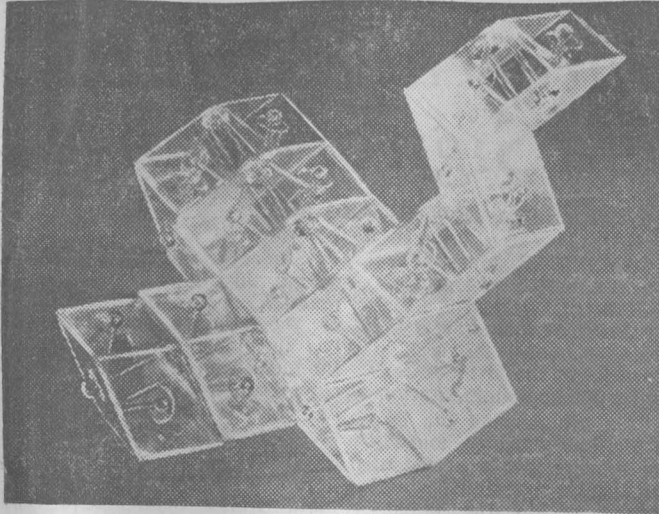


For Adults, the Toys Captivate (and Sometimes Exasperate)



Charles Perry's rhombic hexahedrons join into many shapes. \$10. Museum of Modern Art.

By RITA REIF

WILL art-minded, affluent, amusement-seeking Americans prefer Charles O. Perry's new Perrygons to Betty Thomson's old Multiplications?

Can Victor Vasarely's Planetary Folklore Participation No. 1 compete with Milton Glaser's Cubismo parlor game of last season?

Does Nicolas Schöffer's motorized Lumino make Ernest Trova's hand-operated Falling Man Kaleidoscope obsolete as an after-dinner conversation piece?

Can Magnetic People mesmerize shoppers, causing the Swinging Wonder to click its last staccato beat?

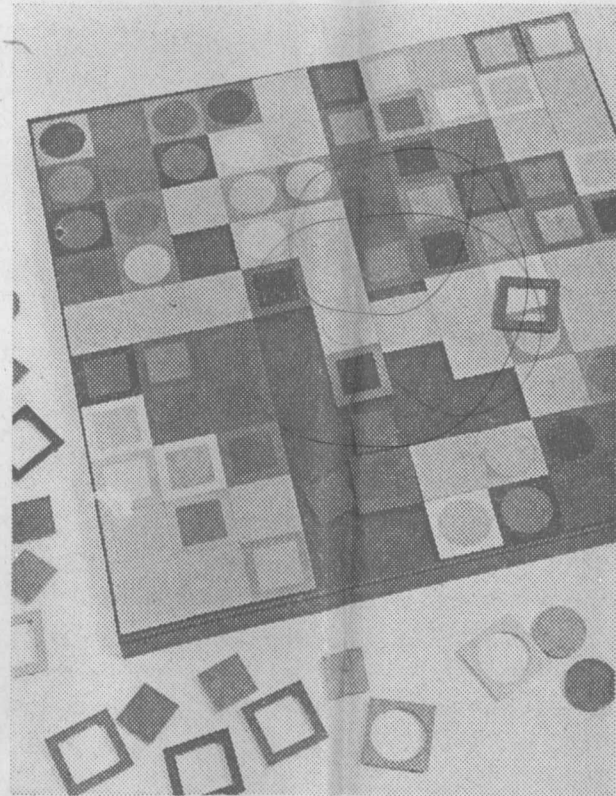
These are some of the questions being asked about the two-year flood of artist-designed and science-oriented playthings that threaten to transform some living rooms into sophisticated nurseries.

Not Child's Play

It's all part of a steadily growing trend aimed at luring grown-ups to the toy counters to buy a gadget that captivates them by the beauty of watching it in action, exasperate them by the complexity of putting it together or impress them by its versatility.

The name of a prominent artist as designer of the toy also helps.

Whether the 1969 crop of toys, with price tags that range from a modest under-\$10 to a more luxurious \$500, will yield a harvest as profitable as last year's nobody knows. But that green glint in the eyes of artists and merchants at museum bookshops, art galleries and spe-



The New York Times Studio (by Gene Maggio and Bill Aller)

Victor Vasarely's signed puzzle is arrangeable in numerous ways: 5,971,451,683,544,067 plus 265 zeros, a computer says. \$500. Bloomingdale's.

cialty and department stores tend to indicate that it will.

No wonder retailers are enthusiastic. For instance, since the Swinging Wonder was introduced a year and a half ago, 250,000 have been sold (at \$8, \$15 and \$20).

The wood or acrylic framed arrangement of thread-strung clicking balls that is supposed to demonstrate New-

ton's third law of motion is made by Scientific Demonstrators, of Eugene, Ore. The makers say the quarter-million sold does not include orders for this Christmas nor the number sold by manufacturers of the 20 or more copies now on the market.

Another toy to rack up impressive sales is Multiplications, a puzzle cube of hinged

acrylic blocks commissioned by the Junior Council of the Museum of Modern Art last year.

