

## For your information

kind of flower or tree branch and any kind of container—"even a wash basin." He demonstrated this thesis by filling such things as a small white porcelain rowboat and a vase only two inches high with flowers and twigs, placing them one by one to achieve a look, not of artifice, but of easy, asymmetrical balance and pleasing restraint.

### Playground for the UN

Robert Moses' New York Department of Parks has rejected the playground plan designed for the United Nations by Isamu Noguchi and Julian Whittlesey, but the Museum of Modern Art is showing a model of the proposals anyway, only a trifle belatedly, until April 22. The Museum makes it clear that the model is intended as a collection of ideas rather than a hard and fast specification. As either, it looks almost incapable of being opposed. The photograph above shows that there would be many delights for the five-year-old tired of the

same old thing. There would be things to climb on, things to slide down, things to crawl through. The pole in the foreground would hold swings, and off to the right would be a sculptured pile of bright-colored triangles and a miniature stage. The playground was planned exclusively for very young children, whose fancies are generally brief, so the units are kept close together for easy change of pastime.

As if the looks and amusements of the place were not enough to stimulate a speedy start, there was another persuasion, also firmly unaccepted: a group of New Yorkers had offered \$75,000 for its construction.

### Modern Synagogue Art in Baltimore

Percival Goodman, architect of B'nai Israel synagogue reported in these columns last November, also designed the new Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, and again modern artists were asked to produce the decorations. The works were shown at the Jewish Museum

in New York last month, together with models and drawings for those in B'nai Israel and two stained glass windows by Louise D. Kayser for Temple Har Zion in Philadelphia. For the Torah Ark of the Hebrew Congregation, Amalie Rothschild designed a curtain which was executed by ladies of the congregation. The warm, wool texture, the straightforward blues, greens, golds, and browns make the basic design seem, perhaps, better than it is. Not that it's bad at all; it's a modern symbolic representation in four panels, the two on the ends dealing with "The Giving of the Law," the omnipresence of God, and the communion between heaven and earth. They look appropriately infinite and unfathomable, while the two center panels, in a design that suggests our small human orderliness, bear the theme of "The Tabernacle in the Desert;" the idea of the soul's temporary abode in the body is told with bread and wine as man's sustenance, and symbols of Judaism to suggest the eternity of the spirit.

Pictured below is Arnold Henry Bergier's fine bronze sculpture, *The Eternal Light*, that hangs in front of the Ark, looking like a seraphim bringing light down from heaven. There is also a mural by William Melton Halsey for the entrance hall. Its theme, of more corporeal significance than the others', is "The Living God and the Messianic Hope," expressing trust in God as the enduring strength necessary for the good, just, peaceful life on earth.

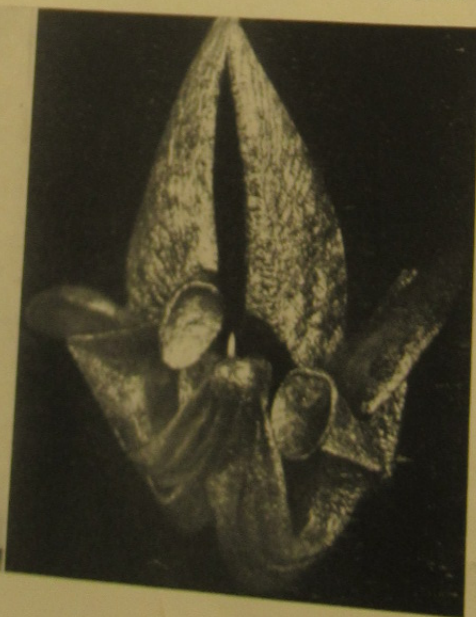
### Fun and Games

Percile Fazzini, as six pages in *Interiors*, December 1948, will show you, is an Italian sculptor who preserves, quite realistically, the most fleeting postures of the human form. The Iolas gallery in New York introduced his work to Americans last month. It is clear that, for Sr. Fazzini, fun and games are an important part of life. Nearly all the sculptures are engaged in activities like acrobatics, diving, and dancing. Few are more than four inches high, and they all have grace and gaiety and charm. This is not all Sr. Fazzini can do, though it is certainly plenty. Pictured at left is a

