

Leppien

Paintings, Water Colors, Graphic Works



JEAN

Leppien

Art Gallery
Harpur College
State University of
New York
Binghamton, N. Y.
January 19 to
February 7, 1964

Within Jean Leppien's gentle personality lies a core of stubbornness that will not be overwhelmed by the calamities of our times. Twice the political forces of his native land destroyed his belongings and artistic production: in 1933, when he left Berlin for Paris, and again during the war in Paris. Liberated in a prison camp by American forces just one day before his scheduled execution, he returned to Paris. There, at the age of thirty-five, he began life anew.

He did not have a name upon which to build. He had no connections, gallery, critical notices or means of support, for between the time he left his Bauhaus masters in 1931 and the outbreak of hostilities the effort to exist in an alien country forced his painting time into the small, spare, extra hours of the week. But the close scrape with execution thrust him dramatically into the vita nuova of the post-war world. In less than two years he began to exhibit. Slowly - as the documentation at the end of this catalogue shows - he has acquired a following. The art works exhibited here have conviction and personality and prove beyond doubt that he has realized his own dream of art.

Leppien bears his psychic scars in secret. In his art we learn nothing certain about his past or his attitude toward the past. For him - as for so many others - painting does not mean reportage. Although he knows the ugly fist of brutality is clenched behind every corner and the air is poisoned with existential malaise, he refuses to entertain these facts in the serious playground of his art. Having learned from certain old masters of the twentieth century - Klee, and especially

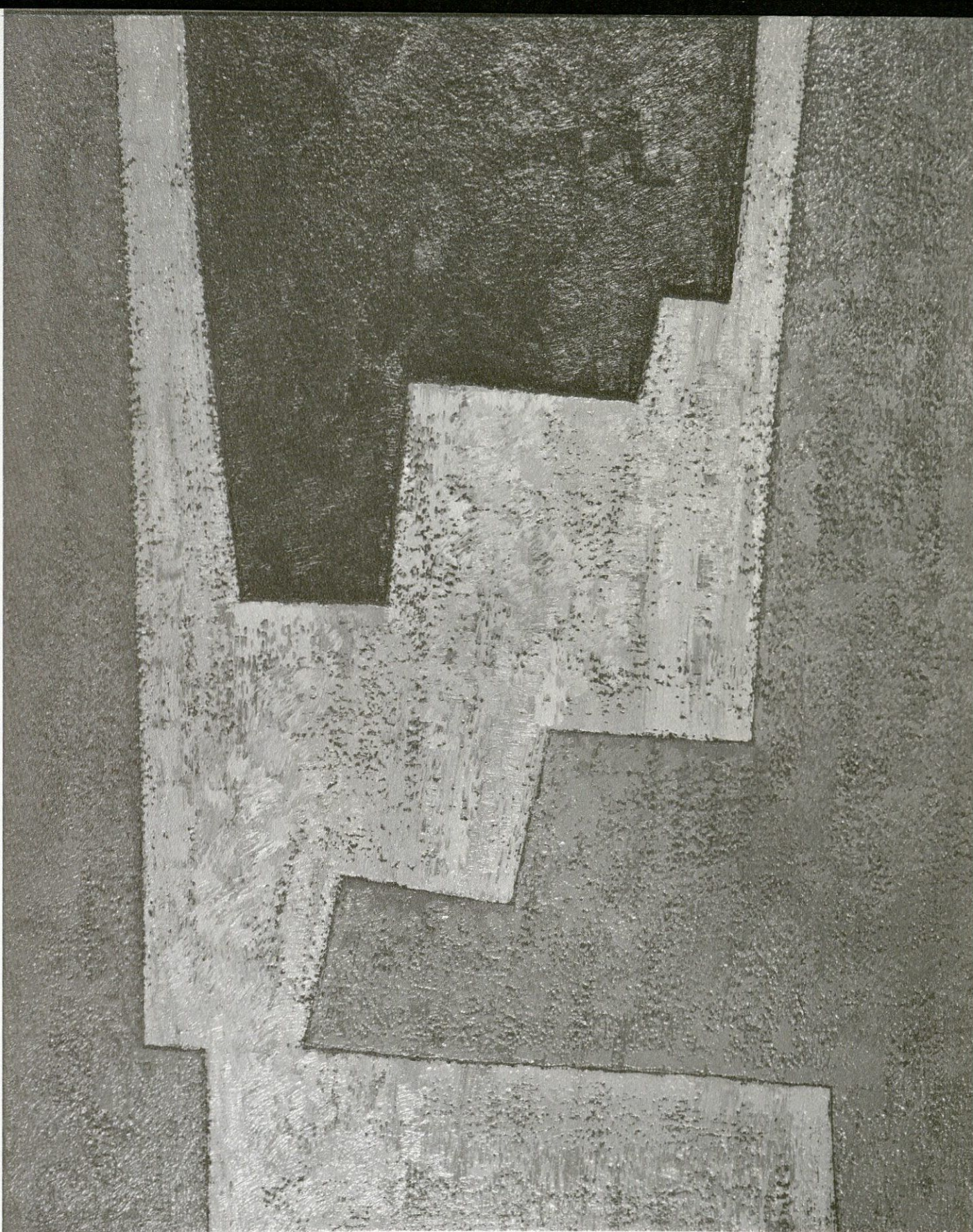
Kandinsky - that painting can germinate in the untouchable and unchanging core of the human spirit, Leppien creates pictorial hieroglyphs which commemorate a pure sense of the present. By looking inward he does not have to look backward and thereby relieves himself and his spectators from the burden of history. He knows that figurative footnotes to the past may be the deceits of an ancient mind which longs guiltily for that which is now impossible.

To describe and analyze Leppien's work with words would be a vain enterprise. Everyone can see for himself the refinement with which the artist deploys his deceptively simple shapes and colors, the growing fascination with textural possibilities, and the appearance, here and there, of literal suggestiveness. Are those upright shapes towers? Do we have walls here? Is that a strange landscape with a frantic moon pattern? To these inevitable questions the artist says, "No: I did not intend realistic references; but I do not mind if you happen to see them." He too sometimes sees them but only after the painting is completed. Thus, concerning the "Edge of the World" (Harpur College Art Collection) Leppien writes: "The red is not a city. The black is not a hill. The blue is not the sky. The black overhead is not a cloud. But: the red is placed on the black and under the blue as a city MIGHT be placed on the edge of the world between earth and high heaven - if ever there should be an edge of the world - as once, as a child I believed, and remembered after having finished the painting."

Thus we are brought here face to face with an essential problem of modern art. The literate mind seeks to impose the abstract force of its words and the linear drive of its discursive logic upon a new art which was consciously made outside the framework of words and this type of logic. The literate mind does this out of custom and pride in its own dictatorial powers. It cries out for the wrong thing - word and logic meaning - and not finding them, pouts in bad faith. In the meantime the painting rests on the wall, impertinently there, sure of itself like a song without words. The painting waits to receive the whole spirit in a sense of wonder, and ultimately, perhaps, may reveal new dreams of harmony to the humbled mind.