More than 80,000 of Miss Thomson's transparent pacifiers have been sold through the museum's mail order department and bookstore. Originally priced at \$10 each (\$7.50 to members), the toy is now \$12.50 (\$9.38 to members) and is now available in other museums and specialty shops. Miss Thomson's royalty is 10 per cent of the member's price.

The demand for Multiplications, which far outstripped the supply last year, is one reason why the museum decided to open an annex to the bookstore. The council also commissioned other manipulable objects, most of which are now on view at the annex, which opened yesterday at 32 West 53d Street, and at the main bookstore in the museum. There are also paper constructions, a pocket-size mirror by Stanley Landsman that distorts viewing (\$10) and Mr. Perry's set of plastic rhombic hexahedrons, which, for \$10, challenges the user to create many geometric forms.

Some of the most amusing—or merely distracting—baubles to appear in a long time come from the Art-mongers Manufactory, Inc., 422 East 92d Street. Seven playable and stationary objects comprise the collection being introduced now in part at the Museum of Modern Art bookstores and, in two weeks, in its entirety at Bonniers, 605 Madison Avenue.

Take, for instance, Bloop, Bloop, Bloop. This clear plastic tube by Casper Hensel-

mann has oil and six acrylic spheres inside. Shake it and bubbles appear and the spheres go up and down. The toy has as much fascination as the "snow"-filled glass spheres of yesteryear—or as little as a carpenter's level. It is \$10.

Les Levine's Waterdrop is a squeezable, clear plastic jigsaw puzzle of abstract shape at \$12. Henry Pearson delivered half a sphere in his Moirasphere, then put a mirror in the base to double the image and increase the moiré pattern. It is \$16.50.

Spacemoo Puzzle

Make-it-yourself sculpture is one of the art-designed objects from Edelman and Goldstein, 272 West 86th Street. Called Spacemoo, this concern's \$15 acrylic (smoke or clear) puzzle comes in four parts that notch together in various combinations. It will be at Scarabaeus, 223 East 60th Street, in two weeks.

Adult toys with a scientific touch come in all sizes and kinetic variations this year. One of them is the Magnetic People, which may not teach anyone anything about magnetism, but it is amusing to watch.

The kinetic diversion is a pedestal-based design in which there are two chromed tubes supporting movable bent bars of different lengths. At the opposite ends of each bar are a magnet and a ball of different sizes. As the bars move, the magnets attract and repel each other, setting up a dance-like movement of the bars. It costs \$20 at Georg Jensen.

Another gadget is called

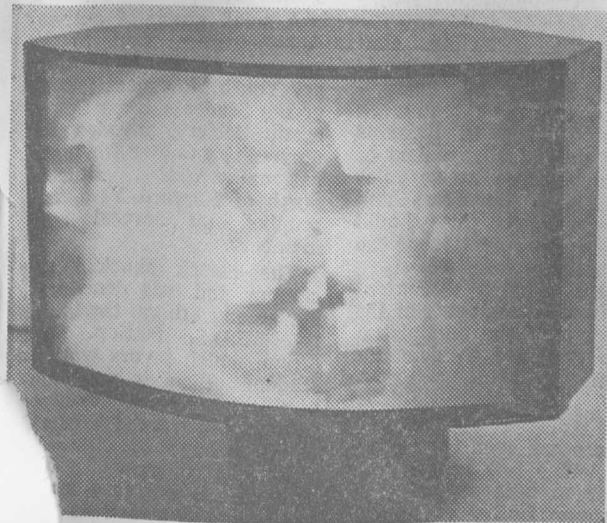
Wave, a motorized demonstration of the ocean. In the clear acrylic box are colored fluids that create wavelike effects as the rocks back and forth. Made by Kinautics International, Inc., of Winchester, Mass., the Wave is \$36.

Two of the most expensive toys of the year are Lumino by Mr. Schöffer (\$500 in a signed, limited edition at Waddell Galleries, 15 E. 57th Street, and \$75 in unsigned, unlimited edition at Altman's, fifth floor) and Vasarely's plastic sculpture puzzle at \$500 at Bloomingdale's on the fifth floor.

Lumino is a kinetic light box in which the patterns of light are not supposed to repeat for 15 days. And Vasarely's Planetary Folklore Participation No. 1, put together inside a frame, is a collection of multicolored circles and squares that, after being assembled, can be hung as work of art.

The trend toward toys for grown-ups is expected to continue well into 1970, according to Art in America. The publication has commissioned several artists to update classic games and devise new ones.

The results, to be published in the November issue, include a board game with a space theme by Ernest Trova, a backgammon board by George Ortman, checkers on a board by Richard Anuskievicz, chess and checkers by Les Levine, a sack-race game by William King, and a two-sided puzzle, striped on both sides, by Gene Davis. The collection will be available next spring at Jensen's.



Nicolas Schöffer's kinetic light box, Lumino, is signed at \$500 at Waddell Gallery, 15 E. 57th St., or unsigned at \$75 at Altman's.