



Brennan Rash mounts a poster announcing May 6 opening of NCFA's new quarters. This poster, done by Allen D'archangelo, is one of six different kinds commissioned by the National Collection and funded by Mrs. Albert List of New York City. The other five were done by Francis, Bontecue, Chryssa, Oldenburg, and Rivers. 500 copies of each were reproduced for mounting in windows of neighborhood stores and museums throughout the country.

NCFA Quarters Will Open May 6

After going without a home it could call its own for 122 years, the National Collection of Fine Arts will open to the public on May 6 in the renovated Old Patent Office Building.

A special showing of the paintings and sculpture and an open house of the

National Collection's new quarters will be held for Smithsonian employees on Saturday, March 4, beginning at 3 p.m.

Dr. David W. Scott, NCFA's Director, describes the new galleries as "among the greatest architectural settings for art in the world." He also estimates that

more than 500,000 visitors will be attracted to the building during 1968.

More than 500 paintings, pieces of sculpture, watercolors, prints and drawings have been selected for the opening exhibition from a total of 11,000 works in the National Collection.

"The show," explains Dr. Scott, "will present a survey of three centuries of American art, sculpture, and graphics."

The predominantly American collection, begun in the earliest days of the Smithsonian, came primarily through bequests and gifts from the nation's art benefactors through the years.

Among the largest private gifts were those from Harriet Lane Johnson, William T. Evans, and John Gellatly, given in the early 1900's. A sizeable donation came in 1967 from the S. C. Johnson and Son Company of Racine, Wisconsin, which presented its entire collection of contemporary paintings.

Called "Art: U.S.A.," this impressive group contains 102 paintings by as many American artists, and will be exhibited in its own special area at the opening.

(Continued on page 4)

Major SAO Observatory To Open on Mt. Hopkins

by Jim Cornell

An important new Smithsonian astronomical observatory will open this spring on Mt. Hopkins, some 40 miles south of Tucson in the Coronado National Forest, with the installation of a 34-foot, concave reflector designed for studies in gamma-ray astronomy.

Work at the mountain-top SAO facility is already underway. An access road is completed, several equipment buildings are constructed, and a laser system for satellite tracking, plus several smaller conventional telescopes, are now operating.

When fully completed in 1969, the \$2 million installation will support research in gamma-ray astronomy, satellite geodesy, atmospheric physics, and stellar atmospheres. The new site will serve as a national center for ground-based gamma-ray astronomy. Other institutions engaged in similar research will be invited to share its facilities.

The Tucson location was chosen for its clear skies, clean air, dark nights and agreeable climate. SAO investigations, based on the precise observations of extremely faint light sources, require such an atmosphere.

Other observing complexes already in the Tucson area include the Kitt Peak National Observatory, the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, and the Stewart Observatory.

This concentration of astronomical research has made Tucson the host city for a continuing round of scientific meetings, conferences, and conventions.

More important, many astronomy-related industries and research organizations also have settled in the Tucson area.

The new Smithsonian installation is expected to attract astronomers from around the world. Already the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Harvard University, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Dartmouth College, the University of Rochester, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have expressed interest in participating in research on Mt. Hopkins.



spread of learning must be the first work of a nation that seeks to be free.

"We can support Secretary Ripley's dream of creating a center here at the Smithsonian where great scholars from every nation will come and collaborate."

The Woodrow Wilson Memorial Commission, established in 1961 to recommend a permanent memorial to the twenty-eighth President, suggested in 1966 an International Center for Scholars, to be located north of the National Archives building. Its final report stated that "The Commission is impressed with Dr. Ripley's proposal that the Center be formally associated with the Smithsonian Institution as a bureau under the guidance of its own Board of Trustees, with its own Director and administrative staff. . . ."

The President then asked the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the Temporary Commission on Pennsylvania Avenue to conduct a study to develop the detailed plan for the Center.