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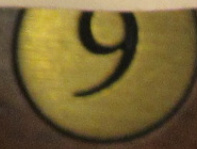
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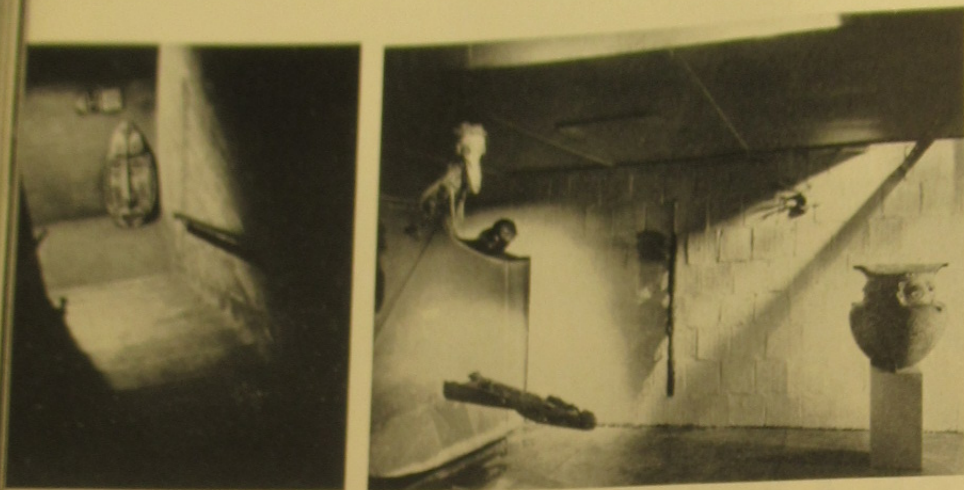
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Treasures rescued by seven varied authorities from a museum's cellar were shown right there.

bronze called "The Youth." The shoulders are still athletic, but there is business and sobriety in the countenance. It was the only thing like it in the show.

#### Lurcat Tapestries

Jean Lurcat, probably the most purposeful of French tapestry weavers, had his first American show last month at the Hacker Gallery in New York, and the works were not without a message for practitioners of the art. M. Lurcat has set down his thoughts in a book called, in the English translation, *Designing Tapestry* (July 1951 *Interiors*, page 20). There he says, among many other things, that tapestries, of all art forms, have an unusual capability of containing life, of "making the subject flesh."

M. Lurcat's tapestries show how he does it. First, they make an onslaught on the sensibilities with vast size, warm, heavy texture, and forceful, forcefully juxtaposed colors. Details, representational but hardly academic, are plentiful, and almost all plane bodies are textured in fine, colorful patterns. And every one of the tapestries is filled with the good, free things in life. Leaves, flowers, butterflies, animals, cocks abound. Especially cocks. Those in the one we show, knowing about "Coq et Canards," "Coq Lune," "Coq

nappe verte," "Coq et Libellules," and "Coquedor," sing, "Lurcat is going to weave us."

#### A Basement Ransacked

Jacques Lipchitz summarized, rather more romantically than the others would have done, perhaps, the attitudes of seven who searched the basement at Philadelphia's University Museum for an exhibition called "14 Eyes in a Museum Storeroom" last month. He said: "I like to pick up in the dirt and dust the pearl which will make me dream, which will teach me and which will make me feel the hand—this distinctive sign of human glory. I was astounded to find such a rare piece as the Mayan bas-relief lying on the floor among potteries of no great interest, and I picked it up just as if I had saved a man from drowning."

