Xanti Schawinsky

Head Drawings and Faces of War

THE DRAWING CENTER

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The Drawing Center

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Drawing Room

Xanti Schawinsky

Head Drawings and Faces of War

Curated by

Brett Littman

DRAWING PAPERS 119

Introduction *by* Brett Littman
Essays *by* Michael Bracewell *and* Juliet Koss

Xanti Schawinsky:
Relocation and Identity

Brett Littman

The son of Polish Jews, Alexander ("Xanti") Schawinsky was born in Basel, Switzerland, in 1904. After attending school in Basel and Zurich, he went to Cologne to work at the architectural office of Theodor Merrill and then took classes at the School of Applied Arts in Berlin. In 1924, he moved to Weimar to study at the Bauhaus, placing him in contact with legendary figures such as Walter Gropius, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Josef Albers, Oskar Schlemmer, and László Moholy-Nagy. Schawinsky played a key role in the school's vital social life and was a member of the Bauhaus Band. He was also deeply engaged in its theater workshop as an actor, set and costume designer, creator of performances, and teacher. In 1925, Schawinsky moved with the Bauhaus to a new building designed by Gropius in Dessau. During this period, he began to experiment with innovative theories of theater design and staging and also developed an interest in graphic design and experimental photography.

With the rise of the Nazi Party—from the 1927 Nuremberg Rally to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933—the Bauhaus came under increasing scrutiny and suspicion. In 1932, the school moved again, to Berlin, but this time for economic and political reasons; it closed permanently the following spring. The difficulties catalyzed by the changes and uncertainty at the Bauhaus were coupled with the challenges Schawinsky faced as a Jewish foreigner. After 1928, when Schawinsky completed his studies at the Bauhaus, he took on a series of independent exhibition and commercial design commissions, including working for two years as the head of the Graphic Division of the Building Department of the City of

Magdeburg, Germany. Commissions of this type, however, became increasingly scarce and anti-Semitism increasingly prevalent. In 1931, Schawinsky left Magdeburg for Berlin. In 1933, he left Germany altogether, traveling first to Zurich and then to Italy. There, he used his talents as a graphic designer to create advertising for a variety of companies including Illy Caffe, Cinzano, Olivetti, and Motta, and landed a job at the prestigious Studio Boggeri in Milan. But as Mussolini's ties with Hitler's government strengthened, Schawinsky emigrated once more—to the United States and Black Mountain College, in North Carolina, where Josef Albers had invited him to teach drawing, color theory, and stage design. He first made a brief stop in London, where he married Irene von Debschitz, the daughter of the co-founder of the Munich-based Debschitz School; and then the couple departed for the US in 1936. After two years of teaching at Black Mountain, he and Irene moved to New York City, where Schawinsky would stay for almost three decades working as a teacher, an exhibition and graphic designer, a sculptor, and a photographer. In 1966, he relocated to Lago Maggiore, Italy, with his second wife, Gisela Hatzky, a Swiss interior designer whom he had married in 1963; they lived in a house Schawinsky designed himself in the International style. He died in Locarno, Switzerland, in 1979.

As one can see from this short biography, Schawinsky spent a lifetime relocating and, in the process, developed his central themes: how identity is constructed; an interest in image of the human face; and the destructive nature and repercussions of machine warfare. His Bauhaus training manifests itself in his work's complex interpretation of the interrelationship among art, craft, and design. His practice spanned a range of artistic realms—including avant-garde theater, experimental photography, music, dance, and graphic design—situating him among the important polymaths of the twentieth-century avant-garde.

The exhibition I have curated for The Drawing Center focuses on two bodies of drawings Schawinsky made in the United States in the 1940s, *Faces of War* and the Head Drawings. The former are man-machine hybrids that could represent either an aggressive enemy or a powerful avenger—or perhaps an identity that encompasses both. This series, made between 1941 and 1946, seems even more relevant

and contemporary than ever in light of the current Israeli/Palestinian and Ukrainian/ Russian conflicts. The *Faces of War* break from the utopian optimism of the early Bauhaus and reveal the existential struggle of an artist coping with identity and the devastation of war. The Head Drawings were also made between 1941 and 1946 and allowed Schawinsky to literally remake his own "portrait" out of detritus from the natural world including thread, crystals, rope, and rocks. In this catalogue, we are very fortunate to be able to go beyond our exhibition checklist and illustrate, for the first time, all of the known *Faces of War* and Head Drawings (including photo reproductions of lost works, drawings on metal, and drawings related to these series). Our hope is that this comprehensive document will be an invaluable tool for Schawinsky scholars.

I am incredibly indebted to the Estate of Xanti Schawinsky, especially Daniel Schawinsky and Benjamin Schawinsky, who have provided The Drawing Center the opportunity to engage with their father's work. I am also very grateful to Anke Kempkes and Lauren Pascarella at Broadway 1602, who have been indispensable guides through the material; to Michael Bracewell and Juliet Koss, whose essays in this catalogue provide invaluable new perspectives on Schawinsky's practice; and to Young Kim for making me aware of these drawings. As well, I would like to recognize Larry List, a Schawinsky scholar who was an integral force behind bringing this body of work to light again to art world.

As always, I want to thank The Drawing Center's staff, including: Nova Benway, Assistant Curator, who steadfastly aided me on the this exhibition and catalogue; Molly Gross, Communications Director; Anna Martin, Registrar; Dan Gillespie, Operations Manager; Alice Stryker, Development Manager; Margaret Sundell, Executive Editor; Joanna Ahlberg, Managing Editor and Peter J. Ahlberg/AHL&CO, Designer.

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Facing Design

Juliet Koss

I

When Alexander ("Xanti") Schawinsky arrived at the Bauhaus in fall 1924, the school had recently undergone a dramatic shift in orientation from its initial focus on expressionism and craft toward an engagement with machine production, commercial design, and industry. Founded by Walter Gropius in 1919—the same year as the Weimar Republic, and in the same city—the State Bauhaus in Weimar had developed out of the merger of two institutions, the Weimar Academy of Fine Art and the Grand Ducal School of Arts and Crafts; embracing Wagnerian ideas of the interrelation of the arts and the integration of art and life, it initially emphasized the creation of handmade objects. "There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman," Gropius decreed:

> Let us then create a new guild of craftsmen without the class distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist! Together let us desire, conceive, and create the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity and which will one day rise toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like the crystalline symbol of a new faith.[1]

Gropius, a practicing architect, presented large-scale construction as the natural outcome of these communal efforts, his nostalgic and

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1 Walter Gropius, "Program for the Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar" (April 1919), in *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert, ed. Hans M. Wingler (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969), 31.

prophetic vision conflating the medieval guild system with modern factory production, the cathedral with the modern skyscraper. While architecture was not taught in the early Bauhaus years, artists of all kinds—an extraordinarily international crowd—would gather there to remake their environment and the world beyond it, and they would do so as artisans, on a human scale.

Twenty years old when he moved to Weimar, Schawinsky thrived in his new environment. Born in Basel to Polish Jews, he had moved with his family to Zurich in 1916, leaving Switzerland three years later for Germany, where he finished high school, worked for two years as an apprentice in a Cologne architectural office, and studied for a year at the School of Applied Arts in Berlin. When he arrived at the Bauhaus, his artistic interests were well matched to the school's stated aims. Creativity there was to be communal and fundamentally interdisciplinary, with artists encouraged to collaborate and to engage in a broad range of artistic endeavors. Indeed, the creative process was treated almost as seriously as was the final achievement, with course-work and extracurricular activities often intertwined. The Bauhaus soon became known for its radical pedagogical approach combining the visual arts and design; students produced work in a wide range of media for courses in such fields as typography, woodwork, metal-work, textiles, and the graphic arts. In addition to pursuing an area of specialization, they were required to take the school's preliminary course, which was developed by the Swiss artist Johannes Itten to introduce Bauhaus principles to all students regardless of their area of study. The school also became known for its costume parties, theatrical events, and boisterous social life; more often than not, photographs of Bauhaus escapades show Schawinsky at the center of the fun or leading the proceedings [PLS. 1, 2].

After the school's major exhibition "Art and Industry: A New Unity" was held in Weimar in 1923, the Bauhaus shed its idealization of craft production to champion the machine as a guiding creative force, a shift also reflected in the overhauling of the preliminary course with Itten's departure that year and the arrival of László Moholy-Nagy. Inspired by his visit to the Weimar exhibition and by meetings with Gropius and Josef Albers, Schawinsky decided to enroll at the Bauhaus. In 1925, during his second year, the conceptual realignment

with technology was further strengthened, and closer ties to industry forged, when the school relocated to the new building Gropius had designed for Dessau, a growing industrial town between Weimar and Berlin. Complex negotiations between individualism and collectivity, and between man and machine, took place within this architectural gem: theater stage, studios, canteen, dormitories, offices, balconies, and circulation spaces were enlivened by the school's occupants, their antics and activities captured often on camera and, sometimes, seemingly produced for the benefit of such technological witnesses. In 1926, the school was renamed the Bauhaus School of Design. Yet for all the changes, the urge toward artistic interrelation and the reconstruction of the surrounding world—the utopian impulse to blur the boundaries of art and life, of artistic practice and social activity—remained fundamental to the Bauhaus.

Both at its first venue in Weimar and subsequently in Dessau, where he remained until 1929, Schawinsky expanded on his artistic training in courses taught by such luminaries as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Moholy-Nagy. While his creative talents were varied, he found his natural home in the theater workshop, which was run by Oskar Schlemmer from early 1923 until 1929 and which in 1924, Schawinsky later reminisced, "was a large gothic pavilion" in the public park in Weimar,

> empty except for a grand piano and an old armchair. Goethe had lived and worked there, and later Liszt, Busoni, and Johannes Itten had taught there. My christening came when I was asked to sit in the famous armchair where they all had supposedly sat. I noticed there were only a few springs left. And that is how I became the youngest member of the Bauhaus theatrical workshop.[2]

His theater work entailed a variety of activities, from writing plays, designing costumes (which involved plaster sculptures and papier-mâché formations, in addition to more traditional fabric constructions), creating stage sets and even an architectural model for a "Space Theater," and often also performing. He appeared in

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2 Xanti Schawinsky, "From the Bauhaus to Black Mountain," *TDR/The Drama Review* 15 no. 3 (Summer 1971): 31. See also Dirk Scheper, "Schawinsky und das Theater," in *Xanti Schawinsky: Malerei, Bühne, Graphikdesign, Fotographie*, ed. Peter Hahn et al., Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin exh. cat. (Berlin: Nikolai, 1986), 47–59.

PL. 1
Members of the Bauhaus in front of the Goethe-Schiller monument in Weimar, January 1925 (From the left: Paul Citroën, Ellen Hauschild, Xanti Schawinsky, Walter Menzel, Kapelner (?))

PL. 2
Irene Beyer (?) and Marianne Brandt (?), *Bauhäusler on the Beach between Elbe and Mulde*, with Schawinsky at front, 1926–27

PL. 3
T. Lux Feininger, *Untitled (Bauhaus Musical Group)*, with Schawinsky at right, 1928

his own works—such as *The Circus* in early 1925, in Weimar, and *Feminine Repetition* in Dessau that fall—and in those by others, including the improvisations that would lead to Schlemmer's famous *Gesture Dances* and Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet*. As saxophonist and trumpeter in the Bauhaus Band, among other musical contributions, he provided entertainment for the celebrations—organized and spontaneous, large and small—that were central components of the school's operations [PL. 3].[3]

After supervising the theater workshop in 1925-26 during Schlemmer's absence, Schawinsky spent a year as the stage designer for the State Theater in Zwickau; he returned to the Bauhaus in 1927 to assist Schlemmer, taking over his teaching responsibilities for a semester.[4] That year he presented his confection *Olga-Olga* on the Dessau stage. With a cast of half a dozen (himself included), the work was, as he later explained, "a ballet-pantomime built around Olga, our newly acquired ballet dancer" whose real name was Amanda von Kreibig and who was better known for her starring role that year in Schlemmer's *Pole Dance*. Schawinsky designed and directed the production, a Dadaistic endeavor that relied heavily on the rearrangement of painted flats in an accordion-fold formation. The characters likewise experienced a constant shuffling of stage identities. Olga, as Schawinsky described it,

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3 On parties, performances, and theatricality at the Bauhaus, see Ute Ackermann, "Bauhaus Parties—Histrionics between Eccentric Dancing and Animal Drama," in *Bauhaus*, ed. Jeannine Fiedler and Peter Feierabend, trans. Translate-A-Book, Oxford (Cologne: Könemann, 1999), 126-39; and Juliet Koss, "Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls," *The Art Bulletin* LXXXV, no. 4 (December 2003): 724–45. For a general introduction to the school's theoretical concerns, see Leah Dickerman, "Bauhaus Fundaments," in *Bauhaus 1919: Workshops for Modernity*, ed. Barry Bergdoll and Dickerman (New York: Museum of Modern Art exh. cat., 2009), 15–39.

4 Schawinsky's official status is variously described in the literature on the Bauhaus. Rainer K. Wick has allowed the following: "It is certainly the case that between 1924 and 1926 Schawinsky was one of the most active and most original students in the stage department, to which he returned in 1927 after a year as an intern at the Stadttheater in Zwickau, and where as Schlemmer's closest collaborator he unofficially fulfilled the function of stage assistant." Wick, *Teaching at the Bauhaus* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 273. In his unpublished biographical sketch of 1960, Schawinsky described his position more generously: "Bauhaus Dessau, 1925–26, in charge of theater workshop until reappointment of Schlemmer in 1926...." Schawinsky, autobiographical sketch of October 1960, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich (XST 1047.2).

appeared on the balcony as an impossible Juliet and received serenades from several Romeos. When the scene changed to Adam and Eve, there was a shot and a murder which went unnoticed by the performers. The flats were shifted again and the ladder behind the balcony flat was carried out, having served its purpose for Juliet.[5]

A photograph by Lux Feininger (who also performed in the piece) shows Schawinsky in the role of Adam, a plumed hat perched jauntily on his head and a fig leaf appended to his leotard [PL. 4]. Behind him, the fully expanded set reveals a variety of bold graphic elements that include a large female countenance with a vacant stare, pencil-thin eyebrows, and heavily painted pursed lips; horizontal and vertical stripes, echoed also in the woman's collar; and what appear to be windows framing other figures and forms that include a top hat, an umbrella and a walking stick, and a misshapen sweater or jacket. A Bauhaus mask, heavily indebted to Schlemmer's designs, covers Schawinsky's face and also foreshadows the faces—generic, iconic—that would suffuse his later work.

A painted sketch for this same design reveals not only the set's bright colors, but also a heavy reliance on the visual models of commercial sign painting [PL. 5]. The shapes—a bright red arrow, those button lips—appear like selections from a catalogue of forms for graphic designers.[6] The bright colors and simplified forms suggest careful attention to the primary colors of De Stijl art and architecture, which had arrived at the Bauhaus in 1921 in the person of the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg, who stayed in Weimar for two years teaching courses independent of the school's offerings. While highly attentive to De Stijl models, Schawinsky was no convert to the movement's restricted palette; red, yellow, and blue are here joined by secondary shades—a

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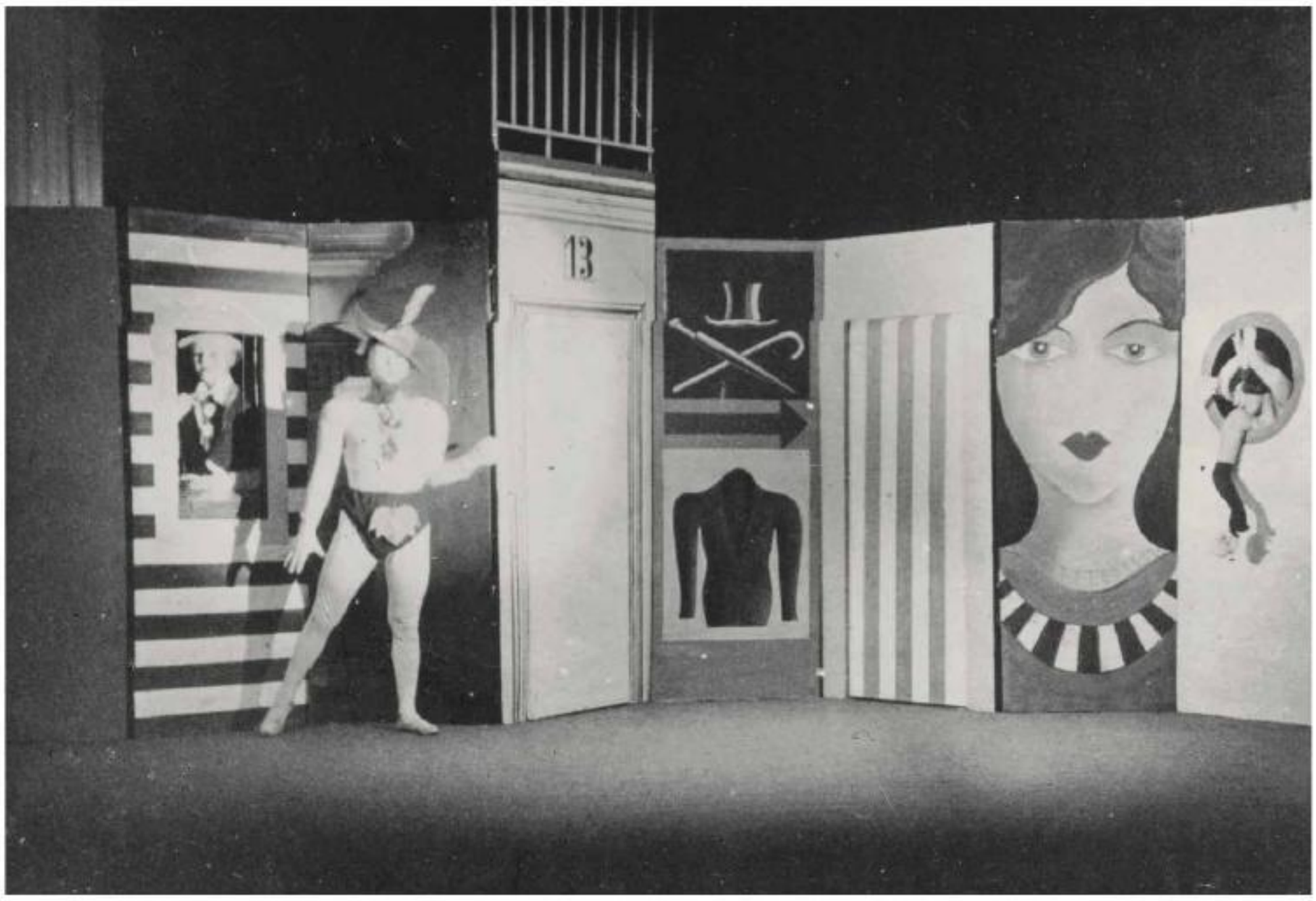
5 Schawinsky, "From the Bauhaus to Black Mountain," 43. "Once in a while a word was spoken, more for effect than for meaning, as the word had no relation to the happenings. The same gramophone record, lasting three minutes, was played over and over again through a big loudspeaker. When the dead man walked out on crutches, however, there was deep silence. The storefront flats (fashion, beauty parlor, etc.) had windows and doors. Shades were drawn, with different characters appearing each time, and there was a space play in and out of the doors and through the whole stage."

6 To a contemporary viewer the set may evoke the paintings of René Magritte, who had likewise been producing theater designs in the 1920s but whose paintings at the time were shaky and lugubrious surrealist affairs, filled with browns and grays and heavily indebted to the works of Giorgio de Chirico.



PL. 4

T. Lux Feininger, Photograph of Xanti Schawinsky in *Olga-Olga*, Dessau Bauhaus, 1927

PL. 5
Stage design for *Olga-Olga*, 1926

range of purples, pale blue and pink, and peach—along with grays and black. Schawinsky may also have been inspired, here as elsewhere, by the graphic works of such Soviet artists as Alexandr Rodchenko and El Lissitzky, the latter of whom was especially influential at the Bauhaus.[7] Perhaps most striking is the interest the set evinces in Dada and Surrealism. The prefabricated shapes and forms of the accordion-fold flats were matched by impossible narrative elements, likewise cut and pasted and shuffled around. "The performance was loaded with kitsch, action, and speed," Schawinsky concluded. "But there was no definite meaning in it. Any interpretation was left to the individual spectator."[8]

The invocation of commercial sign painting in the sets for *Olga-Olga* reflects a broader shift at the Bauhaus in the status of design as a creative category: from the handcrafted work of the school's beginnings to the industrial objects for which it would become famous. This new orientation often remained a utopian projection, insofar as the school continued primarily to produce unique objects that were rarely destined for factory production; silver teapots, wooden chess sets, or carefully crafted children's toys and furniture embodied the ideals of the modern machine, but usually only theoretically, owing partly to a lack of response from industry. Bauhaus artists thus created potential prototypes for modern living in the machine age, negotiating the complexities of Weimar culture to demonstrate designs appropriate for the new democratic state.[9] After the move

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7 Schawinsky was also a friend of Lissitzky, writing in his unpublished autobiography (which he began in 1969 in Oggebbio, Lago Maggiore, Italy, and abandoned in 1971 in New York) that when both were in Dresden in 1931, preparing the International Hygiene Exhibition, they went together to the cinema (along with Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, Lissitzky's wife) to see the first German talking picture: Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*, starring Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings. Both men also worked on exhibition designs at the New York World's Fair in 1939—Lissitzy on the Soviet pavilion and Schawinsky on those for Pennsylvania (with Gropius and Marcel Breuer) and North Carolina.

8 Schawinsky, "From the Bauhaus to Black Mountain," 43.

9 On Bauhaus designs as exemplary productions, see Annemarie Jaeggi, "Bauhaus: A Conceptual Model," in *Bauhaus: A Conceptual Model*, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin exh. cat. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), 13–20. See also Robin Schuldenfrei, "The Irreproducibility of the Bauhaus Object," *Bauhaus Construct*, ed. Schuldenfrei and Jeffrey Saletnik (New York: Routledge, 2009), 37–60. As Kathleen James-Chakraborty has noted with regard to recent Bauhaus scholarship, "Consumerism proves central to an institution often assumed to have been preoccupied only with pure form." James-Chakraborty, "Beyond Cold War Interpretations: Shaping a New Bauhaus Heritage," *New German Critique* 116, vol. 39, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 18.

to Dessau, some engaged more literally with industrial design in such fields as weaving, advertising, and (most successfully, from a commercial perspective) wallpaper.[10] Schawinsky—like Schlemmer, Herbert Bayer, and others—absorbed the bold graphic approach of the European avant-garde and, more profoundly, its interest in the radical utopian potential of design to dissolve the boundaries between art, architecture, commerce, and industry.

