

David Jacobs

DAVID JACOBS

Born 1932 in Niagara Falls, New York.
Studied in California, obtaining his M.A. at
Los Angeles State College. Presently Acting
Chairman, Fine Arts Department, Hofstra
University, New York.

Notebook

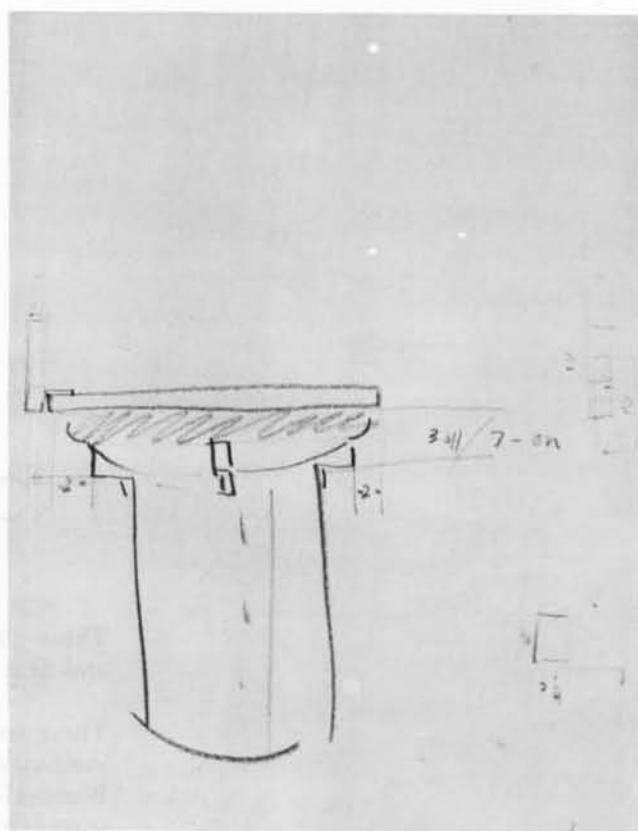
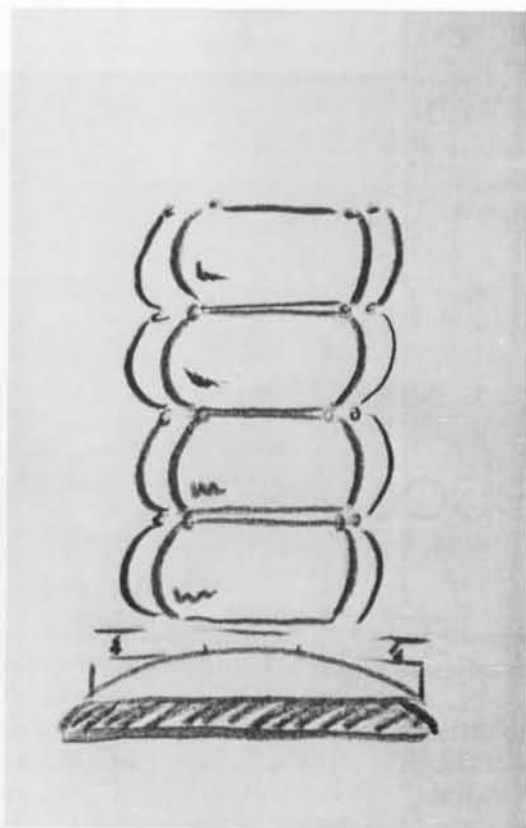
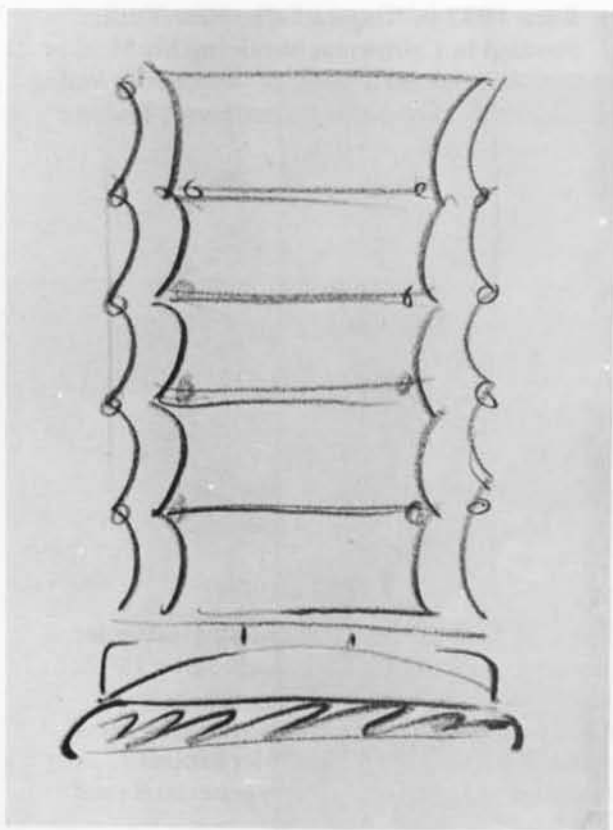
These photographs and pages from my sketchbooks are presented more or less in chronological order and deal with inflating sound sculptures and sound performance/exhibitions I have made since 1967.

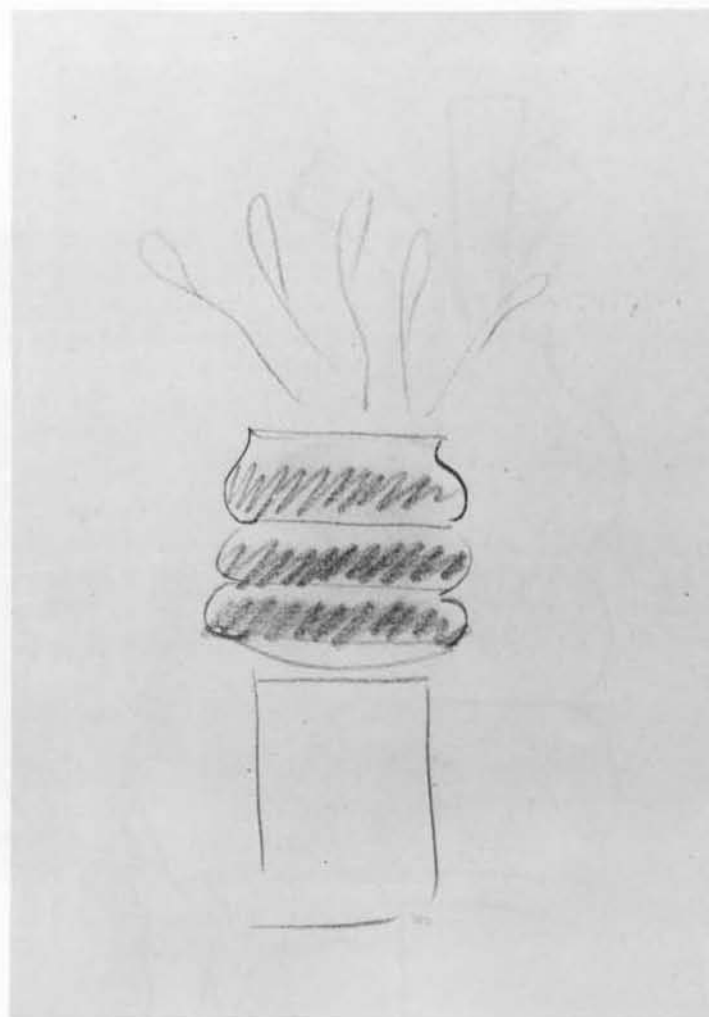
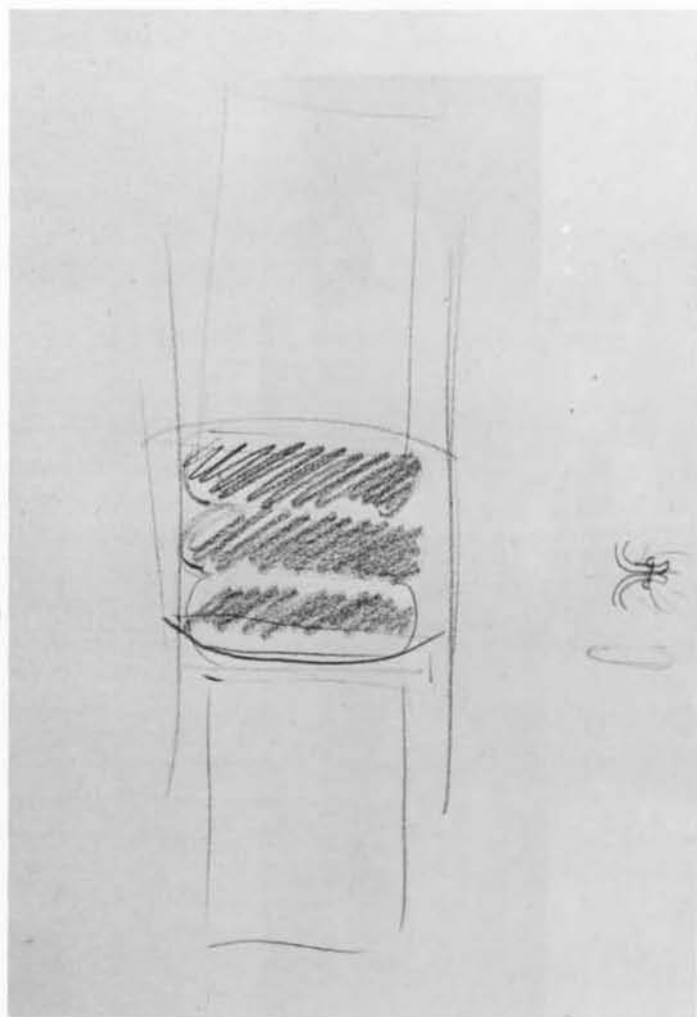
There are two distinct and quite different groups of sound sculptures. The first group was presented variously under the titles "The Wah Chang Box Works Assyrian Air Fair," "Mothers Mechanical Wonderful Wah Wah," "Wonderful Wah Wah," etc., and consisted of sculptures which generated reed sounds and in some cases simple escaping air and motor sounds.