The proposed legislation calls for the Center to be administered by a 15-member Board of Trustees, to be composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, three individuals appointed by the President from within the Federal Government, and eight appointed by the President from private life.

Among the powers which the bill grants to the Board is authority to:

"(1) appoint scholars, from the United States and abroad, and, where appropriate, provide stipends, grants, and fellowships to such scholars, and to hire or accept the voluntary services of consultants, advisory boards, and panels to aid the Board in carrying out its responsibilities;

"(2) solicit, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, and devises of money, securities, and other property of whatsoever character for the benefit of the Center; any such money, securities, or other property shall, upon receipt, be deposited with the Smithsonian Institution, and unless otherwise restricted by the terms of the gift, expenditures shall be in the discretion of the Board for the purposes of the Center;

"(3) obtain grants from, and make contracts with, State, Federal, local, and private agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals; and

"(4) acquire such site as a location for the Center as may subsequently be authorized by the Congress."

"Such a center," the bill declares, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relations between the world of learning and the world of public affairs, would be a suitable memorial to the spirit of Woodrow Wilson . . ."

Nicholas Suszynski (second from right), Director of SI's Information Systems Division, puts the finishing touch on a computer tape, which Dr. Donald Squires (far left) Deputy Director of MNH, will take to The British Museum in London. This marks the first exchange of specimen data between museums in different countries, using computer techniques. Reginald Creighton, senior systems analyst for the MNH project, looks on from the far right. Mr. Eugene P. Kennedy (second from left), Chief of the U. S. Office of Education's Library and Information Services Research Branch, is on hand to represent HEW, which is funding the project.

April Lunchbox Talks to Cover Africa to Moon

Lunchbox talks for April range from Africa to the moon. Speakers for the National Air and Space Museum series, Wednesdays at noon on the second floor of A&I, include:

April 3—F. C. Durant, III, Assistant Director, NASM, "Some Notes on the History of Rocket Development, 1800-1939."

April 10—Karl F. Mautner, Office of International Affairs, "An African Country at the Crossroads — the Modern Sudan."

April 17—Robert Meyer, curator, propulsion, NASM, "The Smithsonian's Aeronautical Propulsion Hall," followed by tour.

April 24—Dr. Brian H. Mason, research curator, Division of Meteorites, MNH, "Recent Meteorites I've Met."

May 1—Dr. John O'Keefe, assistant chief, Laboratory for Theoretical Studies, Goddard Space Flight Center, "Lunar Volcanism."



SEE HOW HE GROWS—MNH scientists Thomas Soderstrom, Arthur Greenhall and Stanwyn Shetler and his actor-keeper observe as Uncle Beazley eats the Mall grass that will help him grow into a 23-foot dinosaur in this scene from "The Enormous Egg." The children's fantasy filmed here last summer will be shown on NBC-TV April 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Colleagues Recall Deignan and Henry

Herbert Deignan and Thomas Henry, two men with long and distinguished associations with the Smithsonian, died last month. Deignan, 61, had been curator of the Division of Birds and was ornithologist emeritus at the time of his death in Lausanne, Switzerland. Henry, 74, was a science writer. The two are remembered here by colleagues.

Herbert Deignan

Herbert Deignan's chosen field of scientific activity was in ornithology, with his major interests and contributions in systematics. Following an excellent general background in university studies, a varied travel experience provided special understanding of value in his museum work.

A brief journey in Central America was followed by an extended period in Thailand, where he had connection with a government school at Cheng Mai. Here his leisure time, especially during

holidays, was devoted to the interesting birdlife, studies which led to more formal investigations in which the Smithsonian Institution cooperated through funds that allowed employment of native helpers, and also expeditions in the time he had available from his teaching.

From the beginning of his service on the staff of the Division of Birds he was steadily productive in a series of short papers covering new forms and summaries of relationship. These culminated in longer contributions — his *Birds of Northern Thailand*, followed later by a checklist of the birds of that country.