II

In 1928, Schawinsky became a teacher at the Bauhaus, offering a course on stage design.[11] But his relationship to the school was significantly weakened, owing not only to Schlemmer's absence, but also to that of Gropius, his teacher and, now, his friend. After nine years at the Bauhaus, Gropius had left the school in spring 1928 to make way for its second director, the architect Hannes Meyer, whom he had hired the previous year to run the newly established department of architecture. This personnel change (along with the departures of Bayer, Breuer, and Moholy-Nagy) riled Schawinsky, yet he, too, was often absent from Dessau for extended periods and traveled frequently for his work as a graphic and exhibition designer.[12] His final Bauhaus commission, appointed by Gropius, was to design the contribution made by Junkers & Co.—the aircraft manufacturer that had enticed the school to Dessau in 1925 with a promise of commissions—to Berlin's *Gas and Water* exhibition in spring 1929. At the end of a two-year stint directing the Graphic Division of the Building Department of the city of Magdeburg, he again worked with Gropius (alongside fellow Bauhäuslers Bayer and Joost

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10 On the relation of art and industry in Bauhaus work in these three fields, see Hal Foster, "Herbert Bayer, Advertising Structure, 1924–25"; T'ai Smith, "Gunta Stölzl, 5 Choirs, 1928"; and Juliet Kinchin, "Wallpaper Design," in *Bauhaus 1919–1933*, ed. Bergdoll and Dickerman, 174–81, 206–9, and 292–95.

11 See Torsten Blume, "Bauhaus Stage Chronology," in *Human—Space—Machine: Stage Experiments at the Bauhaus*, ed. Blume and Christian Hiller. Bauhaus Dessau Foundation exh. cat. (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2014), 226–52.

12 In a five-page, single-spaced typescript inserted before chapter 10 of his unpublished autobiography, Schawinsky expressed lingering anger at Gropius's successor in a diatribe that ends, "yes, hannes meyer, you were killed from behind! the deed cries out towards heaven. Where are your friends, your colleagues?" "ja hannes meyer, du bist von hinten gekillt worden! die tat schreit zum himmel. wo sind deine freunde, deine mitarbeiter?" Schawinsky, unpublished autobiography, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich.

Schmidt) on the German Building Exposition in Berlin in 1931.[13] Indeed, he would remain close to Gropius long after their parallel emigrations from Germany (Schawinsky in spring 1933, to Italy; Gropius that fall, to England) and their subsequent relocations to the United States: Schawinsky in 1936 to North Carolina, to teach at Black Mountain College; Gropius in early 1937 to Massachusetts, to become the chairman of the Architecture Department of the newly established Harvard Graduate School of Design.

In the early 1930s, Schawinsky had increasing difficulty finding work either as a graphic designer or in theater; commissions were rare, especially for Jews.[14] His social life revolved mainly around Gropius and the Bauhaus crowd, as he recalled decades later in his unpublished autobiography (foregoing the use of capital letters, following the custom he had acquired at the school): "the tight circle of former bauhaus-members stuck close together in berlin: gropius and his wife, [marcel] breuer and marta, moholy, bayer."[15] Others in this group included Lion Feuchtwanger, Erich Mendelsohn, Erwin Piscator, and Kurt Weill—along with their wives—but, he insisted, "the real center of the gatherings was in the gropius home, at dinners with excellent cuisine (a song of praise to pia [Ise Gropius]!), and only now and then would we meet in a restaurant or café in the kurfuerstendamm neighborhood."[16] Social pleasures, however, could not keep professional and political problems at bay, either from the Bauhäuslers or their school; "despite the efforts of [Dessau] Mayor

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13 On Schawinsky's work in Magdeburg, see Andreas Krase, "Xanti Schawinsky, Magdeburg 1929–31: Photografien," in Krase, Iris Reuther, and Lutz Schöbe, *Xanti Schawinsky, Magdeburg 1929–31: Photografien* (Berlin: Bauhaus Dessau exh. cat., 1993), 8–17.

14 "Decided to leave Magdeburg in 1932, tired of the continuous threats and attacks as a 'Cultural Bolshevik' and 'Jewish Foreigner' by the Nazi reactionaries gaining ground everywhere, and went to Berlin, 1932–33; [...] invited to join staff at Reimann Art School but left [Germany] under pressure of Nazi-exposure in press and elsewhere with eventual arrests by Gestapo...." Schawinsky, autobiographical sketch of October 1960, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich (XST 1047.3).

15 "der engere kreis der frueheren bauhaus-mitglieder heilt in berlin eng zusammen, gropius und seine frau, breuer und marta, moholy, bayer...." Schawinsky, unpublished autobiography, chapter 10, n.p.

16 "das eigentliche zentrum der zusammenkuenfte war in der gropius-wohnung zum abendessen von ausgezeichneter cuisine (ein loblied auf pia!) und nur ab und zu traf man sich in einem restaurant oder café in der gegend der kurfuerstendamm." Ibid.

[Fritz] Hesse, who led the defense, the bauhaus was attacked as a racially alien institution and, finally, driven away."[17] Now overseen by its third and last director, the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the school had also relocated to Berlin in 1932, but there, too, it could not survive the pernicious combination of political opposition and a lack of funding, and it closed permanently the next spring.

With the National Socialist consolidation of power in 1933, Schawinsky left Germany, at first for Zurich and subsequently for Milan, where for three years he worked primarily as a graphic designer, often for the advertising firm Studio Boggeri. As he later recalled, "commissions came from all over: motta pannetoni, pyroil, olivetti, san pellegrino, cinzano, illy caffè, alpestre, pissi & pizzio, radio marelli, bruzzichelli, and many others, for posters, leaflets, shop windows, radios, espresso machines, an olivetti shop [in Turin], catalogs, exhibition pavilions, packaging."[18] If the confluence of commercial and creative endeavors in Schawinsky's work matched Bauhaus ideals, the Italian creative community was less inspiring. His small studio became a lively meeting place for artists, who asked after the latest developments beyond the Italian and French work already familiar to them. He was surprised to discover that the immersion in advanced European art—the constant engagement with contemporary practice that he had enjoyed at the Bauhaus and elsewhere in Germany—did not feature in his new surroundings: "nothing by kandinsky, klee, mondrian, lissitzky, malevich, doesburg, feininger, schlemmer, and a whole series of painters, most of whom were occupied with abstract, constructivist, neoplasticist or suprematist problems, had penetrated Italy."[19] He also learned that Giorgio de

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17 "das Bauhaus wurde trotz des buergermeisters hesse, der die verteidigung fuehrte, als rassenfremdes institut angegriffen und schliesslich verjagt." Schawinsky, unpublished autobiography, chapter 10, 23.

18 "von ueberall kamen auftraege—motta pannetoni, pyroil, olivetti , san pellegrini, cinzano, illy caffè, alpestre, pissi & pizzio, radio marelli, bruzzichelli, und andere mehr, fuer plakate, prospekte, schaufenster, radio, espressomaschinen, einen olivetti laden, kataloge, ausstellungspavillione, packungen." Schawinsky, chapter 11, 6.

19 "in den gespraechen mit den italienischen kuenstlern wurde ich nach den stroemungen ausserhalb der italienischen und franzoesischen sphaere befragt und wurde gewahr, dass von kandinsky, klee, mondrian, lissitzky, malevich, doesburg, feininger, schlemmer, und einer ganzen reihe von malers von welchen sich die meisten mit abstrakten, konstructivistischen, neo-plastischen oder suprematistischen problemen befassten, nichts nach Italien gedrungen war." Ibid.

Chirico—likewise living in Milan, "in poverty and isolation"—had long been considered passé; this did not temper his admiration for the Italian artist, with whom he arranged a meeting.[20]

While working as a graphic designer in Italy, Schawinsky further developed his affinity for depicting faces. Whether daintily sipping an Illy espresso or peering wistfully above an Olivetti typewriter, photographed or painted, carefully detailed or abstractly rendered, these glamorous forms seem to share a commitment to the vacant stare that also emerged from his Bauhaus masks. Bright red lipstick abounds. One design from 1936, an advertisement for the vitamin drink Sale di Frutta Roberts ("for flourishing health … every morning"), shows an impassive female face topped by a colorful hat that at first glance appears laden with fruits and nuts but that is, in fact, entirely composed of them [PL. 6]. Presumably these are the very objects providing the vitamins for the drink itself, which is also represented in the lower-right corner by a stenciled image of a bottle and its shadow. Even the woman's hair is fruity, made of grapes; her ear, at the left, is a lemon. Only a black S-curve, the outline of a hat brim, holds together this tasty cornucopia, which seems like a modernization of the sixteenth-century paintings of Giuseppe Arcimboldo. Here, the visual pleasures of deciphering a complex and quirky puzzle have been updated for the purposes of advertising.[21] The edible forms of a traditional still life merge with a generic portrait to produce a brightly amusing picture of health. With her blank stare, rosy cheeks, and pursed painted lips, this 1930s visage also suggests a classicized incarnation of the large, button-mouthed (and likewise noseless) female face that graced the sets of *Olga-Olga* at the Dessau Bauhaus in 1927; the shape of her hat even follows her predecessor's russet hairline.

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20 "wieder in milano, in armut und isolation." Schawinsky, unpublished autobiography, chapter 11, 7. Klee, Kandinsky, Schlemmer, Gropius, and the Bauhaus were also unknown to de Chirico.

21 A brief analysis (made via the insights of Roland Barthes) of John Heartfield's use of Arcimboldo's paintings as models for political photomontage in Germany in the late 1920s appears in Devin Fore, *Realism after Modernism: The Rehumanization of Art and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), 292–93 and 386 n. 67 and n. 68.

Other aspects of the Sale di Frutta Roberts advertisement indicate that it might productively be considered a precursor to Schawinsky's works of the early 1940s. The first is formal and concerns the pale blue background, which deepens as it approaches the bottom of the image. This same design effect—horizontal bands of color that become increasingly saturated toward the edge of the page—would reappear most prominently in the series *Faces of War*. In the Italian advertisement the coloration suggests the presence of a horizon line, or shoulders to match the woman's head, or simply a graphic marker of the shift from stony face to product information; in the later works, horizontal color gradations behind military imagery with abstract patches of camouflage suggest, instead, the unfamiliar flag of an invented country. The second pivotal aspect is structural and has to do with Schawinsky's use of specific formal elements from his own advertising designs in developing his more personal works of art. This same cornucopia of fruit and nuts, for example, would later resurface in a photomontage signed and dated 1933–43 [PL. 7]. Now set at a sharper angle, the colorful hat perches above a black-and-white photograph of a fashion model's face. This transference of shapes and elements between commercial commissions and private works of art reveals the permeability of these categories for Schawinsky; mouths, eyes, noses, and ears came to operate as interchangeable features, disappearing from one face only to reappear elsewhere, in another context—and sometimes on another continent.

Advertising work was plentiful, but Milan did not provide the artistic milieu and inspiration Schawinsky craved and, as he later explained, the political atmosphere proved suffocating: "By 1936, created by the war in Etiopia [sic], the Italian patriotic spirit became unbearable inspite [sic] of the liberal minds everywhere…."[22] In 1936, he joined the faculty of Black Mountain College in North Carolina at the invitation of his Bauhaus colleague Josef Albers, who along with Anni Albers had been there since the school's founding in 1933. Schawinsky spent two years at Black Mountain, where he offered courses on stage studies, drawing, and color theory and,

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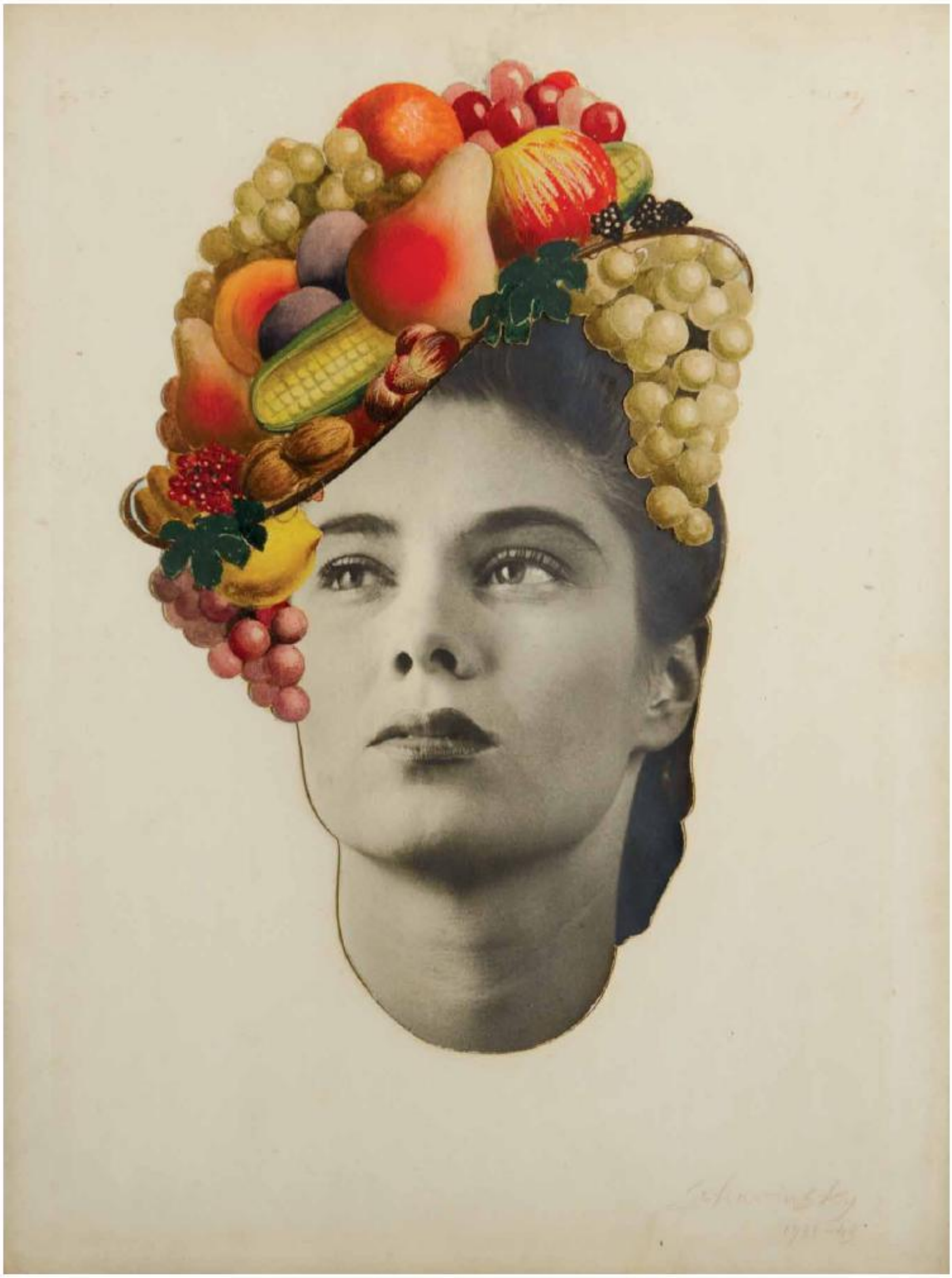
22 Schawinsky, autobiographical sketch of October 1960, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich (XST 1047.4).

PL. 6
Advertisement for Sale di Frutta Roberts, 1936



PL. 7
Untitled photomontage, 1933–43

less formally, presented on such topics as exhibition design, advertising, and music.[23] He also directed (among other productions) his "spectodrama" *Play, Life, Illusion*, now considered one of the first performances of abstract theater in the United States.[24] Comprising four acts (with eleven, six, five, and ten scenes, respectively), the play emerged from his theater work at the Bauhaus and heavily emphasized sound, color, and movement.[25] Schawinsky's work also maintained its profound commitment to Dada and acquired Italian accents. The play's penultimate scene opened as "dressed-up ACTORS of a typical repertory theatre informally enter from everywhere; a few pieces of scenery are moved in by stage hands, and now a rehearsal for a scene of Luigi Pirandello's *Tonight we Improvise* takes place, in which a clashing encounter, reality and illusion, create staggering confusion."[26]

Invited in 1938 to start a theater workshop at the New Bauhaus in Chicago by Moholy-Nagy, the school's founding director, Schawinsky took his leave of Black Mountain, but funding for his five-year contract fell through, as did one for Bayer. He moved instead that year to New York, where he contributed (once again, at Gropius's behest) to the exhibition on the Bauhaus—or at least on its nine years under Gropius's direction—that opened that December at the Museum of Modern Art. *Bauhaus 1919–1928* marked an extraordinary professional success, both for Schawinsky personally and for the school: a profound moment of international

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23 In the intervening summer, he spent time with Bayer, Breuer, and Gropius on Cape Cod; see Peter MacMahon and Christine Cipriani, *Cape Cod Modern: Midcentury Architecture and Community on the Outer Cape* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2014), 13–17.

24 See Xanti Schawinsky, "Play, Life, Illusion," *TDR/The Drama Review 15*, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 45–59; as well as Schawinsky, "Spectodrama: Contemporary Studies," in *Leonardo* 2, no. 3 (July 1969): 283–86. On Schawinsky's work at Black Mountain and on the relation of his productions to the later performance works of John Cage, see James M. Harding, *The Ghosts of the Avant-Garde(s): Exorcising Experimental Theater and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 81–87.

25 Its second scene begins, for example, "The yellow square moves to the left and disappears, uncovering in succession three white shapes: a triangle, a circle, and a square." Schawinsky, "Play, Life, Illusion," 46.

26 Ibid., 58 (emphasis in the original).

recognition during a tenuous period of exile.[27] It offered cause for celebration among those Bauhäuslers who had arrived safely in the United States; it also opened less than one month after the horrors of *Kristallnacht*. Schawinsky was a Swiss émigré who had spent fifteen years living and working in Germany and Italy before moving to the United States; he was also Jewish and now living in yet another foreign country, in yet another language, and while America provided refuge from European political troubles it was hardly immune to anti-Semitism.[28] Schawinsky had found yet another home, and it is tempting to understand his acquisition of U.S. citizenship the following year as an effort to establish a sense of belonging in his new country—all the more so as his wife, Irene (née von Debschitz), was now pregnant and would give birth to their son in December 1939. In 1941, Schawinsky moved with his small family to a penthouse apartment on Washington Square, where he would remain for more than two decades, working as a graphic designer and an exhibition designer; teaching graphic design and painting at City College (1943–46) and, later, painting at New York University (1950–54); and making art.

III

In New York in the early 1940s, Schawinsky turned his artistic attention to the depictions of faces and heads, producing monumental images inflected by (among other sources) Bauhaus shapes and spatial relations, surrealist visual tricks, graphic design elements, Arcimboldo's composite paintings, mescaline visions, and

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27 On how "Gropius and Bayer designed an exhibition that was itself symbolic of exile" (288), see Karen Koehler, "The Bauhaus 1919–1928: Gropius in Exile and the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 1938," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Etlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 287–315. A more general discussion of the Bauhaus abroad appears in Margaret Kentjens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America: First Contacts*, 1919–1936 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), esp. 89–91.

28 "In the summer of 1938," Koehler has written, "the German-American Bund held a mass rally in New York, with upward of 4,000 fascist sympathizers watching members of the Bund march in swastika-adorned uniforms, shouting against the 'Jewish rabble-rousers.'" Koehler, 296. Koehler cites Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemna: A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park: Markgraf, 1990), 133, adding, "Although the German American Bund in fact posed little of an actual threat, this and other fascist groups in the United States garnered a tremendous amount of publicity and therefore created considerable anxiety in the populace." Koehler, 312, n. 32.

PL. 8
The Parachutist (Faces of War), 1942

PL. 9
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of *Atomic Warfare*, c. 1940s

PL. 10
Stage Set, 1943

PL. 11
Stage Studies, 3/3, 1936–38

Schawinsky's early architectural training. Perhaps the best known of these works, exhibited in the United States and abroad in the 1940s and 1950s, was the series *Faces of War*.[29] Simultaneously cheerful and disturbing, and invariably set against a background of the bands of color that appeared in his advertising designs, these images combine drawing, painting, and collage to form profoundly ambivalent visions of the War, with abstract spots of color invoking military camouflage [PL. 8]. Drawn elements seem sometimes like mechanical reproductions from a graphic designer's catalogue and at other times like quirkily original creations. Lacing generic military objects—helmets, tanks—with whimsy and pathos, these deeply personal images derive their aesthetic charge from Schawinsky's commercial work. Indeed, at least one of them led a double life, under an assumed name, in the shadowy world of design; as a black-and-white pencil drawing, it was photographed by the artist and bears his signature and inscription on the reverse: "Xanti Schawinsky. New York. atomic warfare, illustration for pamphlet" [PL. 9].[30]

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29 The series was exhibited (as "The Face of the War") in fall 1942 at A-D Gallery, 130 West 46th Street, New York; an accompanying pamphlet lists twenty works ("a sensational series of temperas") and indicates they were made in Cove Neck, Oyster Bay, Long Island in summer 1942. Also exhibited as "Face of War" and "The Faces of War," the series is sometimes dated 1941; in October 1960, Schawinsky wrote "painted 'face of war' cycle, 1940–41, receiving one-man shows in New York, Cambridge and Chicago," a reference to shows at A-D Gallery, Harvard University (1943, with a text by Breuer in the accompanying pamphlet), and the Chicago Institute of Design (1943, with a text by Moholy-Nagy in the accompanying pamphlet). Schawinsky, autobiographical sketch of October 1960, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich (XST 1047.5; emphasis in the original). In 1944, Gyorgy Kepes included *The Parachutist* in his book *Language of Vision*, where it was renamed *War* and appeared next to Arcimboldo's *Summer*. A relevant discussion of faces and faciality in 1940s European painting is found in Daniel Marcus, "Eyes in the Heat: Figuration in Jean Dubuffet, Cathy Wilkes, and Josh Smith," *Artforum*, vol. 49, no. 10 (Summer 2011): 366–70.

30 Schawinsky may have made the drawings while working for the Visual Problems Unit in the Army Air Corps; a list he made in 1959 of his wartime design work includes "United States Senate (Food for Europe), Recreation quarters for soldiers, Washington, D.C. (Jewish Welfare Board), U.S. Color Exposition (Smithsonian Institute and U.S. State Department)," among other efforts. Schawinsky, autobiographical sketch of November 1959, Schawinsky Archive, Zurich (XST 1060.3). On wartime camouflage work for the U.S. Army carried out by Kepes and Moholy-Nagy at the School of Design in Chicago, see Jean-Louis Cohen, "Didactics of Camouflage, from Chicago to Brooklyn," in *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War*, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal exh. cat. (New York: Yale University Press, 2011), 195–99; see also Robin Schuldenfrei, "Assimilating Unease: Moholy-Nagy and the Wartime/Postwar Bauhaus in Chicago," in *Atomic Dwelling: Anxiety, Domesticity, and Postwar Architecture*, ed. Schuldenfrei (New York: Routledge, 2012), 87–126.

