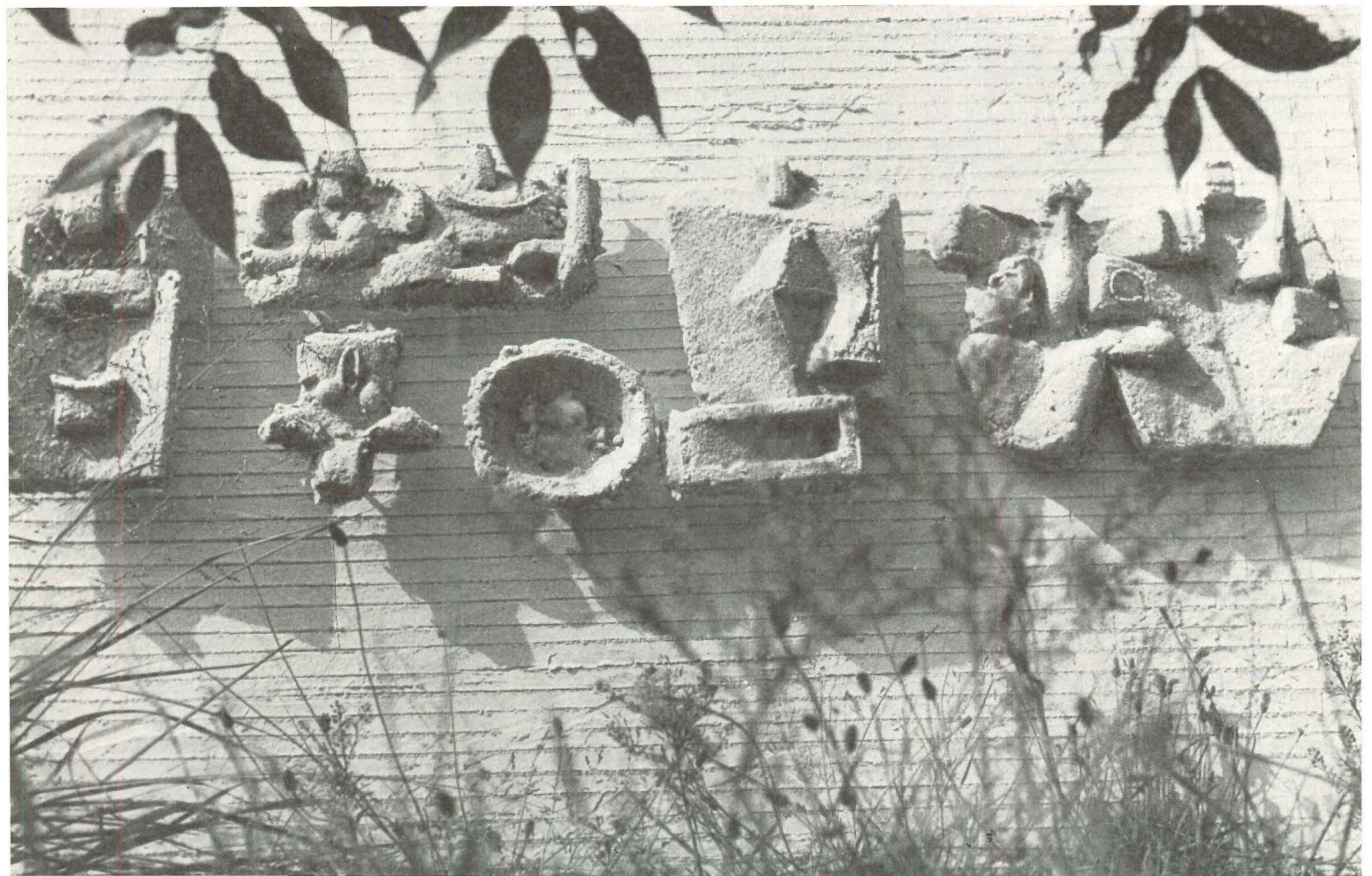


the work of COSTANTINO NIVOLA

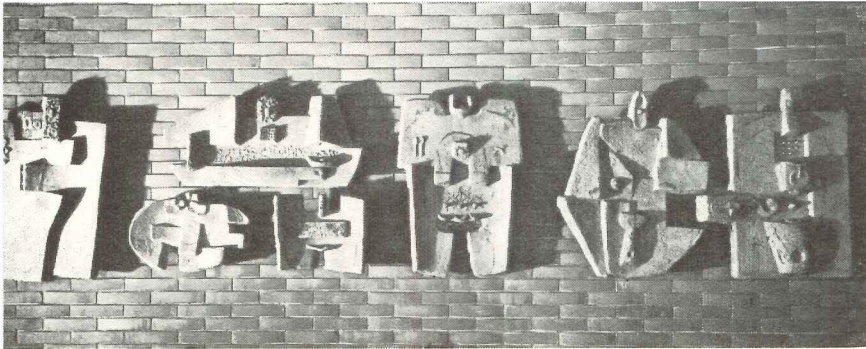
Nivola's primary and principal concern as an artist is to make man's dwelling places and environment more stimulating and enjoyable. Like his ancestors who created ancient sculptures and constructions of Sardinia, he is remarkably talented in these arts. And like his forebears he is capable of creating visual drama out of the most primitive substances. "My sculptures," says Nivola, "are made of common materials—brick, concrete blocks, lime, plaster—using the natural elements—sunlight, water, sand." Nivola employs a mason's technique which was acquired through working with his father, a master mason, in Sar-

dinia. Many of his pieces exhibit the imprint of this background, both artistically and technically. In discussing his work, Nivola pays tribute to still another master: "I learned from Le Corbusier to be conscious of the role every element must have in a plastic organization and its relation to architecture." In his unpretentious though exuberant and lively