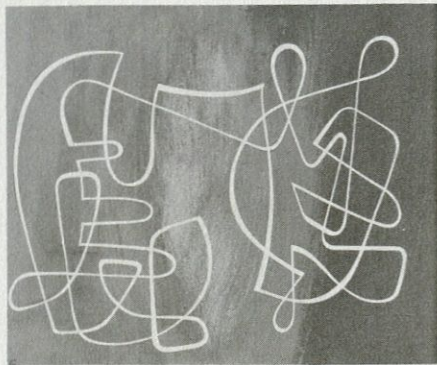
Kenneth C. Lindsay

All paintings and water colors shown at this exhibition are illustrated in this catalog. Therefore, no separate list of these works is included. Unless otherwise stated, oil paintings are of two uniform sizes, 40" x 32" and 22" x 18", as reflected in the relative sizes of their reproductions. All water colors are 11 1/2" x 13 1/2". Graphic works are partially illustrated and fully listed.

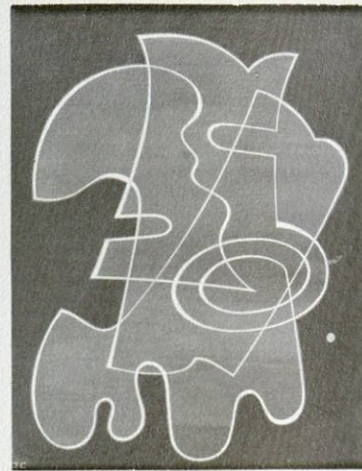


6/60 XXVI

OIL PAINTINGS



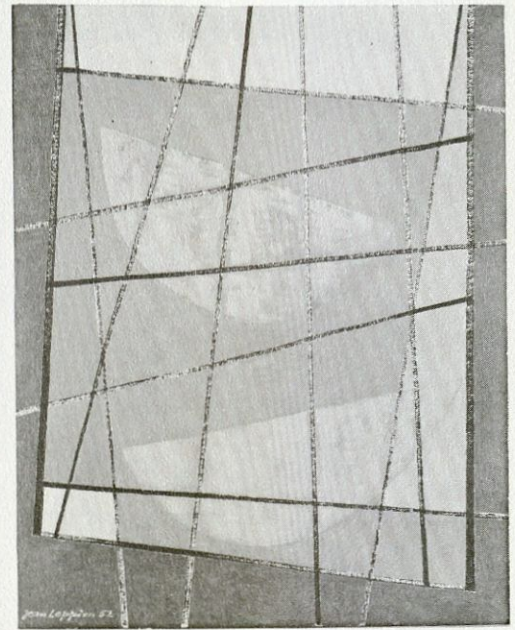
3/47 XVIII (10 1/4 x 8 1/4)



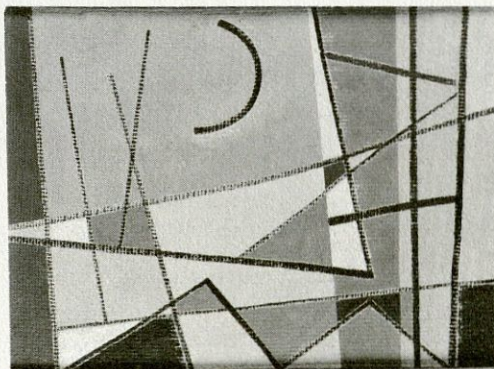
5/47 XXVIII (8 1/4 x 10 1/4)



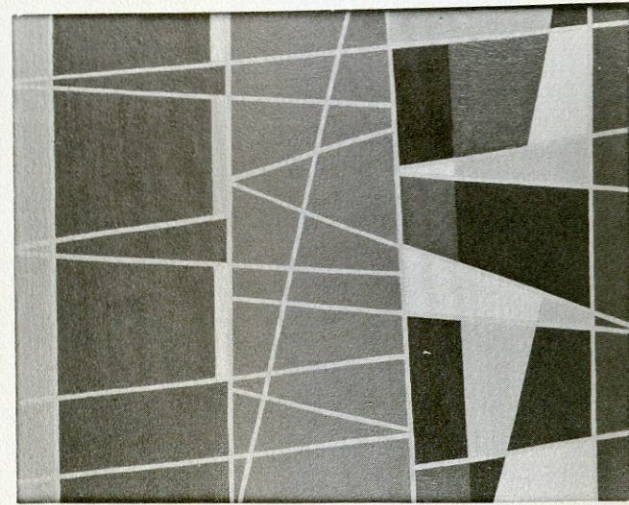
3/53 XXXVI (13 x 16)



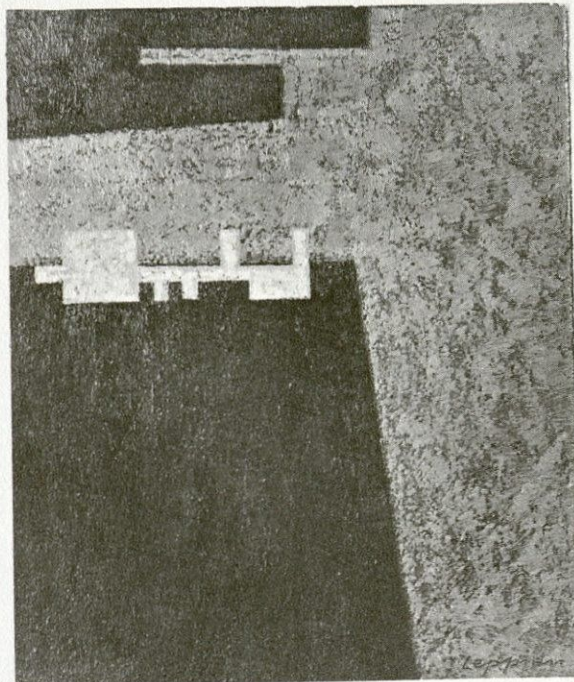
9/52 LIX (13 x 16)



7/50 XCI (13 x 9 1/2)

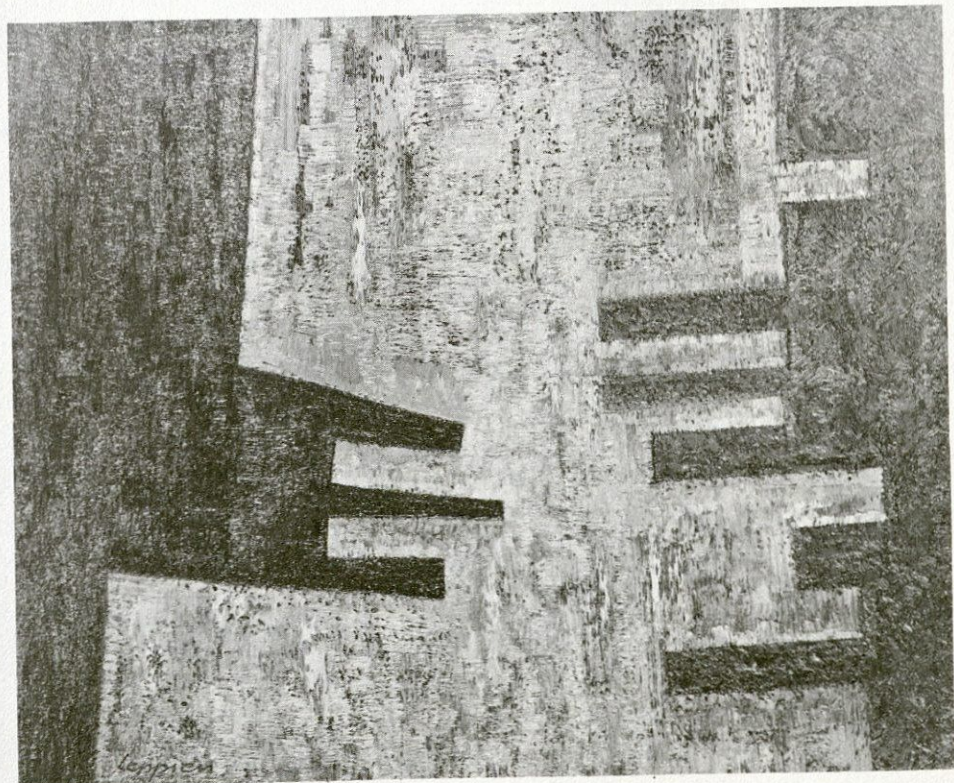


9/51 LII (16 x 13)

