

**GEORGE COHEN**



**EMBLEM FOR AN UNKNOWN NATION I**  
1954, oil on canvas, 68" x 51"  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Newman, Chicago

## GEORGE COHEN

PAINTINGS AND CONSTRUCTIONS

FEBRUARY 2-26, 1965

DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY GALLERY  
MITCHELL HALL, ROOM 128  
KENWOOD BOULEVARD AT DOWNER AVENUE

PRESENTED BY

DEPARTMENT OF ART  
SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE

*Signed by the artist  
"the Artist"  
(Daddy)*

The art of George Cohen is marked a major development in the annals of painting since 1945. Time's perspective continues to reaffirm the significance of his contribution to others and to recognize an unique personal statement. This exhibition, in capsule form, attempts to present the essence of the creative artist.

The "junk" sculpture of the late forties, the influential constructions of the early fifties and the whole rich iconographic development of the last fifteen years attest the continuing exploration of what it means to paint. Constant searching and refinement have given George Cohen a reputation as a pioneer in areas which are of major concern to all of the artists of our time. Some of his influences have been direct, some indirect, and — as the artist himself

would insist — some perhaps merely coincidental. The artist is a product as well as a prophet of his time.

The early constructions, particularly the series called the *Phenomenology of Mirrors*, are explicit expressions of the artist's involvement in the act of creation. This facet of Cohen's work was an individual and exciting exploration of a concept that was the chief — and almost the only — avowed concern of artists of the New York School. At the time some must have considered Cohen's work a shy and tentative aside. The media and the scale permitted a certain distance that would have been alien to those who wished to be engulfed by their creations. However, the quiet voice proved to be a pioneering statement that was to become a truism a decade later:

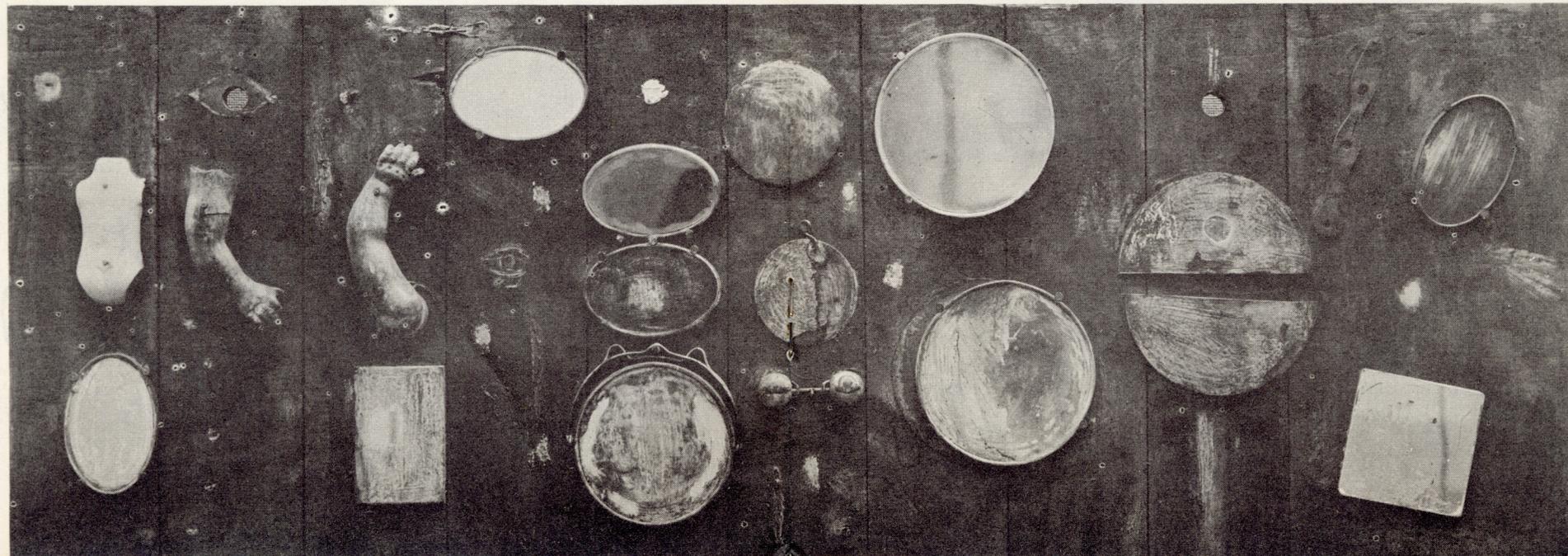
the spectator is involved in a work of art only as he participates. The seeming banality of this remark received from Cohen a fresh interpretation both witty and profound. He has said: indeed, the work of art as such does not exist without the spectator's participation.

