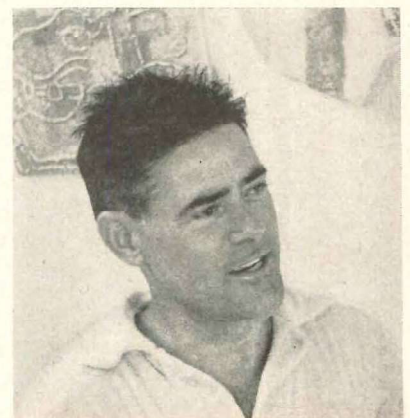
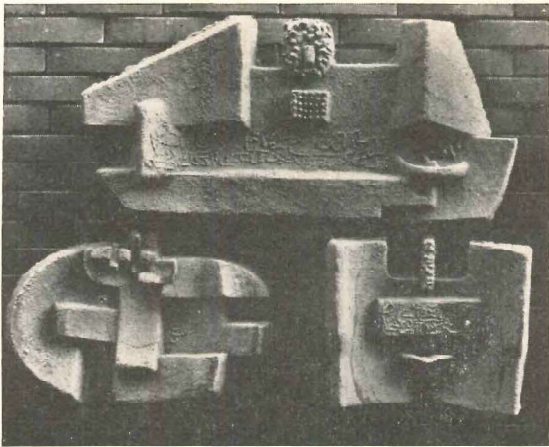


Hans Namuth photos

SAND SCULPTURE BY
COSTANTINO NIVOLA

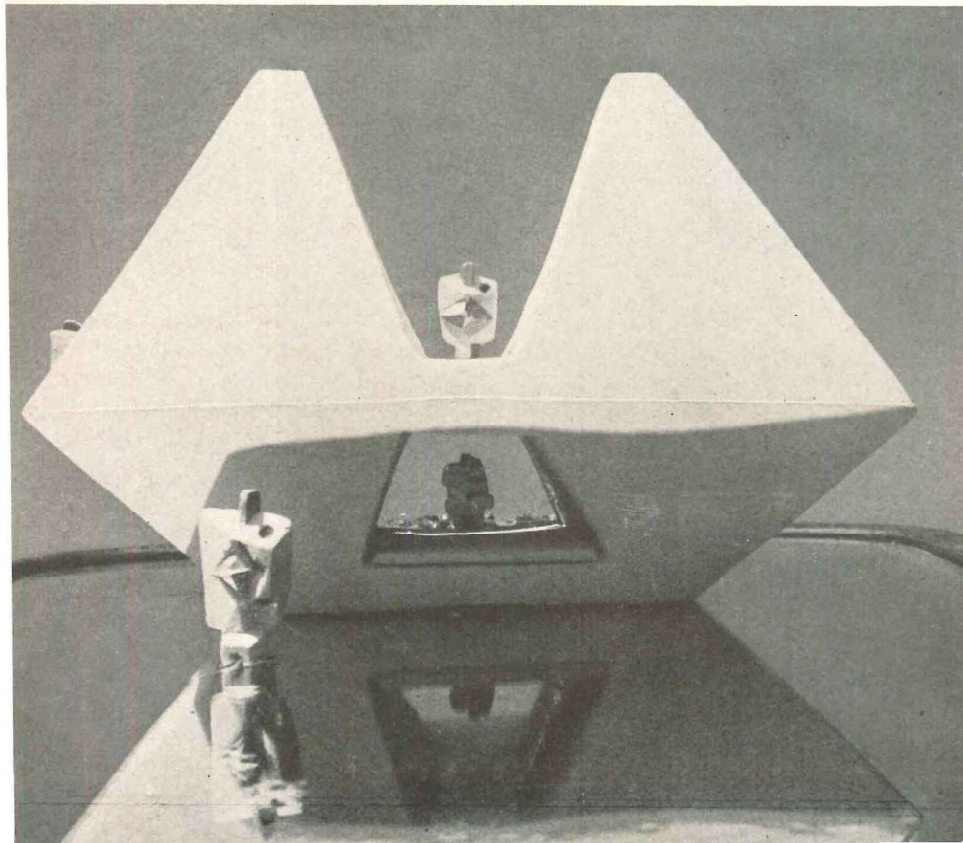
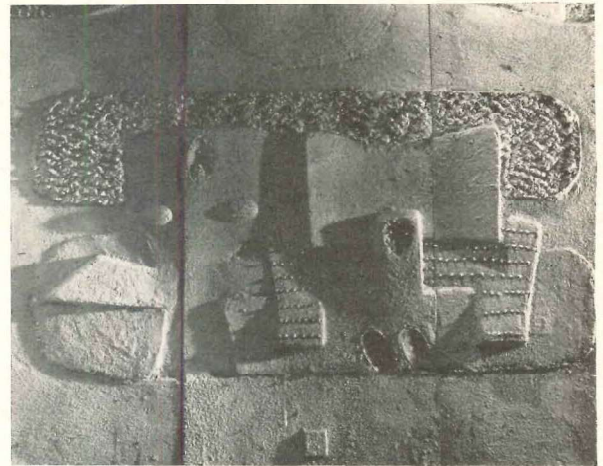
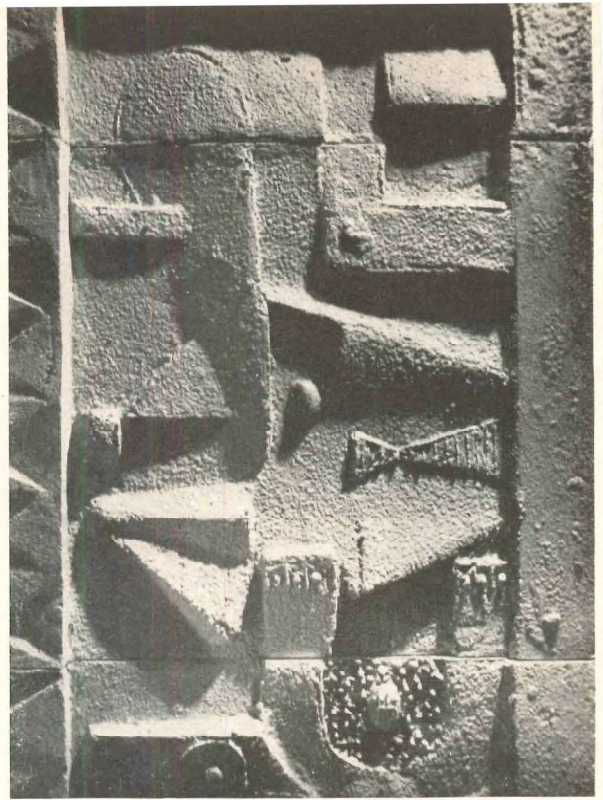