At the same time, Schawinsky produced large-scale pencil drawings that likewise follow Bauhaus mandates to combine art and industry (in this case, the advertising industry) and reveal an ongoing, active engagement with two- and three-dimensional design. *Stage Set*, 1943, for example, shows an arrangement of three-dimensional abstract shapes—blocks, a sphere, a trapezoid—that would not have been out of place on the Dessau Bauhaus stage or at Black Mountain College; in fact, it derives from a four-part color study Schawinsky had made while teaching in North Carolina [PLS. 10, 11]. With a gridded floor invoking de Chirico's early works and Schlemmer's stage drawings, it also contains a spatial reversal worthy of René Magritte: the outline of the face marks an incision into a wall, thus providing a window on to the proscenium of abstract objects and provoking a visual oscillation between the two-dimensional drawing of a face and the three-dimensional arrangement of stage props. The head of *Bird Head*, 1943, is produced entirely by the slender trunks and branches of five leafless trees growing from barren ground; eyes and mouth are outsized birds carefully perched on delicate limbs [PL. 12]. In another drawing from the same series, one continuous ribbon begins and ends at the neck of a sweetly smiling woman presented in three-quarter profile, from above, as if to showcase the carefully shaded tangle of her confetti coiffure [PL. 13]. Her eyes, eyebrows, nose, and button mouth are likewise constructed of ribbon snippets—and, despite their fabric origins, her lips oddly echo the mouth of *Bird Head*, among other puckered lips in Schawinsky's oeuvre.

Part pencil fantasy, part trompe l'oeil exercise, these latter two works are also preparatory drawings for commercial commissions from the company Parfums Bourjois for advertisements that appeared in *Mademoiselle* under the name "Xanti-PAT" in the mid-1940s. The head of ribbons resurfaced in bright colors, one bottle of scent (Mais Oui) now floating on the lower right corner of the page and another (Evening in Paris) superimposed on the trailing ribbon at her throat, rendering her tendrils a waft of perfume impossibly escaping from a sealed bottle [PL. 14]. The three birds of *Bird Head* have been transferred from their barren trees to perch on the delicate branches of a pretty floral arrangement in pink, yellow, and white, dotted with pale green leaves, with Evening in Paris and Mais Oui now joined by a third bottle: Courage [PL. 15]. Like the large female face on the

PL. 12
Bird Head, 1943

PL. 13
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s

Olga-Olga sets (and like countless women in early-twentieth-century advertising drawings), this figure has no nose, rendering her ironically unable to smell either the flowers in her hair or the products she purveys. The blue sky at the top of the page—streaked with clouds, darker behind the blossoms, and perfectly matching the band of color at the base of Schawinsky's design for Sale di Frutta Roberts—likewise seems both hyperreal and logically impossible, extending as it does not only to the area above her flowery helmet, but also to her forehead. As in *Stage Set*, the skin of this face is formed by negative space.

For Schawinsky, drawings and advertisements were equally creative endeavors, and if some of the monumental graphite heads are preparatory works they can be considered so only in retrospect, following the reappearance of facial features and formal elements in his advertising designs. These commercial works, moreover, operate equally within the discursive arena of artistic production. Schawinsky's designs for perfume advertisements, for example, may be understood in relation to *Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette,* Marcel Duchamp's assisted readymade from 1921. Made in collaboration with Man Ray, this work comprises an actual glass perfume bottle on which is pasted a new label, showing Man Ray's photograph of Duchamp (or at least his head) refigured as his female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. It is tempting to imagine the multilingual Schawinsky raising an eyebrow at the deliberate misspelling of "Parfums Bourjois" conflating bourgeois pleasures and French joy; surely he would be reminded of Duchamp's perfume bottle design with its puns on Belle Hélène (Helen of Troy, in her guise as French cultural figure) and Eau de Toilette to form a title that translates as "Beautiful Breath: Veil Water." The connection is even plausible; Schawinsky was familiar with the work of Duchamp, who had moved to Greenwich Village in 1942, and for more than two decades the two were chess partners.

Schawinsky's Duchampian inclinations appear more explicit in a photomontage from this period, one of twenty in a series entitled *Theme and Variation on a Face: For Walter Gropius, May 18 1943* [PL. 16].[31] For these works, made in honor of the Bauhaus

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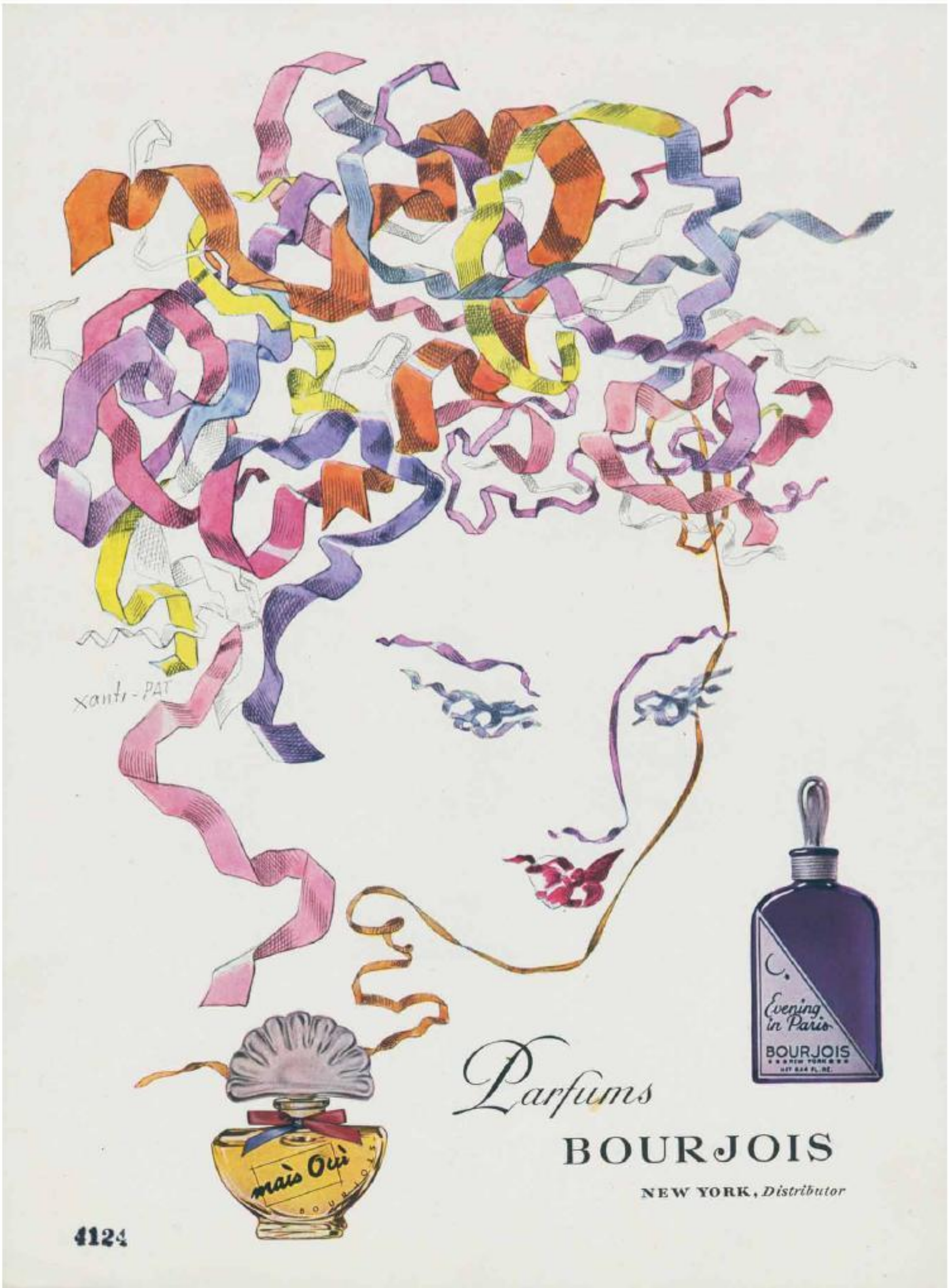
31 On this series (erroneously dated May 16, 1945), see H. Felix Kraus, "Theme with Variations," *Popular Photography* (February 1946): 47–49.



PL. 14
Advertisement for Parfums Bourjois, c. 1946

PL. 15
Advertisement for Parfums Bourjois, 1946

founder's sixtieth birthday, Schawinsky added abstract patterns, colors, textual cutouts, and other designs to Gropius's face, often borrowing elements from his own works. Here, a painted-on moustache and beard repeats a gesture made in 1919 by Duchamp, who famously applied these same features to a reproduction of the Mona Lisa to create the rectified readymade *LHOOQ*. Schawinsky has also added lilac eye shadow, pink blush, and lipstick; darkened Gropius's eyebrows; and painted on thick waves of hair to create, in combination with the striped scarf, a representation of a remarkably placid dolled-up dandy. His receding hairline now covered by the flowing locks of a much younger man, Gropius has acquired the hairdo of the large face on the *Olga-Olga* sets and his cheeks are likewise adorned with abstract pink circles. The collage gently mocks the Bauhaus founder—it is, fundamentally, an act of defacement—but also indicates Schawinsky's profound respect for his teacher, mentor, and friend, on whose lapel he has pinned a small-scale bouquet of blue flowers.[32] This altered image, moreover (and, indeed, the entire series), followed a longstanding Bauhaus tradition of making humorous photomontages of—and for—Gropius on the occasion of his birthday, an event that had prompted annual celebrations at the school. The particular combination of collage and gender bending also derives from this tradition, which had been extended by many others from the Bauhaus long after Gropius's departure and long past the school's official closing.[33]

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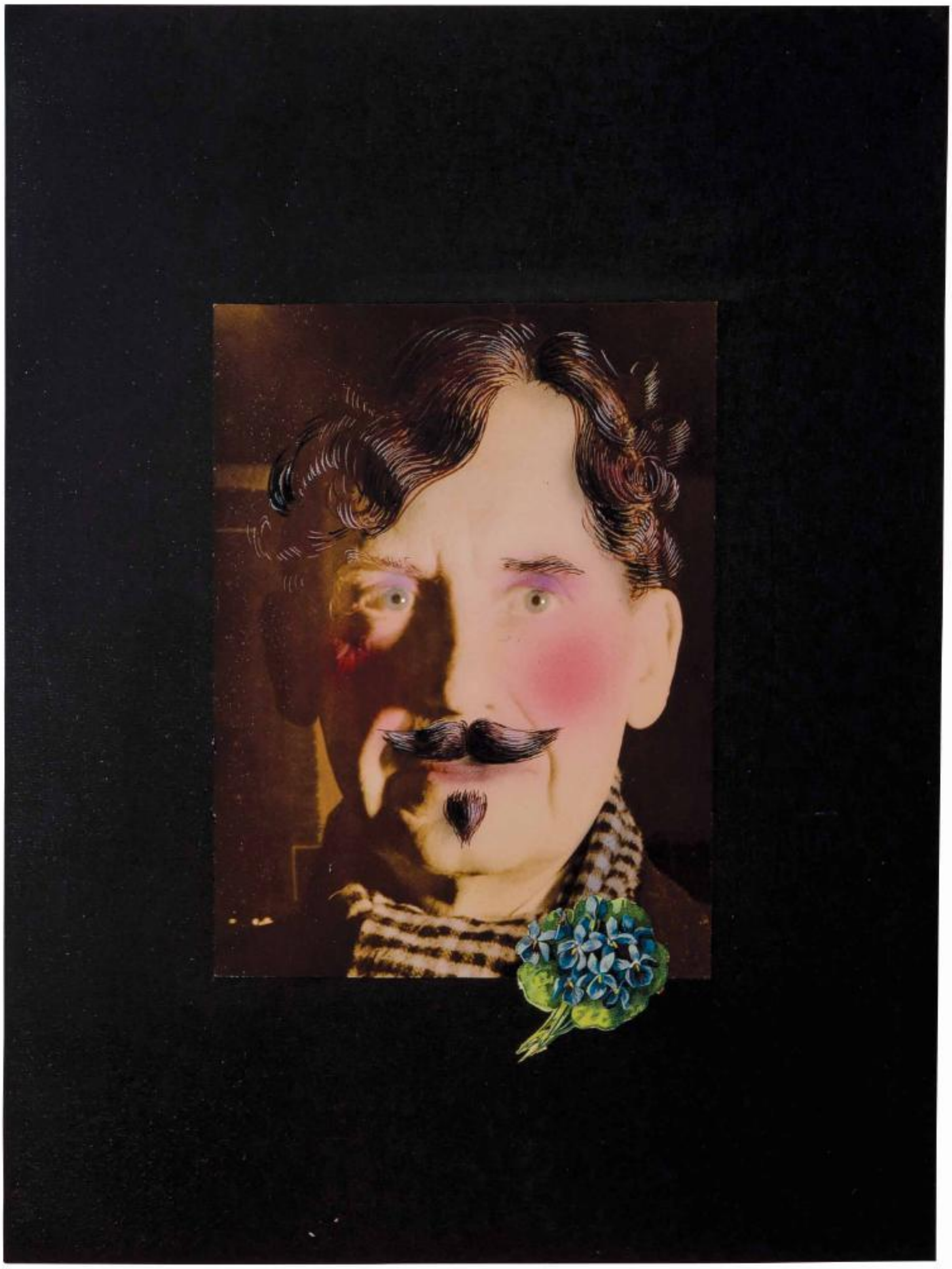
32 In spring 1948, this friendship came to a decisive end. On his own initiative and at some expense, Schawinsky had spent two years preparing a book on Gropius's work; when they sought to make official the arrangements for the publication, Gropius argued that he should receive half of the book's royalties, insisted this was standard practice between authors and their subjects, and made it clear he did not hold the copyright for material he had provided. Schawinsky, expecting financial assistance from Gropius for his labor and publication costs, balked. After some final furious missives, correspondence between the two ceased. See Schawinsky Archive, Zurich, XST 695.1-XST 712.2

33 See, for example, *Portrait of Marcel Breuer as a Girl with a Magnolia: On the Occasion of [Walter Gropius's] Birthday, May 18, 1924*, a photomontage showing Breuer in drag (and most likely made by him); or number four of Herbert Bayer's *50 Years of Walter Gropius and How I Would Like to See Him Still: On the Occasion of his Birthday, May 18, 1933*. On these works see Elizabeth Otto, "Designing Men: New Visions of Masculinity in the Photomontages of Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer and Moholy-Nagy," in *Bauhaus Construct*, ed. Schuldenfrei and Saletnik, 183–204. On the Bauhaus tradition of birthday gifts, see *Happy Birthday: Bauhaus-Geschenke*, ed. Klaus Weber (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv with Ott + Stein, 2004).



PL. 16
Figure 7 from the album *Theme and Variation on a Face: For Walter Gropius, May 18 1943*, 1943

Over the course of countless journeys and emigrations, Schawinsky engaged in an extraordinary range of creative fields that included graphic design, collage, printmaking, photography, playwriting, advertising, exhibition and stage design, painting, and sculpture. The remarkable breadth of his artistic enthusiasms reveals both a spirited and improvisational nature and a loyal adherence to the ideals that Gropius had articulated in Weimar in 1919. Schawinsky's work in theater and performance encompassed formal stage presentations, costume parties, and the musical entertainments of the Bauhaus band; his commercial work in Germany, Italy, and the United States, carried out primarily in advertising and exhibition design, likewise followed Bauhaus mandates in their easy conflation of art and industry. From his formative years in Weimar and Dessau through the early 1940s in New York, Schawinsky's work merged creativity and commercialism, art and industry, insistently ignoring accepted hierarchies between them. Whether in the form of theater masks and sets, drawings and photomontages made for advertising purposes or for personal pleasure, or ominous visions of war machines, human faces appeared and reappeared, their individual features likewise surfacing like so many cut-and-pasted elements of graphic design.

My thanks to Wallis Miller, Elizabeth Otto, and Margaret Sundell for their incisive comments on earlier versions of this text. This essay is for Daniel Schawinsky, with much gratitude for his assistance and his kindness.

Elegance and Doom:
A Contemporary Perspective on the Drawings of Xanti Schawinsky

Michael Bracewell

Supposing we had never seen the works before and knew nothing of their maker, what might be our first impressions, as contemporary viewers, of the *Faces of War* and Head Drawings, two bodies of work created by Alexander ("Xanti") Schawinsky during the first half of the 1940s after the Bauhaus-trained artist had fled fascism to settle in the United States? Certainly, the effect of these images is immediate and striking: modern yet antique, quaint yet brutal; beguiling, sinister, strange, darkly ironical and threatening; at once sublimating modes of European modernism—industrial, urban, and technological—yet also reminiscent of fairy tales, dreams, and allegories: touched with fantastical beauty and richly sentient.

We look closer, first at the *Faces of War*. These portentous drawings depict the hybridization of human heads and mechanical weaponry: visages and half-profile portraits of machine-robot-warriors limned in black outlines against curiously beautified opalescent voids. It is perhaps their sumptuous background coloring—heady, almost chemically synthetic intensities of tonal atmospherics—that first arrests the gaze.

From the top of each portrait-format drawing, chromatic bands appear to descend, diffuse, and then re-thicken into new shades: dense, Bible black, empyrean blue, greyish pink, or mauve fade gently to areas of barely tinted dawn-like light, before darkening again to startling contrasts of color: peach gold, turquoise, umber, peppermint green, navy blue inkiness. Minimally, but notably,

camouflaged by squeezed, curvilinear dabs and patches of muted hues, the centrally placed "faces" seem to drift diagonally forward through the paleness that opens up between fading strata of rich, poeticized light.

Reminiscent of intensely romantic—even cartoon Technicolor—depictions of dusk or dawn, these exquisite backgrounds appear incongruous in relation to the brutal, grim, and bizarre weaponry on display, while also heightening its presence. To a contemporary viewer, such "prettified" fades of color might also suggest the pictorial language of certain early- and mid-twentieth century iterations of mass media and popular culture—advertising, cartoons, film credits, poster art. In other words, those artisanal visual forms conceived to be immediate and eye-catching while thematically neutral: anonymous aesthetic agents of "mood" or visual tempo.

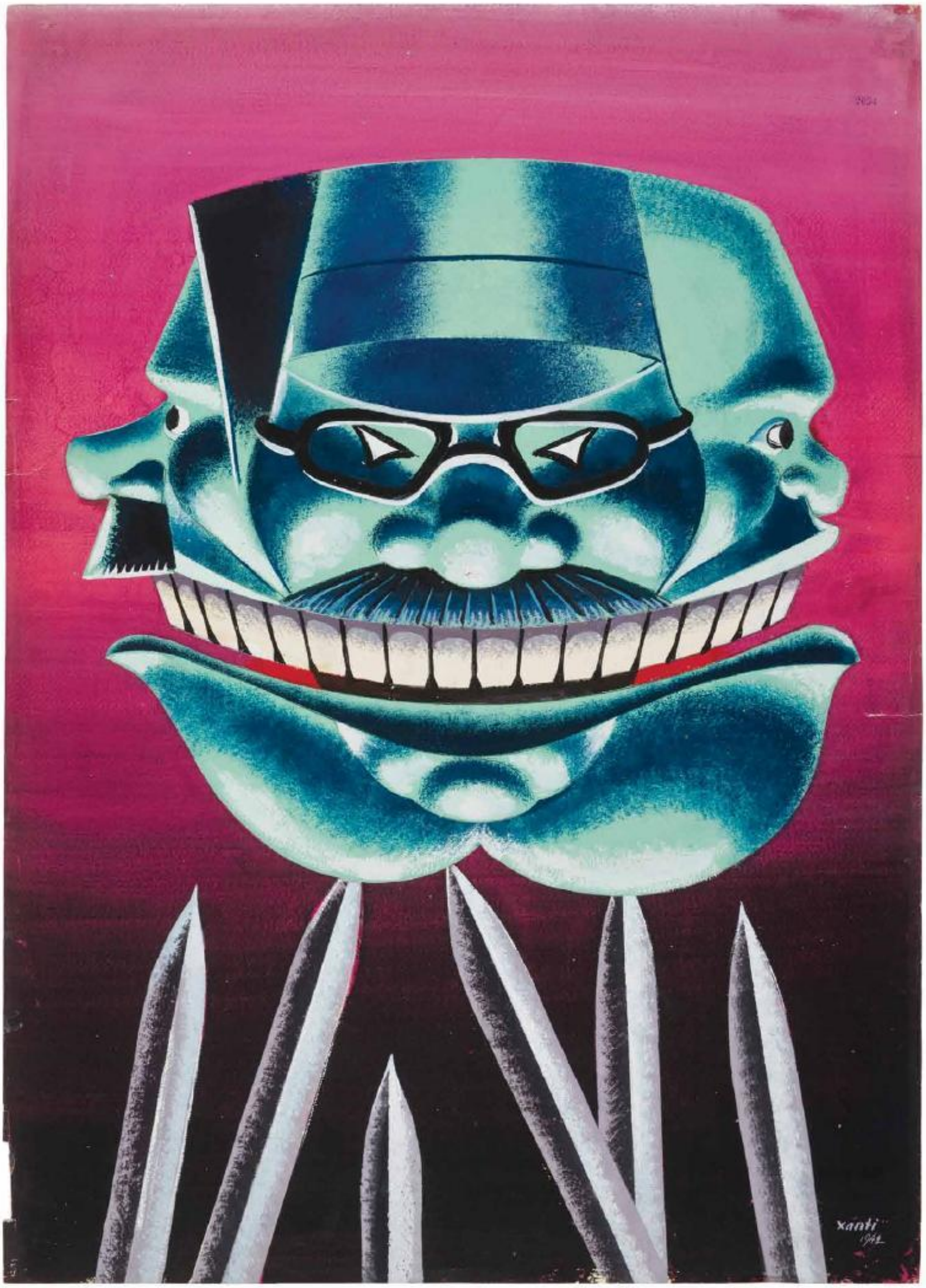
They also, on first impression, might appear to describe a sense of weightlessness; viewers might feel that they are looking at stratospheric altitudes and the beginnings of outer space. And it is this impression of stateless yet atmospheric space—a "nowhere" place within which these menacing machine-hybrids appear to be massing—that seems as well to describe a state of consciousness. If the *Faces of War* might represent psychological archetypes (and the serene, dreamlike voids within which they appear), they clearly denote ones of apprehension, fear, and existential crisis.

In their bizarre humanizing of armor, weaponry, and compressed areas of city skyscrapers—helmets, tank tracks, towers, cannons, battleships, riveted metal panels that are also heads, cheeks, noses, mouths, and eyes—the *Faces of War* comprise a succession of visual puns. They transform the machine components of warfare into menacing crypto-industrial entities—the "expressions" and countenances of which are macabre and brutal intimations of aggression: the "killing machine" given a sentient yet lifeless form, implying ruthless, targeted yet impersonal cruelty. The "efficiency" of industrial design is thus horrifically re-routed to advance the cause of mechanized combat; that which was conceived to benefit humankind is placed in the service of cold-blooded destruction.