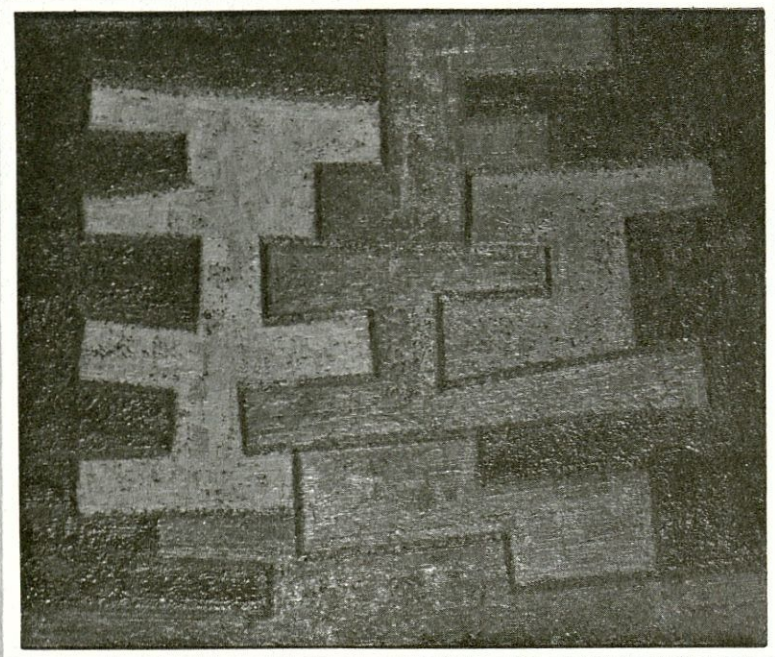


*Harpur College
Art Collection*

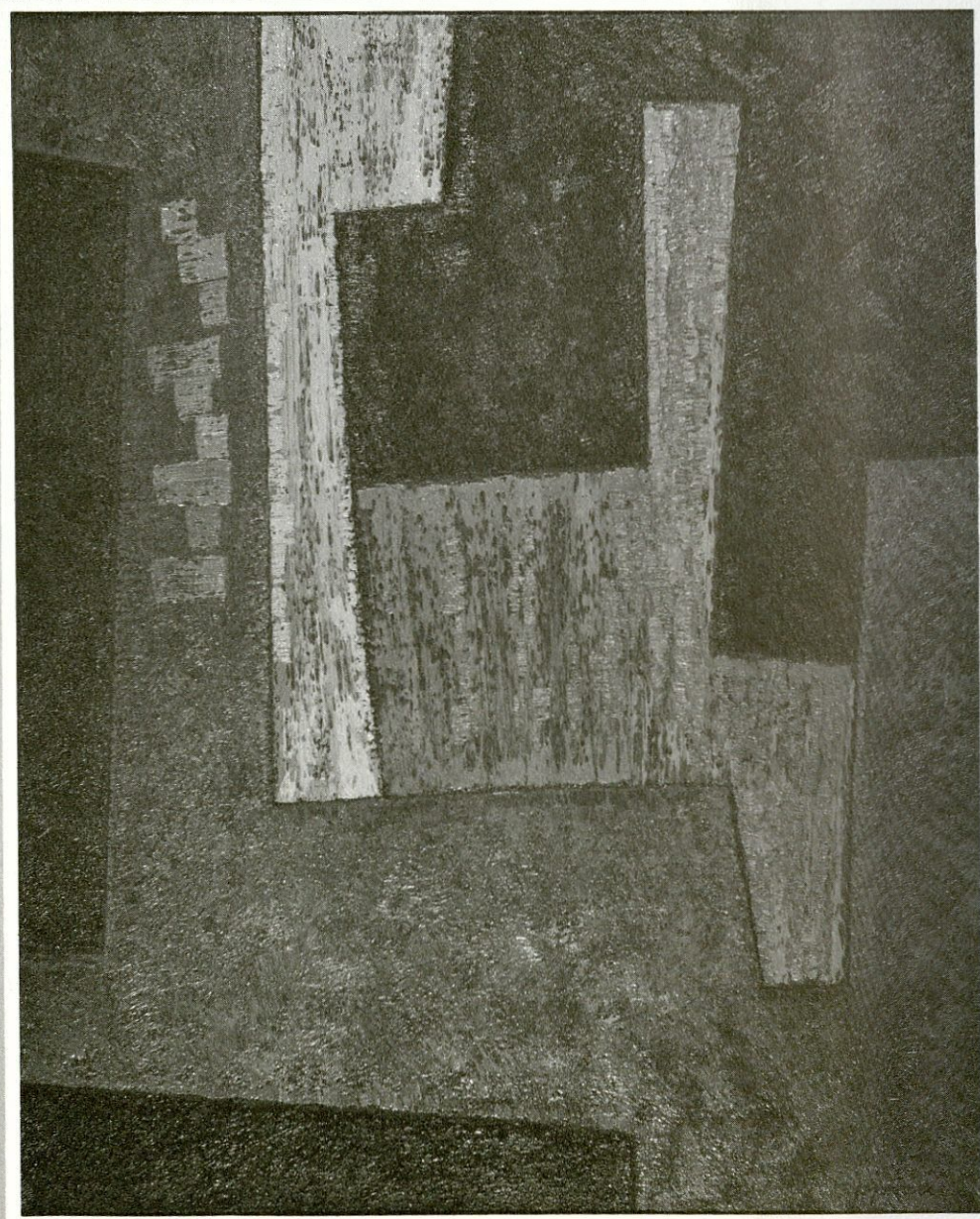
8/58 XCIV "Edge of the World"