way, he has had great influence on latest architectural development. Many critics feel that Nivola has had an effect on the master himself—Le Corbusier, who has lately turned his attention away from the *machine à habiter* to such plastic expressions as the Chapel of Ronchamp or the

High Court Building of Chandigarh. Nivola's latest and perhaps most significant pieces are constructions similar to the one shown in the process of assembly (*acrosspage*). The possibilities of these sectional sculptures, in which volumes are juxtaposed as in architecture, are unlimited and Nivola himself suggests, "My dream is to make them as big as buildings." This scale has been partially realized in the memorial fountain (page 119) and more fully in a design for his own house, to be shown in June 1956 P/A. In effect, one finds it difficult to tell where Nivola the sculptor leaves off and Nivola the architect begins.



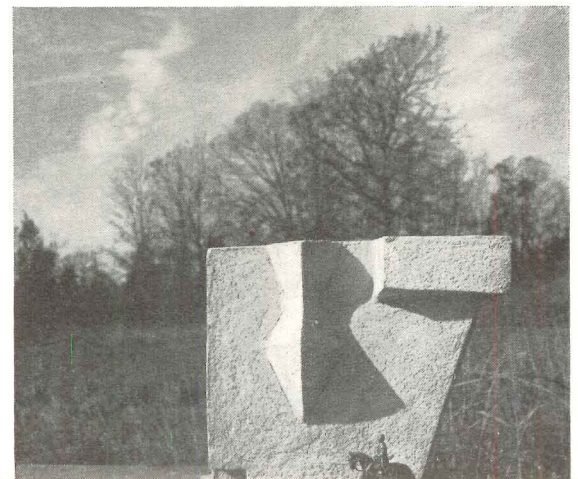
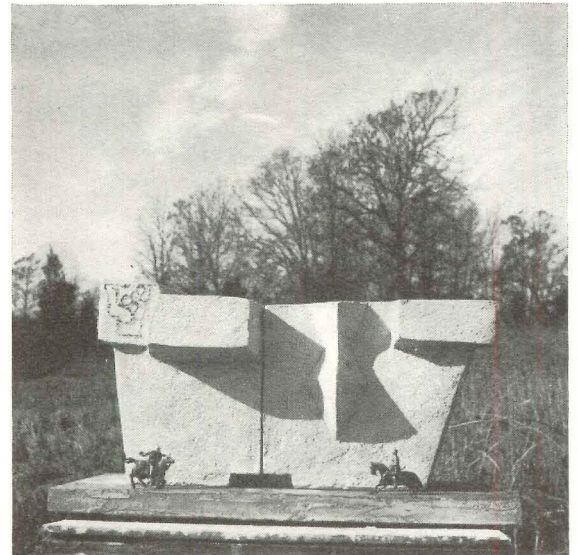
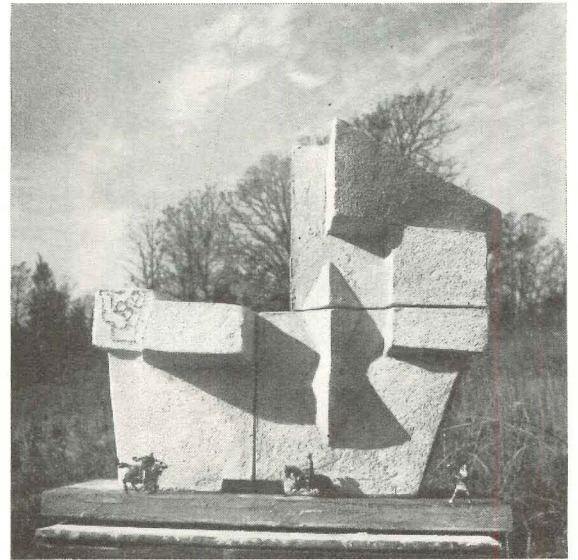
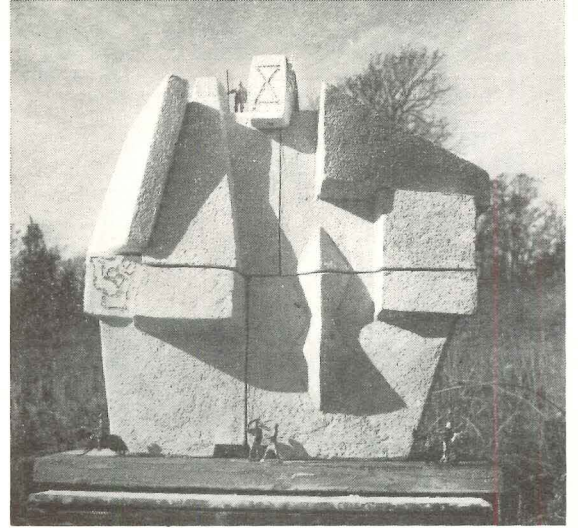
Hans Namuth