In addition to these, another major accomplishment was a summary list of the many type specimens of birds in the Museum collections, with pertinent comment and discussion where necessary of the various forms involved. This was particularly useful with the older material where, with modern knowledge, better understanding was possible. An excellent memory and a definite grasp of

form and character gave him more than usual understanding of relationships, beyond those of species and genera.

As a Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union he served for a period as its secretary. And his other memberships included the principal ornithological societies. Thailand honored his scientific work especially by the award of the Order of the White Elephant.

While his interests centered definitely in his scientific studies, his others embraced a wide circle of friends. In addition to his own scientific studies, he was helpful always to others, especially among younger persons who came to him constantly for advice. These connections continued during his later life in Switzerland where he was consulted constantly by newer workers, especially in Thailand, because of his broad knowledge of that country.

ALEXANDER WETMORE

Thomas Henry

The death of Thomas R. Henry brought to a close the distinguished career of a man who, during the period of his most productive years, reached the top of his profession as a popular-science writer. Obituaries in the local papers covered his journalistic activities pretty well but did not stress two or three items that concerned the Smithsonian Institution.

Though a regular staff member of the *Washington Star*, Henry "moonlighted" at the Smithsonian for well over 30 years and on a free-lance basis wrote hundreds of Smithsonian press releases, first under the direction of Webster P. True, who initiated the press activities of the Institution way back when, and later under the undersigned. Tom's work spanned the terms of three Smithsonian Secretaries — Abbot, Wetmore, and Carmichael.

If one were to go back into the files of these releases, the magnitude of his service would be amply evident. They covered not only current activities of the Institution but also a great variety of science topics, particularly on research with which the Smithsonian was directly or indirectly concerned.

Tom will be remembered by many a Smithsonian oldtimer as a friendly, conscientious, faithful newspaperman who had a knack for extracting the meat and juice from a hard scientific nut and making it most readable and understandable for the general public. He served the Institution at a time when its budget for information activities was even smaller than it is today. Science reporting has made great strides since Henry began, but he was one of the pioneers in the field, and his contribution ought not to be forgotten.

PAUL H. OEHSER

Programs Abroad Getting Attention Of April Travelers

The Institution's international programs have drawn three travelers abroad this month. *Kennedy B. Schmertz*, International Activities, is in India until April 13, reviewing foreign currency programs in that country. *Lee M. Talbot*, Ecology, will return the same date from an International Biology Program conservation conference in Tunisia, and *Lois A. Bingham*, NCFA, is visiting Italy, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Netherlands to make arrangements for the Venice Biennale and to discuss opportunities for exhibitions under the International Art Program.

The director and deputy director of the Museum of Natural History are both spending the early part of the month abroad. *Richard S. Cowan* is attending the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources meeting at San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina. *Donald F. Squires* is in England for a NATO advanced study institute at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and consulting with colleagues on data processing methods.

Frank A. Taylor, director of the U. S. National Museum, is lending his know-how to the director of the National Museum of Iran, advising on methods to improve the museum. He will also visit India, to arrange for a conference on a regional museum service laboratory, and will return May 14.

The Zoo's *John Perry* is traveling through South America this month, studying exhibition and construction in zoos of Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. On the other side of the world, *Victor G. Springer* is collecting and studying marine fishes in Taiwan.

MNH Bookstore Opening in April

A new look and a new concept of service to museum visitors goes into operation at the old museum shop location in the Museum of Natural History during April.

Completely devoted to books on natural history and related to exhibits in the museum, the newly renovated shop will have special sections for publications by museum curators and a large selection of children's books on subjects such as gems, shells, prehistoric life and the American Indian.

Mrs. Florence Lloyd is the newly appointed manager of Smithsonian bookshops.

Women's Rights Group Named

Don't be too surprised if the Smithsonian someday has a female on its Board of Regents.

A 10-member advisory committee has been established to plan, among other things, an action program for assuring equal employment opportunity for women at the Smithsonian.