Mr. Lipchitz also chose a rattan cage from Borneo that, with its open areas permitting a view through, looked like some of his own transparent sculpture. Charles Addams cast his eyes around the cellars and emerged with three weird African figures ("I chose these little Africans because I feel they'd be delightful people to live with"), the desiccated bird hung at left on the picture above, from New Guinea, and a killer whale from Alaska,

all of which would have found excellent homes in one of Mr. Addams' heavily locked cages.

Norman Bel Geddes selected, among other things, a skull-like Mayan death's head ("an excellent, though frankly unpleasant, bit of abstract design") and a drawing on a Ptolemaic mummy bandage whose figures seemed to him to be rehearsing something.

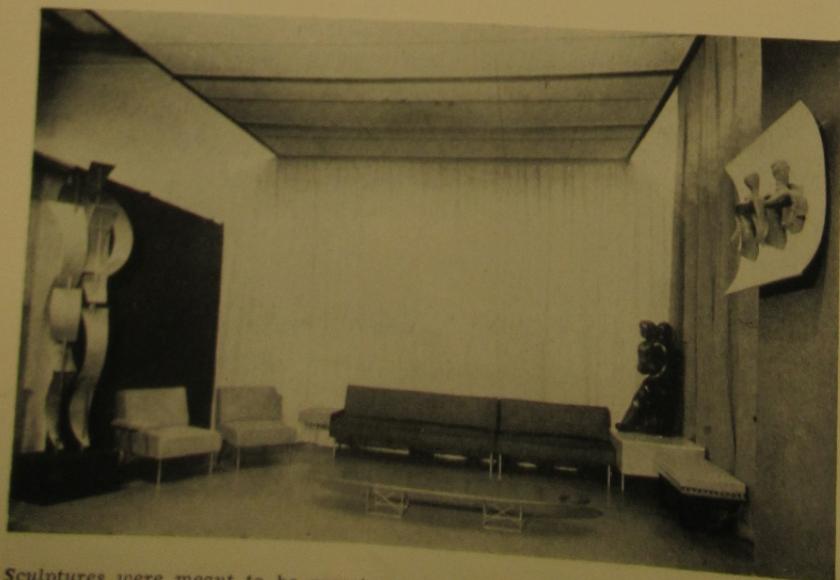
Among painter Franklin C. Watkins' selections were a bamboo zither from Borneo ("I like the sleek vertical design. I like its strength and sinew and its perfect mechanism"), a Sabaeon stone figure from South Arabia, and a Guetar stone figure from Costa Rica. The Klee-like delicacy and whimsy of some potteries from Brazil and a Hittite stone eagle's wisdom and humor intrigued collector Louis E. Stern, while Rene d'Harnoncourt, director of the Museum of Modern Art, chose a primitive wooden bowl from Micronesia that, like some of the best products of modern industrial design, "derives its beauty entirely from perfection of proportions without the help of surface decoration or elaboration."

The selections of Lincoln Kirstein, director of the New York City Ballet, reflected his chief concern, too. He chose a ritual headdress adorned with a swan-like bird from New Ireland that "forms for me an ancestral image of . . . Tchaikowsky's 'Lac des Cygnes,' in its recent brilliant metamorphosis, 'Swan Lake.'" The show was in the Museum's sub-cellar, right next to the dim, murky, bewitching storerooms where the treasures were found. Two views are shown above.

#### Sculpture in Settings

Seven interiors flanked a large collection of sculptures at the Sculptors Guild's show at the American Museum of Natural History in New York last month. They all meant, not so much to demonstrate the academicism about sculpture being at home in architecture, but rather to present individual esthetic answers to problems posed by interiors of specialized function.

There were two living rooms, a contemporary one by William Pahlmann that used slightly more sculptures than a modester temperament would admit, and a room of mixed modern and traditional by Earnshaw, Inc., which was pre-



Sculptures were meant to be prominent in this and six other special interiors. The song of modern, knowing cocks goes, "Lurcat va nous tisser."