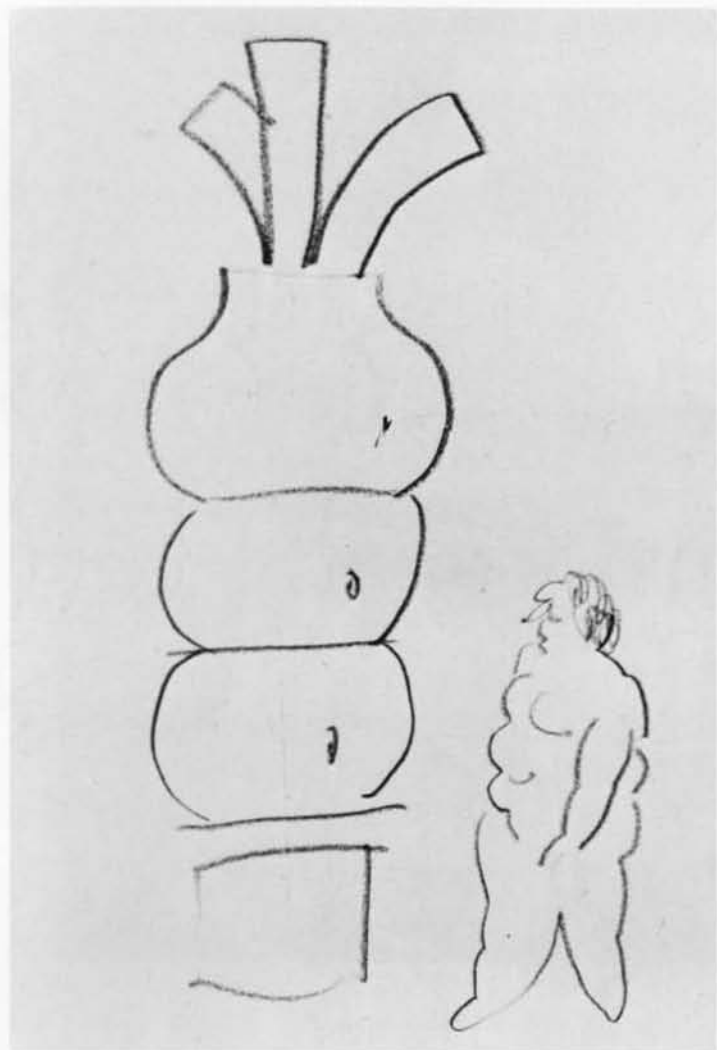
The second group dating from late in 1969 and still being added to is called "Wah Wah" (being the name of each piece as well as the group as well as the performance) and consists of sculptures generating excited columns of air. The more mysterious airy sounds of the Wah Wah seem to defy identification and placement hovering near your ear or in your head or just past you beckoning you to a place of privilege.

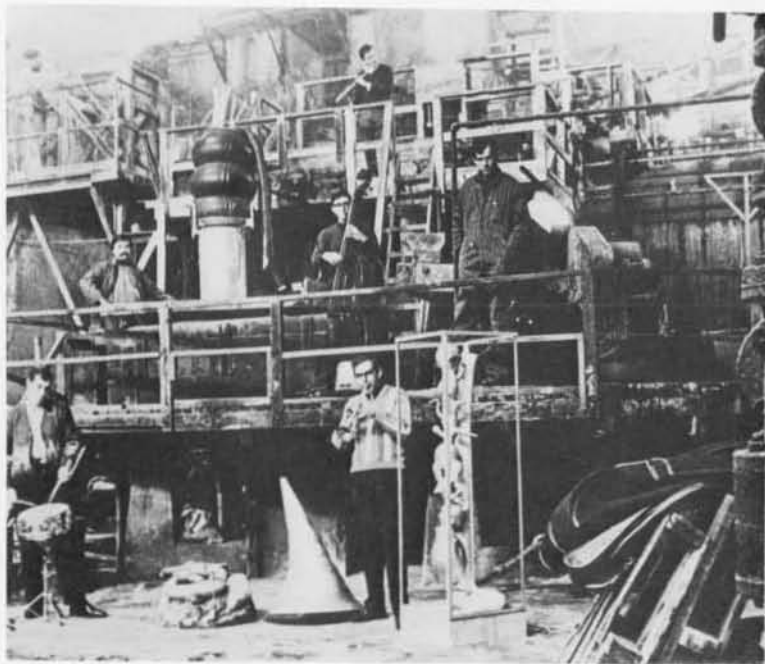
Sound is an integral part of my sculpture at this time, shaping space at least as effectively as any visual elements.

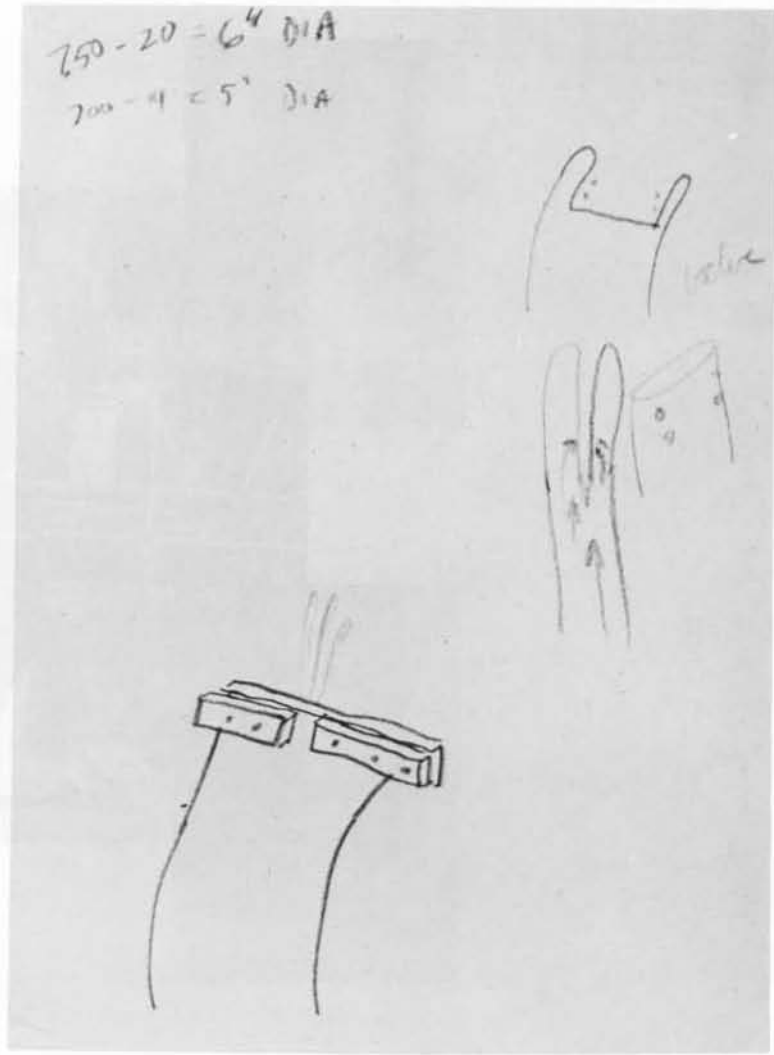
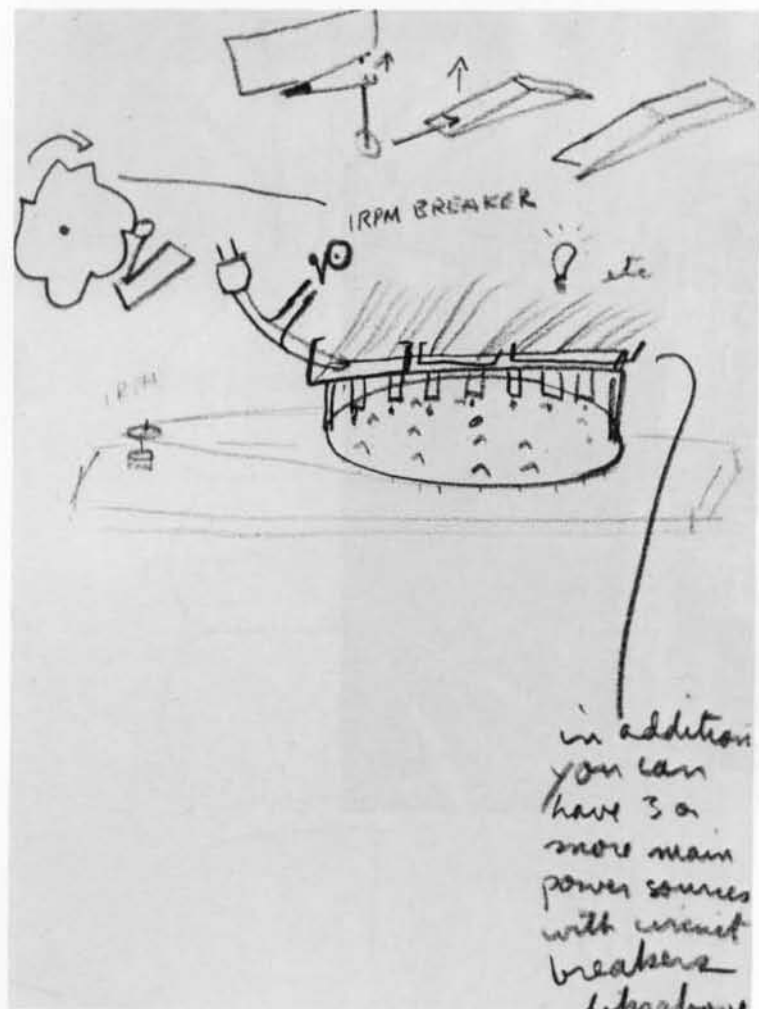
A commentary follows on pages 63-67.

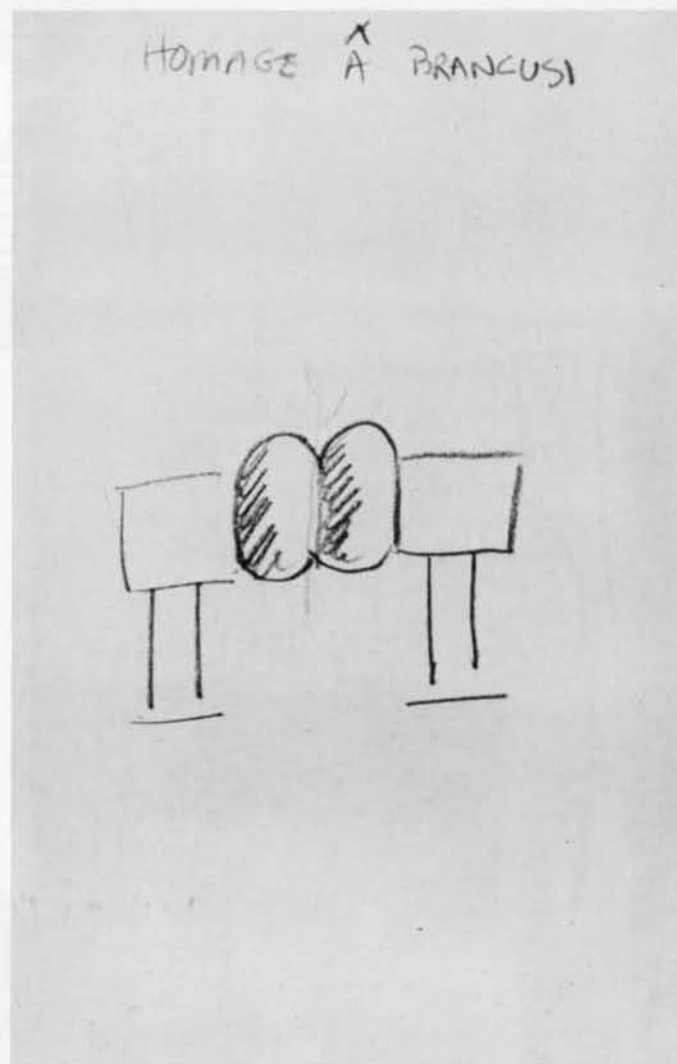
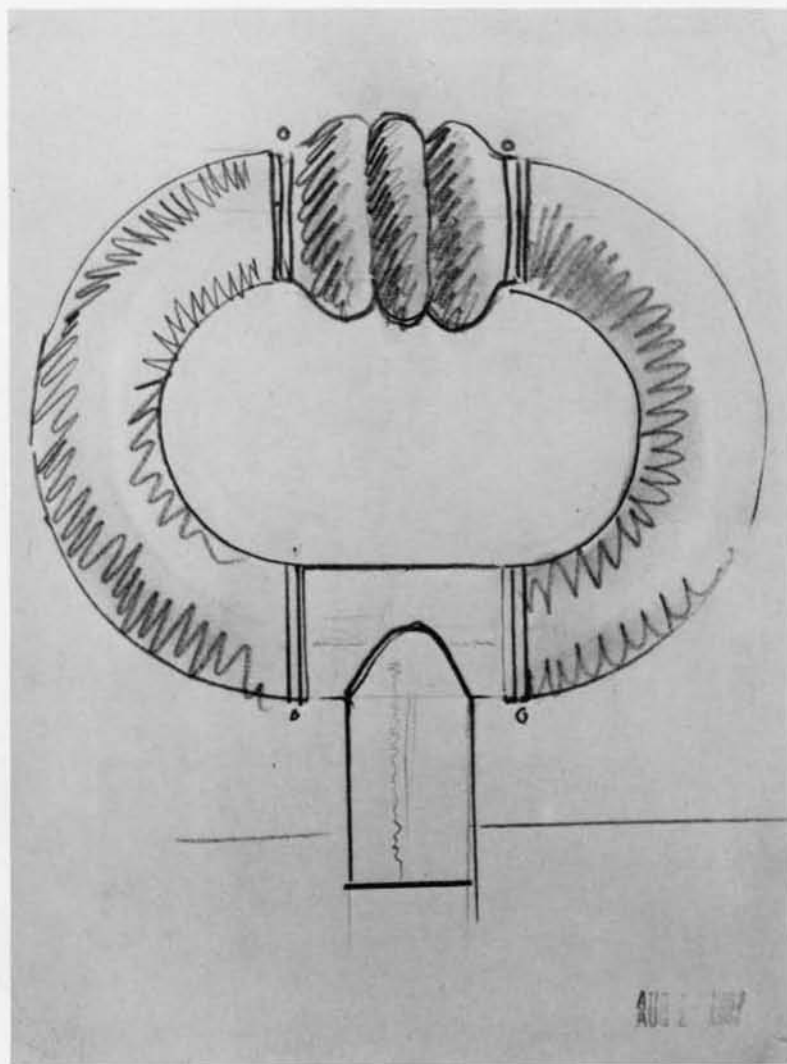