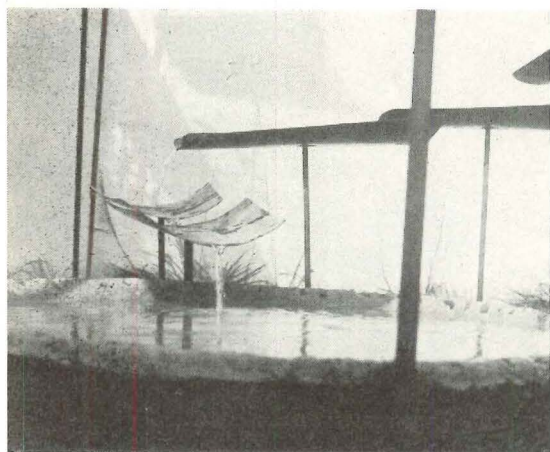
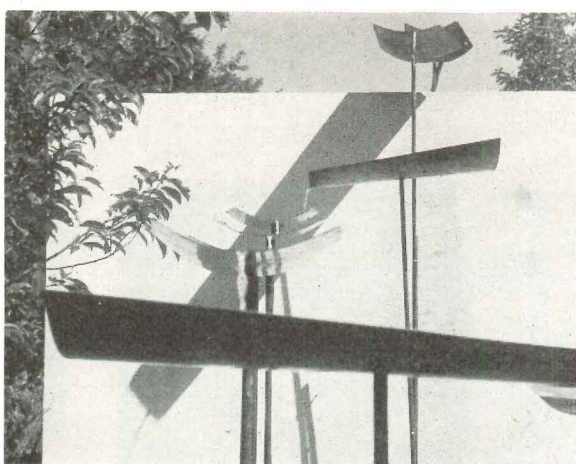
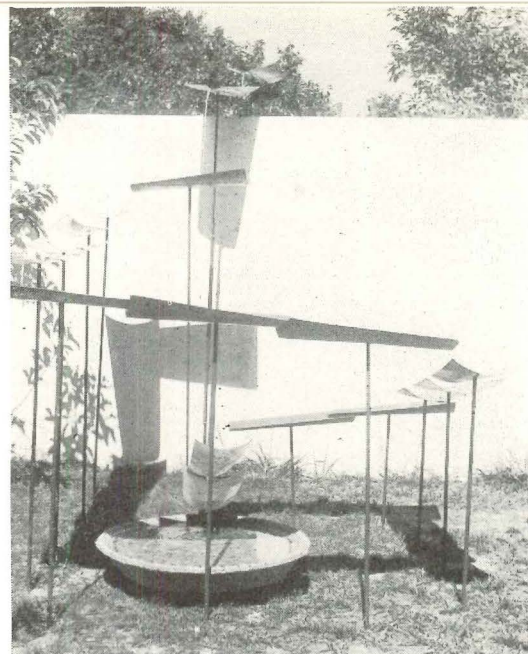
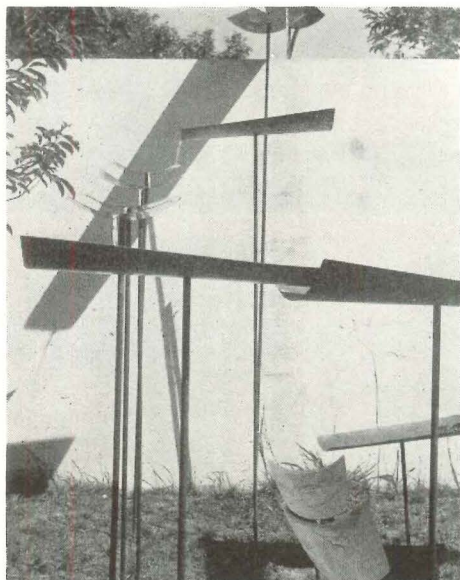
Free-standing garden wall (above) defines one side of the entrance patio of a New York apartment house. Nivola's low reliefs of concrete, cast in sand, stand well out from the wall, their plastic quality thus emphasized. Earlier model (acrosspage) suggests a less pronounced background, perhaps more in keeping with the sculptured plaques.