Members of the committee, formed by the Institution's new Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, are **Lois Bingham**, NCFA; **Iryne Black**, General Counsel's Office; **Ann Campbell**, Organization and Methods; **Grace Cooper**, Division of Textiles, MHT; **Dorothy Glenn**, Office of Personnel; **Helen Hayes**, Office of the Assistant Secretary (Science); **Maria Hoemann**, Office of the Budget; **Marion McCrane**, National Zoo; **Nancy Powars**, Smithsonian Press (representing AFGE Lodge 2463); and **Dorothy Rosenberg**, Office of the Assistant Secretary (Administration).

Among their proposals—advanced only minutes after the committee itself was formed—are more active recruiting in women's schools, September through March employment for mothers of school-aged children, more training opportunities at non-government institutions for women employees.

Viking Incident Recalled

by George J. Berklaey

The details surrounding the event have long been known by Smithsonian naval historians Melvin Jackson and Philip Lundberg:

The 1,349-ton schooner *Viking* of New Bedford, Mass., was grounded and sunk in a storm off the Japanese island of Mikurajima in 1863. The islanders rescued and brought safely ashore 25 Americans, including Captain Benjamin Townsend, and 460 Chinese laborers bound for the California gold fields.

The Americans returned home after receiving medical care and other help from the islanders. The treatment was considered exceptional because of Japan's isolationist policy at the time.

Last week, Mrs. William Morden of Greenwich, Conn., a Smithsonian Associate, filled in the rest of the story for the TORCH.

The almost forgotten history of the shipwreck, Mrs. Morden reported, was unearthed by Dr. Motoiku Takahashi of Tokyo Uni-

versity, who was collecting botanical specimens on the island in 1962 and came across a large stone lantern mounted atop a winch which, it turned out, belonged to the *Viking*.

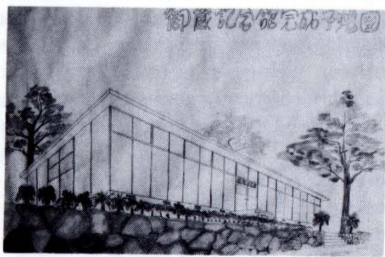
His trail finally led to New Bedford, whose residents were both surprised and greatly pleased to hear the story, which had become a legend on Mikurajima.

In 1967, one-hundred and four years after the shipwreck, residents of New Bedford unveiled a plaque with due ceremony to express their gratitude to the people of Mikurajima. A few weeks later, a similar plaque was placed in a village on the Japanese island by grateful Americans, such as Polly Hussey of Bronxville, N.Y., whose late husband was the great-grandson of the *Viking's* owner, George Hussey.

The markers were made by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum in New Bedford.

Now the island of Mikurajima may soon have its own museum—a "Memorial Hall" that will house all the valuable artifacts connected with the *Viking* incident. (See cut.)

The memorial, which is being planned by a group of interested American and Japanese citizens, will, along with the plaque "serve as a symbol of amity between the two shores across the Pacific Ocean."

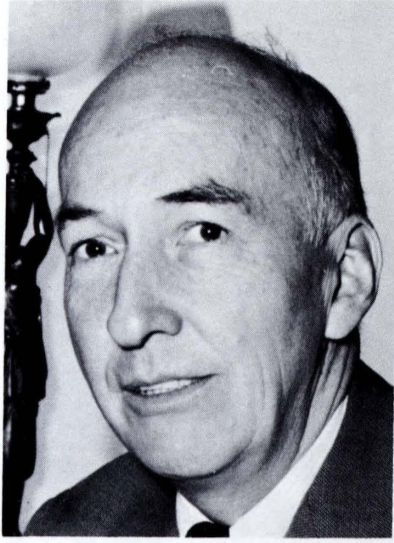


Social Biology Demands Attention, Dr. Ripley Says

The following comments by Secretary Ripley are taken from *The Smithsonian Year*, the annual report for fiscal 1967. The book, edited by John Lea of the SI Press, will be out April 10.