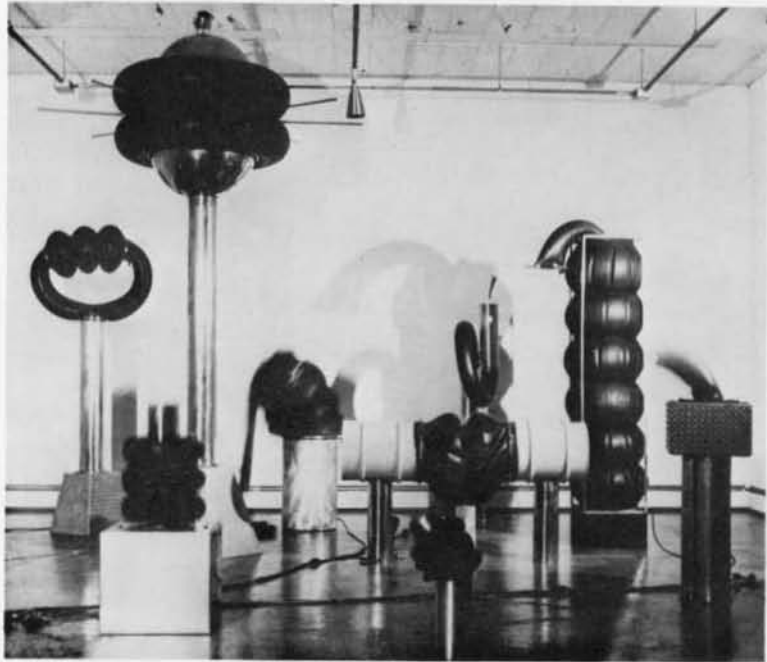
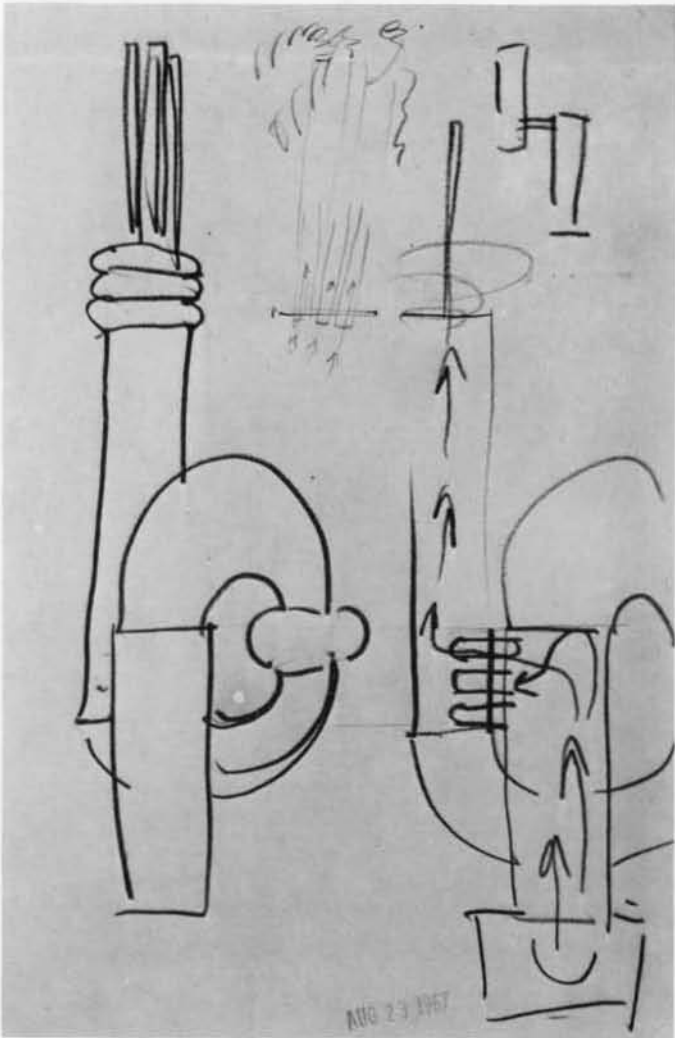






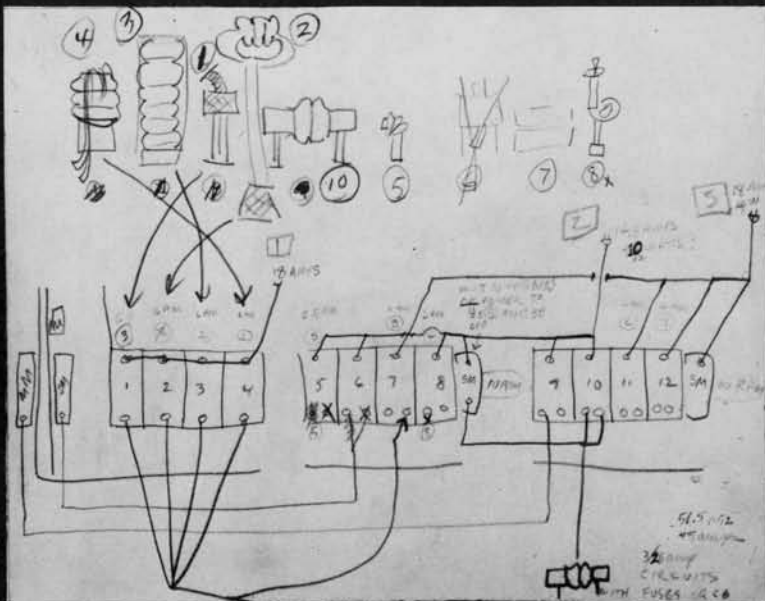






華昌

DAVID
JACOBS
WAH CHANG
BOX WORKS
63 HERB HILL
RD GLEN COVE
NEW YORK 11547
CODE OR 6-1313
516 OR 6-8809

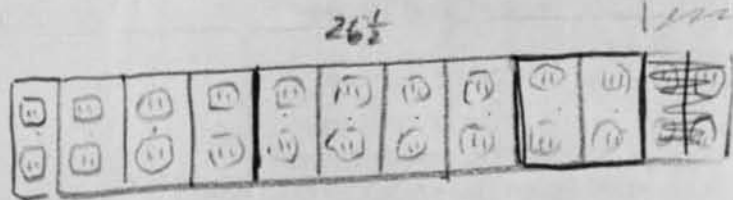
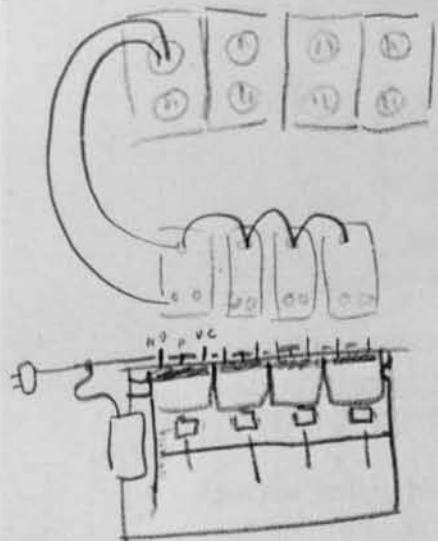


You are invited to the
"WAH CHANG BOX WORKS
ASSYRIAN AIR FAIR, BABY"

Being a group of performing, singing,
breathing, hard and soft things,
by David Jacobs

At the studio of
Allan D'Arcangelo
127 Columbus Avenue
at 66 Street (opposite Lincoln Center)
Time: 9:30 P.M.