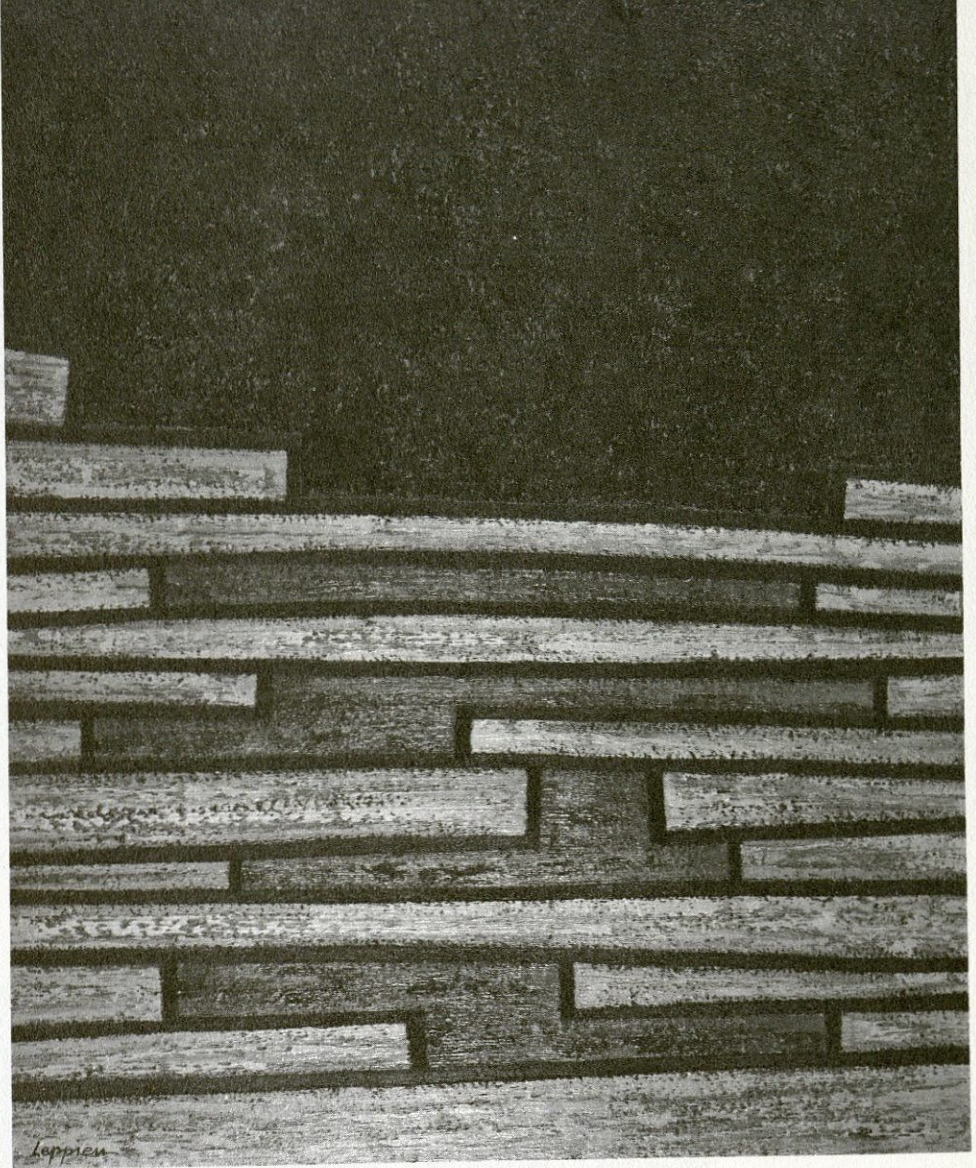
4/60 V (32 x 25 1/2)