To the contemporary viewer, these intent, tanklike presences might appear the simultaneously archaic and futuristic devices from the nightmares foretold by literary modernists, artists, musicians, and film-makers of the mid-twentieth century, in which the inevitable destination of technological progress and mass industrialization is a new and devastating form of warfare—realized first in the atrocities of Hitler's Holocaust and then by the threat of Atomic annihilation during the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s. As such (and as seemingly endorsed by Schawinsky's grotesque caricature subtitled *Three Green War Faces*) [PL. 17], these robot weapon-machines appear to be emissaries of totalitarian and fascist regimes. The mutation of technology and industrial design to service war and armaments is revealed as modernism's shadow-side.

W. H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles" (1952), exemplifies in poetry the humanist despair in the face of an increasingly industrialized warfare so keenly present in Schawinsky's drawings. In Auden's verse, with its ironically ceremonial title, Hephaestos, the blacksmith of the gods, reveals to Thetis, the mother of Achilles, not the heroic glory of combat but the soul-crushing horror of a new, modernist battle that is all the more terrifying and tragic for being conducted with the depressed and dreary impersonality of a bureaucratic machine age: "a million eyes, a million boots in line" are sent off to war ("to grief") while "[n]o one was cheered and nothing was discussed." In this terrible vision, war is remote-managed by anonymous voices on loudspeakers and mobilized on dull, hot days across empty and featureless hinterlands. Such presentiment and such a state of consciousness seems to be made chillingly eloquent by the *Faces of War*. Of the titled drawings, *The Enemy*, *The Aviator*, and *The Admiral*, all 1942, for example, deploy their visual puns in an agitprop manner that merges irony, dark humor, and the Jungian "shadow" of the modernist imagination. The faces seem to grin and smile, but with dead eyes–primitive terminators in a lineage of war machines that have taken up residence in the collective consciousness of the mass age.

These drawings might seem, in the lingering twilight of our post-modern period—when cultural history can be perceived as a database of visual and thematic styles—to conjure an aesthetic



PL. 17
Untitled (Three Green War Faces), 1942

phantasm in which received ideas of Europe and "the modern" are powerfully combined. (In this, the pacifist descendants of the *Faces of War* might include the *mensch-maschine* or "man-machine" robot musicians conceived by the German synthesizer group Kraftwerk in the early 1970s.) To contemporary eyes, archaic visions of the future or the modern (further refined by Kraftwerk into a super-stylized form of nostalgia for technological innovation, from neon to nuclear power to computing) appear to possess a particular aesthetic and cultural-historical piquancy: a sense of pre-history in which the concerns of our own age are rehearsed in the visual language of what is effectively the now-vanished civilization of the early and middle years of the twentieth century. We might now view Schawinsky's *Faces of War*, along with his Head Drawings, through such a filter of cultural knowingness and find their strangeness and portent not merely intact but intensified.

Made contemporaneously with the *Faces of War*, Schawinsky's Head Drawings likewise explore the hybridization of objects and humanoid forms by way of visual puns on materials and countenances. Executed in graphite on paper, their drawing style combines soft and sharp mark-making to create images that are elegant, intricate, delicate, and assertive. In *Walls and Stones*, 1942 [PL. 18], a chaotically geometrical and angular assemblage of bricks, stones, and blocks comprise a head turned to the side, whose "eyes" appear to gaze with imperious gravity toward an unseen far horizon.

Crystal Head, 1943, *Rope Head*, 1944, *Rocky Fellow*, 1944, and *Lumber Room*, 1946, can all be seen as variations on this exercise in the word play of visual language: personages created from arrangements of unlikely materials that grant sentient human form and personality to these "heads" made of inanimate items. Unsurprisingly, strangeness predominates, and a sense of the absurd or surreal, as opposed to the simply comic. In another drawing from the series, a young woman's inclined head and coiffure are created from tangles and strips of ribbon; in yet another, from jewelry (pendants and bracelets suspended from an opened hand); by contrast, swept rubbish—including a light bulb, a broken bottle, a discarded shoe, and the end of a comb—become the half profile of a balding man; and so on.

PL. 18
Walls and Stones, 1942

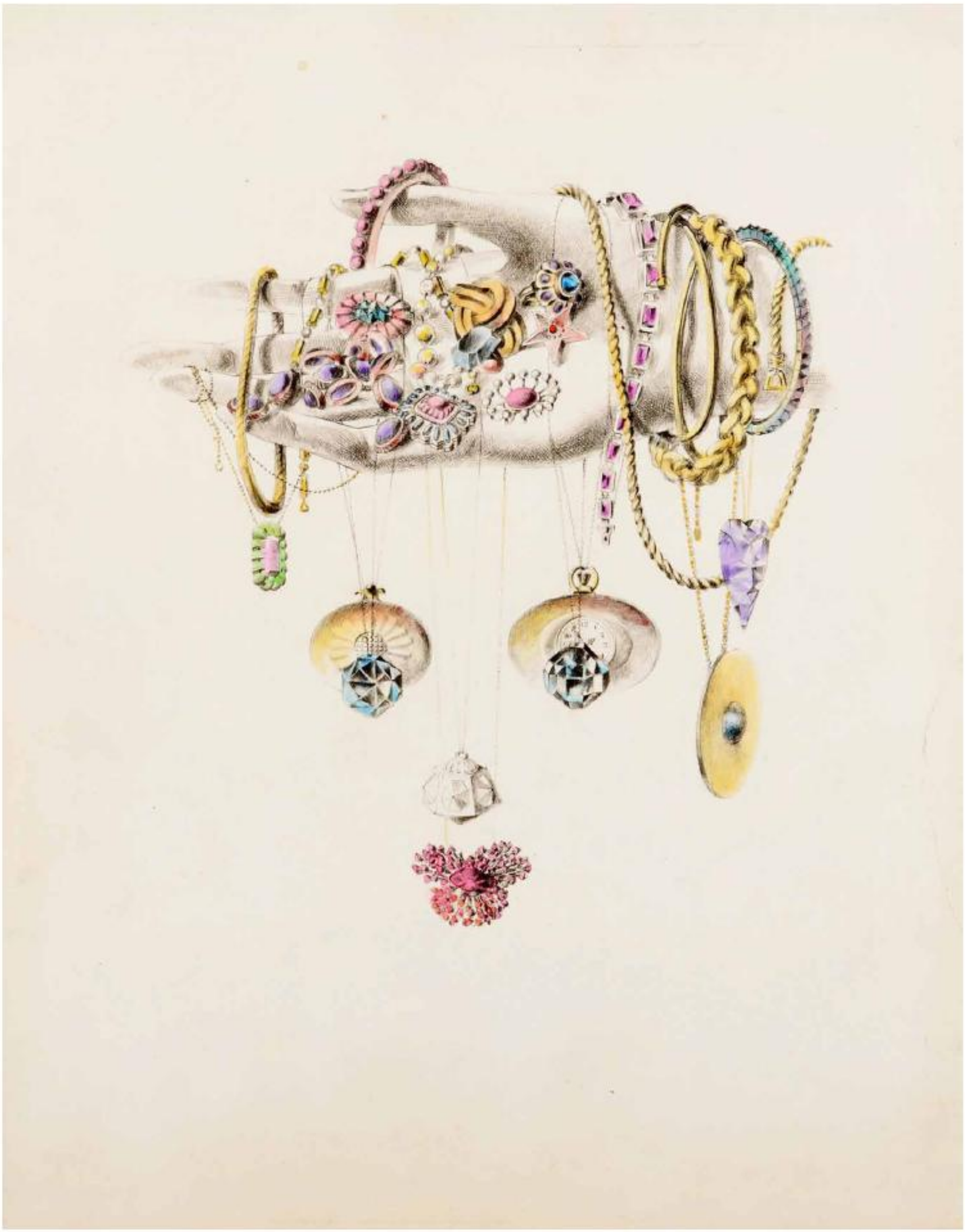
There is a wit and artistry to these drawings which, in addition to their softly surreal strangeness, appears to locate their temperament and visual appeal between imaginative inventiveness, the fantastical (three birds in the leafless, etiolated and upward reaching branches of a grove of five trees become the head of a smiling man) [PL. 12], and the manner in which we, as viewers, both look at art and see the world around us. Indeed, it is the spectator who completes the imagistic circuitry of these *Faces of War* and Head Drawings—reflexively "solving" each visual game, being drawn, in the process, into the consciousness of each dreamlike personage. As such, these drawings might seem like exercises in cognition as much as in drawing itself—proposing simultaneous games, prompts, and insights, part fantasy and part bravura excursions into technique. To succeeding generations raised on mass pop culture, Schawinsky's drawings from the first half of the 1940s might appear like the dream or nightmare consciousness of modernism, nuanced with touches of rococo elegance.

Were we to know nothing more about them, their context or intention, we would nonetheless recognize a sensibility that is at once playful, reflective upon the modern condition of humankind, and drawn from a strangely lit crease within the pictorial imagination: elegance and doom, twin poles of the modern age.

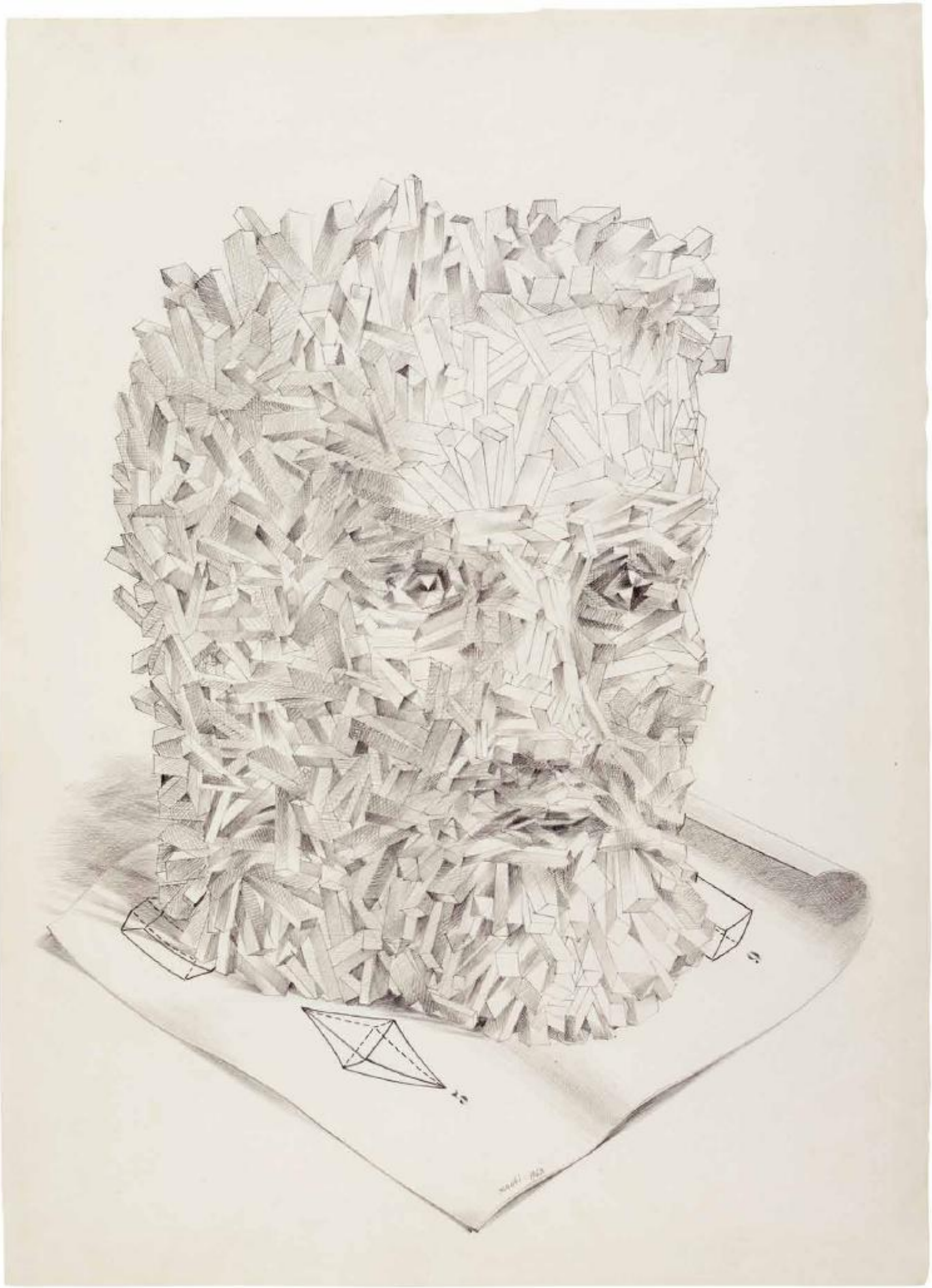
Head Drawings

PL. 19
The Soldier, 1941–44

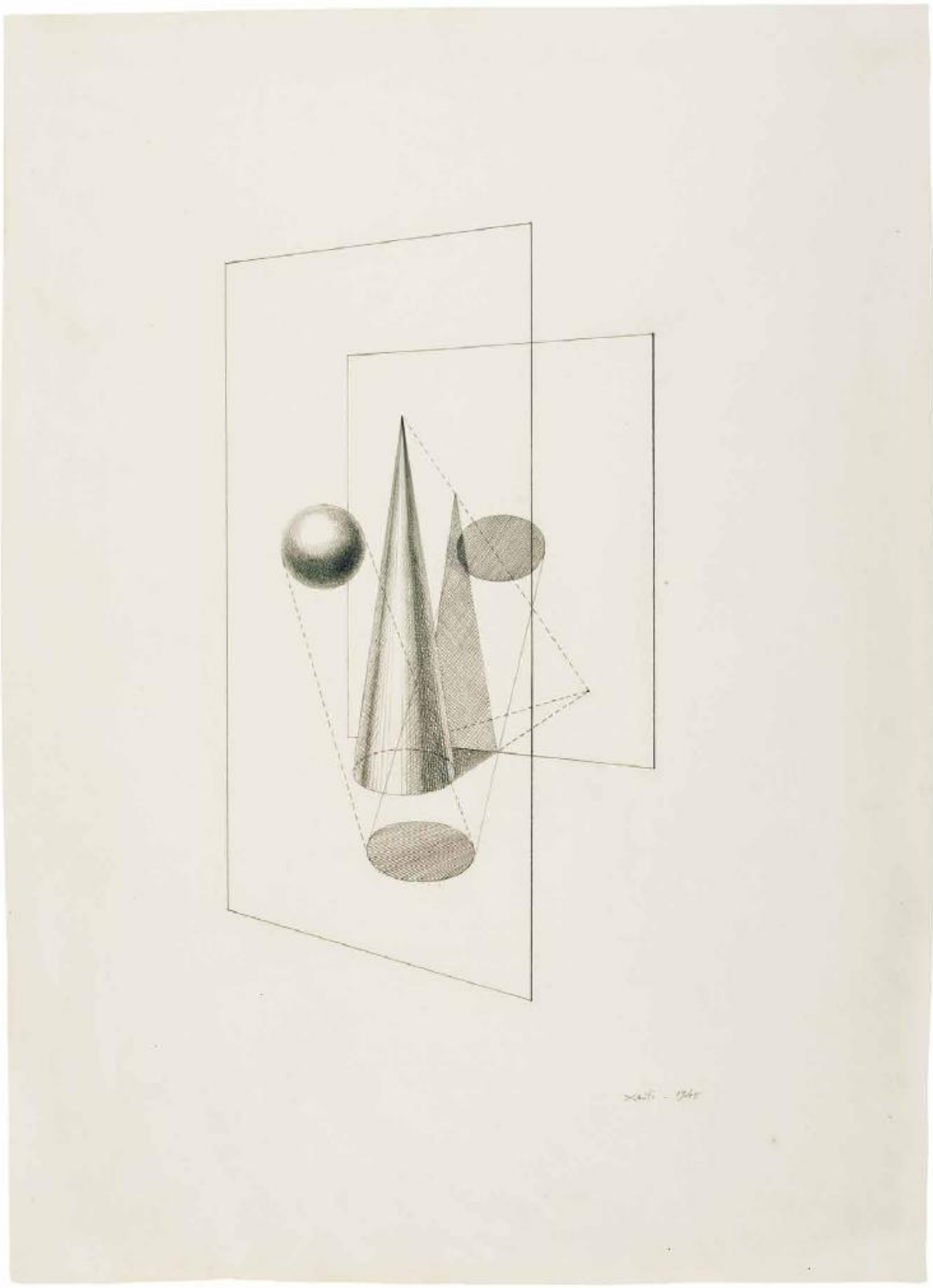
PL. 20
Jewelry Head, 1941–44



PL. 21
Jewelry Head, n.d.