Some years ago, in conversation, the late Robert Oppenheimer remarked to me that he felt that men in the future would find the single area of greatest discovery in biology. Oppenheimer was of course thinking primarily of the then exciting discoveries in molecular biology, the end effects of which, while perhaps inevitably upon us, will not be revealed for many years.

As a biologist, one might now question whether there is not another area where discoveries rather than refinements await us. To me it seems that the single area which needs the greatest amount of attention from discoverers is that uncharted and almost unknown field which might be called social biology. The field is unknown and uncharted because it is not a specialty, and today most scientists are trained for narrow specialties. Biologists are concerned primarily with laboratory or field studies of animal and plant species. Sociologists are concerned primarily with the study of the origins and history and constitution of human society. In universities the departments of the two disciplines are usually in separate buildings, and in libraries the books they use tend to come from different parts of the stacks.



Scientists or Humanists?

In fact, sociologists labor under the disadvantage of being somewhat luxated; are they scientists or are they humanists? It is a symbol of the age that they should feel thus dislocated. It is of course unnecessary. Similarly, some thoughtful biologists tend today to feel slightly uncomfortable about being scientists. Science in the public mind has come to be associated almost exclusively with the physical sciences or with medicine. Scientists are white-coated men, either possessed of a Batman-like syndrome, about to fly off into space, or else all-knowing, wise versions of Dr. Kildare. In any case, biologists who have to do with physico-chemical processes involving the components of a single cell, or those who are involved with medical science, can perhaps feel closer to the physical scientists and to medicine.

But biologists associated with natural phenomena in gross, external terms, with population biology and the dynamics of large systems, and with much of what is today called ecology (a badly misused word in most cases) as well as paleobiologists and evolutionists—many of these sorts of biologists find themselves somewhat dislocated. Perhaps they are in danger of becoming humanists? Perhaps indeed the scientific sociologists and the humanist biologists are approaching each other, figures on a darkened and uncharted stage.

When one says that there is an area here which perhaps contains the single, greatest problem that man faces today, one is referring to problems of human survival and of morality. Here it must be said that many scientists are greatly troubled about the responsibilities and the integrity of science. Scientists and sociologists alike work in disciplines where study brings them a knowledge of the social consequences of the discovery of new technologies and of new principles about behavior. By training, however, most scientists tend to be cautious about ascribing broad implications to the results of narrowly defined and controlled experiments. Science-minded sociologists tend to have kindred feelings, and often prefer to remain aloof from the dangerous area where theoretical results are correlated with non-controlled situations.

Responsibility to Speak

And yet there is a responsibility to speak out. As the conditions of the environment deteriorate, as the social disorders of the age deepen, the special relationship between the scientist's social responsibilities and his general duties of citizenship grows critical. As Barry Commoner says, "If the scientist, directly or by inferences from his actions, lays claim to a special responsibility for the resolution of the policy issues which relate to technology, he may, in effect, prevent others from performing their own political duties. If the scientist fails in his duty to inform citizens, they are precluded from the gravest acts of citizenship and lose their right of conscience."

In 1847 Joseph Henry, meditating upon the course of the Smithsonian Institution, wrote: "To effect the greatest amount of good, the organization should be such as to enable the Institution to produce results in the way of increasing and diffusing knowledge, which cannot be produced by the existing institutions in our country." What is there that we in the Smithsonian can think upon which would illumine the basic problems confronting social biology?

There are certainly three paths along which we might travel toward illumination: one leads to the study of terrestrial environment, another to the study of our social environment, and the third to the study of man as an evolving species.

The disorder of our age is graphically illustrated by the slow degrading of man's terrestrial environment. There is something inherently wrong with man's relations with his environment. Nature suffers continually in

an undeclared war. Man, animated by hunger for profit or for spectacular action, continually erodes our landscape. Many feel indeed that this is appropriate, that man and nature can never live in harmony. Thomas Hardy said, "nature and man can never be friends." Must we then kill off our enemy and in so doing kill off ourselves?