2/63 III



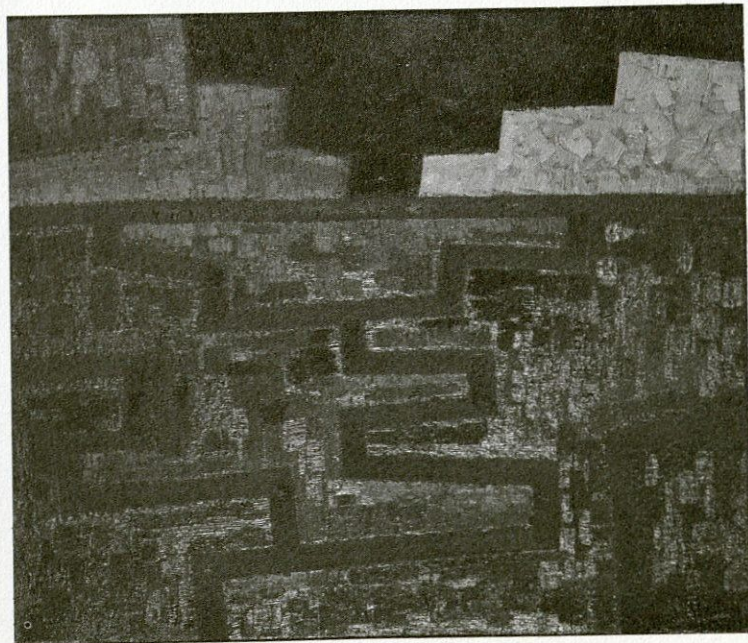
6/60 XL



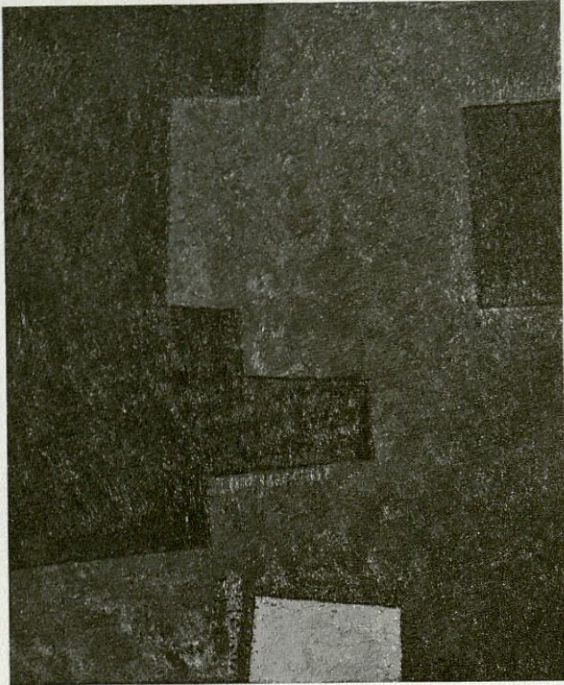
Leppien

3/63 XII

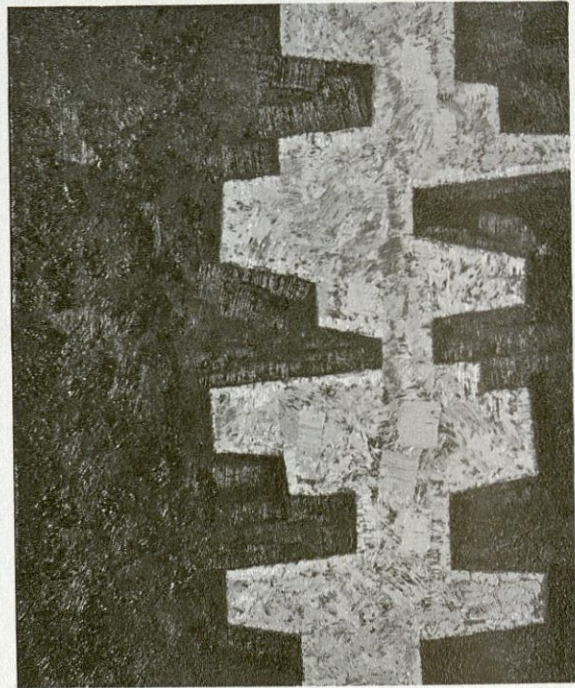
Detail on cover



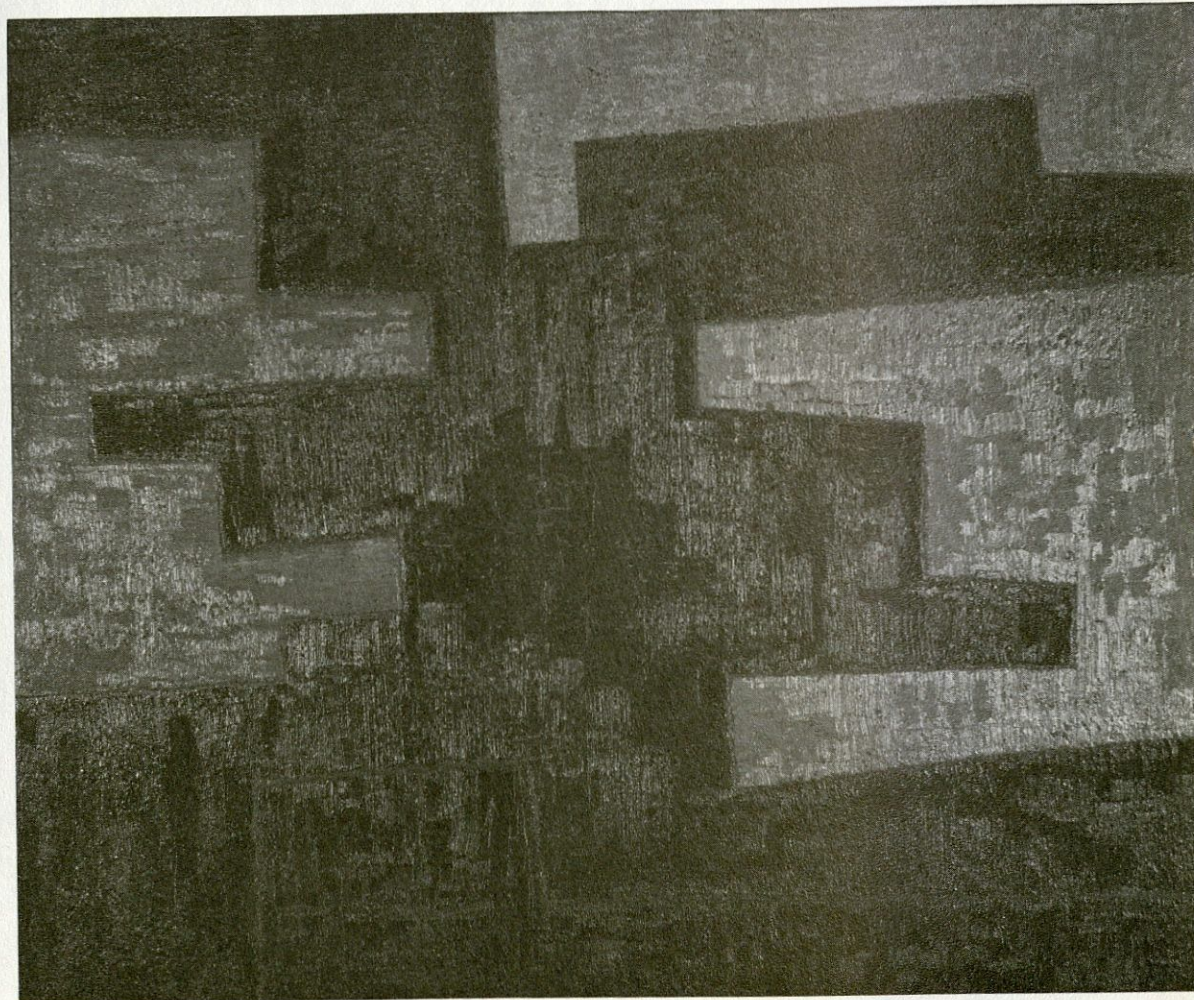
2/63 IX



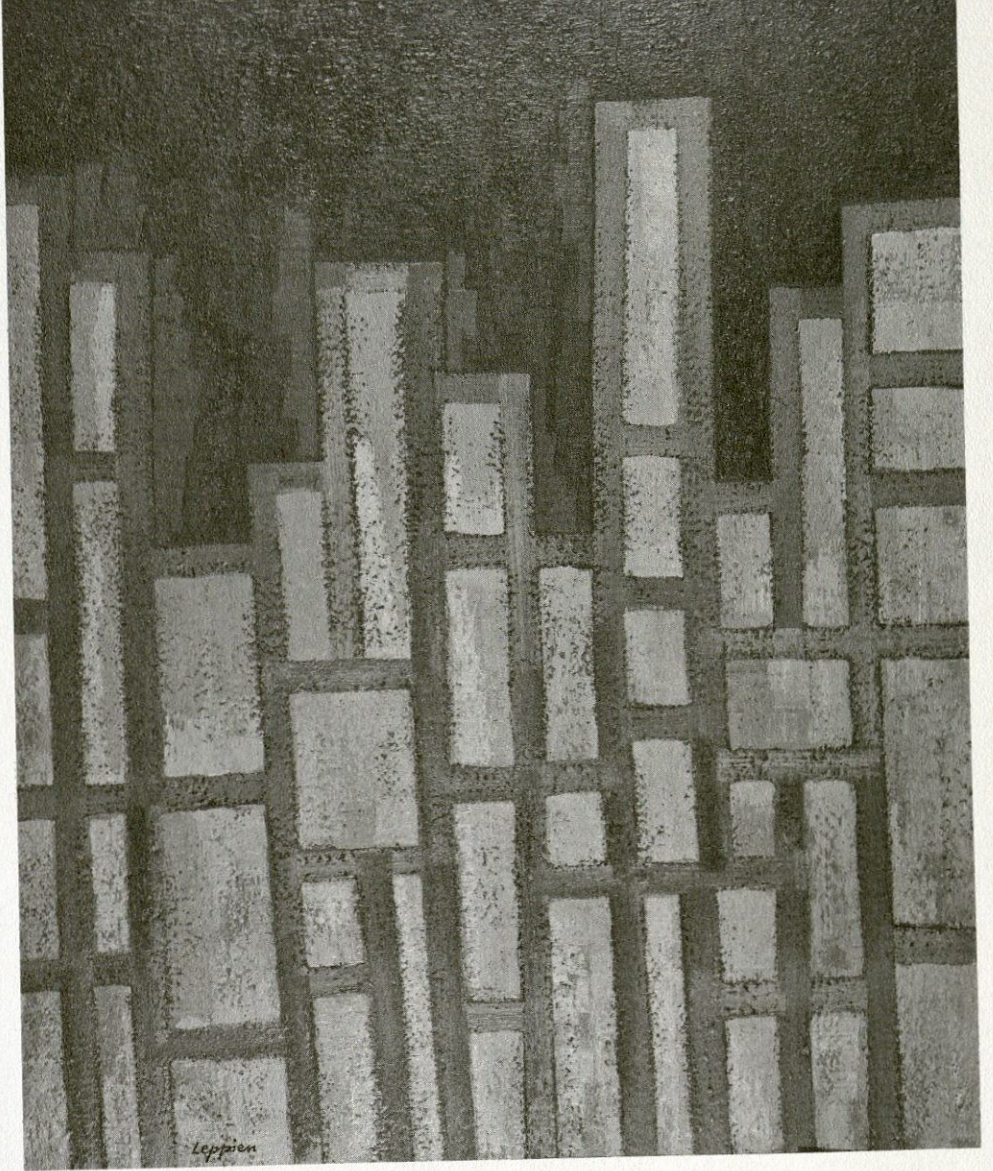
12/60 LXXXVI



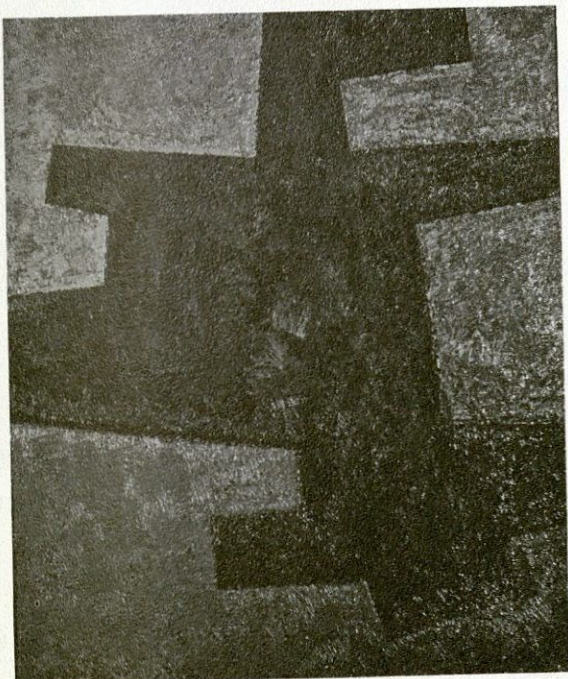
5/60 XVI



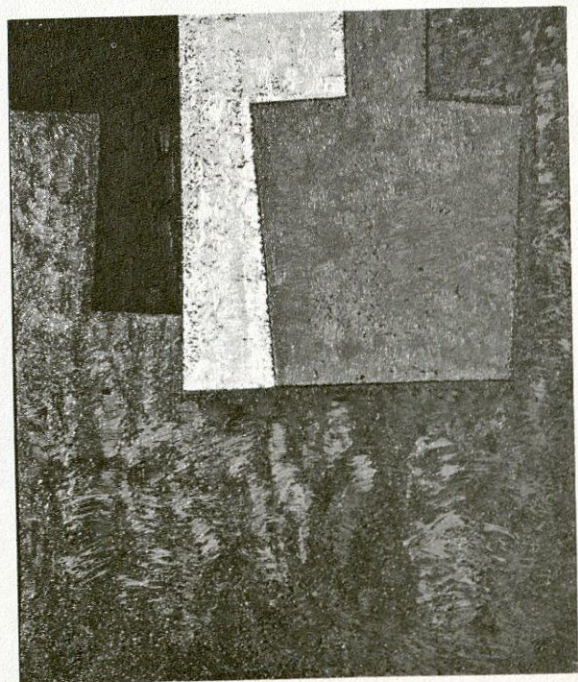
7/60 LIII



5/62 VII

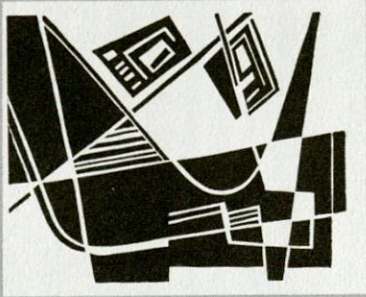


12/59 CL