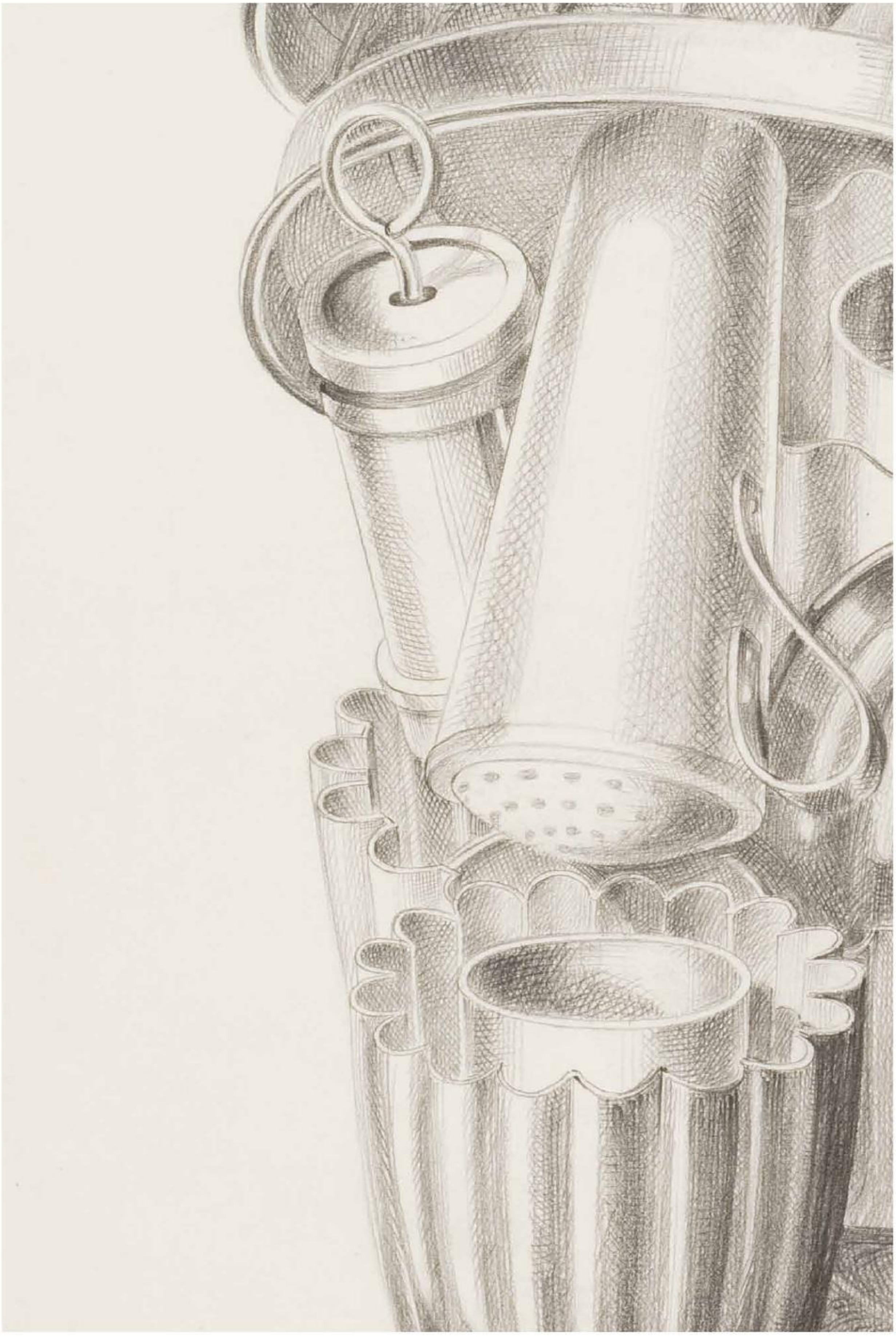
PL. 22
Crystal Head, 1943

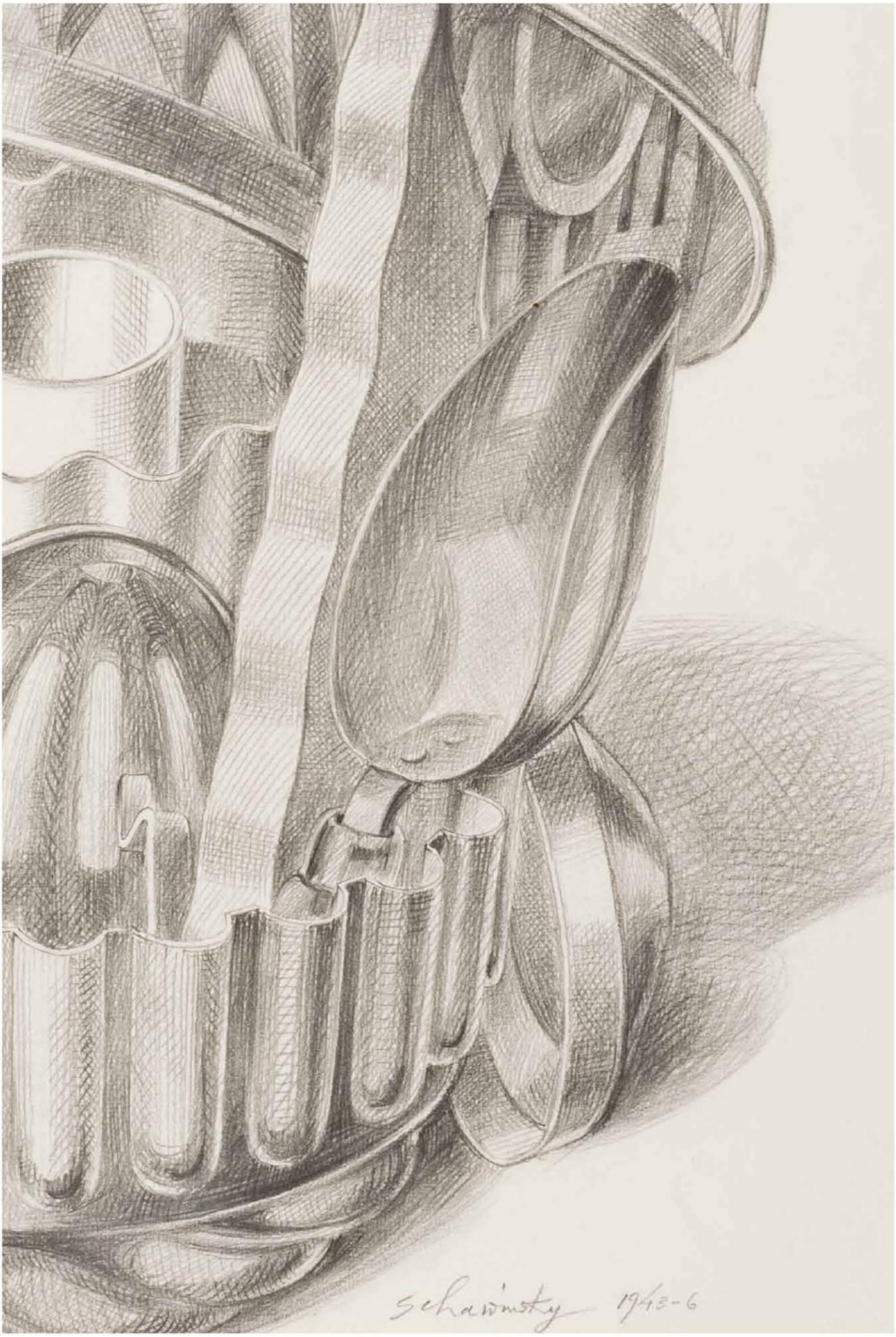


PL. 23
Euclidian, 1943

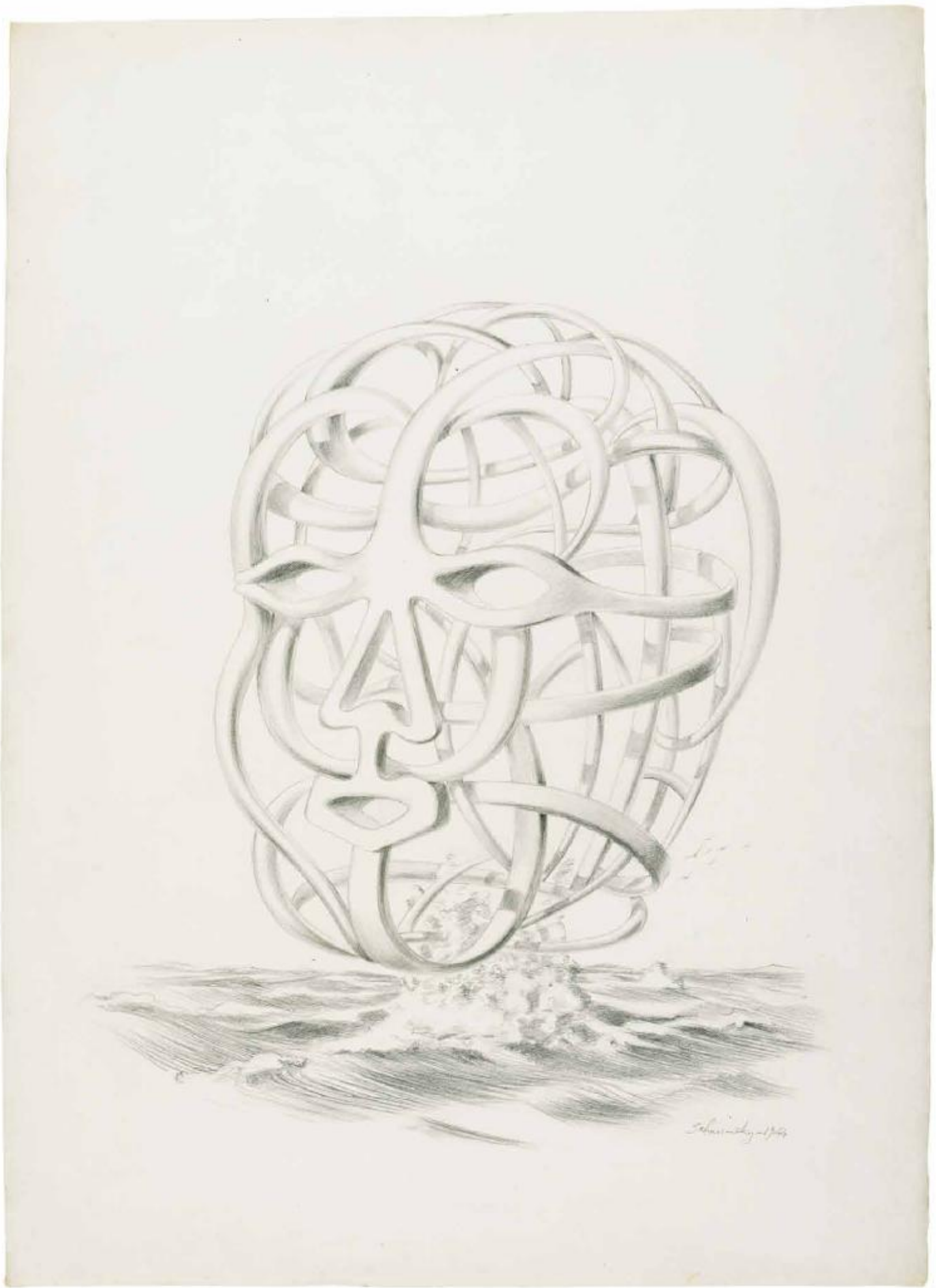
PL. 24
Rope Head, 1944

PL. 25
Domestic, 1943–46

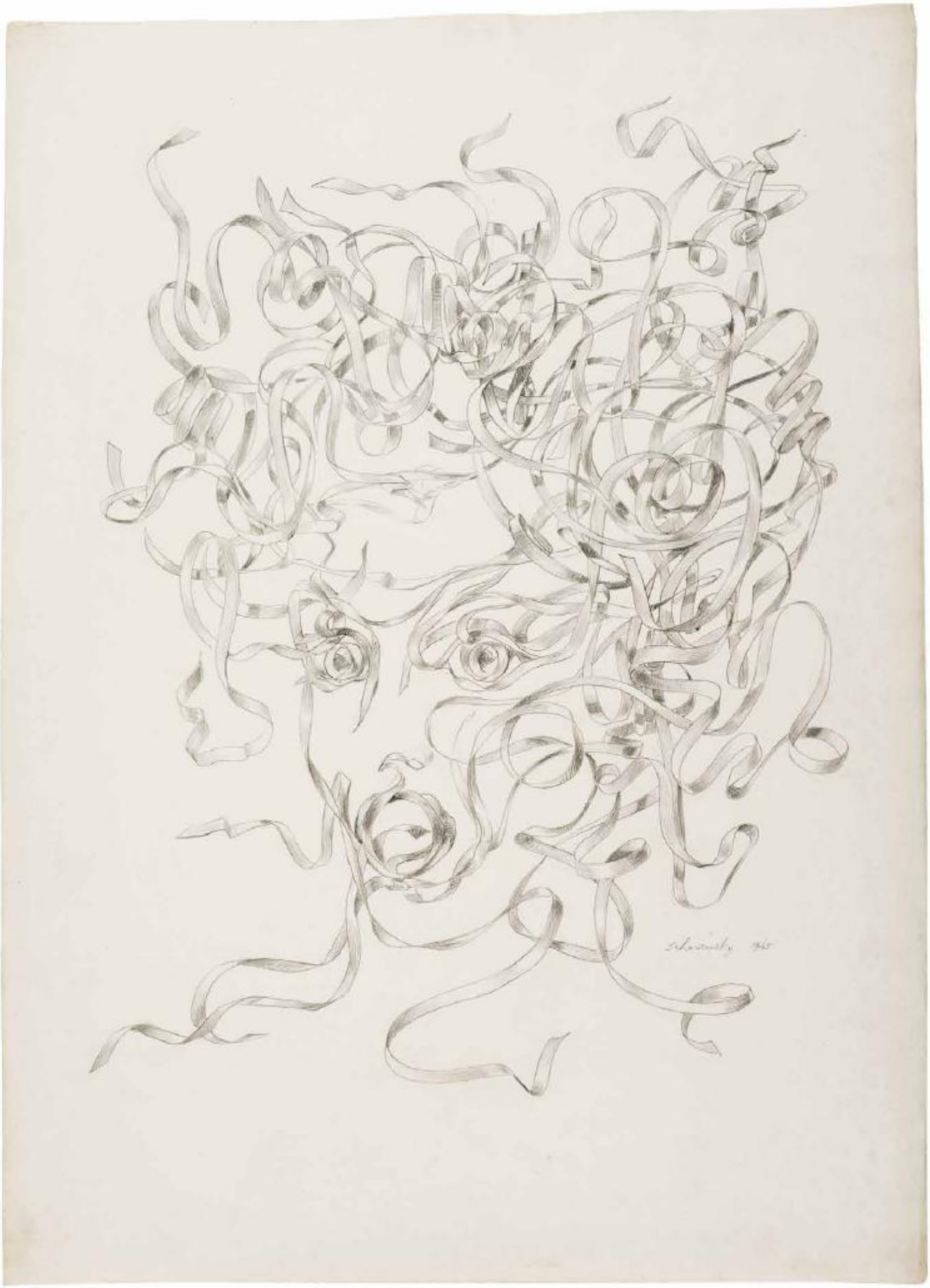



Schawinsky 1943-6

PL. 26
Rocky Fellow, 1944

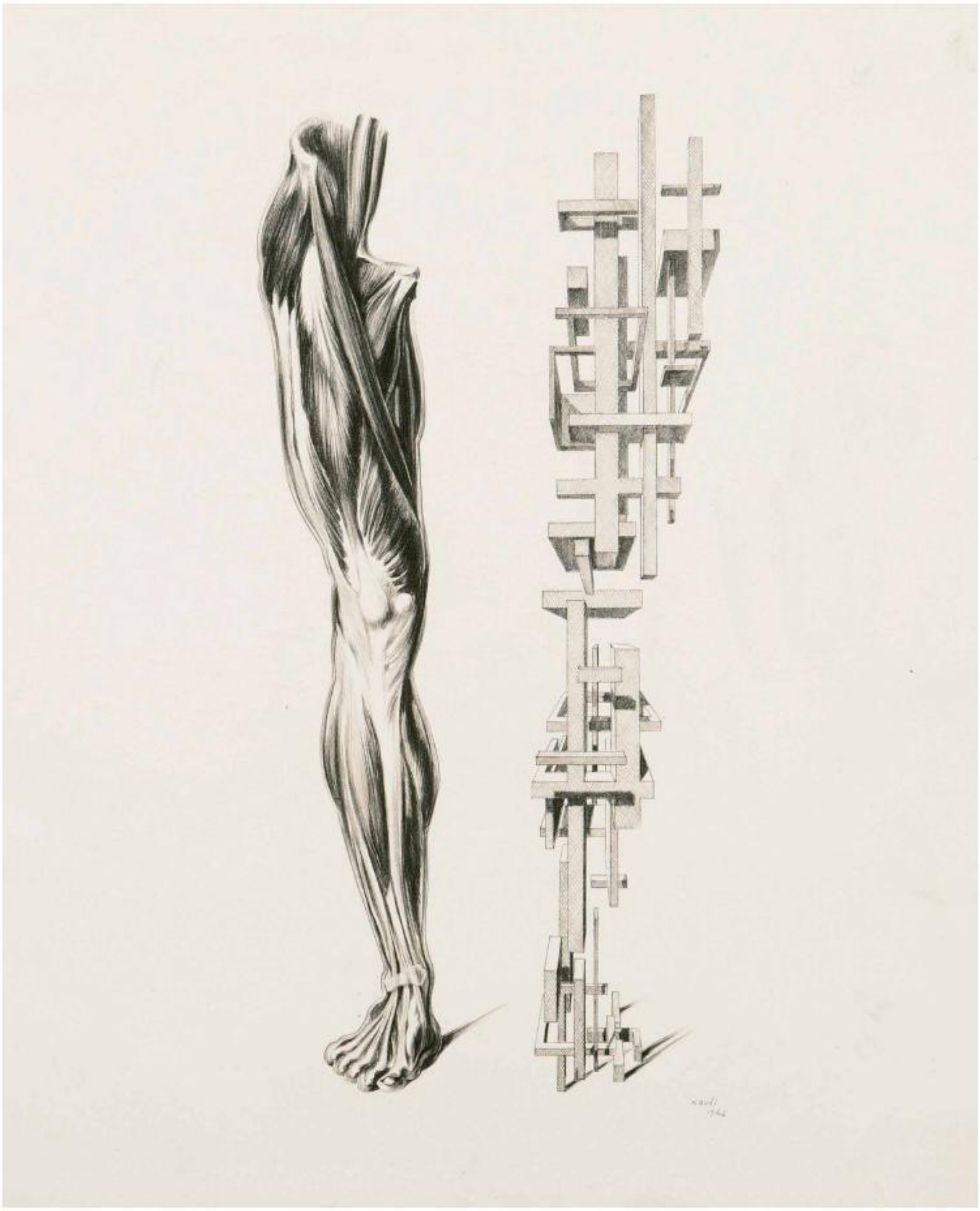


PL. 27
Above the Waters, 1944

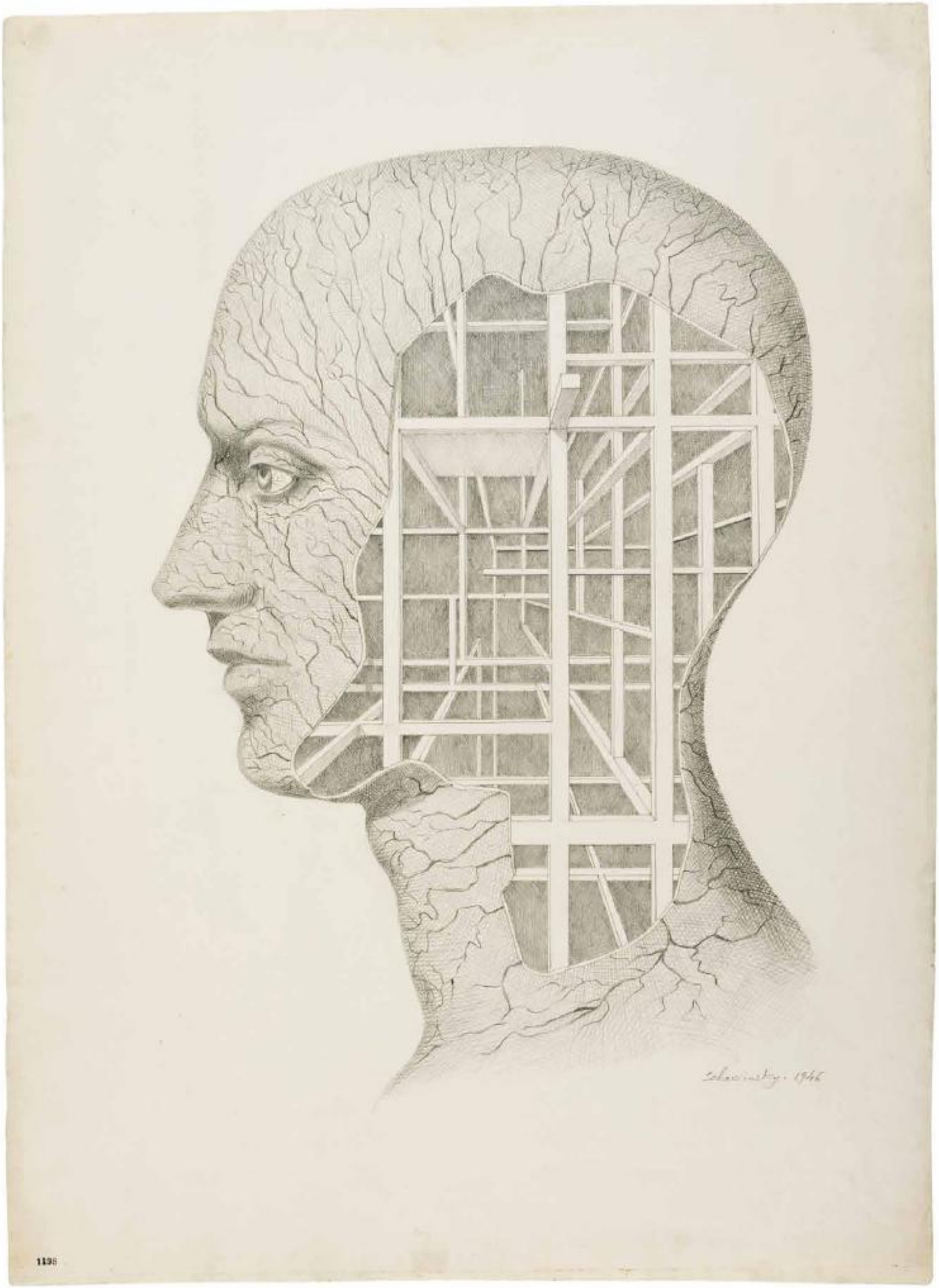


PL. 28
Medusa, 1945

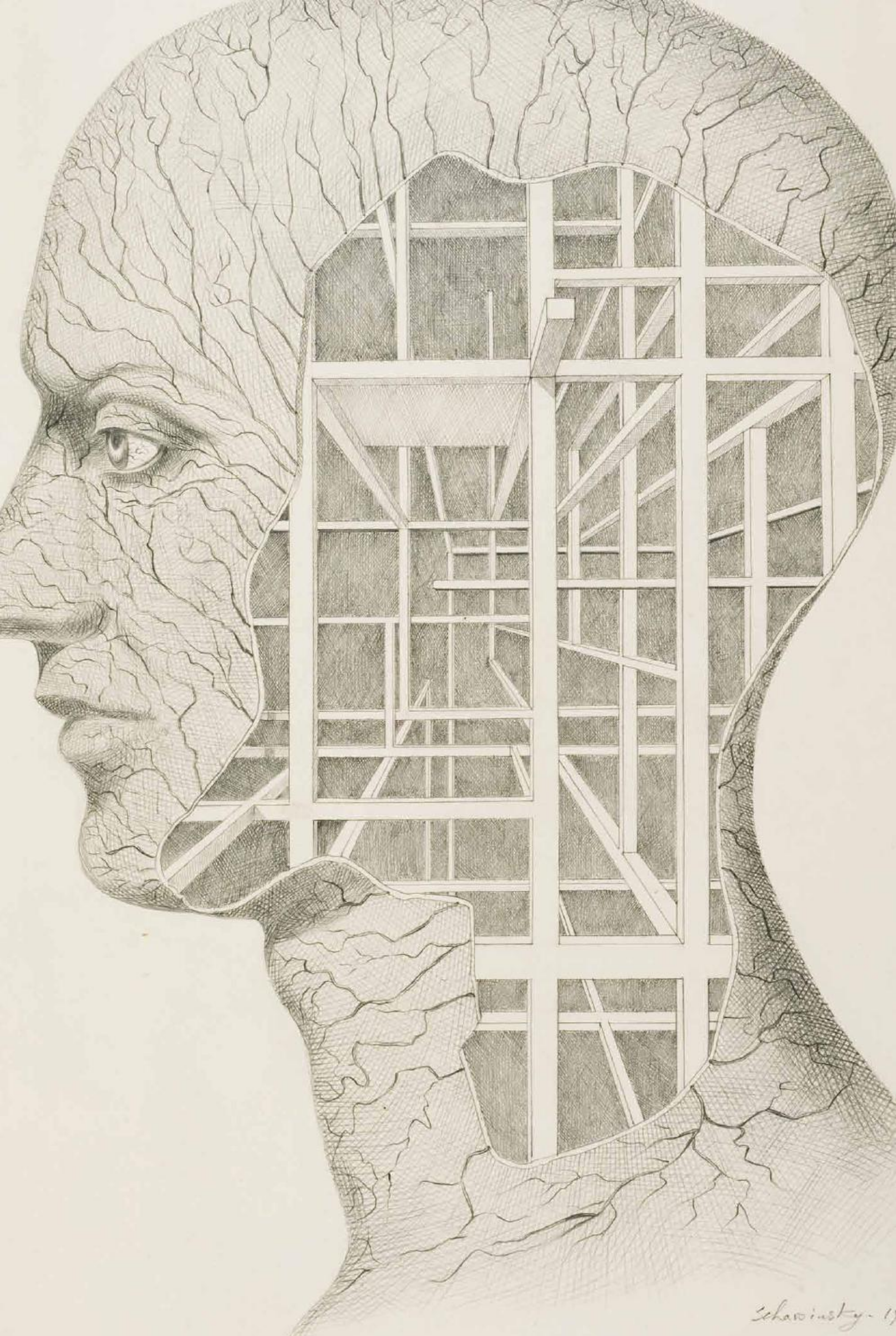
PL. 29
Water Man, 1945

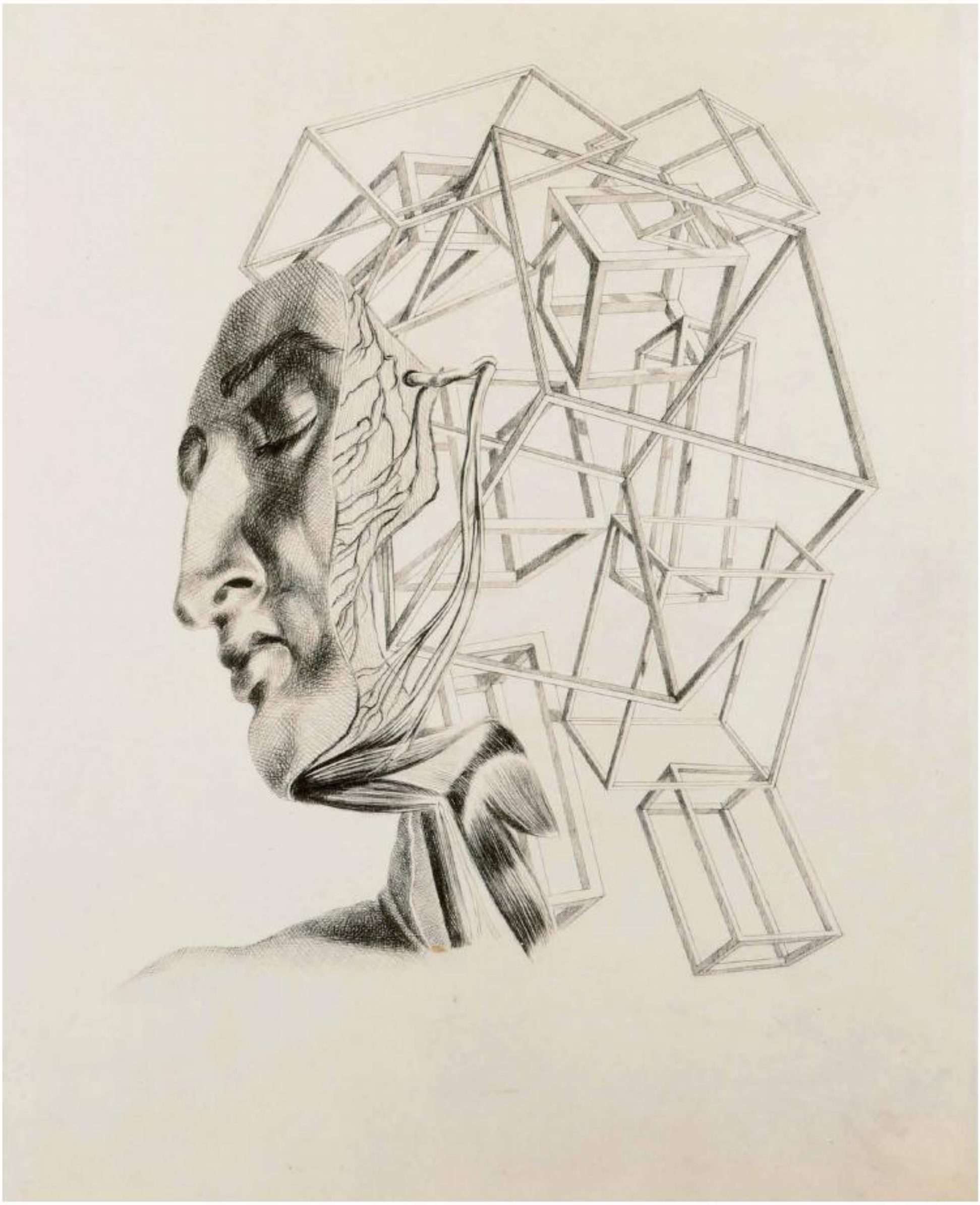


PL. 30
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, 1946

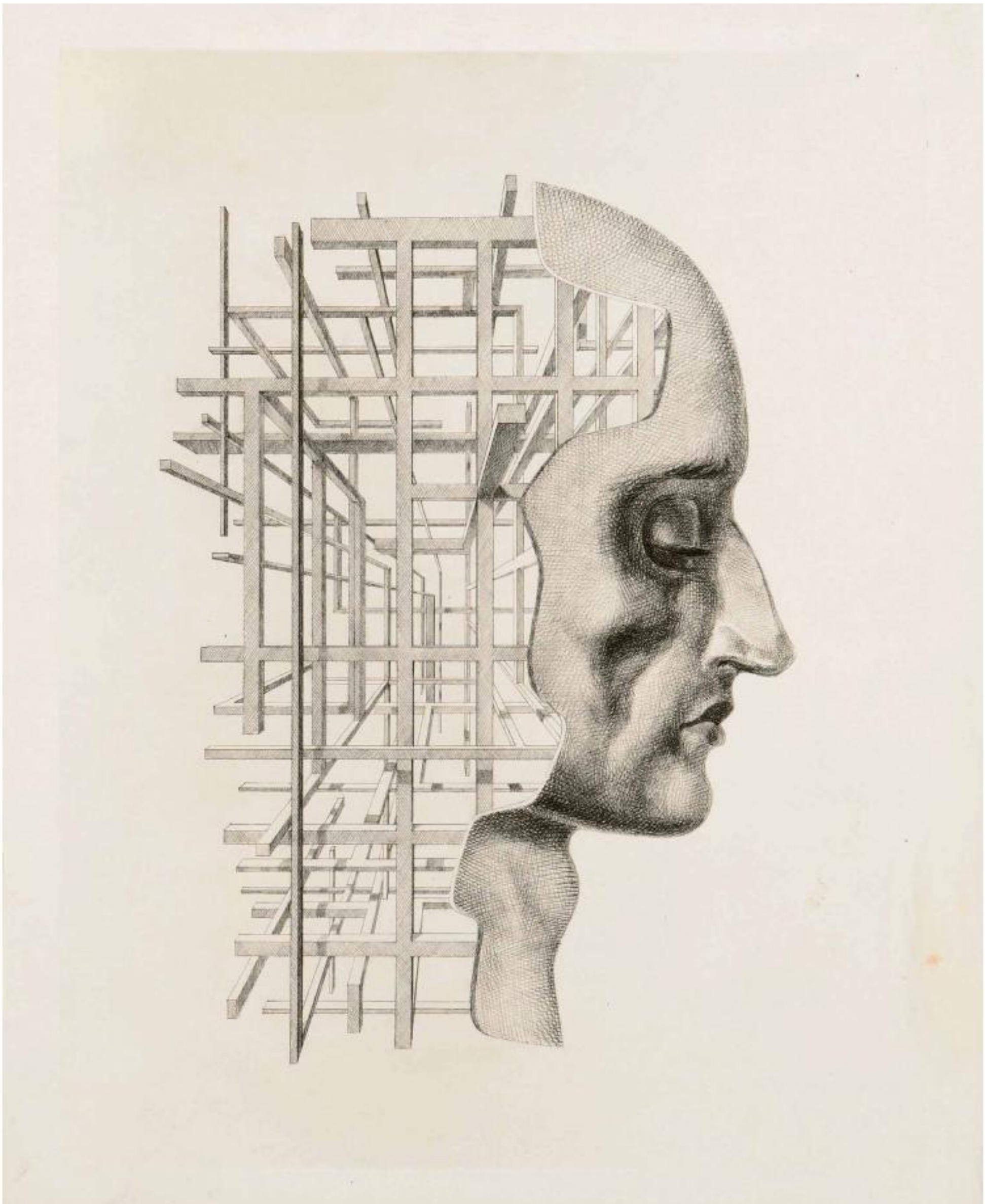


PL. 31
Lumber Room, 1946