The fact that the space of the picture depends on the space of the viewer underscores the involvement of the artist and his quiet insistence that the spectator must transcend his passive role. In a natural development — in Cubist and Surrealist terms — the artist has given a new interpretation of perspective. It is not space for the sake of space — a game for a Renaissance player — but an invitation to everyman to explore the nature of painting. Personal idioms, all tied to the traditions

as well as to the timeliness of art, appear and reappear in the search for the perfect expression of the frailties and the eternal qualities of time and space and man.

Woman especially is shattered and caressed with oil, gesso, glass and plastic. She is at once cheap and exotic, repellant and sublime. Her frenzy and her patience dominate the limits of her space and time. Here she searches, there she waits for what she knows will come. New media from an astounding source — the carefully selected products of a slickly inventive and often tawdry world — suddenly become not tired castaways but the articulators of new meanings in the luxuriant surroundings which the artist creates for them because he sees they do belong.

R. E.



GAME PRESERVE, 1957, 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 34<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>", construction on wood  
Richard L. Feigen, Chicago

## CATALOG

1. **FLIGHT**, 1949-50, oil on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weinstein, Chicago
2. **EMBLEM FOR AN UNKNOWN NATION I**, 1954, oil on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Newman, Chicago
3. **EMBLEM FOR AN UNKNOWN NATION II**, 1956-57, oil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
4. **WOMAN IN CLOAK**, 1952, oil and lace on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur P. Feigen, Chicago
5. **THE SANCTIFIED**, 1950, oil on paper, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weinstein, Chicago
6. **AUGUR**, 1954, oil and foil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
7. **GRISAILLE**, 1957, oil on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Root, Chicago
8. **THE BIRTH OF VENUS**, 1958, oil and glass on canvas, George Cohen, Evanston
9. **OVAL NUDE**, 1959, oil on canvas, Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago
10. **OVAL**, 1960, oil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
11. **HERMES**, 1957, oil, cloth, and sandpaper on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Shapiro, Oak Park
12. **AGORA**, 1963, oil on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. John Zeisler, Chicago
13. **A CASA**, 1961, oil on canvas, Mrs. Mario Biagiotti, Florence, Italy
14. **GAME PRESERVE**, 1957, glass, plastic, metal, and oil on wood, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
15. **SKETCH FOR A GAME OF CHANCE**, 1954, glass, plastic, metal, and oil on wood, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
16. **ANTECHAMBER (PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRRORS IV)**, 1962, glass, plastic, metal, and oil on wood, Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago
17. **FACCIATA (PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRRORS V)**, 1963, glass, plastic, metal, and oil on wood, Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Mayer, Winnetka
18. **ECHINUS (PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRRORS VI)**, 1962-63, glass, plastic, and oil on wood, Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago
19. **CONSTRUCTION WITH OPEN DOOR**, 1953-61, glass, plastic, metal, wood, and oil on wood, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weinstein, Chicago
20. **IMAGO**, 1955, sponge, net, metal, string, and oil on wood, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weinstein, Chicago
21. **LIMBUS**, 1958, glass, rope, hair, and oil on canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Shapiro, Oak Park
22. **FLESH PAINTING II**, 1962, oil on gesso on masonite, Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Hirschmann, Glencoe
23. **FLESH PAINTING IV**, 1962, oil and glass on gesso on masonite, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
24. **HERA**, 1962-63, oil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
25. **FLESH PAINTING XI**, 1964, oil and hair on gesso on board, Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago
26. **FIGURE WITH ATTENDANTS**, 1953, oil and metal on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
27. **PERSEUS**, 1957, oil and glass on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
28. **DEPARTING**, 1959-60, oil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
29. **THE WOMAN**, 1959-61, oil on canvas, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago
30. **DOMUS**, 1963, oil and gesso on masonite, Richard L. Feigen, Chicago