Biologists have a social duty to alert citizens to the inescapable results of such mass suicide. In this Institution we have in particular one great scientific resource to bring to bear upon this problem. Our sorts of biologists are concerned with the quality of the environment, for they are concerned with systematics, with setting into categories organisms that are inescapably a part of the particular environments within which they, as species, live. The assembled data about species in relation to their environments assumes an historic and important relevance to the environment as it is today. That is, the recordings of systematists become a series of benchmarks against which modern environments can be gauged. To put it in crude terms we know for example that the American mountain lion was exterminated from all the eastern seaboard States by the late 1800s, except for the fastnesses of Florida and parts of West Virginia and Vermont. Today the principal population of mountain lions survives precariously only in parts of the Sierra Nevada and the high mountains of the West. We also know why. We know the food habits, the predator-prey food chain, the range requirements, the amount of "leaving alone" which a mountain lion requires in order to live and reproduce its kind. In a similar way we know the requirements of a whole series of animal and plant species, and what happened to them when these requirements were not met.

All these situations are similar in that a certain formula is involved. A proportion of one or another sets of conditions is required, without which a certain species will not occur. The declining ratio of natural to man-made conditions over the continent creates multiple effects which can be measured or simulated through models. The results, when arrayed against the resources of the planet, surely could tell us much of the ability of various species to survive. The results also tell us something of man's plasticity and tolerance, and of his ability to survive the changes he is introducing into the environment.

Standards for Survival

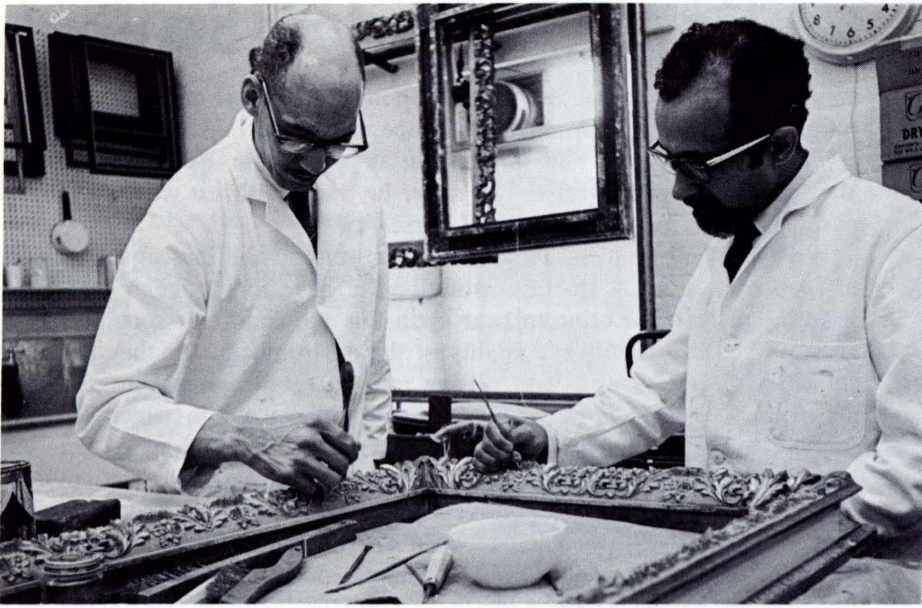
One of the keys to American success in foreign aid and indeed in foreign relations will be the degree to which American planners pay attention to the knowledge of environmental problems already possessed by American scientists. At present there is little if any indication that aid planners or foreign policy planners have ever heard of ecology or would know how to talk to a systematic biologist if they met one. And yet in areas of the tropical world today ecologists and systematists are far more capable of predicting the effects of change in the environment than are engineers and dam builders or agriculturists. The proposed International Biological Program—unknown to most planners or policy makers—has within it the capacity of mobilizing field biologists into a concerted effort to understand the present state of our terrestrial environment all over the world. The resulting information could be utilized in a way which might provide vital criteria, real benchmarks against which to set our standards for survival for the future. Our traditional economic and political aims, keyed to commercial development and the promotion of consumer consciousness, have blinded us to our own survival.