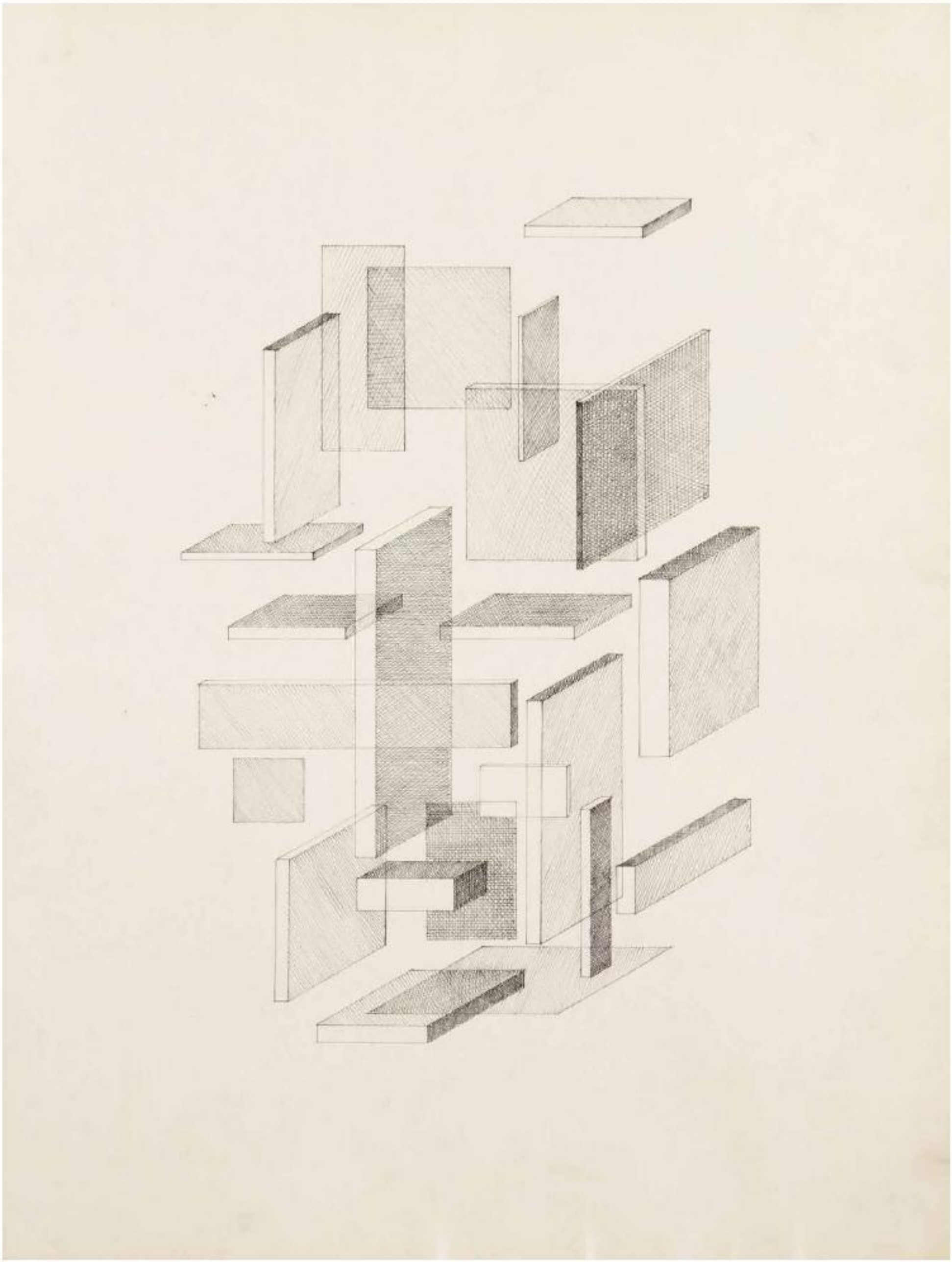


PL. 32
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s



PL. 33
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s

PL. 34
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s

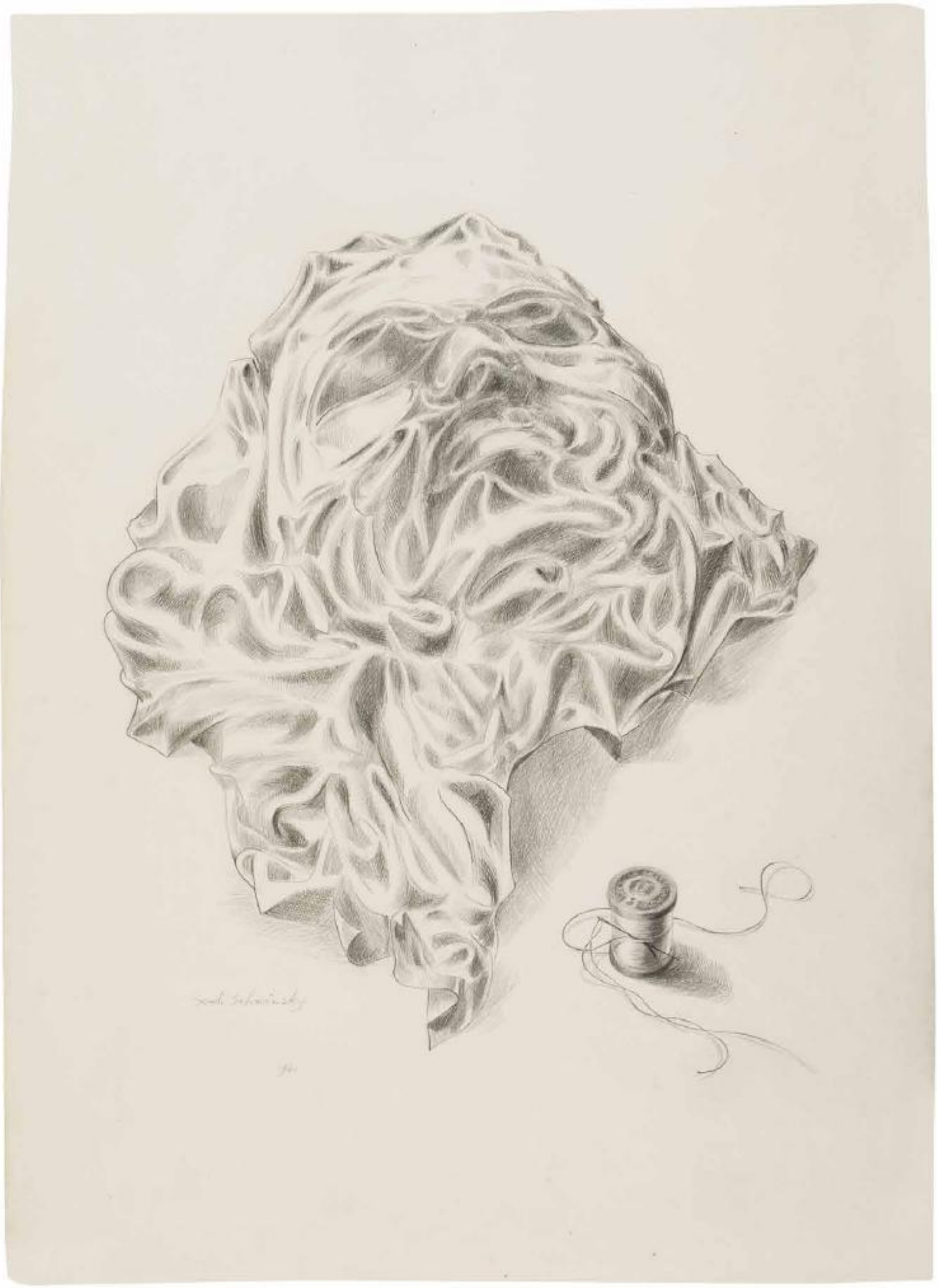


PL. 35
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s

PL. 36
Laundry Man, 1944

PL. 37
Towel Head, 1945

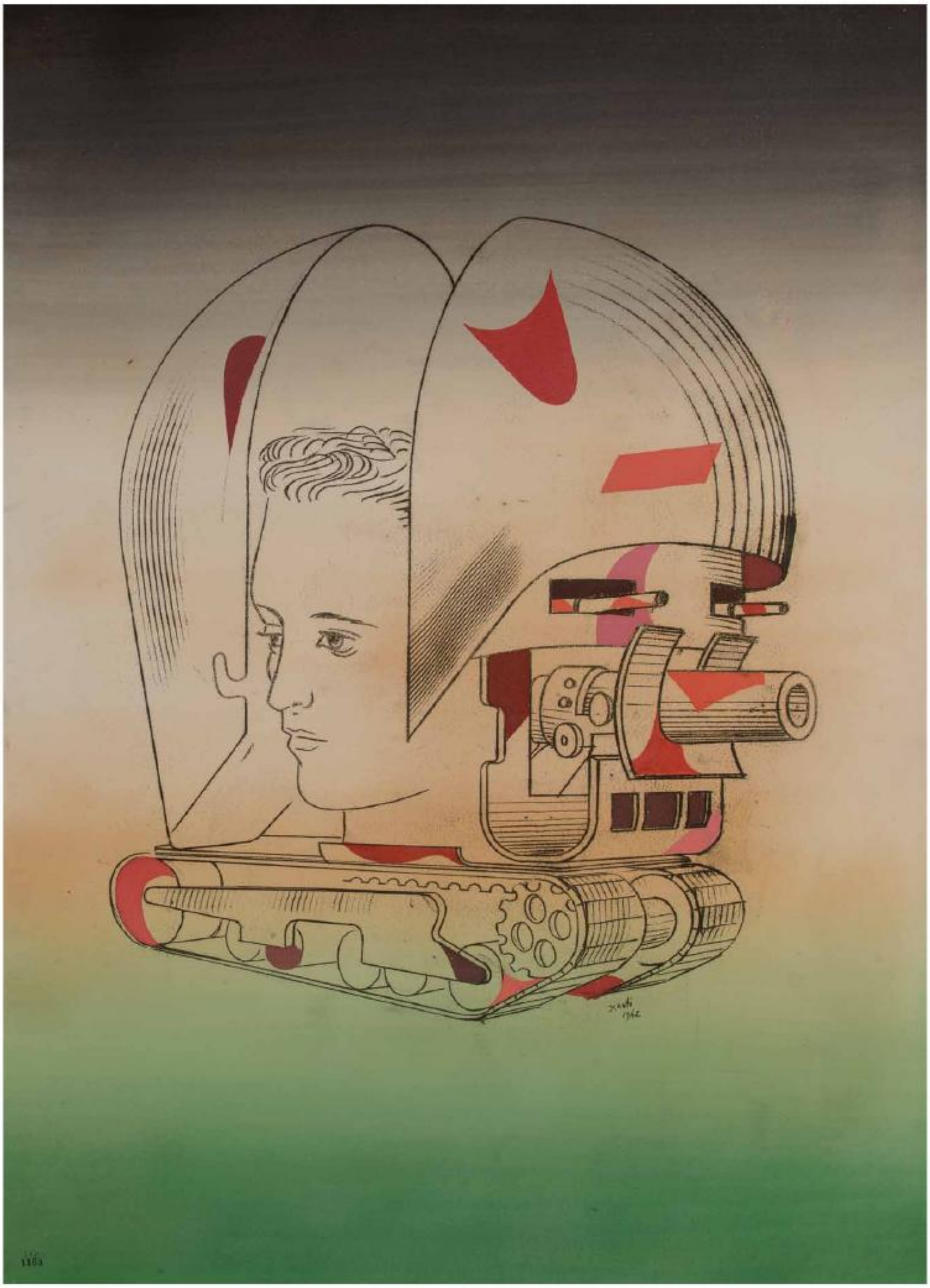
xanti
1945



PL. 38
Sewing Hour, 1941

PL. 39
Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing, c. 1940s

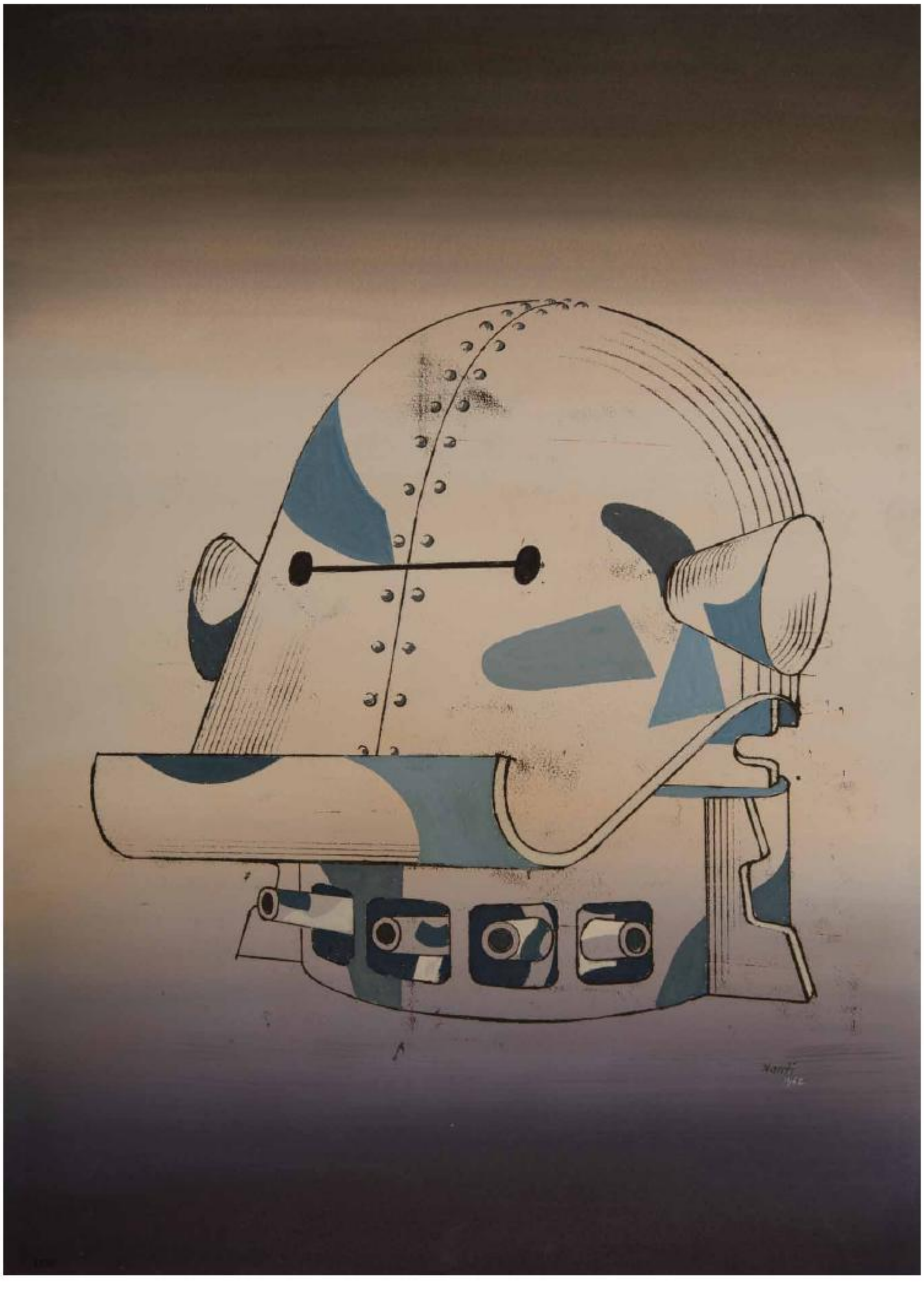
Faces of War



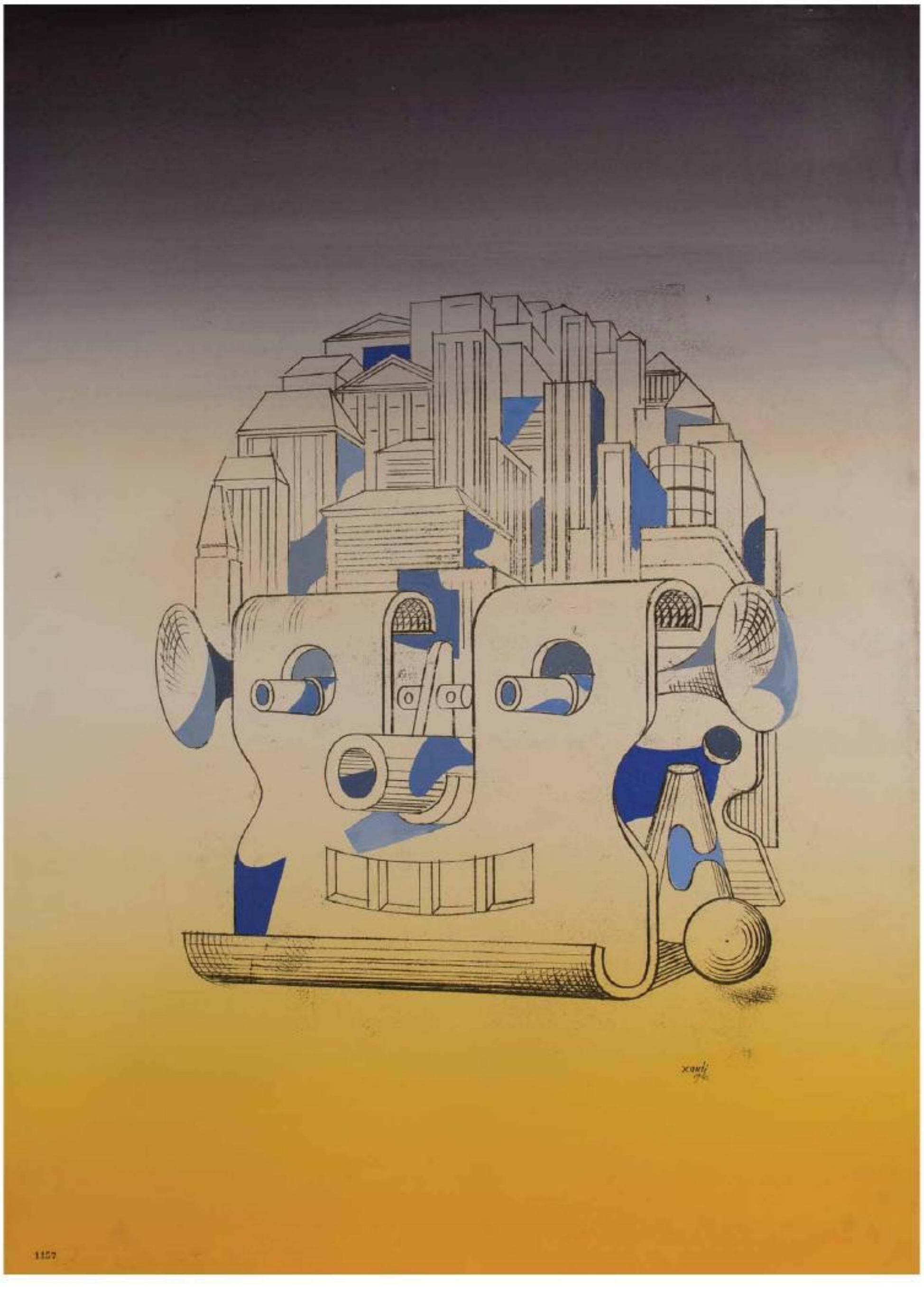
PL. 40
Soldier's Rest (Faces of War), 1942

