



NOVEMBER 1947

Craft Horizons

50 CENTS

2 DOLLARS A YEAR



the art of weaving — follows down from ancient times when the proud Incas wove Vicuna Cloth for the Emperor's robes. When, centuries before Confucius, in the far mountains of Tibet, the early Chinese discovered the secret of spinning and weaving fine camel hair into shawls. The art of weaving rare fibres grew wherever civilized peoples cultivated the arts. It flowers now, through the skill and craftsmanship of

Stroock

CREATOR OF AMERICA'S MOST DISTINGUISHED WOOLENS

Craft Horizons

NOVEMBER, 1947 VOL. 8 NO. 19

Look forward to 1948.....	3
Industry's future linked with craftsmanship.....	4
Plastics—a 20th century phenomenon <i>by Harriet Morrison</i>	6
The pageantry of tweeds <i>by Mary Lyon</i>	9
Scalamandr� revives hand-loomed.....	11
Educating to design <i>by Van Day Truex</i>	14
Handicraft and humanity <i>by John Goldsmith Phillips</i>	16
The modern use of figurines.....	18
Skilled hands hallmark fine workmanship <i>by Edward J. Wormley</i>	20
The technique of a thickened edge.....	22
Tapestry weaving yesterday and today <i>by Lea Van Puybroeck Miller</i>	24
Quilted pages from legend and history <i>by Roger Hale Newton</i>	26
Prevailing winds <i>by Frances Wright Caroe</i>	28
News of the councils.....	31
Activities of affiliated groups.....	31

Editor, MARY LYON
Editorial Board
Eleanor Bitterman
Patricia Brown
Dorothea Castles
Mary Ballard Duryee
Dorothy Giles
Aileen O. Webb

A quarterly magazine published by the American Craftsmen's Cooperative Council, Inc., 485 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York, on February, May, August, and November 15th. Price 50 cents a copy, \$2.00 a year.



OUR COVER ★ The journey of the Magi by Sassetta, Siennese painter who lived from 1392 to 1450 A.D., carries to us over the ages the sense of joy and suspense of the first Christmastide. This fine reproduction in color was made available to Craft Horizons through the courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Primeval wonder of Day and Night infuse this panel, designed by Jean Picart le Doux, the contemporary French artist and executed in Aubusson in 1945. One of a magnificent collection, ancient and modern, of Gobelins, Beauvais and Aubusson tapestries loaned by France to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Courtesy of the French Embassy.

Look forward to 1948

Craft Horizons wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May the Christmas Angels hover over us all and may we sing with them: "Peace on Earth; Good Will to Men!" May the New Year bells ring in a year of progress and increased stability and prosperity for all the world.

Happy New Year! Words of optimism which make us forget the past and look to the future. Words which evoke the background of traditional good resolutions; of stock-taking with ourselves, of a determination to do better. We present here for your consideration some resolutions a craftsman we know intends to make as 1948 begins. Perhaps you would like to join with him in these or make your own to suit your own shortcomings. Our friend starts:

"I resolve to feel design more deeply, to study my approach to this important subject more profoundly, to read books, attend exhibitions when possible and so learn to integrate good design with my materials and techniques.

"I resolve to pay especial attention to my work habits as I realize their importance and know my weaknesses in this direction. I shall endeavor to work steadily in working hours and never dawdle; to make every motion count; to use my tools correctly; to leave my shop clean and neat every night; to maintain my work sheet records from day to day.

"I resolve to overhaul my system of book and record-keeping so that I can always know where I stand and can find the correct cost of any article I make. To do this properly I shall ask for expert advice.

"I resolve to study more closely the whole subject of my market; to know at first hand those who sell for me and to discuss my production with them.

"I resolve to know what others are doing in my field as I realize how important this is to me in setting correct prices, and in gauging my market.

"These resolutions I apply to my work. The next are more personal but are imposed by my concern over the conditions of the world.

"I resolve, by my attitude towards others and towards the solution of world problems, so to conduct myself that I, as an individual, will be a unit which helps and does not hinder progress."

Such resolutions show an awareness of the needs of a good craftsman and a good citizen. We should never underestimate the potential power of the will of an awakened spirit. This is not a new force, it is as old as mankind. In one form or another, whether good or bad, it has motivated the great movements of history. Often expressed through the leadership of one individual it is, nevertheless, the power which controls him. Without this force he would be nothing.

