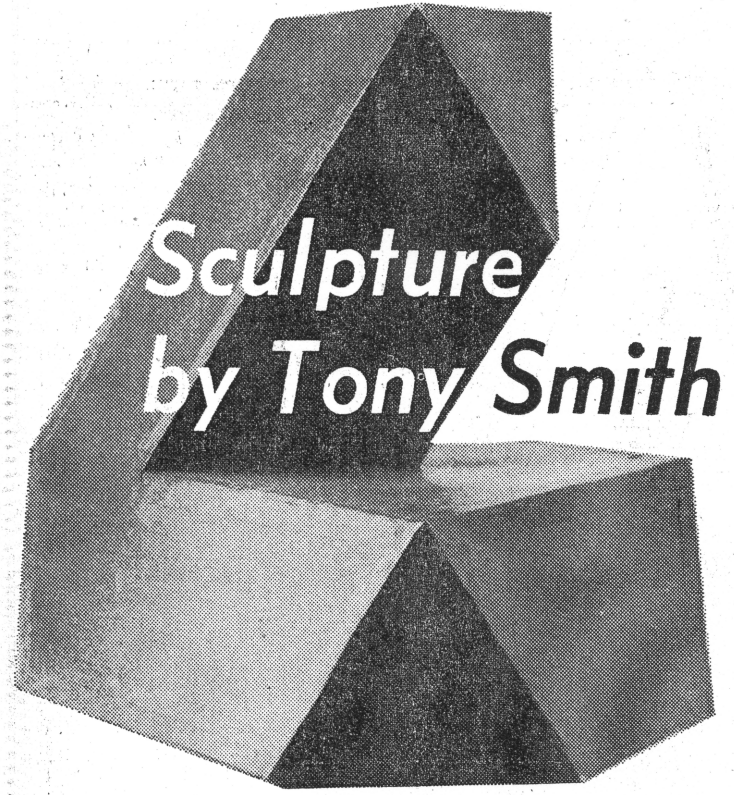
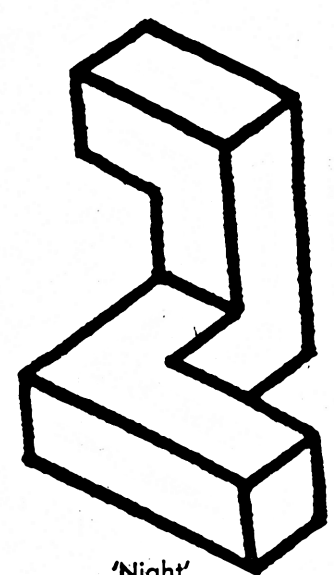


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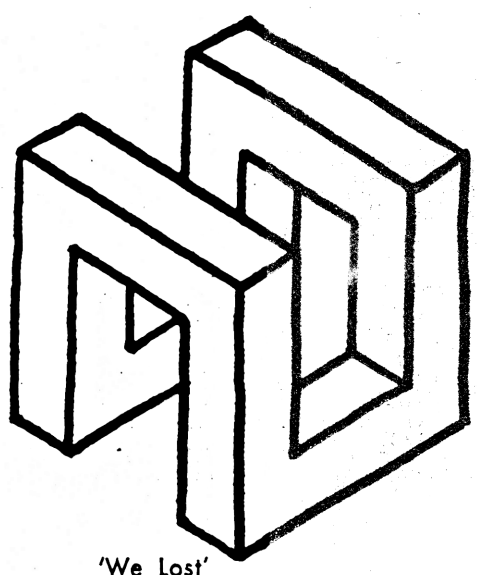


Sculpture by Tony Smith

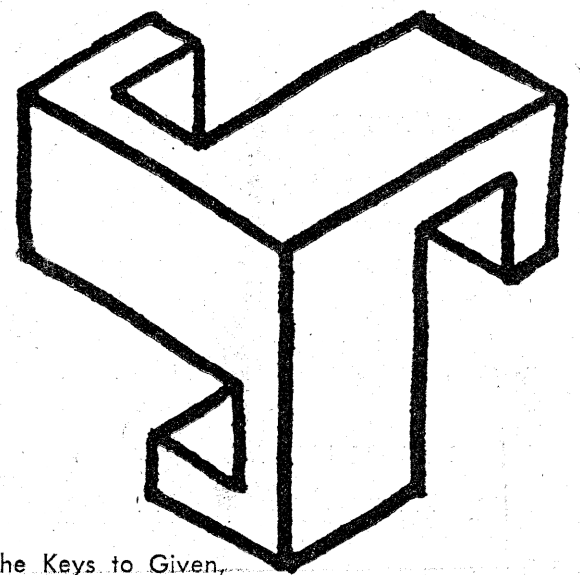
Cardboard model for monumental sculpture.