Another disorder of this age is graphically illustrated by the decline of social and moral values in our cities. The problems of deteriorating environment and of social disorder are related. As the landscape suffers, man becomes less humane. As Eric Hoffer, speaking of our increased command over nature, says, "In many parts of the world the taming of nature by rapid industrialization gave rise to degrees of social barbarization." If man cannot live in cities as a humane individual, then he cannot survive. Thus social biologists have a duty to alert citizens to the inescapable results of urbanization.

In this Institution, a world center for anthropology, there should be a whole series of benchmarks which, interpreted by social anthropologists, could produce models of stress, crowding phenomena, aggression and hostility. Our view derived from these data could be of great use, indeed ensynoptic.



The first day of spring brought what was probably only the first of a steady stream of visitors who will pause for rest or reflection by the new MHT fountain. Secretary Ripley expects its waters to cool many a young tourist's feet when the summer months arrive.



Oliver Henderson (left) and Alden Jackson of NCFA's Frame Shop ready a frame—one of hundreds, big and small, wide and thin—which will hold one of the paintings for the opening.



"The Defender," by Thomas Lipton, will be in the opening display of sculpture in the Granite Gallery.



The office of Dr. David Scott, Director of the National Collection of Fine Arts, resembles a small gallery. Here Dr. Scott pauses before "Int'l Surface Number 1," an abstract by Stuart Davis. The explosive painting hangs on the wall to the right of Dr. Scott's desk. Visitors to his office can't miss it.

NCFA Once Was National Gallery

(Continued from page 1)

The largest painting that the National Collection will exhibit is Alexander Liberman's abstract work, *Green Diagonal*, measuring 8 feet 4 inches by 18 feet 4 inches. The smallest is Albert Pinkham Ryder's *Passing Song*, approximately 5 inches by 9 inches.

Works from the remarkable collection of sculpture by Hiram Powers will be displayed in a room recalling Powers' original studio in Florence, Italy. This studio will open later in the year.

When Powers died 95 years ago, he

left in the studio nearly 200 pieces of sculpture and a collection of letters to and from many of the famous personalities of the 19th century.

Included in the sculpture collection is the original model of Powers' celebrated "Greek Slave," which brought him widespread fame when it was exhibited at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. The work inspired Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnet, "The Fair Stone."

In its origin the National Collection traces even farther back than Hiram Powers. It began in a small museum in

Washington in 1829, owned by John Varden, and later assimilated into the National Institute, the forerunner of the Smithsonian.

Conceived as a repository of art donated to the government—it still is primarily dependent on private gifts—the National Collection was formally established along with the Smithsonian in 1846.

Interestingly, it became known by law as the National Gallery of Art in 1906 and retained the title until 1937.

In that year, Andrew Mellon's great gift assumed the designation of The National Gallery, and the original Smithsonian's holdings became the National Collection of Fine Arts.

Congress then redefined its purpose: in addition to preserving the old collections and acquiring new ones, NCFA was "to foster . . . a growing appreciation of art" and "to encourage the development of contemporary art and to effect the widest distribution and cultivation in matters of such art."

Now, after all those years in the Museum of Natural History dominated by the Fenykovi elephant, the permanent and special exhibitions of the National Collection will have their rightful place.

Dr. Scott, his staff, and the National Collection now not only have ample office space and exhibition galleries, but also at their disposal are a beautifully appointed library, conservation and photographic laboratories, assembly and lecture rooms, and even a private parking lot.

But it is really that impressive 77,690 square feet of exhibit space that brings a satisfied smile to Dr. Scott's face.

How does Dr. Scott compare the Lincoln Gallery and the Granite Gallery, of the "new" National Collection of Fine Arts with the Art Hall and Foyer Gallery of the Museum of Natural History, where NCFA for many years held exhibitions?