PL. 41
The Home Guard (Faces of War), 1942

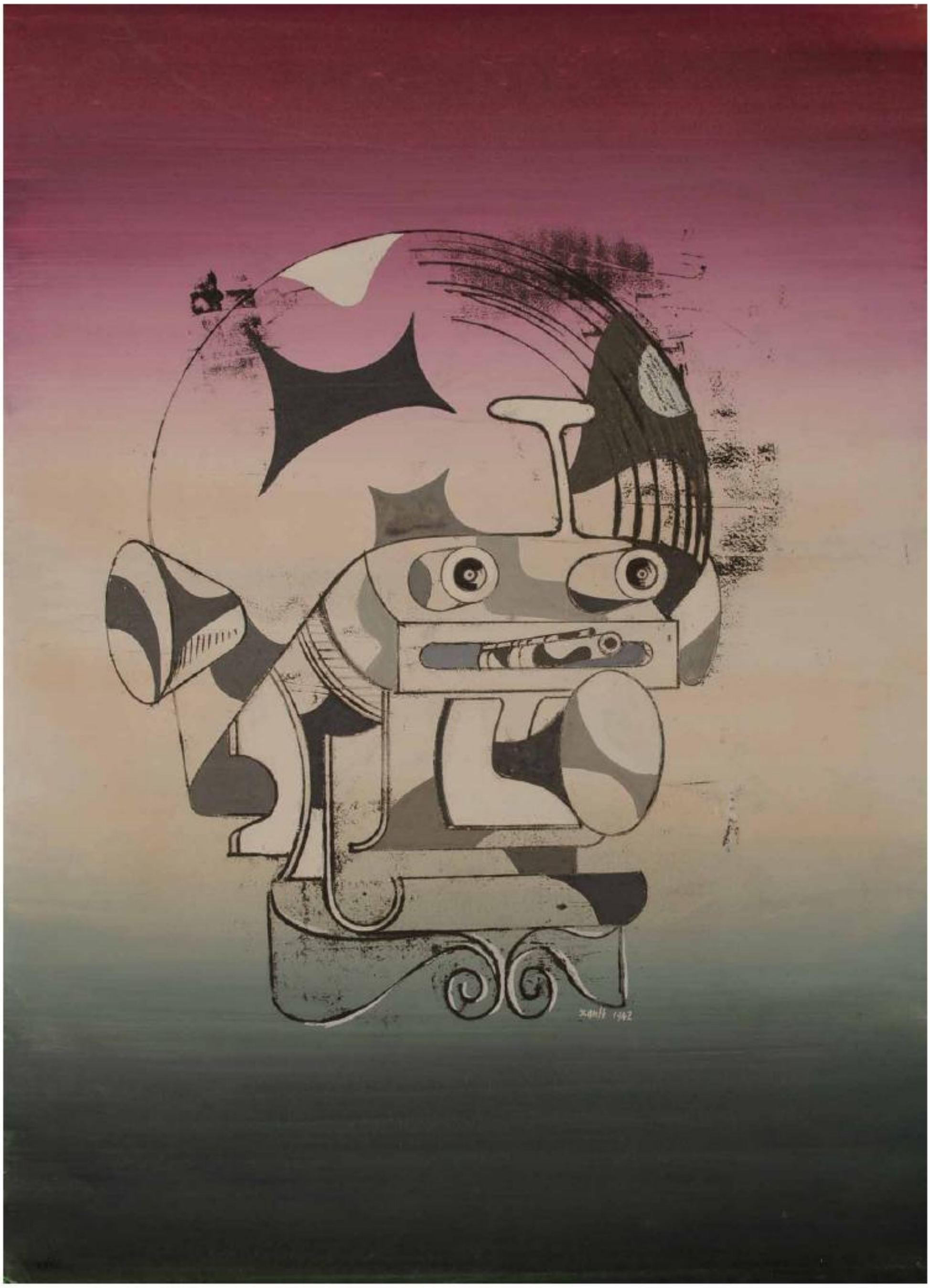
PL. 42
The Admiral (Faces of War), 1942



PL. 43
The Enemy (Faces of War), 1942

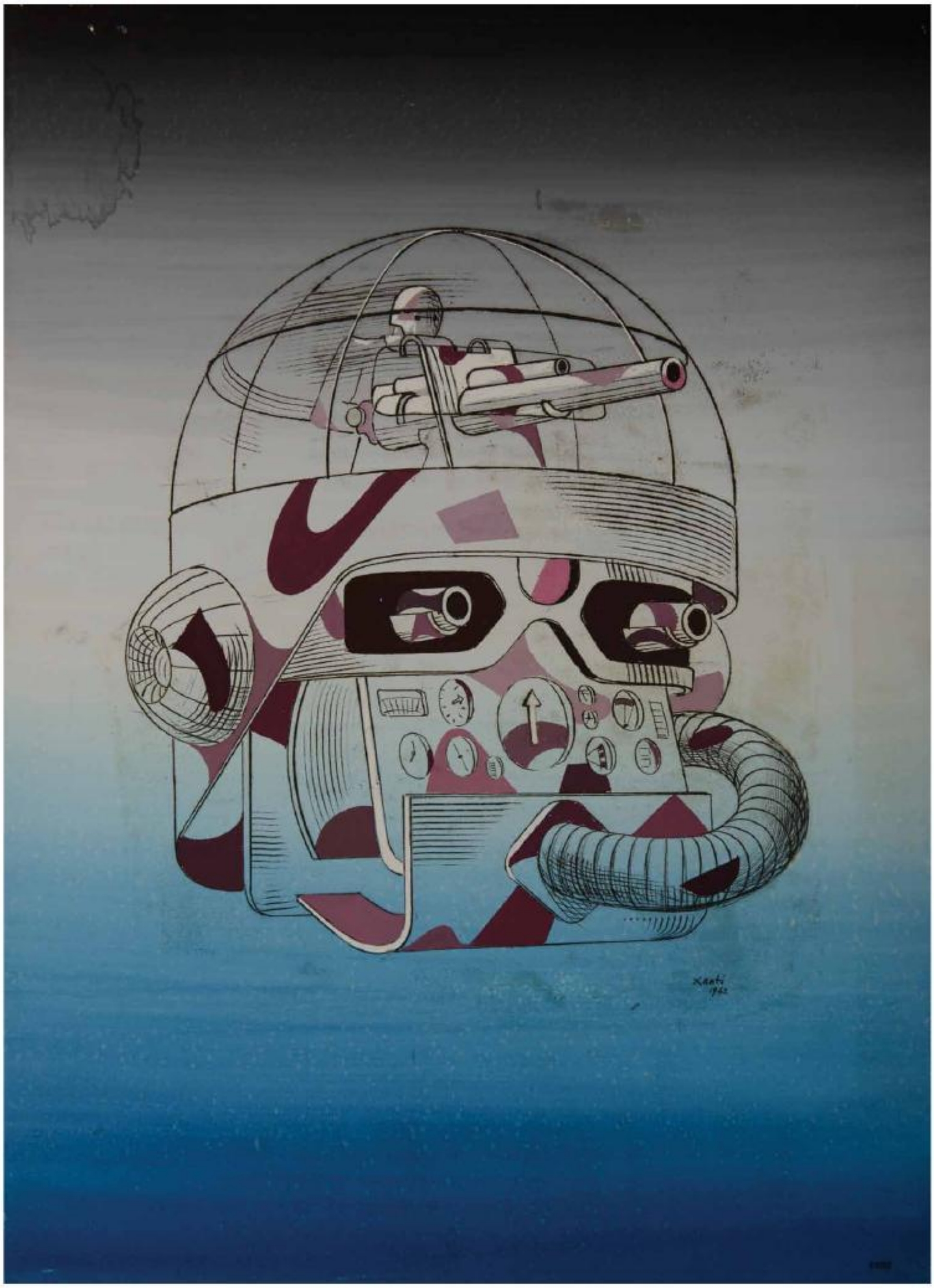


PL. 44
The Defender (Faces of War), 1942

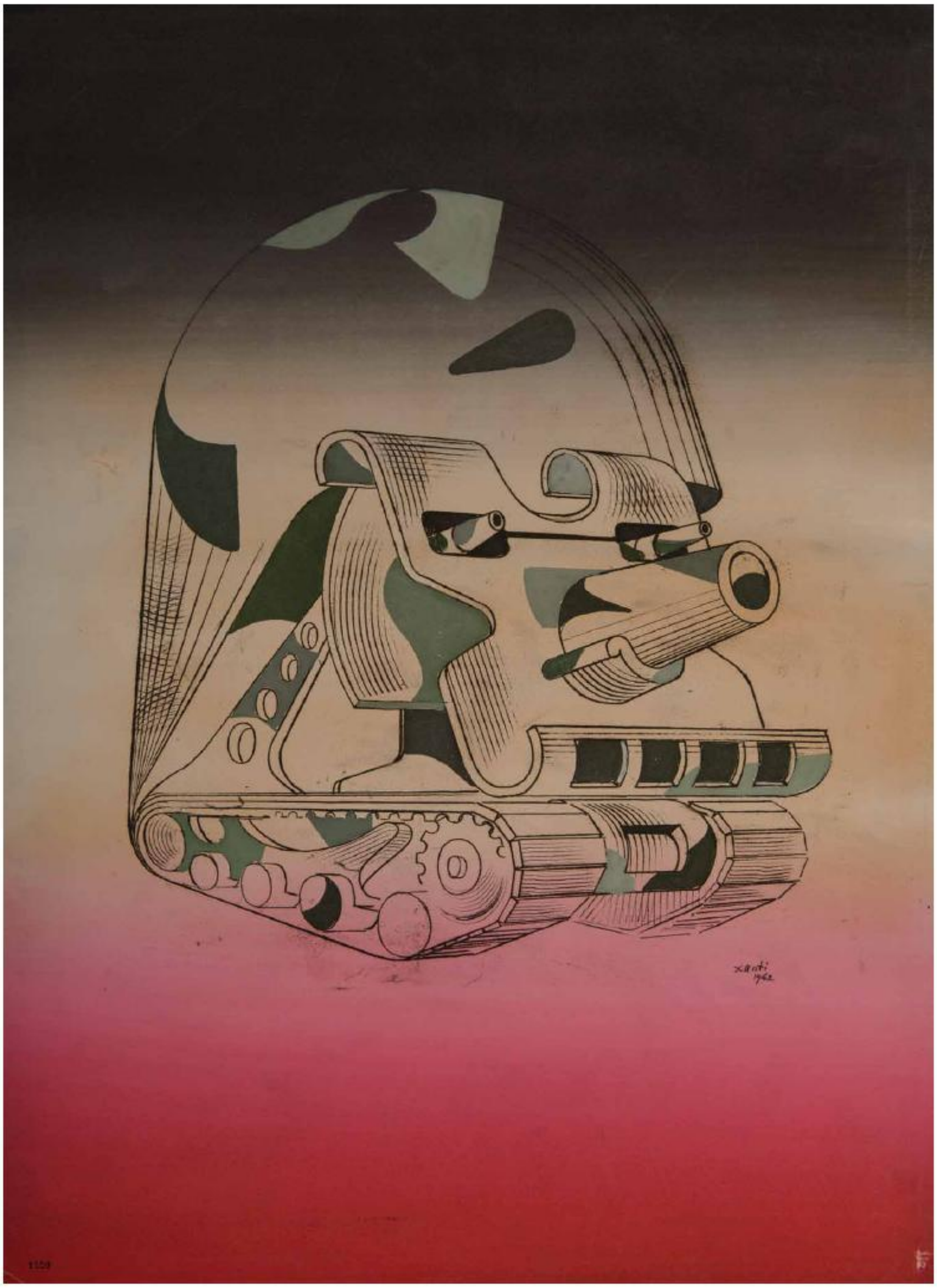


PL. 45
The General (Faces of War), 1942

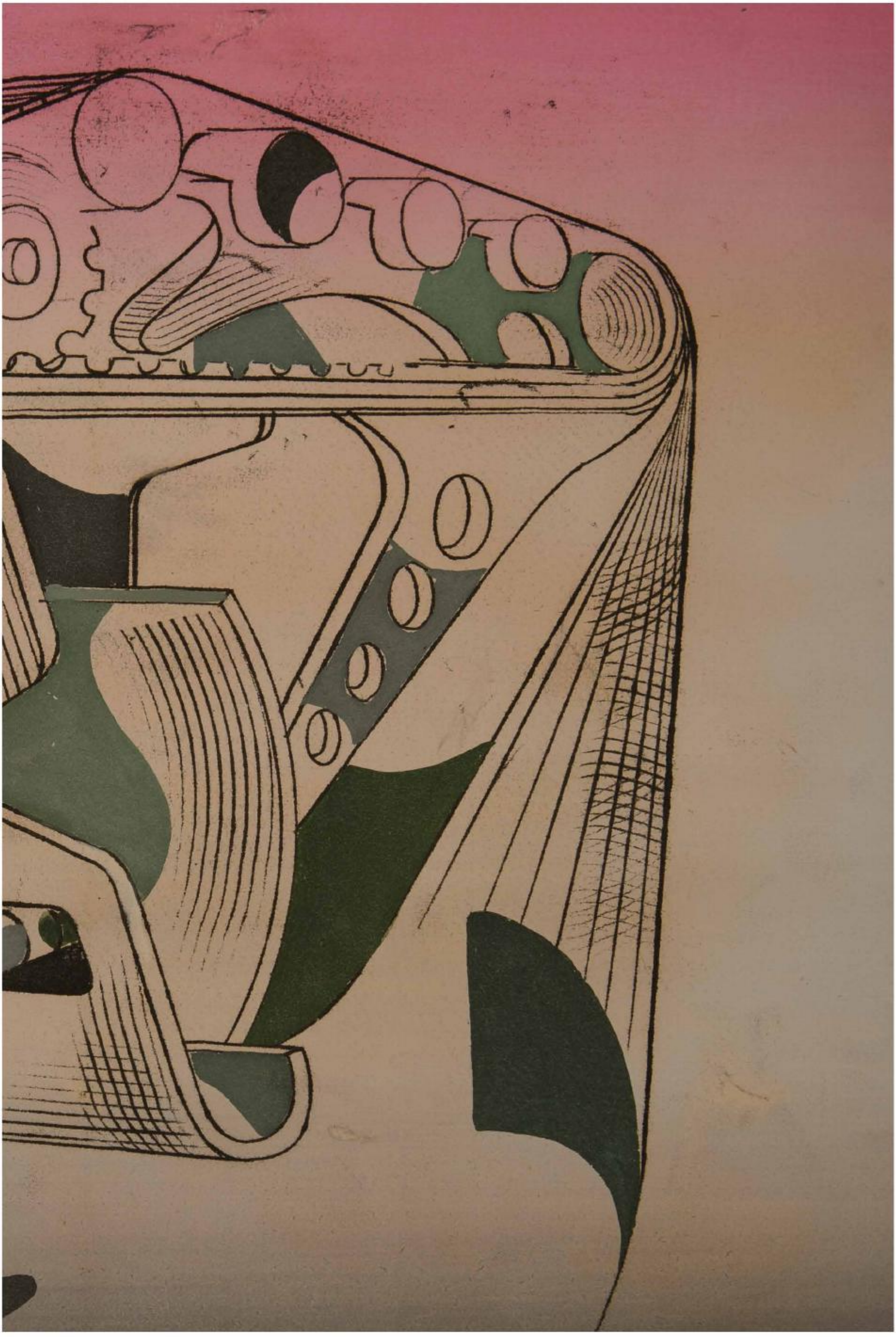

xanti 1942



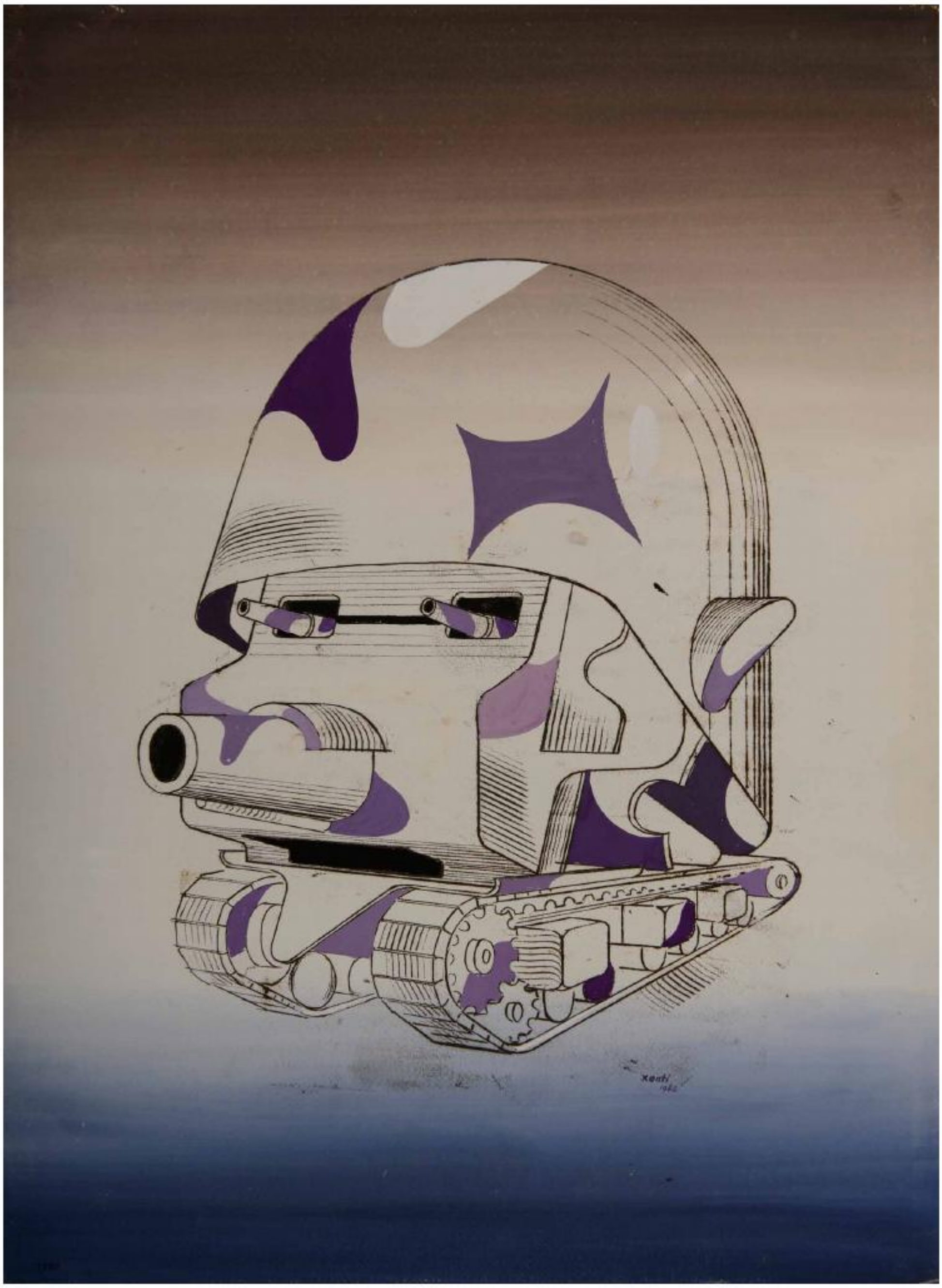
PL. 46
The Aviator (Faces of War), 1942



PL. 47
The Warrior (Faces of War), 1942



PL. 48
The Soldier (Faces of War), 1942



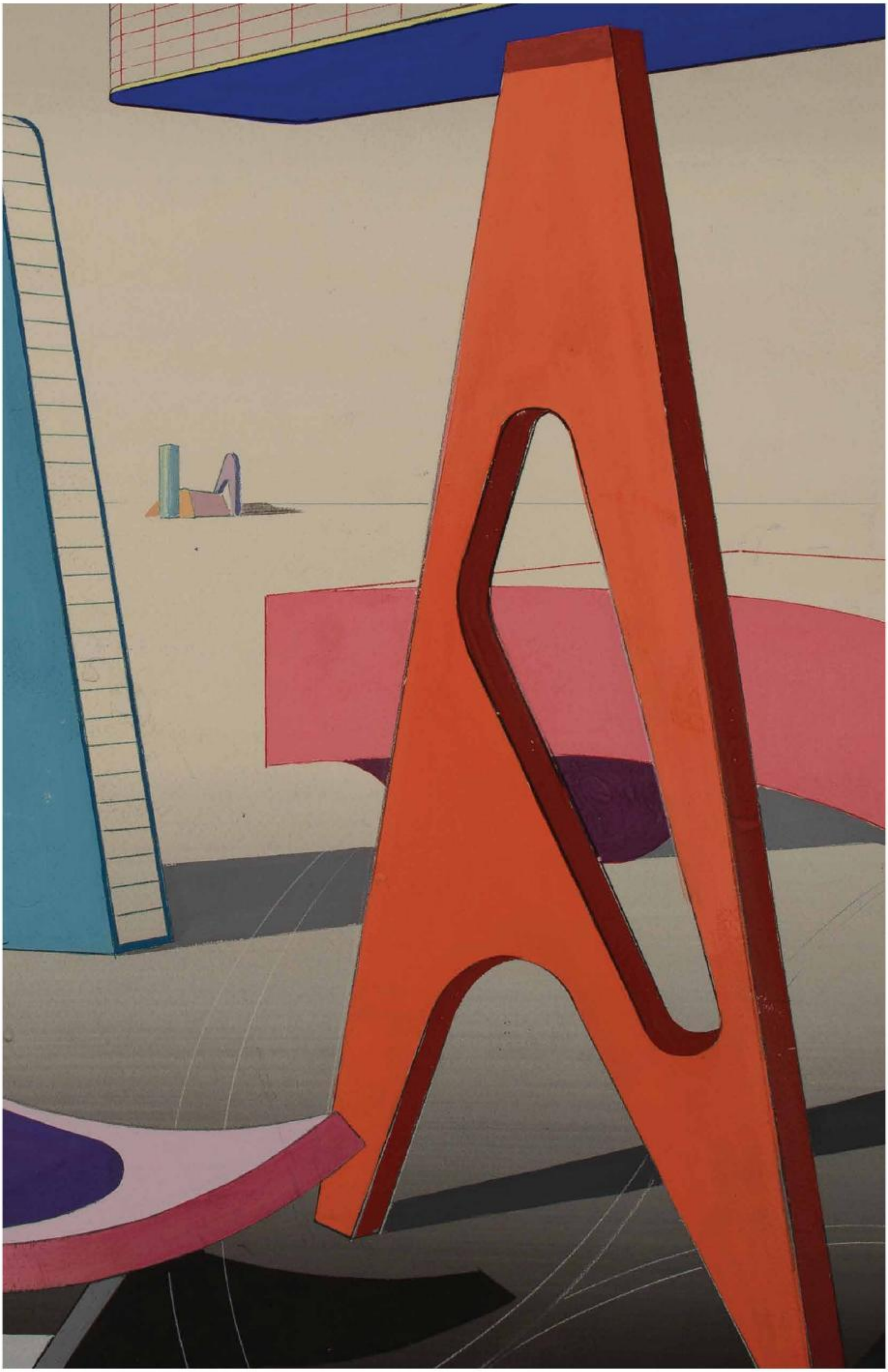
PL. 49
The Gunner (Faces of War), 1942

PL. 50
Man-o-War, 1942

Related Works

PL. 51
Architectural Design, 1945

PL. 52
Untitled (Architecture), 1940s

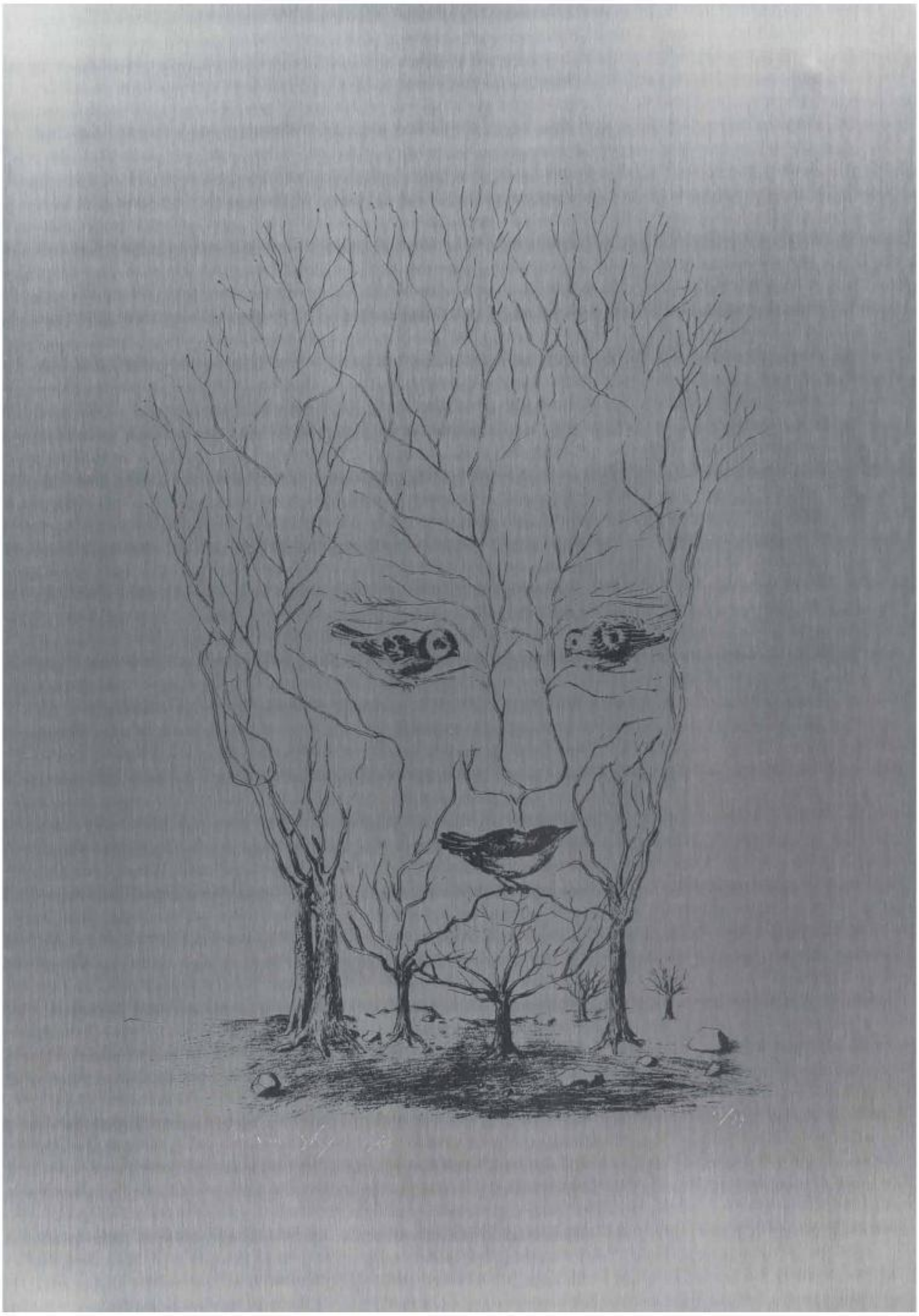


PL. 53
Untitled (War Face and Child), 1942

PL. 54
War Series, 1942

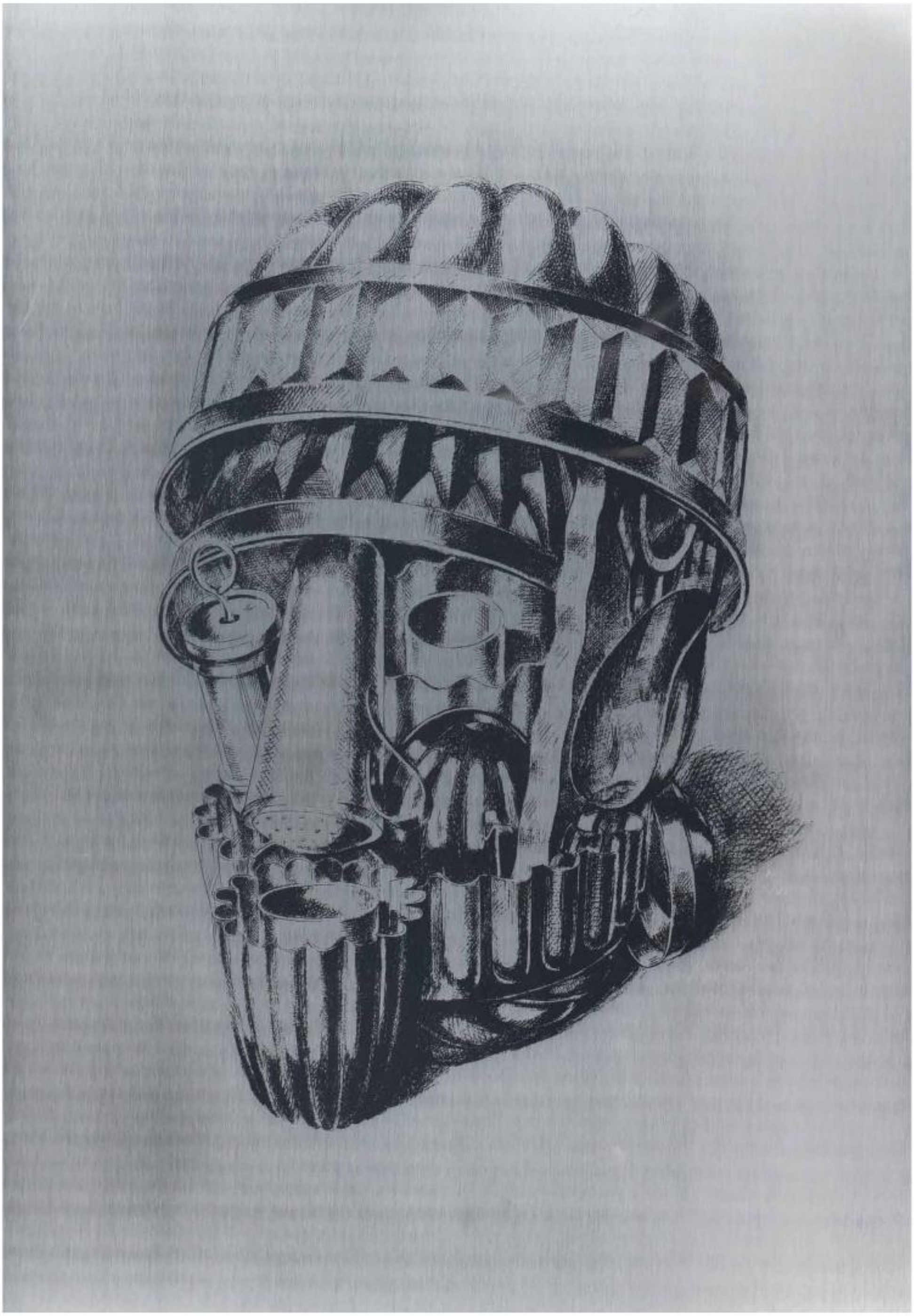
PL. 55
Untitled, 1945

PL. 56
Perspective Dialogue, 1945

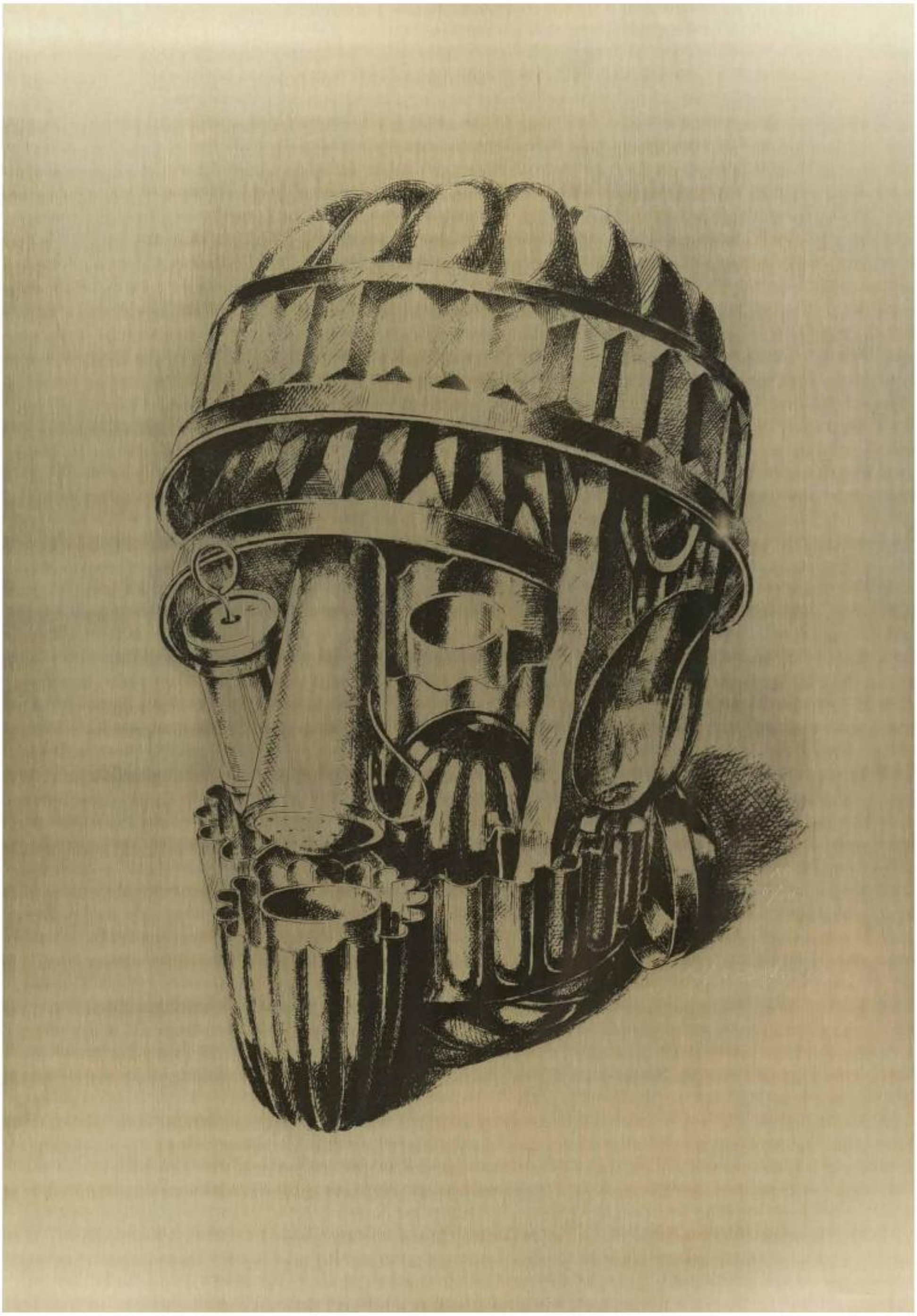


PL. 57
Bird Man, 1943

PL. 58
U.S.A. West, 1944



PL. 59
Kitchen Man, 1943–46



PL. 60
Kitchen Man, 1943–46

PL. 61
Laundry Head, 1945

LIST OF PLATES

* *Work included in exhibition*

PL. 1

Photographer unknown

Members of the Bauhaus in front of the Goethe-Schiller monument in Weimar, January 1925. From the left: Paul Citroën, Ellen Hauschild, Xanti Schawinsky, Walter Menzel, Kapelner (?)

4 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches (11 x 8.3 cm)

Image courtesy of the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin

PL. 2

Irene Beyer (?) and Marianne Brandt (?)

Bauhäusler on the Beach between Elbe and Mulde, with Schawinsky at front, 1926–27

1 1/4 x 3 inches (4.2 x 7.7 cm)

Image courtesy of the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin

PL. 3

T. Lux Feininger

Untitled (Bauhaus Musical Group), with Schawinsky at right, 1928

Vintage black-and-white photograph

3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches (8.3 x 10.8 cm)

Image courtesy of Estate of T. Lux Feininger

PL. 4

T. Lux Feininger

Photograph of Xanti Schawinsky in *Olga-Olga*, Dessau Bauhaus, 1927

Image courtesy of Estate of T. Lux Feininger

PL. 5

Stage design for *Olga-Olga*, 1926

Mixed media, watercolor, pen, and pencil on paper

15 3/8 x 21 11/16 inches (39 x 55.2 cm)

PL. 6

Advertisement for Sale di Frutta Roberts, 1936

9 x 12 inches (22.9 x 30.5 cm)

PL. 7

Untitled photomontage, 1933–43

20 x 15 inches (51.0 cm x 38.3 cm)

PL. 8

The Parachutist (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 1/4 x 20 1/2 inches (74.2 x 53.3 cm)

PL. 9

Vintage silver gelatin artist print of *Atomic Warfare*, c. 1940s

13 9/10 x 11 inches (35.4 x 28 cm); album: 15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 10

Stage Set, 1943

Graphite on paper

30 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (77.5 x 57.8 cm)

Norman Waitt Jr. Collection

PL. 11

Stage Studies, 3/3, 1936–38

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

22 3/16 x 30 9/16 inches (56.4 x 77.8 cm)

PL. 12

Bird Head, 1943

Graphite on paper

30 11/16 x 22 13/16 inches (78 x 57.9 cm)

PL. 13

Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing,

c. 1940s

13 9/10 x 11 inches (35.4 x 28 cm)

PL. 14

Advertisement for Parfums Bourjois, c. 1946

9 x 12 inches (22.9 x 30.5 cm)

PL. 15

Advertisement for Parfums Bourjois, 1946

9 x 12 inches (22.9 x 30.5 cm)

PL. 16

Figure 7 from the album *Theme and Variation on a Face: For Walter Gropius, May 18 1943*, 1943

Photocollage on paper

22 13/16 x 17 11/16 inches (58 x 45 cm)

PL. 17

Untitled (Three Green War Faces), 1942

Gouache on paper

28 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches (72.4 x 52.1 cm)

PL. 18*

Walls and Stones, 1942

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.8 x 57.2 cm)

HEAD DRAWINGS

PL. 19*

The Soldier, 1941–44

Graphite on paper

31 x 20 1/2 inches (78.5 x 52.1 cm)

PL. 20*

Jewelry Head, 1941–44

Graphite on paper

30 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (77.5 x 57.2 cm)

Norman Waitt Jr. Collection

PL. 21

Jewelry Head, n.d.

Hand-painted photograph of *Jewelry Head*

13 7/8 x 11 inches (35.4 x 28 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 22*

Crystal Head, 1943

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.7 x 57.2 cm)

PL. 23*

Euclidian, 1943

Graphite on paper

31 1/2 x 23 inches (80 x 58.4 cm)

PL. 24*

Rope Head, 1944

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 inches (78.7 x 55.9 cm)