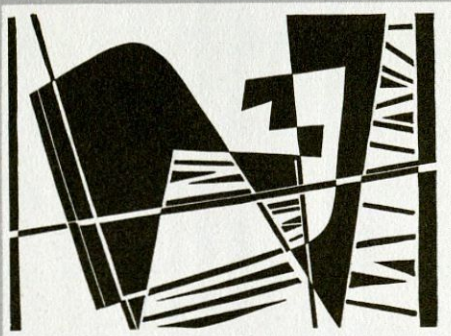


9/59 CXXXV

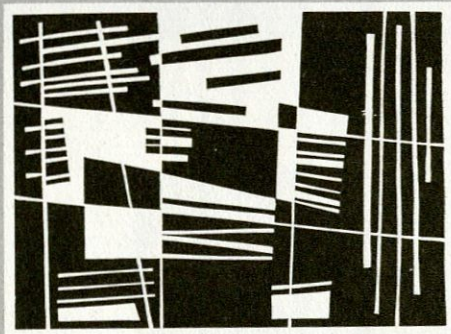
GRAPHIC WORKS



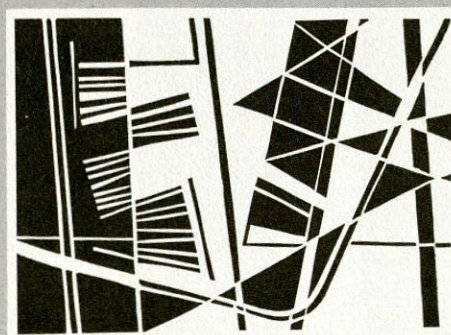
1948



1949



1949



1951

Exhibit includes 8 woodcuts, arbitrarily numbered 1 to 8, size 7 x 5 on sheet size 9 3/4 x 8 1/4, unless otherwise noted:

No. 1/1948 (5 1/2 x 4 1/4)

No. 2/1948

No. 3/1949 No. 6/1950 (3 prints)

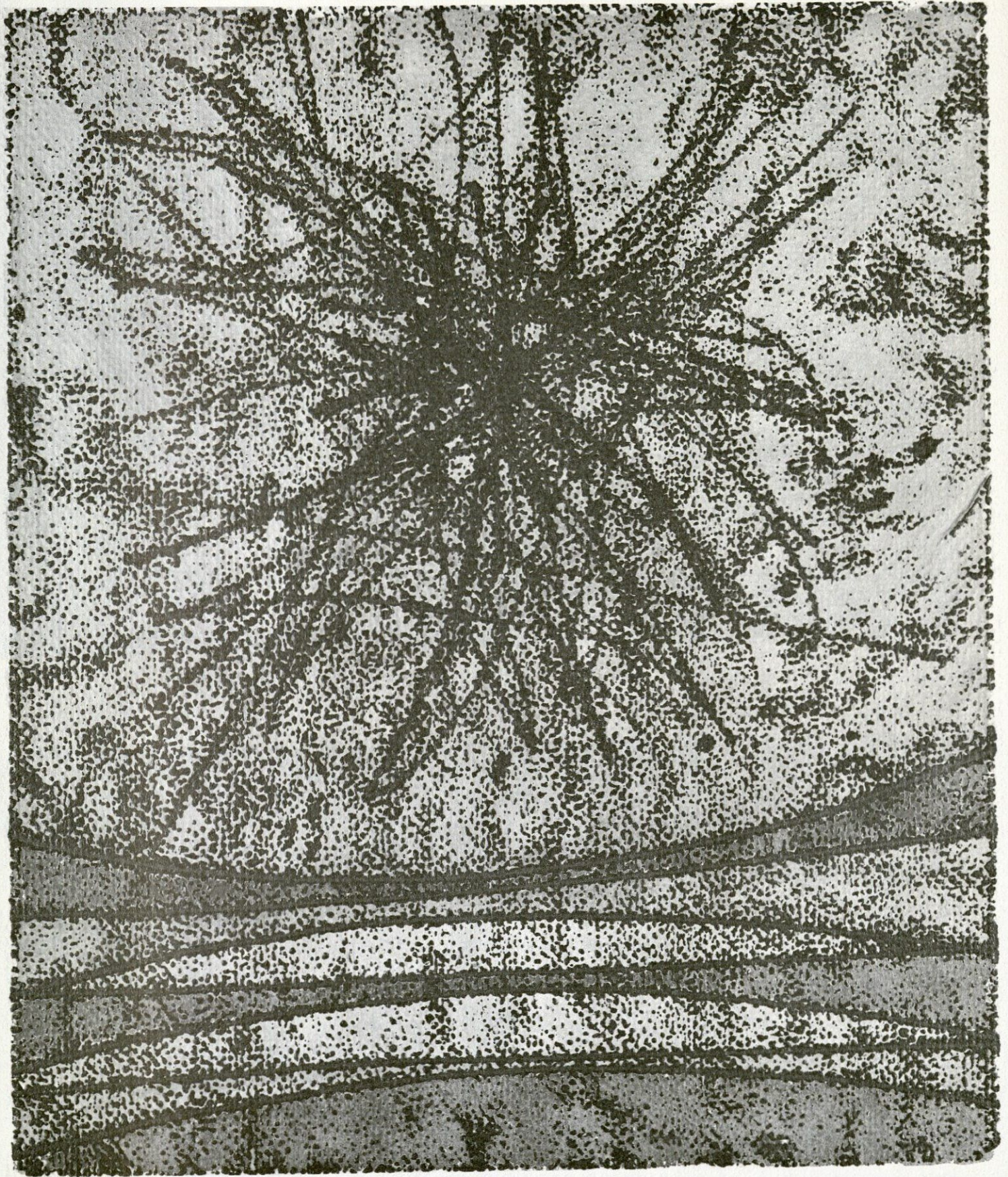
No. 4/1949 No. 7/1951 (3 prints)