DEC 3 1967

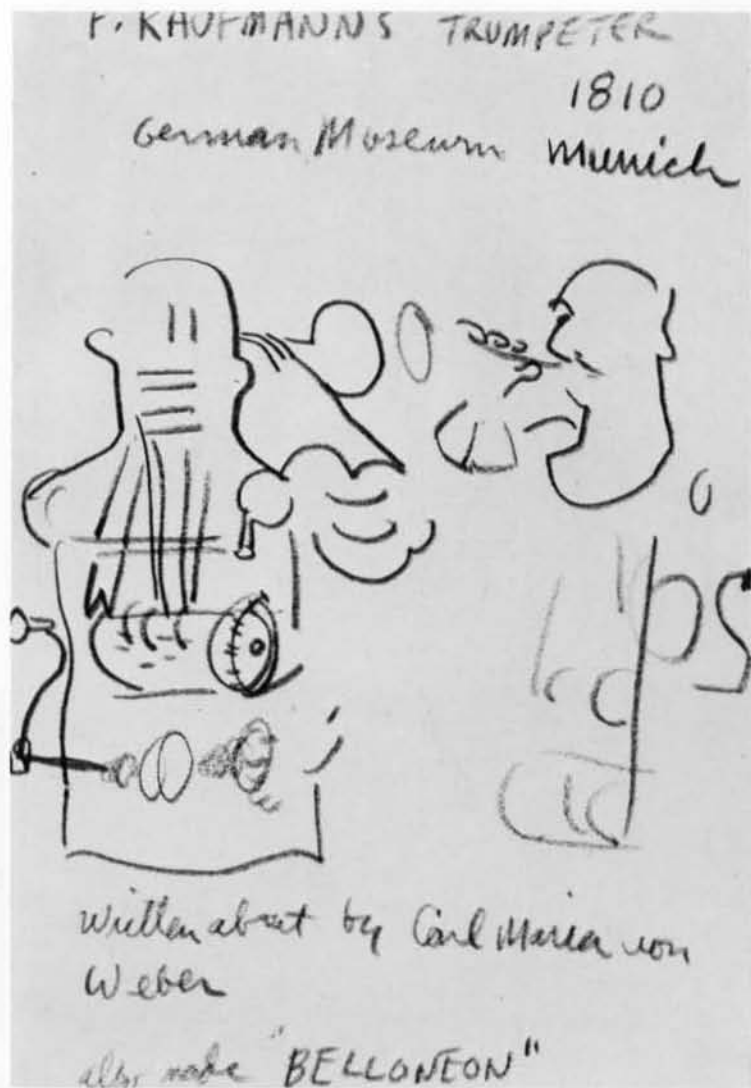
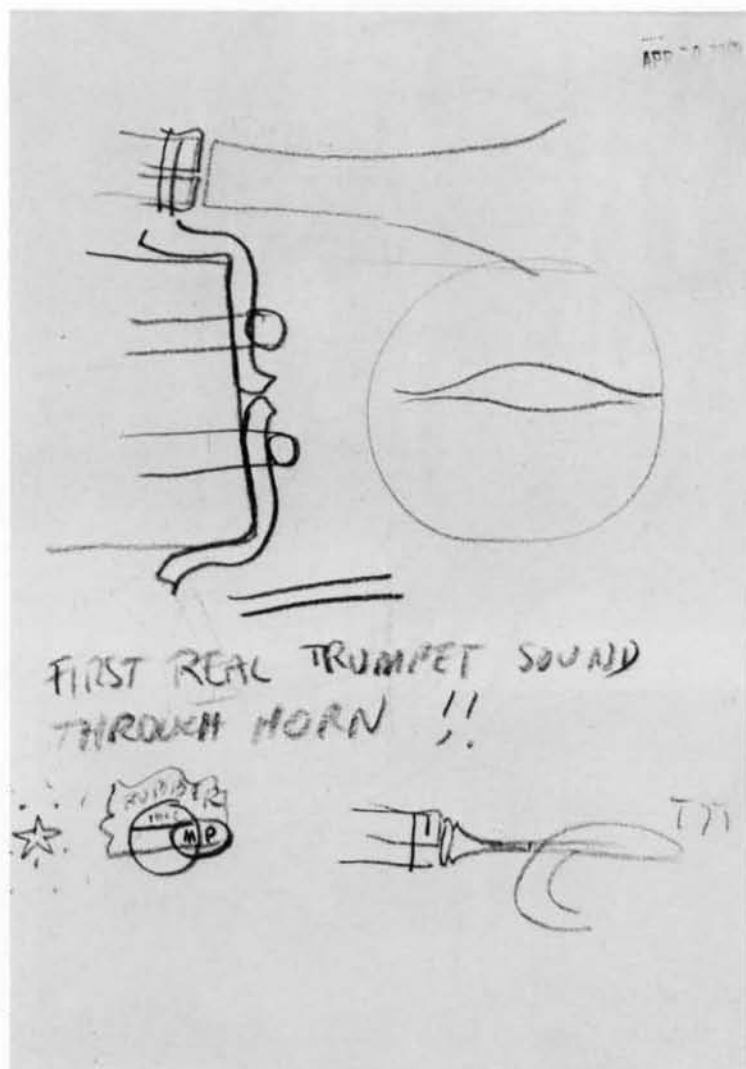


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 550
 15

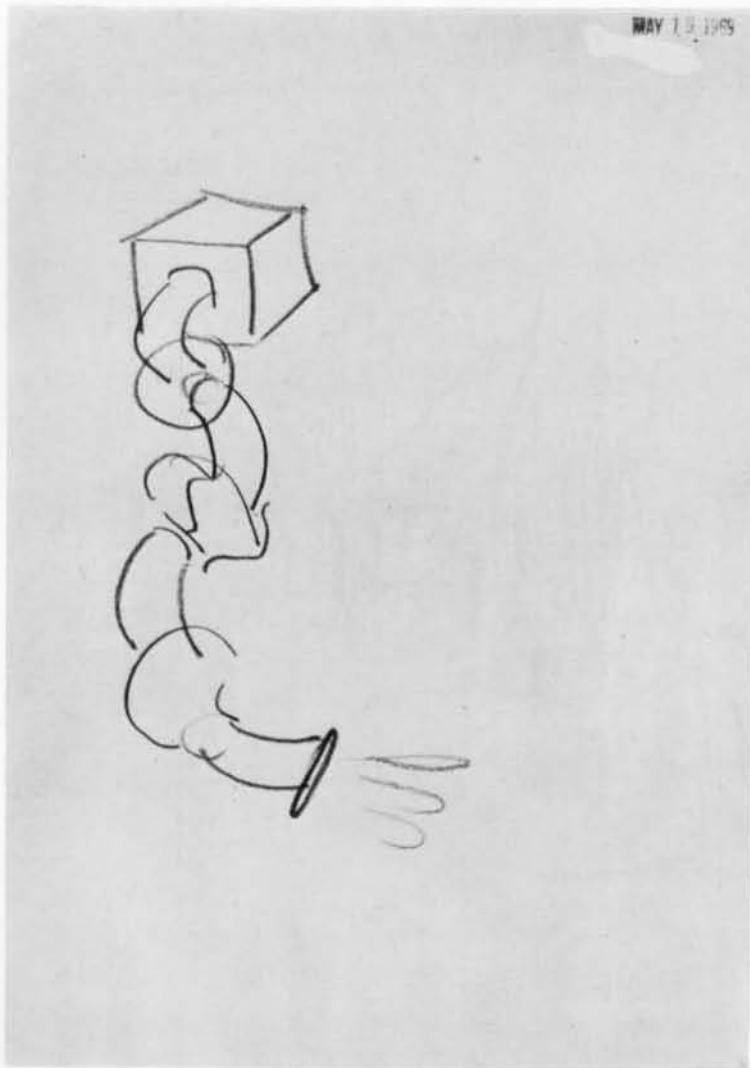
AUG 13 1967

YOU HAVE WHAT YOU
 CALL YOUR "HOPPER"
 AND YOU HAVE YOUR
 "CITOPPER"

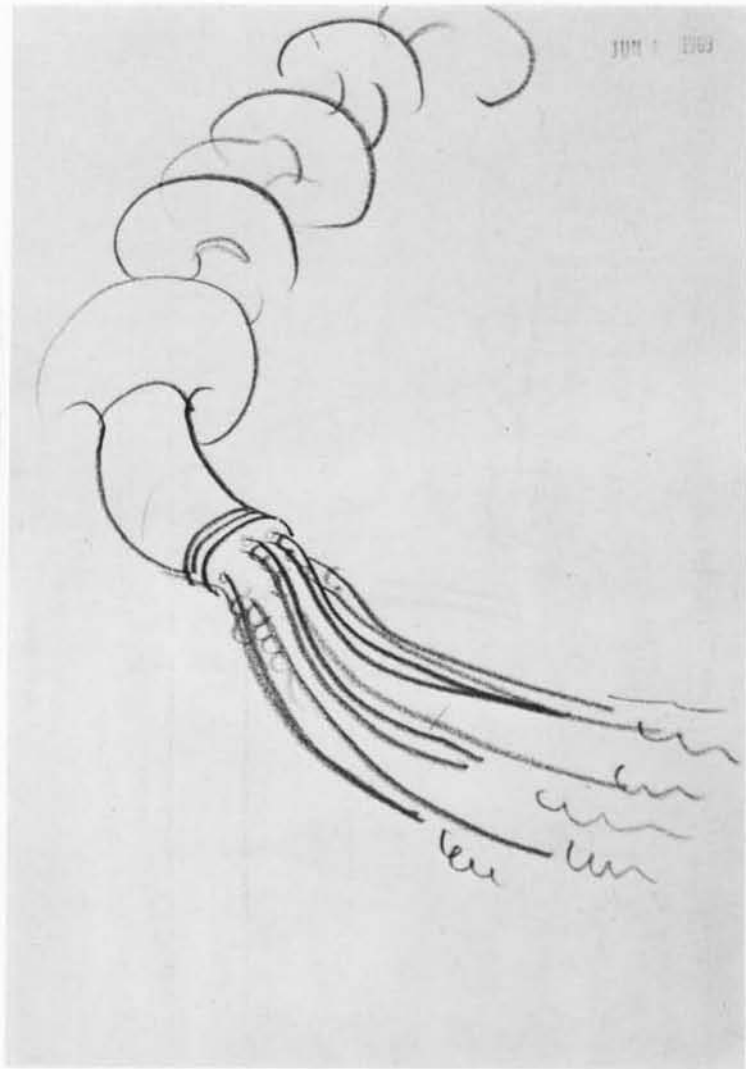
MOTHER RUBBER FATHER FACTORY
 HER RUBBER FATHER FACT
 RUBBERFAT HER FACTORY
 HER MOTHER FAT HER FACTORY
 MOTHER RUBBER FACTORY
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 MOTHER RUBBER FAT ACT
 MOTHER RUBBER FATHER ACT
 MOTHER RUBBER HER ACT



MAY 13 1965

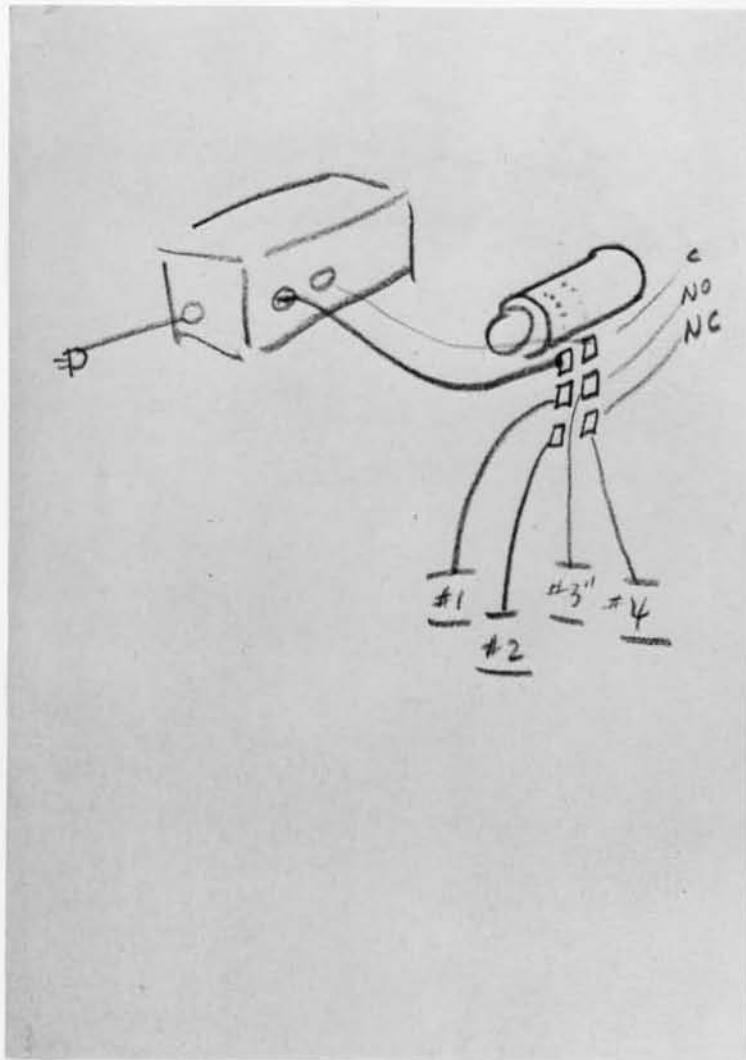
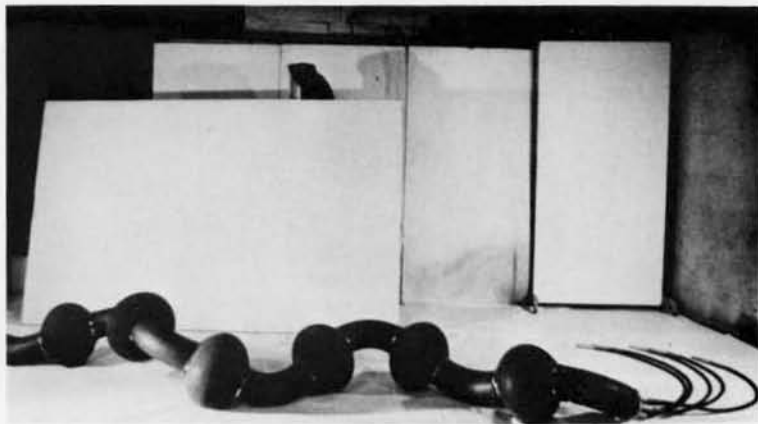