'Night'



'We Lost'



'The Keys to Given'

By Jean Charlot
Star-Bulletin Art Critic

An important display of blueprints and models for monumental sculptures by Tony Smith is currently being shown at the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

Smith was our visiting lecturer and instructor on the UH Manoa campus last summer. He is very much in the news and Time magazine honored him with a cover display in 1967. More important, his art is of a quality made to endure. And, most important for us, he has been working on a monumental project soon to be realized on the Manoa campus.

Regardless of the immense complexity of contemporary trends, present-day sculpture divides along lines for which the safe and tried labels — classical and romantic — apply most aptly.

SOME SCULPTORS love to struggle bodily with their

material. Rodin was the romantic when he dug his spatulate fingers into the wet clay with a nearly sadistic delight. For him, the making of the work was the climax. The finished work could be left to delight art lovers.

Some contemporaries, in their attitude to work, are close enough to Rodin. Action sculpture, like action painting, emphasizes the sport, modeling or carving. A whole show I saw was made of sheets of clay left to harden just enough so that the sculptor, in a boxing gesture, shoved his fist through the material. It exploded somehow, suggestive of intense violence, of a soldier's chest caved in by a bullet in battle.

Shredded at its exploded edges, the art was accidental, impressive as it froze into timelessness instant action. Perhaps brawn, motored by passion, had more to do with the resulting sculpture than reason.

Naturally enough, some artist was bound to claim, or reclaim, rational thinking as a birthright of the art-maker. To clarify his stand further, such an artist would avoid every trace of this orgiastic manipulation of the material that characterizes action sculpture.

TONY SMITH exemplifies superbly this reaction to action. His training is that of an architect. The architect sits a his desk, marking squared paper with compass and ruler, shunning freehand improvisation. All is measured, all is balanced in terms of stress and pull.

The sheafs of cool studies that are the result of his cogitation are, for the connoisseurs, as real as the house itself.

A house is truly the nearly abstract brainchild of its planner. But it acquires intense reality for those who live in it.

Like the architect that he is, Smith feels a special al-

lery when it comes to grappling with the matter to be shaped. A good architect need not be a good bricklayer or stonemason. Blueprints, exactly arrived at, are his whole work. The marble or the bronze will come closer to his ideal if shaped by others, mechanically rather than romantically.

YET IT IS A latent romanticism that made the artist switch from architecture to sculpture, from the 'machine for living in' to the 'machine you cannot put to any use' that is a sculpture.

That is, not to any practical use. Smith's sculptures, cool as they seem at first, are a potent aid to meditation, not because of their impeccable geometries, but because basic three-dimensional solids are his peculiar script for jotting down emotions.

His texts, unassuming, pithy and to the point, clarify the roots of his inspiration.

The sculptor has this to say of "Night":

"During the summer of 1962, I sat alone for a long time in a quiet place, and I saw night come up just like that."

And of "The Keys to Given."

"Someone asked me to do a house for his family.

"The site provided the opportunity for a scheme in which the same thing happened along all three axis of symmetry . . . Nothing came of the house."

Insofar as public monuments are concerned, up to not so long ago our State had but one, the Kamehameha, all chocolate and gold that, right or wrong, it is to Hawaii forever what the she-wolf feeding Remus and Romulus is to Rome.

parks and street corners peopled with bronze thinkers, seated, their forefinger dug into the high forehead, or orators standing, arm raised, open mouth forever orating wordlessly.

Up to now sans statues we can, unlike other states, make a clean start. We took a splendid first step with Marisol's Damien, certainly the most architectural thing to be seen in our Capitol. And now, Smith's monument, "Hubris," promises to boost high the level of our public commissions.

Sponsored by the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts, "Hubris" will occupy a very large area — large enough to raise on it still another skyscraper. Instead, the low-lying monument will provide a chance for meditation that is most welcome.

It opposes two textures — one yielding, the other aggressive. Its title, relating to pride, may point to the contrast between the inner man, living a dusk, uncertain of himself, and the outer man, armored against the world.

FOR THE ATTENTIVE onlooker, in this beautifully presented show, paper models and blueprints transform themselves effortlessly into the giant monuments that could not be exhibited.

Besides, one object in a permanent material is shown, "Broomstick", carved in white marble. It was inspired by a detail in one of my paintings, "Mexican Kitchen," where an old-fashioned broom made of twigs is laid against an adobe wall. Smith made a gift of this piece to my son John.

Photos by Honolulu Academy of Arts.

OTHER STATES boast