No. 5/1950 No. 8/1951 (3 prints)

Portfolio, "Dix Gravures," 1952, containing ten woodcuts with watercoloring, size 6 1/4 x 8 3/4 on sheet size 9 x 11 1/2. Numbered copy 42 (Limited edition of 60 copies).

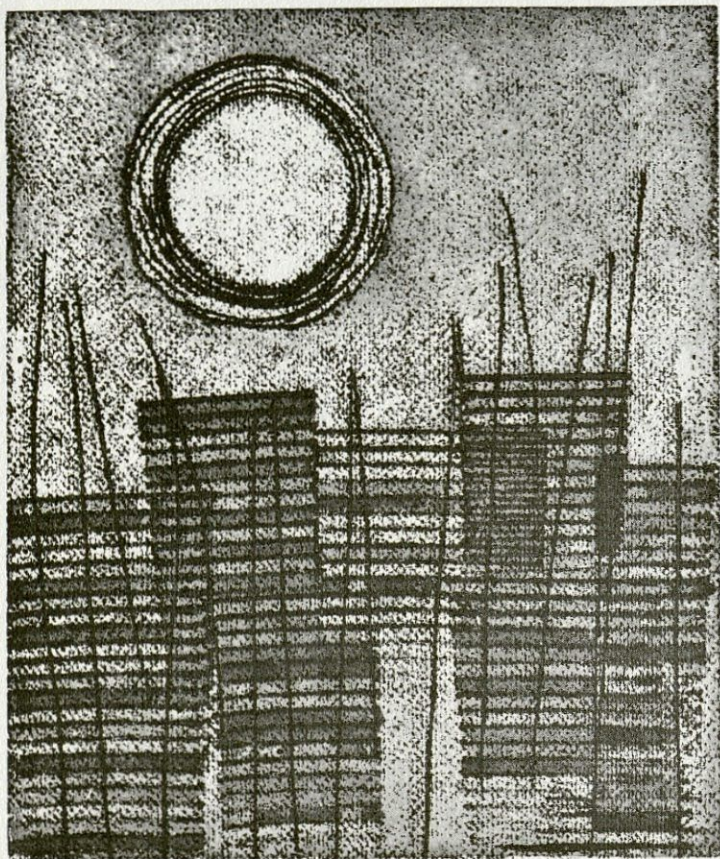


One of ten sheets from portfolio.
"DIX GRAVURES" 1952



LXXIX/60

WATER COLORS



XXXIII/63



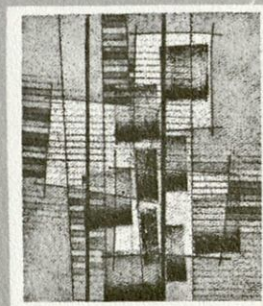
LXVIII/63



LXII/63



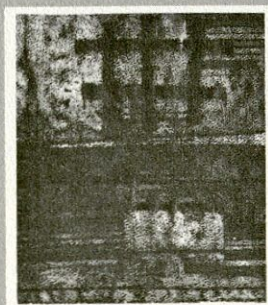
LXV/63



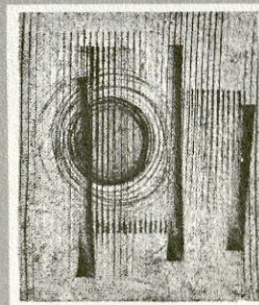
LXXI/63



CLXIX/59



CLXXI/59



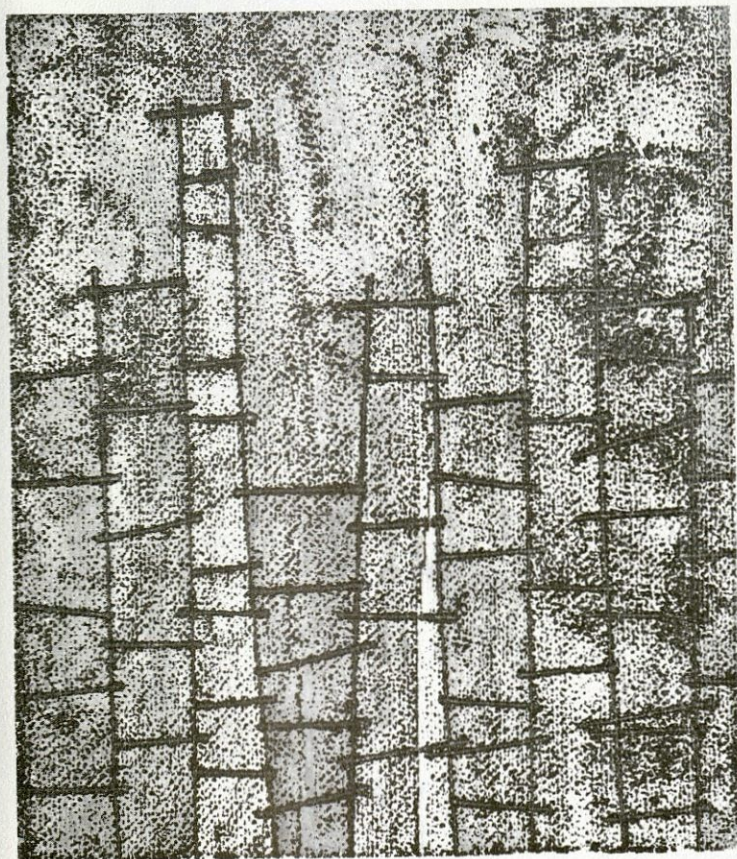
LXIII/63



LXVII/63



LXXVII/60



LXIV/63

Chance? No, there is no "chance," but certainly no "reason"! I start painting by pure improvisation. Then the painting starts living, then I'm the first astonished spectator, the observer of what the painting desires to become, trying to help the work to get born.

*Jean Leppien
in a letter of December 1963*



LXXIII/60



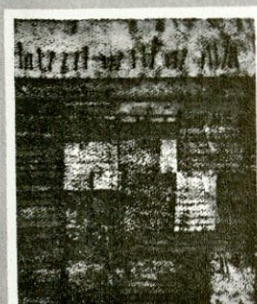
CVI/60



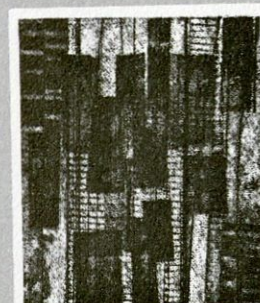
XCII/60



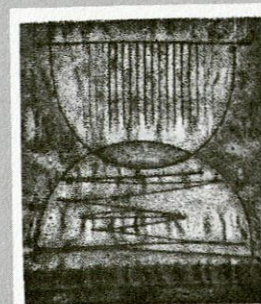
CVIII/60



CXI/60



LXX/63



CXLV/59



LXXXVII/59

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

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- Peter Lufft, "Jean Leppien," Das Kunstwerk, 3-4 (1953).
- Claude-Hélène Sibert, "Jean Leppien," Art d'aujourd'hui (February, 1954), p. 18-19.
- Michel Seuphor, "Jean Leppien," Knauers Lexikon abstrakter Kunst (Munich: 1955), p. 244.
- Denys Chevalier, "Jean Leppien," Aujourd'hui, 5 (February, 1961), p. 28.
- Denys Chevalier, "Quelques exemples d'intégration des arts et d'utilisation de nouveaux matériaux," Aujourd'hui, 6(April, 1962), p. 58f.