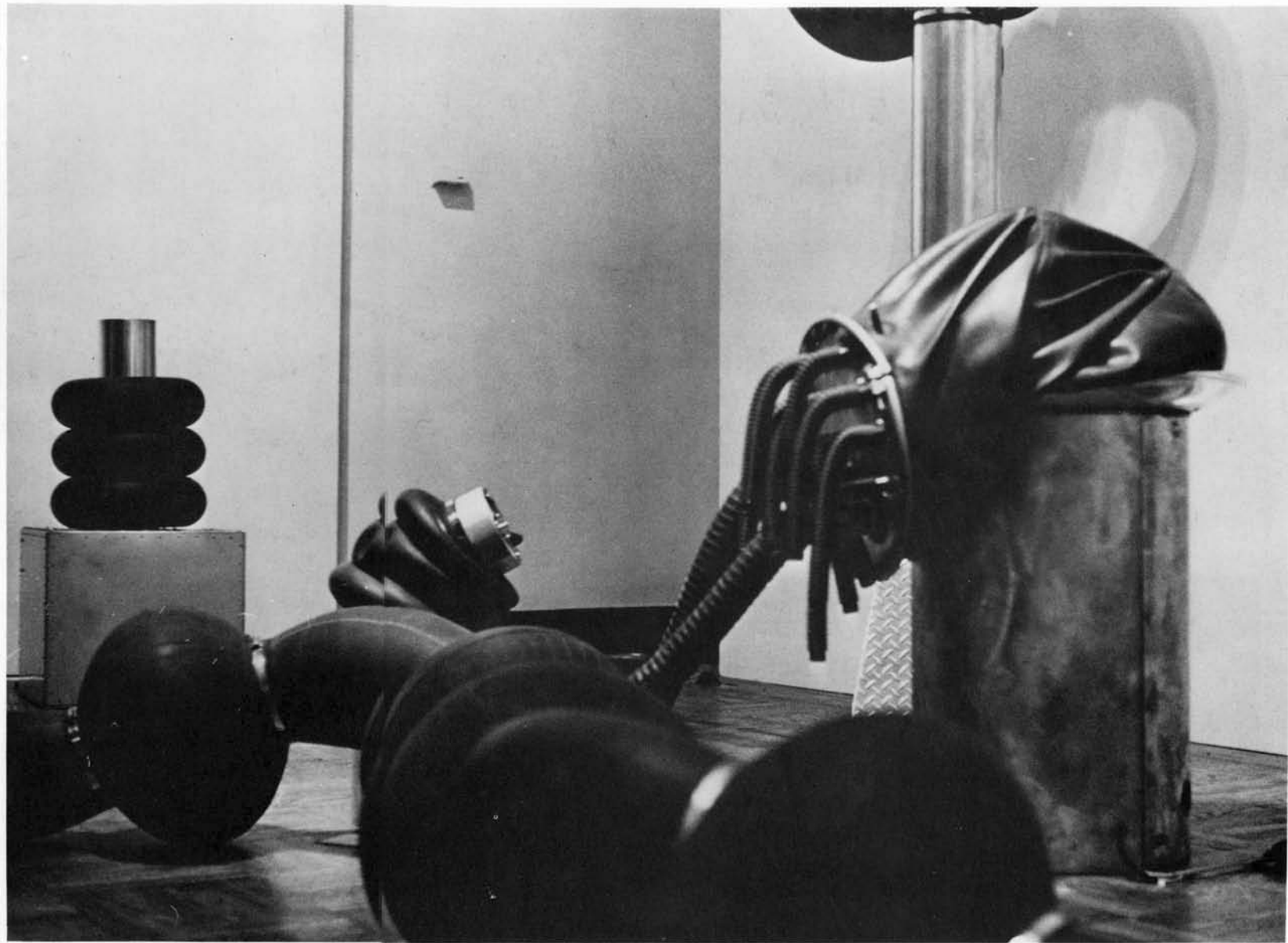
JUN 1 1963

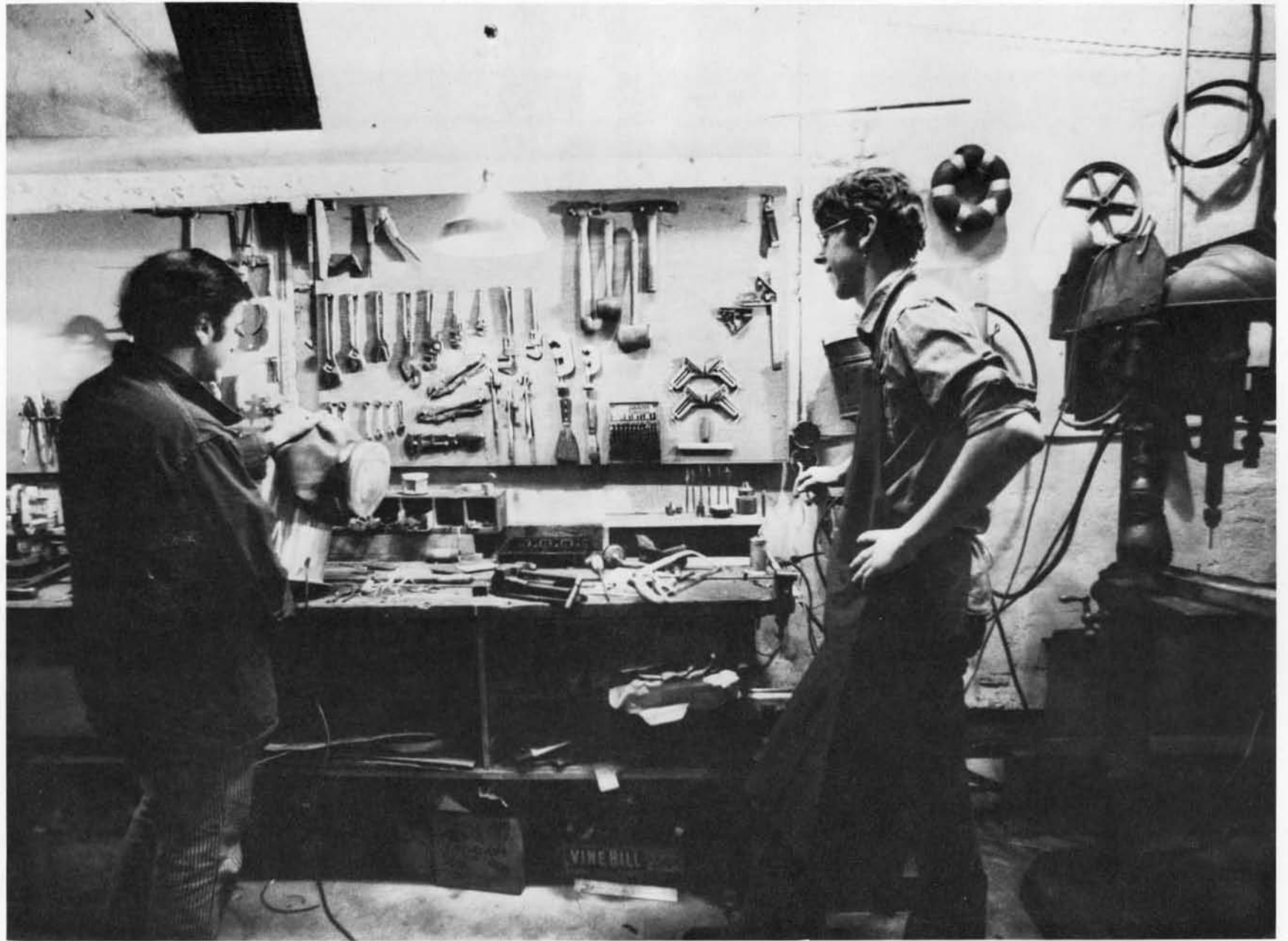


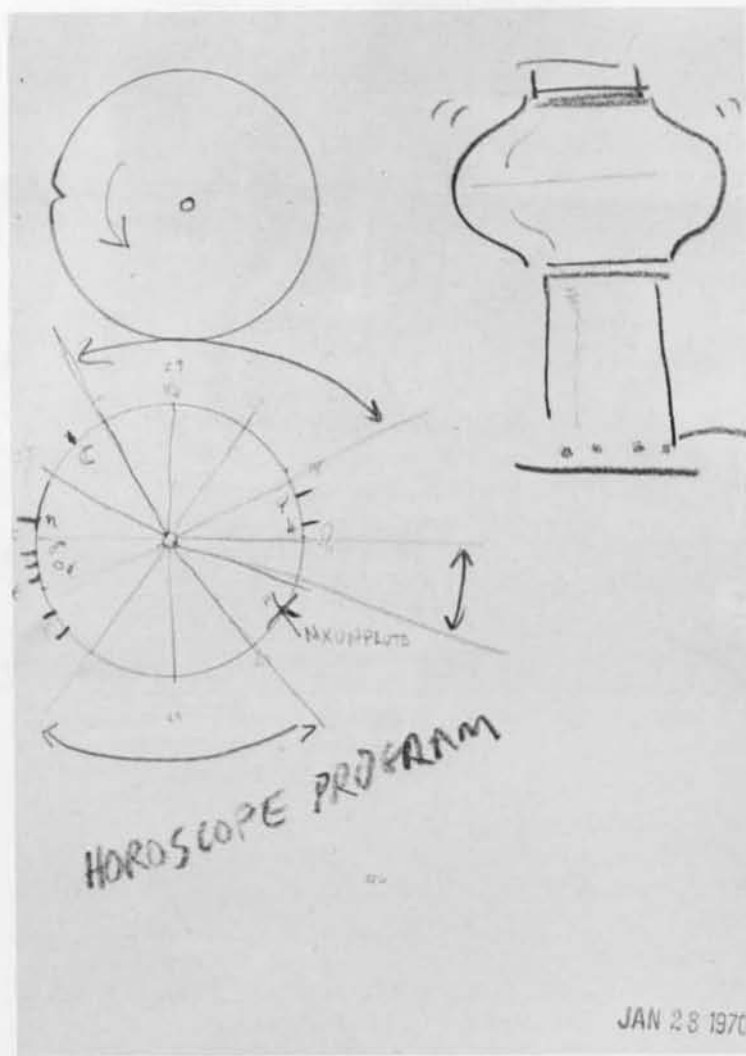
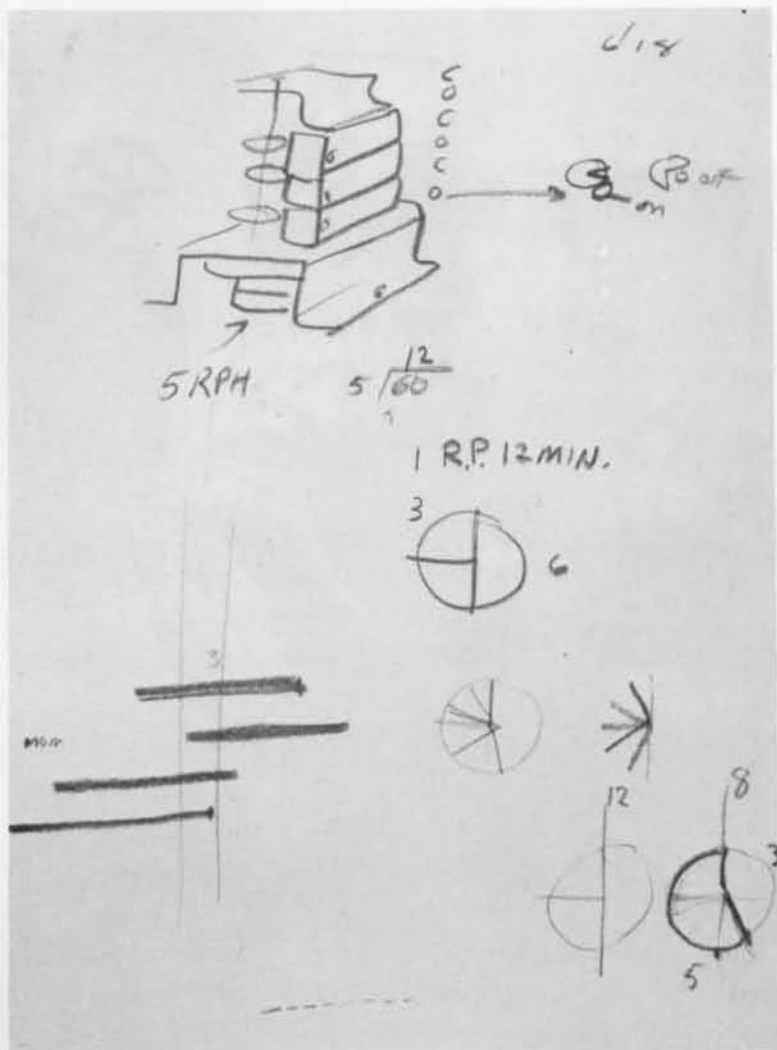
WINKELS COMBINUM
was calculated to play
14, 513, 461, 557, 74, 527, 824
variations; if each lasted
5 min. — 138 trillion yrs.
before all possible combos