Science tells us that matter consists of atoms of an incredibly small size, yet within these atoms lie vast possibilities for good or evil. Individual man can be thought of as the living atom of society. The power of good or evil lies within him. No cyclotron is needed to release the energy of man, only his directed will.

It is for this then that man should strive: So to direct his will that he will do his work better, with intelligence and understanding. And above all, so to direct his will that he, with millions of others, will provide that motivating force for mutual understanding and constructive action so necessary to the welfare of the world today.



Quality of light and refraction in clear plastic is a tool of the artist in "The Acrobats" by Amino, who has transcended certain existing art concepts in his use of this new medium. All photographs are courtesy of the Clay Club.

PLASTICS

a twentieth century phenomenon

The plastic family as a medium for artistic expression is a dynamic material about which little is known. To use it is to come to grips with chemistry and to transcend existing art concepts. The strange and fascinating properties of this material are enough to fire the imagination but as yet they belong more to the chemist than the artist.

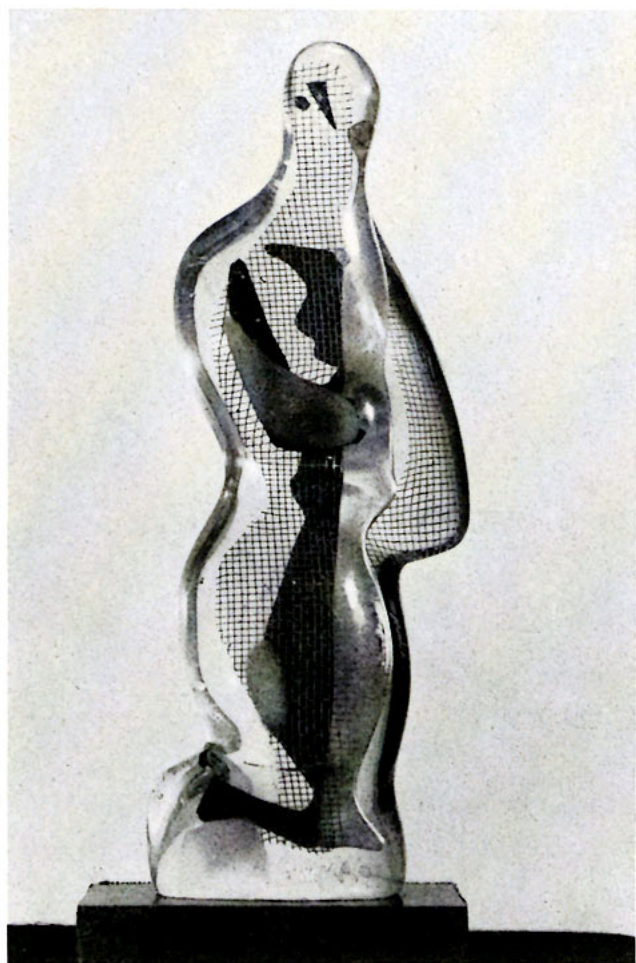
In the meantime, much pioneering is being done. An outstanding example of the possibilities of this medium is the work of New York City's sculptor Leo Amino. He has been experimenting for the past three years.

Amino had been working in wood and was looking for a way to employ color in sculpture that would come from within and not be a surface coating. He felt that there was no reason why a sculptor could not use color. But how? It occurred to him that he could mix pigments

with plastic materials and he began writing letters of inquiry to chemical companies. First he worked with magnesite, experimenting with pigments. He found he could imitate marble and could achieve striking effects with color that was part of the material itself.

As he learned more about the plastic family he soon realized that the ability to take color was but one property of plastics. Here was a most versatile material. It could be crystal clear, translucent, opaque or colored, and its reaction to light was completely different from that of any other material.

Through trial and error Amino learned how to use different types of plastics. In the collection of his sculpture recently exhibited at the Clay Club in New York, he employed fully the unique characteristics of this medium.



New visual concept in Leo Amino's sculpture: wire and copper provide form within form in clear plastic.