He just smiles, and asks whether you would like *another* tour of the new facilities.

CORRECTION

To the Editor:

From Scotland came the Scots, from England came the English, from Northern Ireland came the Irish, Scots—Irish and who knows what besides; and we all come from Great Britain and are BRITONS (or, maybe North Britons if we come from Aberdeen and farther north).

But not one of us is a Britisher, even if we put up with Germans calling us Britische or Britschin. [See book review, *March TORCH*]

P. W. Bishop, chairman
Department of Arts & Manufacturers

Portrait in Anonymity

John Wink Would Rather His Work Go Unnoticed

by J. A. C. Dunn

It is easy to miss John Wink. In fact, it is hard to find him. The government pays him not to be noticed. John Wink likes that. Unnoticeability is the keystone of his art.

You go into the Smithsonian through the underground vehicle entrance, past the loading platform and into the basement corridors, drift momentarily toward the smell of the kitchen, blunder into and out of a few offices, peer at door numbers, and eventually you find John Wink lurking in an unsuspected little workshop with bits of brass strewn around on scarred tables, and in the air a smell of hot metal.

John Wink: Small, tubby, forty-ish, black-rimmed spectacles, blue-checked sport shirt. He seems delighted to be discovered—he is pretty proud of his work, and he should be. His product gives no hint of the hours of agonizingly delicate labor he put into it.

John Wink makes hooks and brackets and fastenings to hold up the specimens of history which the Smithsonian displays. Somebody else designs the layout in the display cases, but John Wink's function is to mount whatever is to be displayed so that it is both pleasant to behold and gives a feeling of depth and movement.

This is not easy. A cup and saucer are pretty static, after all. Even a 100-year-old pair of spectacles can look pretty dull. Fragments of a rotted cannonball do not set the average person's blood afire, and the most rabid gun buff

might give a rare old rifle only a passing glance if it were displayed insensitively, as though carelessly left behind by somebody.

John Wink can make even a plain wooden mallet look as though it is about to leap out of the display case and bang things. Of course, he has to invent a way to do it. He has already discarded or improved on the Smithsonian's old standard techniques of object-display, and now he is playing the game off the top of his head. The secret is invention.

A few rules exist, but they only make the game harder. A brass hook holding an old rifle upright cannot touch the metal of the rifle itself; a tiny doeskin felt pad must cushion its grip. No awkward lumps may mar the symmetry of an antique plate. Bracket flanges cannot be clumsily wrought, and must blend with the color of whatever they hold. For this reason, John Wink uses only silver solder, which can be polished. Sometimes he camouflages metal hooks and brackets with paint. He makes everything by hand, and no two pieces are ever the same.

He also works with wood and plastic. Glassware is displayed in clear plastic boxes of various shapes, and many of these John Wink makes himself. Plastic is not easy to work with because it is brittle and its edges are difficult to fasten together. Also, it acts as a prism, from certain angles, offering the eye distracting reflections. The whole business is very touchy and exacting.

One display, of early technical instruments, John Wink spent



John Wink

three months assembling, and it is a masterpiece. You never notice the little metal arms holding the compasses and the astrolabes in their niches lined with red fabric, and if you want to see the reverse side of something you press a foot treadle and a small motor turns the display panel around. A mirror has even been mounted so the underside of one instrument can be seen.

Personally, John Wink appears to be a sort of personification of his work, which is just this side of a vanishing act. He came to Washington eight years ago from Lincoln, Neb., where he had painted theater scenery and worked at merchandising display.

Once he owned his own ready-to-wear store, but he found it dull. No matter how cleverly the shirts were arranged in the window, the business was still essentially a matter of simply waiting for people to come in and buy them. So John Wink quit and went to work artistically and undetectably enshrining bits of history for the government.

"It's kind of recognition in reverse," says John Wink. "The pleasure of it is knowing that people aren't going to notice your work. It's creative, but people never see it."

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