exhausted!

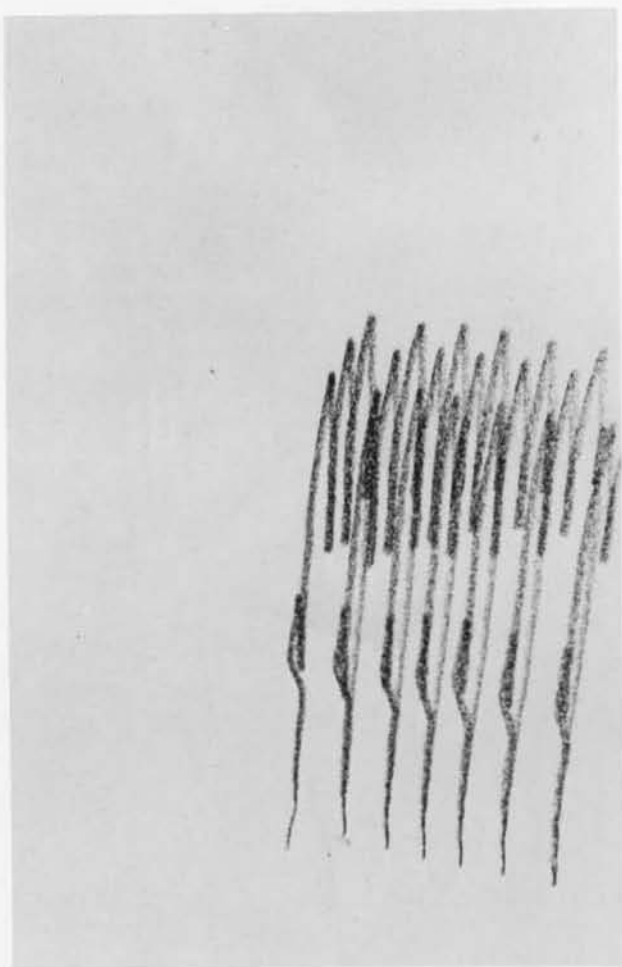
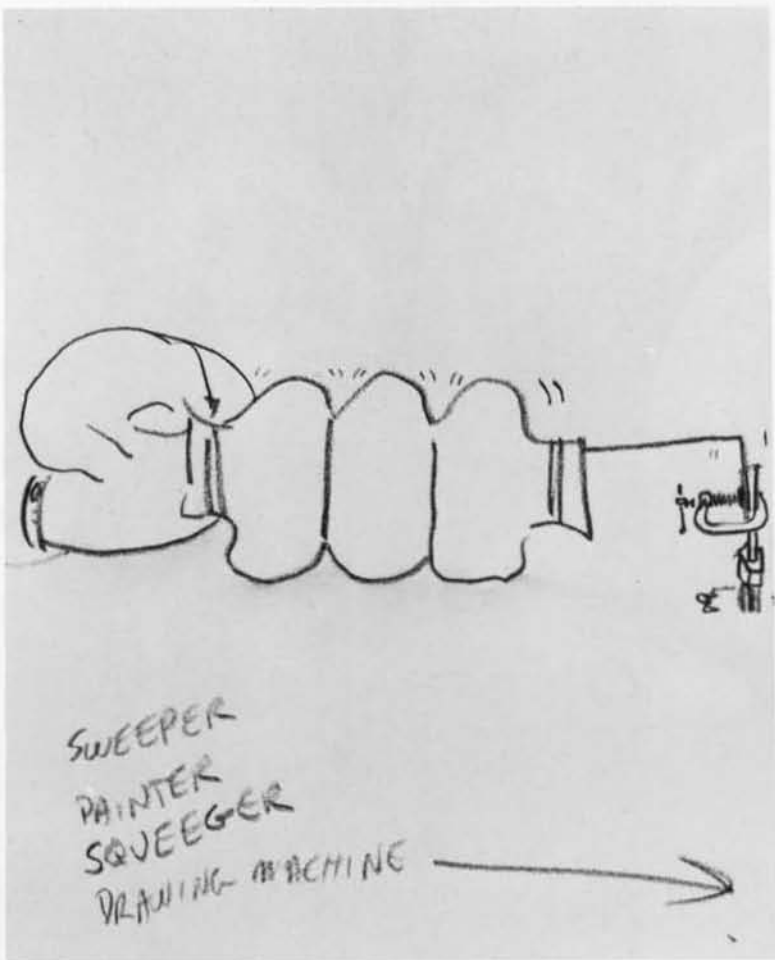
Royal Conservatory
Brussels

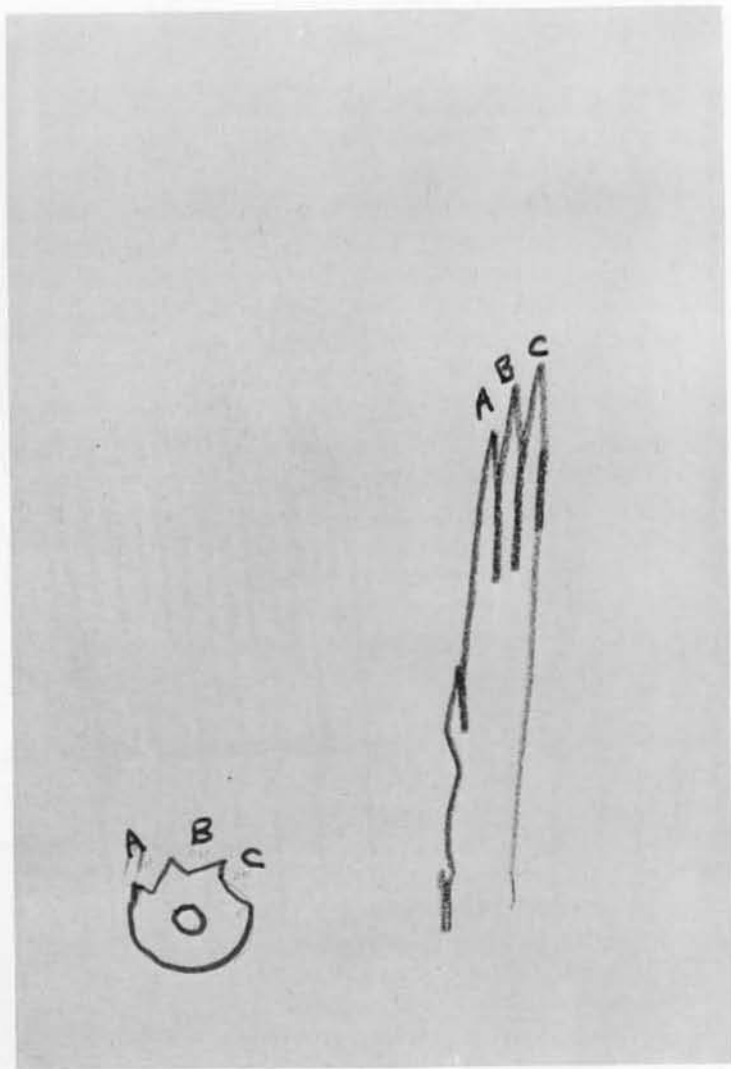












- Clothes
- Ornell
- Sculpture House

FEB 6 1970

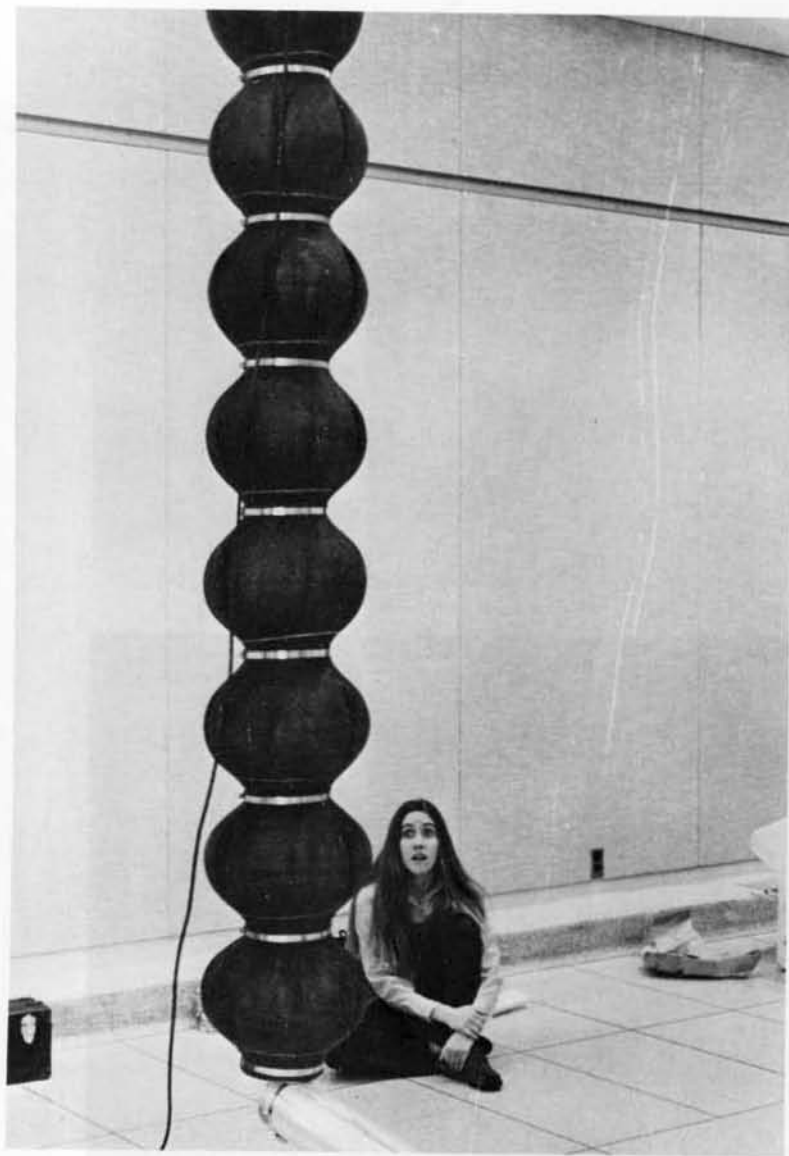
- Pug called will come at 3ish
- Jon H. will call if he can come