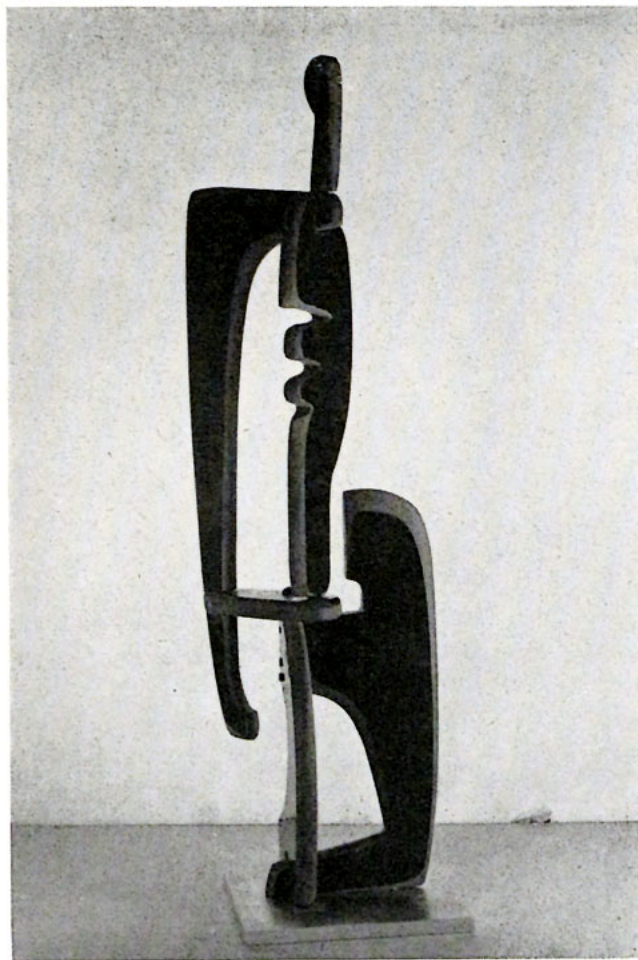


String is used here for one of Amino's double vision transparencies—symbolic figure within figure.

The exhibit included his earlier work with opaque materials in which he simulated marble and experimented with color. It also included sculpture in the transparent family of plastics. This interested him the most for it offered unlimited possibilities. He was not content to use plastic to imitate other materials. It was his desire to bring out the properties of plastics that made it distinctive. This he did and the art critics as well as the uninitiated were drawn to his work. Critics came back to buy and onlookers who had never before considered owning a piece of sculpture bought Amino's work. All enjoyed these abstract designs. Here was something truly different and this is the reason why:

A glance at Amino's sculpture reveals, sometimes, not one form but several, due to the refraction of the clear plastics he uses. Plastics reflect light magnificently but at the same time light passes through the sculpture and becomes a part of it—a tool of the artist. Due to these qualities of light and refraction, the sculpture must be seen to be fully appreciated. A photograph, being static, does not do it justice.

Amino's work has exterior form as well as interior form particularly in those pieces which he calls "Form Within Form" or "Double Vision." These phrases mean that another solid form is inside the clear plastic form. In the casting process he has incorporated shapes made of plaster, thread, wire, string, copper and wire mesh. Any material can be used for this interior design.



Amino's abstract concepts in plastic combine the velvet smoothness of wood with the fluidity of the medium.

This sculpture has a jewel-like quality. Pieces are light in weight, warm to touch, smooth and sleek. They invite handling the better to enjoy the effects under varied lighting. They are also safe to handle because the material is not delicate or fragile.

Amino's designs are abstract. They have grace and rhythm. Pieces are whimsical and gay but at the same time they are dramatic, strange and enchanting.

It would not have been possible for Amino to use plastics for sculpture if he had not had the help of a friend, who is a chemist, because many plastic materials now available are inflammable. The process of putting the liquid into molds and subjecting it to heat involves considerable risk. This "curing" (known chemically as polymerization) should not be undertaken without proper supervision. It takes as long as two weeks and requires careful regulation of temperature in order to assure good results.

When the plastics industry develops a product at a reasonable cost that eliminates the risks and technical difficulties involved in the "curing" processes, plastics will be used by more artists and craftsmen and may very well change the entire aspect of sculpture as we know it today. When this time comes Amino feels that craftsmen as well as artists will have a chance to work with plastic and everyone may benefit from this new material that the 20th Century has given us. This is what he, with the help of chemists, is working toward.



Fused with color, Amino's sculptures in opaque plastic have a jewel-like quality, compelling touch.