PL. 25*

Domestic, 1943–46

Graphite on paper

31 1/2 x 22 inches (80 x 55.9 cm)

Private Collection

PL. 26*

Rocky Fellow, 1944

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.7 x 57.2 cm)

PL. 27*

Above the Waters, 1944

Graphite on paper

31 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (80 x 57.2 cm)

PL. 28*

Medusa, 1945

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 inches (78.8 x 55.9 cm)

PL. 29

Water Man, 1945

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.7 x 57.2 cm)

PL. 30

Vintage silver gelatin artist print

of a drawing, 1946

10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.4 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 31*

Lumber Room, 1946

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.8 x 57.2 cm)

Norman Waitt Jr. Collection

PL. 32

Vintage silver gelatin artist print

of a drawing, c. 1940s

10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.4 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 33

Vintage silver gelatin artist print

of a drawing, c. 1940s

10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.4 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 34

Vintage silver gelatin artist print

of a drawing, c. 1940s

10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.4 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 35

Vintage silver gelatin artist print

of a drawing, c. 1940s

13 9/10 x 11 inches (35.4 x 28 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

PL. 36

Laundry Man, 1944

Graphite on paper

31 x 22 1/2 inches (78.7 x 57.2 cm)

PL. 37

Towel Head, 1945

Graphite on paper

29 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches (74.8 x 54.6 cm)

PL. 38

Sewing Hour, 1941

Graphite on paper

30 1/2 x 22 inches (77.5 x 55.9 cm)

PL. 39

Vintage silver gelatin artist print of a drawing,

c. 1940s

13 9/10 x 11 inches (35.4 x 28 cm); album:

15 5/8 x 13 5/8 inches (39.5 x 34.5 cm)

FACES OF WAR

PL. 40*

Soldier's Rest (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 3/8 x 21 1/2 inches (74.5 x 54.5 cm)

PL. 41*

The Home Guard (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 x 21 inches (74.8 x 54.6 cm)

PL. 42*

The Admiral (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 5/8 x 21 3/8 inches (75.4 x 54.3 cm)

PL. 43*

The Enemy (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

28 5/8 x 20 5/8 inches (72.6 x 52.4 cm)

PL. 44*

The Defender (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 3/8 x 21 1/2 inches (74.5 x 54.5 cm)

PL. 45*

The General (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches (74.8 x 54.6 cm)

PL. 46*

The Aviator (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

28 7/8 x 21 inches (73.4 x 53.4 cm)

PL. 47*

The Warrior (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 x 21 3/8 inches (73.7 x 54.2 cm)

PL. 48

The Soldier (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

28 5/16 x 20 11/16 inches (72 x 52.6 cm)

PL. 49

The Gunner (Faces of War), 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

28 11/16 x 21 1/8 inches (73 x 53.6 cm)

PL. 50

Man-o-War, 1942

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

29 3/8 x 21 3/8 inches (74.6 x 54.4 cm)

RELATED WORKS

PL. 51*

Architectural Design, 1945

Mixed media, watercolor, and black pen on paper

20 3/4 x 28 7/8 inches (52.7 x 73.4 cm)

PL. 52

Untitled (Architecture), 1940s

Mixed media, watercolor, and pen on paper

28 7/8 x 20 7/8 inches (73.4 x 53 cm)

PL. 53

Untitled (War Face and Child), 1942

Gouache on paper with collaged black-and-white photograph on paper

28 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches (72.4 x 52.1 cm)

PL. 54

War Series, 1942

Gouache on paper with collaged black-and-white photograph on paper

28 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches (72.4 x 52.1 cm)

PL. 55

Untitled, 1945

Pastel on paper

24 x 18 inches (61 x 45.7 cm)

PL. 56

Perspective Dialogue, 1945

Pastel on paper

24 x 19 7/8 inches (60.9 x 45.5 cm)

PL. 57

Bird Man, 1943

Etching on silver metal

27 1/2 x 19 5/8 inches (70 x 50 cm)

PL. 58

U.S.A. West, 1944

Etching on light gold metal

27 1/2 x 19 5/8 (70 x 50 cm)

PL. 59

Kitchen Man, 1943–46

Etching on metal

27 1/2 x 19 5/8 (70 x 50 cm)

PL. 60

Kitchen Man, 1943–46

Etching on golden metal

27 1/2 x 19 5/8 (70 x 50 cm)

PL. 61

Laundry Man, 1945

Etching on silver metal

27 1/2 x 19 5/8 (70 x 50 cm)

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