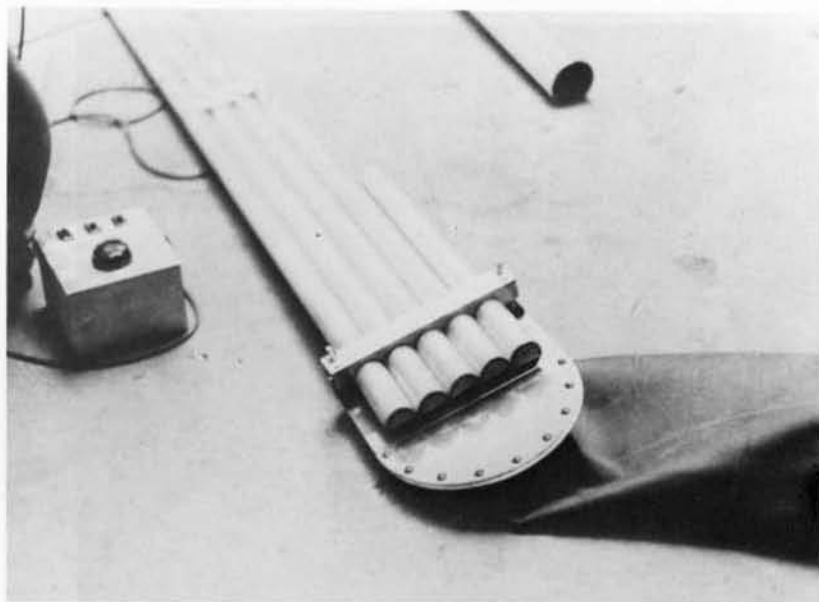


CHRISTOPHER
WINTER
PUGLIESE'S
FIRST DRAWING
AGE 14 MONTHS





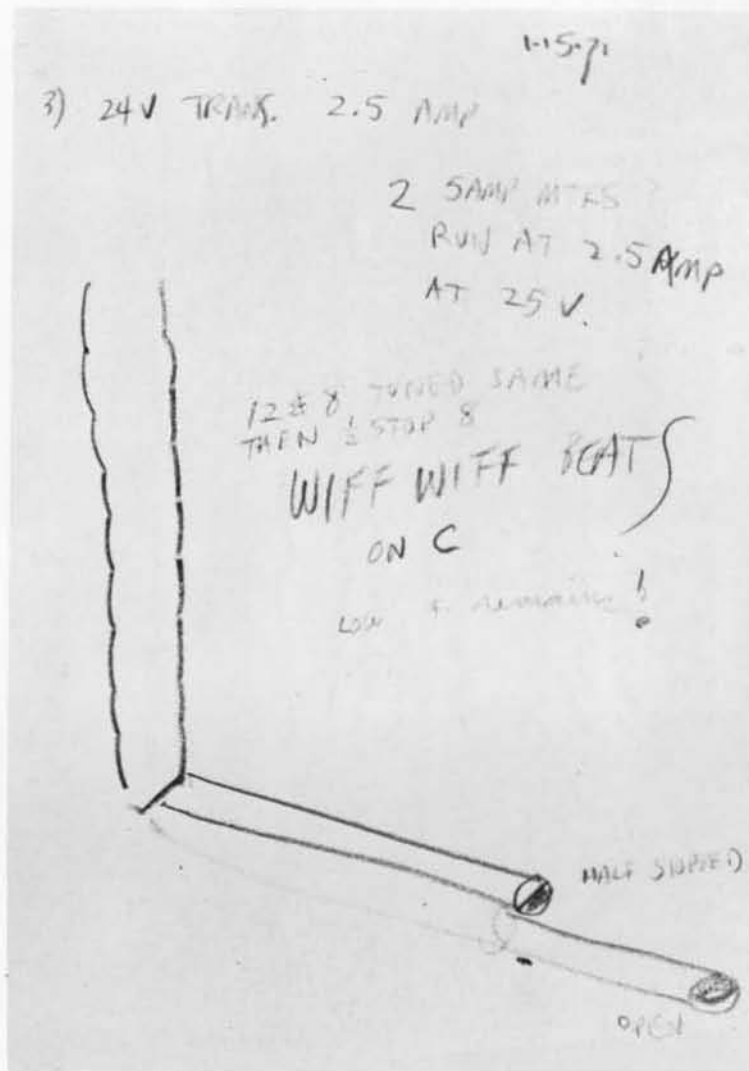
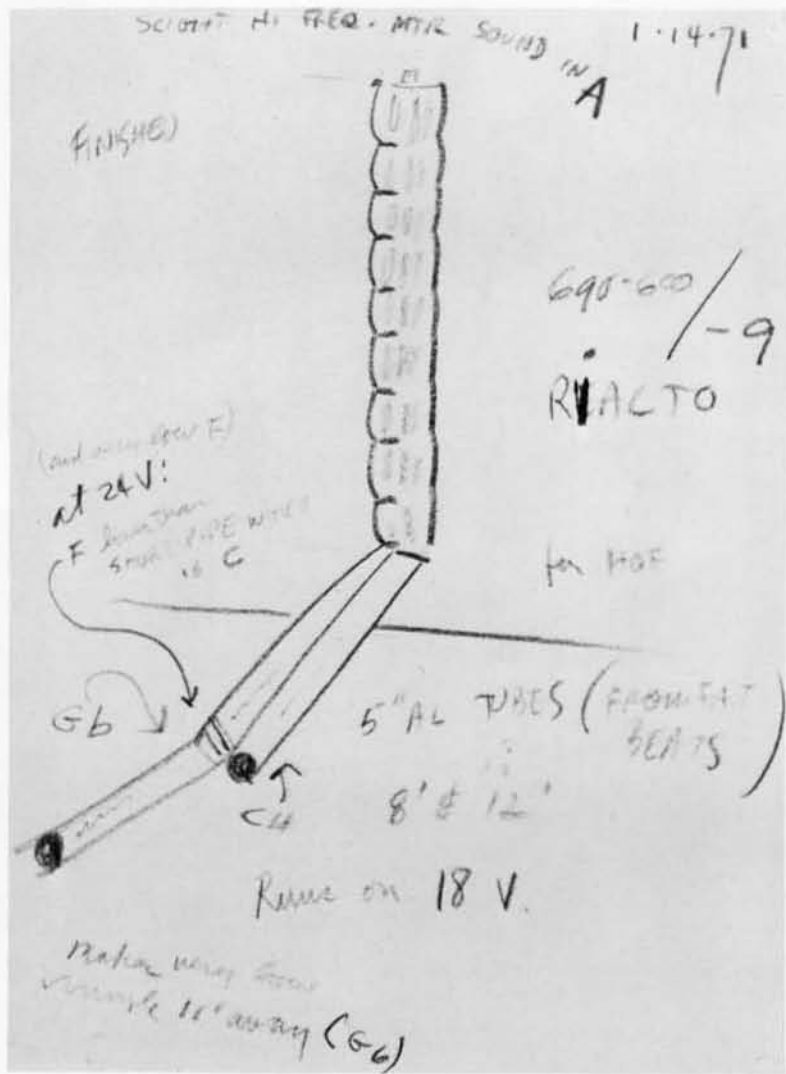


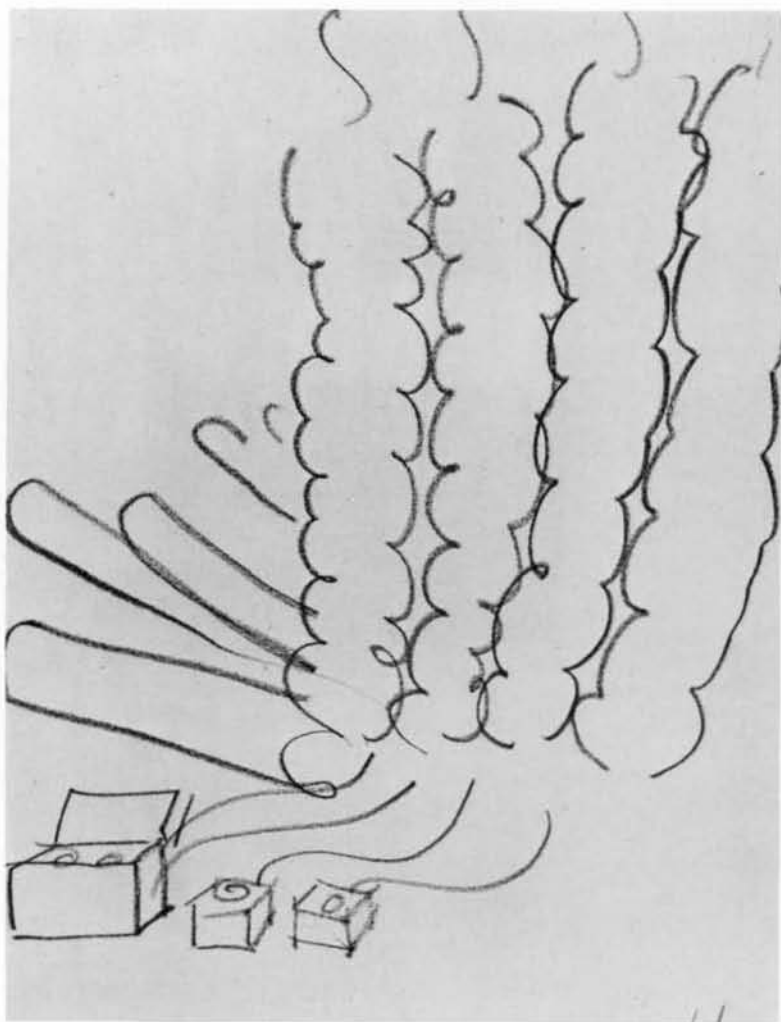
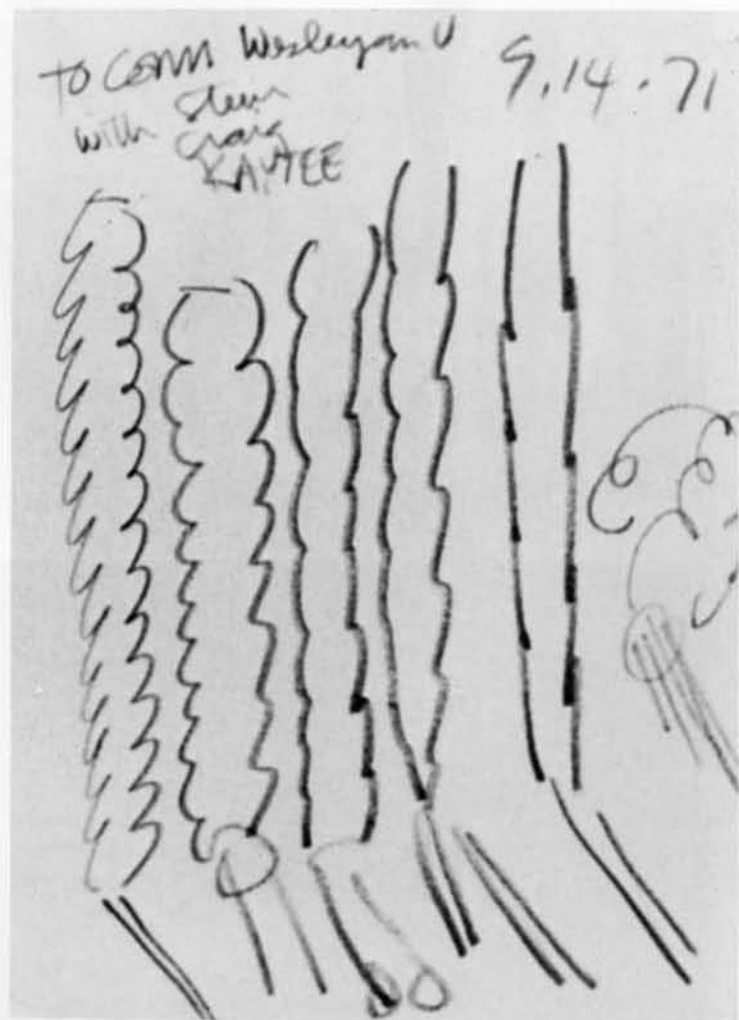