"Building blocks" (right) are interlocking monolithic sections of built-up concrete which Nivola assembles like masonry. Toy figures suggest the monumental scale these constructions can assume.

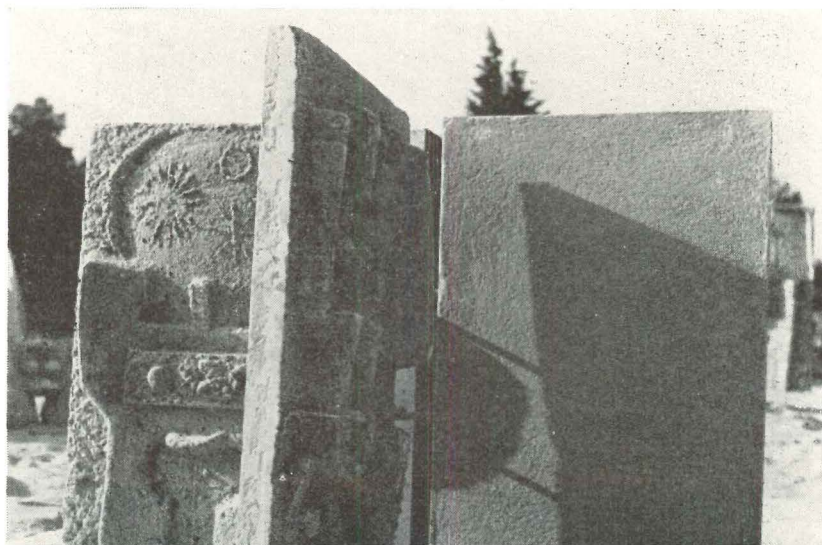
Photos (except as noted) : Costantino Nivola