Reviews

- Francois Stahly, Werk, 41, sup. (February, 1954), p. 19.
- H.C., Werk, 43, sup. (July, 1956), p. 127.
- Werk, 44 (May, 1957), p. 176.
- H.C., Werk, 45, sup. (August, 1958), p. 161.
- Arts (August, 1948), p. 4.
- Martica Sawin, Arts, 33 (June, 1959), p. 61.
- H. L. F., Art News, 58 (June, 1959), p. 22.
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- Denys Chevalier, Aujourd'hui, 5 (December, 1960), p. 53.
- Herta Wescher, Das Kunstwerk, 14 (April, 1961), p. 77.
- R.J., Das Kunstwerk, 15 (July, 1961), p. 66.

Catalogue Introductions

- Firenze: Galleria d'arte contemporanea, 1952 (Introduction by Charles Estienne).
- Zürich: Galerie Palette, 1956 (Introduction by Dr. Herta Wescher).
- Milano: Galleria Bergamini, 1958 (Introduction by Giampiero Giani).
- Clermont-Ferrand: Galerie A, 1959 (Introduction by Frank Elgar).
- Lausanne: Galerie Kaspar, 1959 (Introduction by George Boudaille).
- Paris: Galerie la roue, 1961 (Introduction by George Boudaille).
- Witten: Märkisches Museum, 1961 (Introduction by Dr. Wilhelm Nettmann).
- Braunschweig: Kunstverein, 1961 (Notes by Peter Lufft).
- Kaiserslautern: Pfälzische Landesgewerbeanstalt, 1961 (Introduction by C. M. Kiesel).

REPRESENTATION IN MUSEUMS

Paris	(1)	Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
Paris	(2)	Musée National d'Art Moderne
Witten	(2)	Märkisches Museum
Zürich	(1)	Kunstgewerbemuseum
Kaiserslautern	(2)	Pfalzmuseum
Oldenburg	(2)	Landesmuseum
Liege	(1)	Musée des Beaux Arts
Wolfsburg	(2)	Musée Municipal
Saint Etienne	(2)	Musée Municipal

ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS

Paris	1949	Galerie Colette Allendy
Braunschweig	1951	Galerie Otto Ralfs
Paris		Galerie Colette Allendy
Wuppertal	1952	Galerie Das Studio
Berlin		Galerie Springer
Milano		Galleria Bergamini
Firenze		Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea
Paris	1953	Galerie Colette Allendy
Endicott, New York	1954	Berryman Galleries
Bruxelles		Palais des Beaux Arts
Cuxhaven		Galerie Rauschenplatt
Milano		Galleria Bergamini
Buenos Aires	1955	Galerie Krayd
Alger		Galeria de l'Empire
Nice		Galerie Bernard Marange
Zürich	1956	Galerie Palette
Bern		Galerie 33
Lausanne		Galerie Entr'Acte
Clermont Ferrand	1957	Galerie "A"
Paris		Galerie Dina Vierny
La Chaux De Fonds	1958	Galerie Numaga
Zürich		Galerie Palette
Milano		Galleria Bergamini
Clermont Ferrand	1959	Galerie "A"
Lausanne		Galerie Kasper
Basel		Galerie Bettie Thommen
New York	1960	"Artistes de France" Gallery
Oldenburg		Landesmuseum
Liege		A. P. I. A. W.
Ulm	1961	Musée Municipal
Paris		Galerie La Roue
Witten		Märkisches Museum
Kaiserslautern		Pfalzmuseum
Hagen		Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum
Braunschweig		Kunstverein, Haus Salve Hospes
Zürich		Galerie Palette
Aachen		Suermondt Museum
Darmstadt	1962	Archiv des Bauhauses
Verviers	1963	Musée Municipal
Auvernier		Galerie Numaga

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Paris	1947	Galerie des Deux Iles
Paris		Galerie Colette Allendy
Paris	1948	Galerie Denise René
Paris		Galerie Colette Allendy
Paris	1949	Galerie Lydia Conti
Paris		Galerie Denise René
Paris		Galerie Colette Allendy
Mannheim	1950	Galerie Egon Guenther
Witten	1951	Märkisches Museum
Nice		Art Club
Braunschweig		Galerie Otto Ralfs
Paris	1952	La Hune (Témoignages pour l'Art Abstrait)
Bergen		Musée de Bergen
Torino		Peinture Française
Cannes		Palais du Festival
Bruxelles		Palais des Beaux Arts (Témoignages)
Speyer		Pfälzische Sezession
Aix en Provence		Exposition Internationale
Paris		Galerie Colette Allendy
Amsterdam	1953	Stedelijk Museum (Collection Domnick)
Firenze		Galleria Contemporanea (Collection Chenu)
Wuppertal		Galleria Das Studio
Roma		Musée d'Art Moderne
Milano		Palazzo Reale
Aix en Provence		Festival
Saarbrücken	1954	Kandinsky et six peintres de Paris
Darmstadt		Museum (Collection Stroehrer)
Biot		Groupe Espace
Paris		Denise René (Sérigraphies d'Art d'Aujourd'hui)
Paris		Galerie Arnaud (Collages)
Rouen	1955	Musée: Peinture 1955
Saarbrücken		Musée: Peinture 1955
Milano		Galleria del Fiore (Tapisseries)
Toulon	1956	Musée
La Chaux de Fonds		Galerie Numaga
Nice		Galerie Mararasso (Art Club)
Nantes	1957	Musée (sélection des Réalités Nouvelles)
Zürich		Galerie Palette
Clermont Ferrand		Galerie "A"
Kaiserslautern	1958	Musée (peintres d'origine allemande, école de Paris)
Charleroi		Peinture du XXIe siècle
Valdarno		Premio Marzotto
Lausanne		Prix suisse de la peinture abstraite
Vence		Galerie des Mages
Lausanne		Galerie Kasper, petits formats
München	1959	Haus der Kunst, Premio Marzotto
Paris		Musée d'Art Moderne, Premio Marzotto
Lausanne		Galerie Kasper
Helsinki		Architektur og Billedkunst
Lausanne		Prix Suisse de la peinture abstraite
Oslo		Architektur og Billedkunst
Salzburg		Internationale Grafik
Macerata	1960	Pittori d'oggi
Paris		Galerie la Roue
Charleville		"Les Contemporains"
Reims		"Les Contemporains"
Paris		Galerie Allendy, Hommage a Colette Allendy
Paris		Galerie du Pont Royal
Kopenhagen	1961	Galerie Hybler
Antibes		Salon des Beaux Arts
Paris	1962	Galerie La Roue
Vallauris		Galerie Cavalero
Nice		Expo. inaugurale Galerie "A"
Paris		Galerie Orient-Occident