in GÖRLITZ a lion was
— 8 PIPES OF DIAPHSON
REGISTER
Tuned D, D#, F, G#, A, D#, F
worked by elec. bellows



a barrel organ exists
in use in little church
in SHELLAND near STOWMKT.
& BARNSTON near DUNMOW
BBC DID BROADCAST OF
EACH !









February 1967. (It's 10% damage). There are perhaps here 1 exhibit consisting of a black and white photograph of a shopping element designed by Charles Peasey in what was to be a forthcoming presentation with goods, Deitch and his group of





- Page 36 February 1967. (8¼x10¾ drawings) These two pages show how I added towers of clinking clacking aluminum to a flopping element designed by Charlie Frazier in what was to be a collaborative presentation with Herb Deitch and his group of musicians. Frazier's flopping base, a prototype of two hover craft he made for Allan Kaprow's Happening "Gas," was unstable and could not balance the towers I built. The last drawing shows how I turned the whole thing upside down, added a platform on top the flopper, and added a stable base. The air (generated by a vacuum motor and fan) pushing against this platform escaped through small holes into which I thrust small organ pipes.
- Page 37 February 1967. Another immediate addition seen here is the integrating for the form of black joined inner tubes.
- Page 37 February 1967. Without a doubt this is the moment of birth of an integrated inflating, sounding, form.
- Page 38 March 1967. Although I had made several other sound sculptures as early as 1957, this body of work was born under the same sun sign as I and seemed to me very appropriately shaped.
- Page 38 March 1967. Polaroid photos of the first completed sound piece which I've always called "Mother." This piece was improved somewhat when re-built later in the summer.
- Page 39 March 1967. Photo, Barbara Bernal. Taken in the Wah Chang Tungsten Refinery in Glen Cove, Long Island where Frazier (middle row right) and I had studios. The sculptures in the foreground are Frazier's, and Professor Herbert Deitch, a colleague of mine at Hofstra University, is playing the trumpet.
- Page 40 May or June 1967. Allan Kaprow's drawing in my book suggesting a method for programming the several pieces I had made by this time. This bumped disc switching system was one he had used while investigating apparently random systems while he was studying with Cage, I believe.
- Page 40 March 1967. A cut stretched inner tube emitting reed vibrations. Used in the second piece I refer to as "Pop."

- Page 41 April 1967. A smacking force reminding me of Brancusi's "Kiss," this became "Breather," a rhythmically inflating piece of escaping air sounds.
- Page 41 August 2, 1967. Somewhat revised this idea became "Champ," a sometimes grunting piece.
- Page 42 August 23, 1967. The air system for "Horn," an offensive blasting piece.
- Page 42 September 1967. Photo, Michael Fales. The group of nine performing sound sculptures which appeared in the Emily Lowe Gallery at Hofstra University as "The Wah Chang Box Works Assyrian Air Fair." Each piece had an electromechanical program (timer) which I could thwart at a console. At this series of performances I used colored lights, slides, films and taped factory sounds to create an environmental effect. I used these audio, visual elements finally at the D'Arcangelo studio performance in December also.
- Page 43 August/September 1967. Programming system as used for work described above. Series of three four-switch timers interrelated so as to prolong pattern. The first timer on the left was an ancient one with a flywheel slowed by a variable magnet making possible slower or faster programs in four pieces.
- Page 43 Portion of the invitation to the series of performances held in New York in November and December of 1967.
- Page 44 August 13, 1967. Visualization of electrical connection from timer to outlets.
- Page 44 June 4, 1969. A poem relating to my life in a rubber factory in San Clemente, California circa 1951.
- Page 45 April 30, 1969. I thought I'd discovered something pretty important when I stretched rubber over a pipe attached to a blowing vacuum cleaner motor and placed the rubber lips against my cornet.
- Page 45 Fall 1970. Imagine my embarrassment when I discovered that a mechanical bugler with rubber lips had been made in 1810. Sketch from a beautiful color photo in Buchner's Mechanical Musical Instruments, Batchworth Press, London.
- Page 46 May and June 1969. Drawings developing a mostly rubber exhaust sounding piece described below.
- Page 46 June 1969. "Floor Piece." Collection: Vera List.

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In Fall of 1970 I was granted a semester leave from Hofstra University where I have taught sculpture since 1962. During this sabbatical I read at various libraries in New York. The music library at Lincoln Center as well as the Free Library of the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York were good places for me to find out about some of the phenomena which I had discovered in the studio. I began by trying to trace the history of programming from the early barrel organ through other mechanical musical instruments, androids and automata, the Jacquard loom, street organs, the Link trainer of World War II, and switching devices, to the computer. All are based on a switch which is "on" or "off" whether it's a log with nails in it tripping organ keys or a card with holes in it letting threads fall onto the weaving pattern of a loom or a paper piano roll causing a blinking message on the underside of airplane wings or a punched paper roll switching a motor in a factory. Winkel's Componium (a composing machine made in 1821) could play without repetition for 138 trillion years.

Page 47

A programming switch like one used together with thwarting buttons for the three pieces which appeared as "Mothers Mechanical Wonderful Wah Wah" at 'Options,' Milwaukee Art Center and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago in 1968. This programming switch, widely used in industry, consists of a cylinder with 60 grooves which rotates completely in a minute. Each groove may contain a moveable plastic peg which can actuate a microswitch each second. The length of program in this case is, then, one minute for each switch (a single motor may drive a unit containing as many as 57 switches, each switch being separately programmed by the plastic pegs.) Of course this useful principle is that of the barrel organ and the music box. Variations on this system include lengthening the program by causing the cylinder to move laterally, permitting another row of pegs to actuate the switch.

Page 48

Photo, courtesy Jewish Museum. View of some of the pieces which were included in the 'Inflatable Sculpture Exhibition' at the Jewish Museum the summer of 1969. In the fall, the whole exhibition traveled to the Witte Memorial Museum in San Antonio. In the winter, a slightly different selection under the title "Wonderful Wah Wahs" performed at Colgate University.

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1970. Photo, Hugh Rogers. Steve Hendirckson and I working in my 13th Street studio.

Page 50

1969. A stack of three microswitches and a 5-rph motor of the kind available from surplus outlets. These switches and motors are very durable and rarely fail even though they may have seen ten or more years of service. Automatic dish and clothes washers also yield very usable parts.

- Page 50 January 28, 1970. At top left is the tracing of a metal disc with one notch which can actuate a microswitch. Below, my natal horoscope is superimposed and niches cut out corresponding to the arrangement of planets. This is the program of the small piece I call "Self Portrait."
- Pages 51 - 52 February 1970. A "drawing" and later "painting" machine which made the graph-like drawings in which we see both the simple program and the simple resultant "drawing." Later developments added variable voltage and therewith a "how much" on or off possibility. These and other developments made a greater apparent distance or difference between the program disc input and the output or product. Nevertheless, it was not without interest that I read "Man is a Machine" by Woolridge.
- Page 53 This photo signals the beginning of the change from reed sounds to vibrating air column sounds. This floor piece was planned for construction at San Jose State College by myself and students during May of 1970.
- Page 54 May 1970. The San Jose piece emitted sound of an excited air column in aluminum pipe ten inches in diameter and twenty feet long. A large rubber construction inflated slowly, causing a very low fundamental note first, then other higher partials till the highest was reached as the serpentine rubber tubes were engorged with air. The piece then deflated and the sounds dropped in volume and pitch till all was silence.
- Page 55 Photos, Justin Kronewetter. I can be seen operating a variable voltage unit controlling the speed of motor and fan housed at the top of the rubber portion. Here and hereafter I have used both or either manual controls and programmed controls.
- Page 56 A five-pipe sounding unit composed of 2-, 4-, 6-, 8-, and 10-foot pipes two inches in diameter. This piece was first played at Cornell University's Sibley Dome in spring 1971. A manual variable voltage control is seen at the left.
- Page 56 1970. Photo, James Hendrickson, Jr. Left-to-right: "Ashleigh" Gibbons, my first apprentice from the Great Lakes Colleges Association Arts Program, me, Steve Hendrickson, another GLCA apprentice, and Richard Wengenroth, painter and Director of GLCA Arts Program in New York.
- Page 56 Fall 1970
- Page 57 Dated 1971. I called this piece "Blue Rialto" after the brand name of the innertubes I made it from. "Blue Rialto" produces most satisfying beatings and difference tones. The pipes are five inches in diameter, are 8 and 12 feet long and the 8-foot pipe is half-stopped. "Blue Rialto" was first shown at Hofstra University's Emily Lowe Gallery in 1971, erroneously albeit playfully titled "Bobby."

- Page 58 Dated 1971. A drawing of hanging pieces in anticipation of the Wah Wah at Cornell's Sibley Dome.
- Page 59 April 1971. Photos, David Jacobs, Jr. Listeners at Sibley Dome. During the day all pieces were operating at a constant gently beating low volume. From 4-6 p.m. on each of three days a crowd gathered for a "concert performance."
- Page 60 Photos, David Jacobs. Sibley Dome, Cornell.
- Page 60 Student musician playing with Wah Wahs.
- Page 60 Robert Moog at the "console" of the Wah Wah.
- Page 60 Young people responding physically to an inflated Wah Wah.
- Pages 61-62 February 1972. Photos, Todd Greenaway. Wah Wahs at the Vancouver Art Gallery