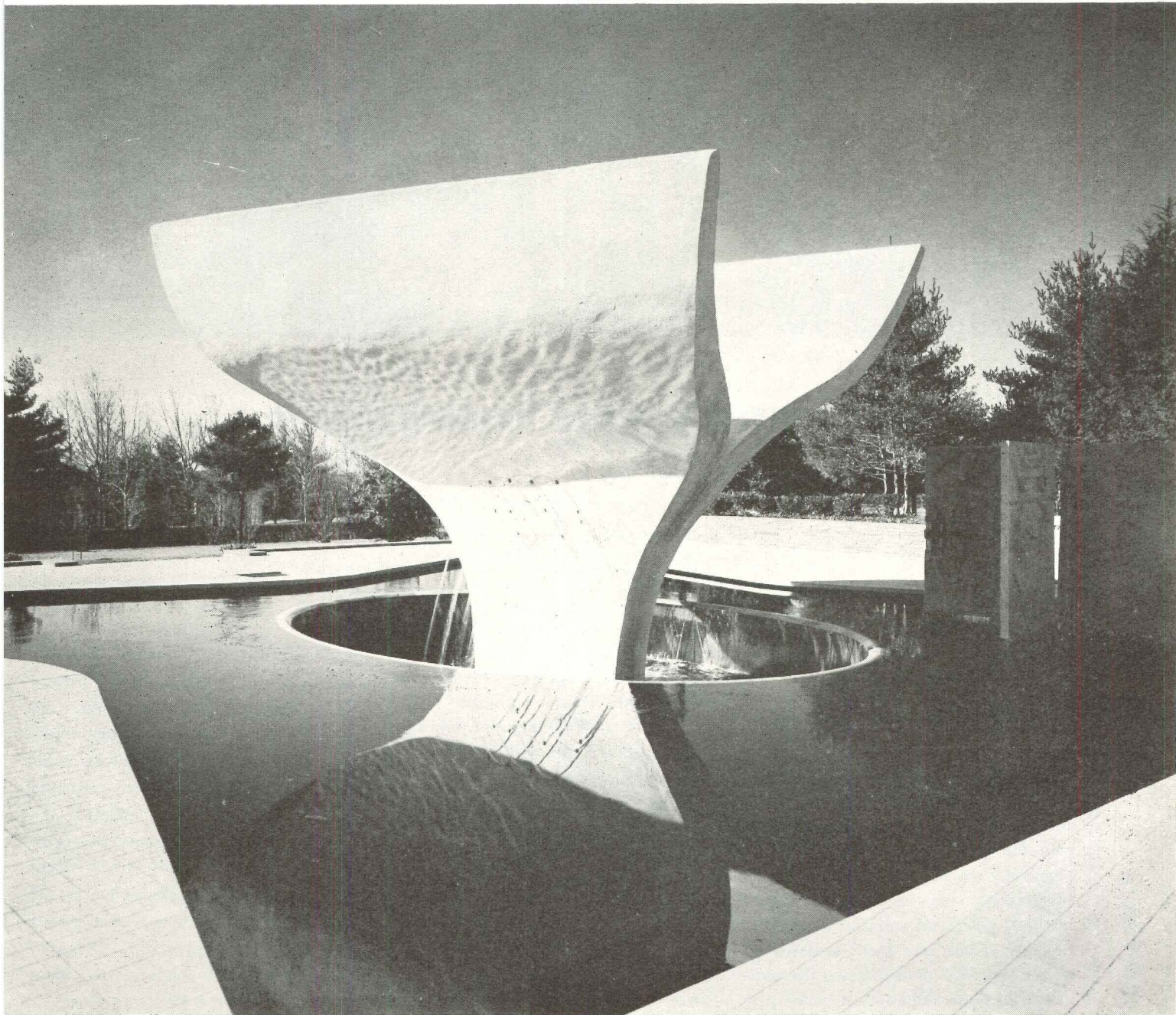
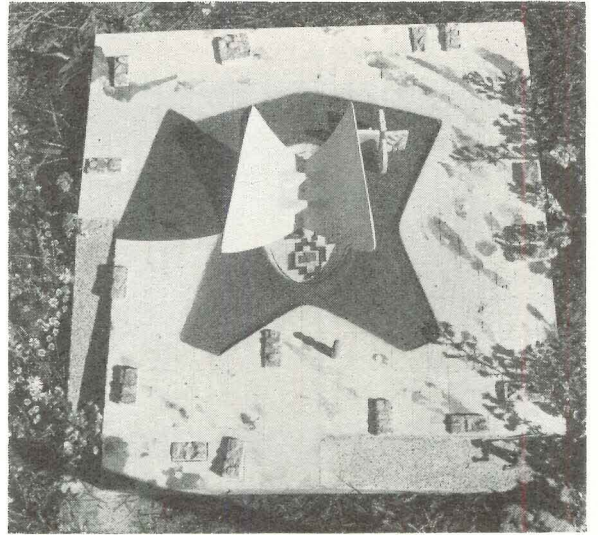
related design fields



By the simplest means—with bent-brass sheeting and an assortment of slender brass rods—Nivola has fashioned an engaging and lively fountain (left and above) adaptable to anyone's garden. Water is brought up through the first stem, a hollow pipe; then it falls from one level to the next, introducing elements of movement and music into an otherwise static landscape. Different notes are sounded by varying the length of the stems.



Designed for a nonsectarian cemetery at Falls Church, Va., the Memorial Fountain, dedicated to the four chaplains who gave their lives in a wartime sea disaster, is one of Nivola's largest architectural sculptures. Again, it is an economically executed work using simple materials. Dominant element in the composition is a concrete form, a symbol of the sinking ship. Dark, star-shaped area (model right) signifies the ocean; the oval in its center, the world beyond. It was the sculptor's original intention to build this oval of light and colorful tiles on various levels, symbolizing the eternal city to come, and also to give visitors a view down into it from the nearest point on the platform above. The four panels suspended above the level of the "ocean" are sculptured on one side only and fresco-colored on the other (detail acrosspage bottom). As the sun moves, each panel is lighted in turn and each color given emphasis.



Robert C. Lautman