## BIOGRAPHY

- 1919 *Born; Chicago, Illinois.*
- 1937-42 *Studied; Art Institute of Chicago (B.F.A. 1946)*
- 1942 *Married; Constance Teander.*
- 1946 *Studied; Drake University.*
- 1946-48 *Studied; University of Chicago (Residence work completed toward M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History).*
- 1948 *Instructor; Northwestern University.*
- 1953 *First Prize; North Shore Art League Exhibition, Chicago.*
- 1955 *One-Man Exhibition; Korman Gallery (now Zabrieskie Gallery), New York.*
- 1956 *William and Bertha Clusmann Prize; Chicago and Vicinity Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago.*
- 1958 *Exhibited; Carnegie International, Pittsburgh.*
- 1959 *Exhibited; "Contemporary American Painting", Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
One-Man Exhibition; Alan Gallery, New York.*
- 1960 *Renaissance Prize; Chicago and Vicinity Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago.  
One-Man Exhibition; Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago.*
- 1960-61 *Kleiner Foundation Grant (\$10,000) for travel Abroad.*
- 1961 *Exhibited; "Art of the Assemblage", Museum of Modern Art, New York.*
- 1962 *William H. Bartels Prize; Chicago and Vicinity Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago.  
One-Man Exhibition; Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago.  
Exhibited; "Recent Painting U.S.A.: The Figure", Museum of Modern Art, New York.*
- 1963 *Walter M. Campana Memorial Prize; Annual American Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago.  
One-Man Exhibitions; Feigen-Herbert Gallery, New York, and Feigen-Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles.  
Exhibited; "Directions — Painting U.S.A.", San Francisco Museum of Art.*
- 1964 *One-Man Exhibitions; Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago, and Richard Feigen Gallery, New York.  
Currently; Professor of Art, Northwestern University.*

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
Wichita Museum of Art  
Art Institute of Chicago

## PRIVATE COLLECTIONS (including)

The Hon. Nelson Rockefeller  
Joseph Hirshhorn  
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hunter

cover: **VESTIBULE (PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRRORS III)**, 1961, construction, 13½" diam.  
Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago (not in present exhibition)

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The School of Fine Arts gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the RICHARD FEIGEN GALLERY, MR. GEORGE COHEN, and MR. ROSS EDMAN, in assembling this exhibition. We wish also to thank those collectors who have generously loaned paintings and constructions; MRS. MARIO BIAGIOTTI, MR. and MRS. ARTHUR P. FEIGEN, MR. RICHARD L. FEIGEN, MR. and MRS. STANLEY FREEHLING, DR. and MRS. JEROME HIRSCHMANN, MR. and MRS. ROBERT B. MAYER, MR. and MRS. ALBERT NEWMAN, MR. and MRS. ARNOLD ROOT, MR. and MRS. JOSEPH R. SHAPIRO, MR. and MRS. HAROLD WEINSTEIN, MR. and MRS. JOHN ZEISLER.

A. A. Suppan, Dean  
*School of Fine Arts*

Howard Schroedter, Chairman  
*Department of Art*

Laurence Rath sack, Chairman  
*Exhibition Committee*

*catalog designed by Peter Sinclair*