. He became a specialist in layout design and typography, and is now Associate Art Director for Lindsey and Company of Richmond. He has exhibited in four Virginia Museum Biennials, receiving a Purchase Award in 1953 and a Certificate of Distinction in 1955. He has also been represented in many exhibitions of the Richmond Artists' Association.

Bell Worsham of Richmond is also a native-born Virginian artist. Following two years at Hollins College, she studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and was awarded a Cresson Traveling Scholarship to Europe. Returning to Virginia, she received her B.F.A. degree from Richmond Professional Institute. In 1949 she studied fresco painting and lithography at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and has since executed three mural commissions in the South. Miss Worsham has had six "one-man" shows, and has exhibited her work in all parts of the Old Dominion, including the Virginia Museum, and in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., and Florida.

#### BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Registrants for leisure-time courses are still being accepted in the ceramics class and several of the adult painting and drawing classes. Museum Members may register, at the usual 10% fee discount, through the first two meetings of all classes. A complete course schedule appears on page four of this issue.



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