ART, ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTURE



Norman Oberferst

Ninola's work ranges from the enormous, free-standing projects shown on the preceding page, to the more domestic scale of the plaques above from a New York apartment house. His wall for the Olivelli showroom in New York (far right) gives a simple, overall impact, but is filled with such intricate detail as that shown at near right. Below is a scheme for a projected fountain for an American embassy in the near east. Inset is a study for a free-standing monument or wall, made of many individual blocks



Hans Namuth



Hans Namuth

By Dore Ashton

AMONG THOSE currently striving for a vital integration of the arts, one of the most enthusiastic is the sculptor Costantino Nivola, who is perhaps best known for his sand sculpture wall in the New York Olivetti Showroom.

Nivola is overflowing with ideas on how the breach between architecture and the other arts can be closed — and he tends to split the blame equally. In order for sculpture to be related to architecture, he feels, there must be consistency in techniques. And for him, sculpture must always be related to environment; the scale of a piece of sculpture should suggest that it belongs somewhere.

“Sculpture ought to be made with the same building material, same technique, and same carpentry as the building in order to be consistent with the scale and design.” Furthermore, he adds, art should be incorporated in the plans at the same time as the plumbing as an equally important element in living. And

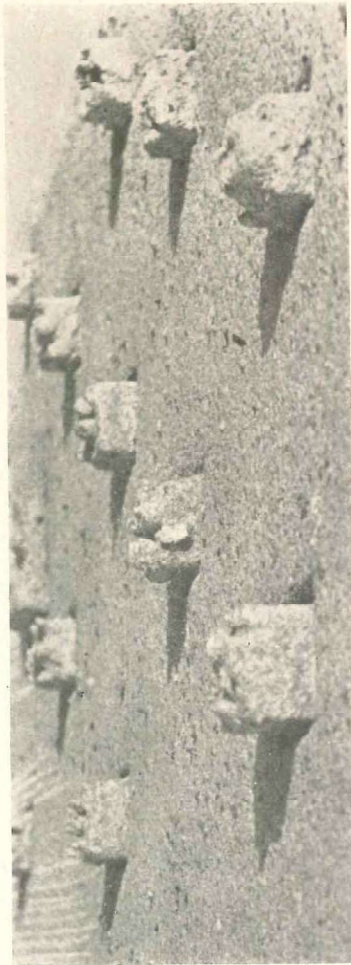
if an artist were to work truly in terms of today’s architecture, he would solve problems of time for installation, expense of materials, unions, and all the various considerations which discourage builders from incorporating art at this time.

Along with this goes a plea for a certain degree of artistic freedom. “The danger in being what they call a practical designer, is that you do things only to solve a problem. But there must be a background. An artist must do things independently of problems so that when he is given one, it is already partially solved. Art must be a disinterested act of inventing, explaining, revealing. Application is the second phase.”

Nivola has developed a highly personal technique. In the sands near his Long Island home, he scoops out generous forms, which are then cast in blocks of concrete. If such bas-reliefs are to be used in a large scale building, they are created in units which can be easily lifted and assembled by workmen. For three-dimensional



The use of sculptured inserts to provide shadow interest for a building façade is shown in this study for a school soon to be built. Each insert would be individually designed. A typical one is shown above



sculpture, blocks are molded separately and fitted together in monolithic, angular patterns.

In developing his style, Nivola has referred to two civilizations — he was born in the medieval village of Orani in Sardinia. His father was a master mason. “Working with my father,” Nivola recounts, “I learned how to use simple materials — lime, brick, clay and sand.” Later he augmented his craft by learning the art of stucco decoration. At fifteen, he was selected by a local painter as apprentice, and assisted in decorating the university in Sassari with Renaissance-derived designs. He next went to Monza, near Milan, where an advanced art school offered him a scholarship. Subsequent events brought him to America, and for a number of years he worked as a designer for publications.

His current sculptures strongly recall the great antique monuments of piled stone that punctuate the rise and fall of the Sardinian mountains, echoing their

imposing scale and simplicity of technique. He frequently adds the interplay of natural elements — wind, sun, shadow, water.

A project with architectural implications that he would like to do, is a labyrinth. It would have different levels, with views seen from narrowing or opening spaces. The accent would be on sensory experience, with surprises: a corner turned, and a splash of color on a wall, or a bridge over a pool.

Nivola is also fascinated with the idea of monuments, as tall as buildings, to “celebrate life.” One such idea is a huge, many-fired stove — a fireplace with several fires flickering against its sculptured flanks. Another is a project for his native town — a pergola that will cover the narrow streets until they converge on the large, open piazza. On the piazza would be a stone monolith and a wall — a big poster advertising nothing, but celebrating the piazza.