



Dark Roasted Blend

Weird & wonderful things

A THRILLING WONDER PUBLICATION

ADDICTIVE
EXPLORATION



Machines Alive!

The Whimsical Art of Boris Artzybasheff

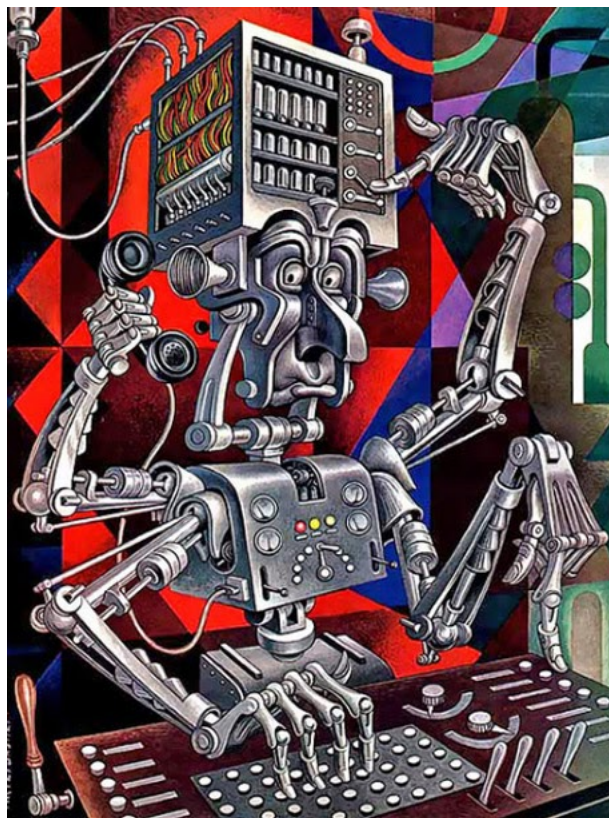


"QUANTUM SHOT" #865

[Link](#) - article by [James Vaughan](#) and [Avi Abrams](#)

Hungry printing presses, greedily laughing, grinding gears... Is it a dream, or a nightmare?

With a name to fit his eccentric creations, [Boris Artzybasheff](#) (1899-1965) was born and raised in Russia and immigrated to America at the age of twenty. Producing countless advertisements, magazine covers and editorial illustrations Artzybasheff is best remembered for his "anthropomorphizing" of machines into living creatures. The [definition](#) of anthropomorphizing should not include making your machines wildly bizarre, crazy, or nightmarish - but in case of Artzybasheff it simply comes with the territory:



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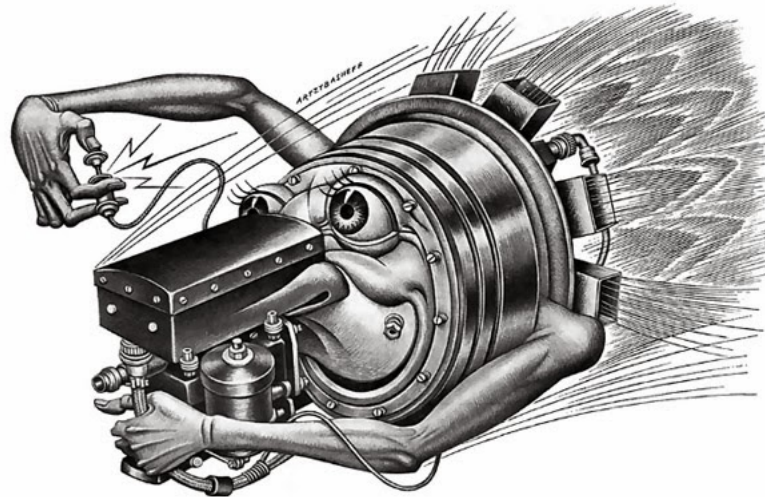
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(top left: Esquire, "Cybernetics" (1952); top right: 1956 Time Magazine cover; all images via [James Vaughan](#))

His creations display a crazy, functional logic; they unfailingly appeal to the innerchild engineer in all of us:

Spotlight



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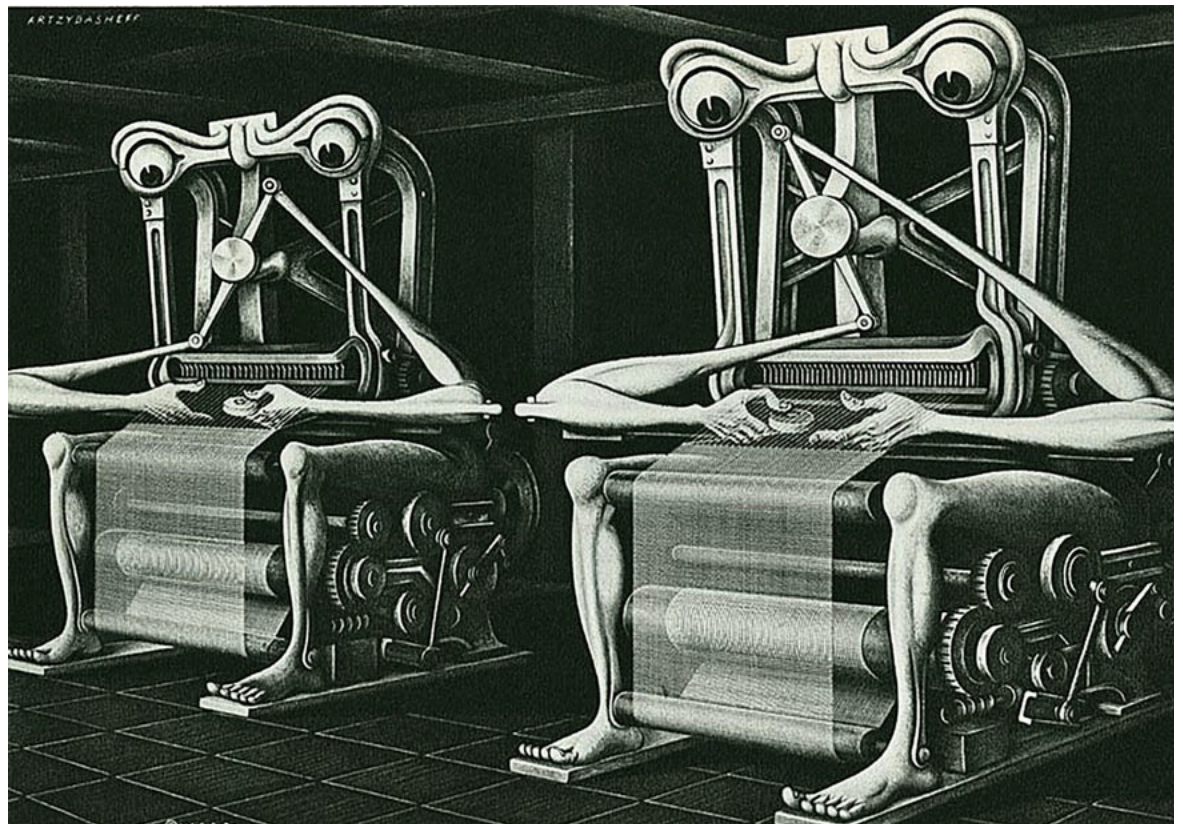
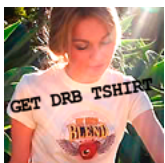


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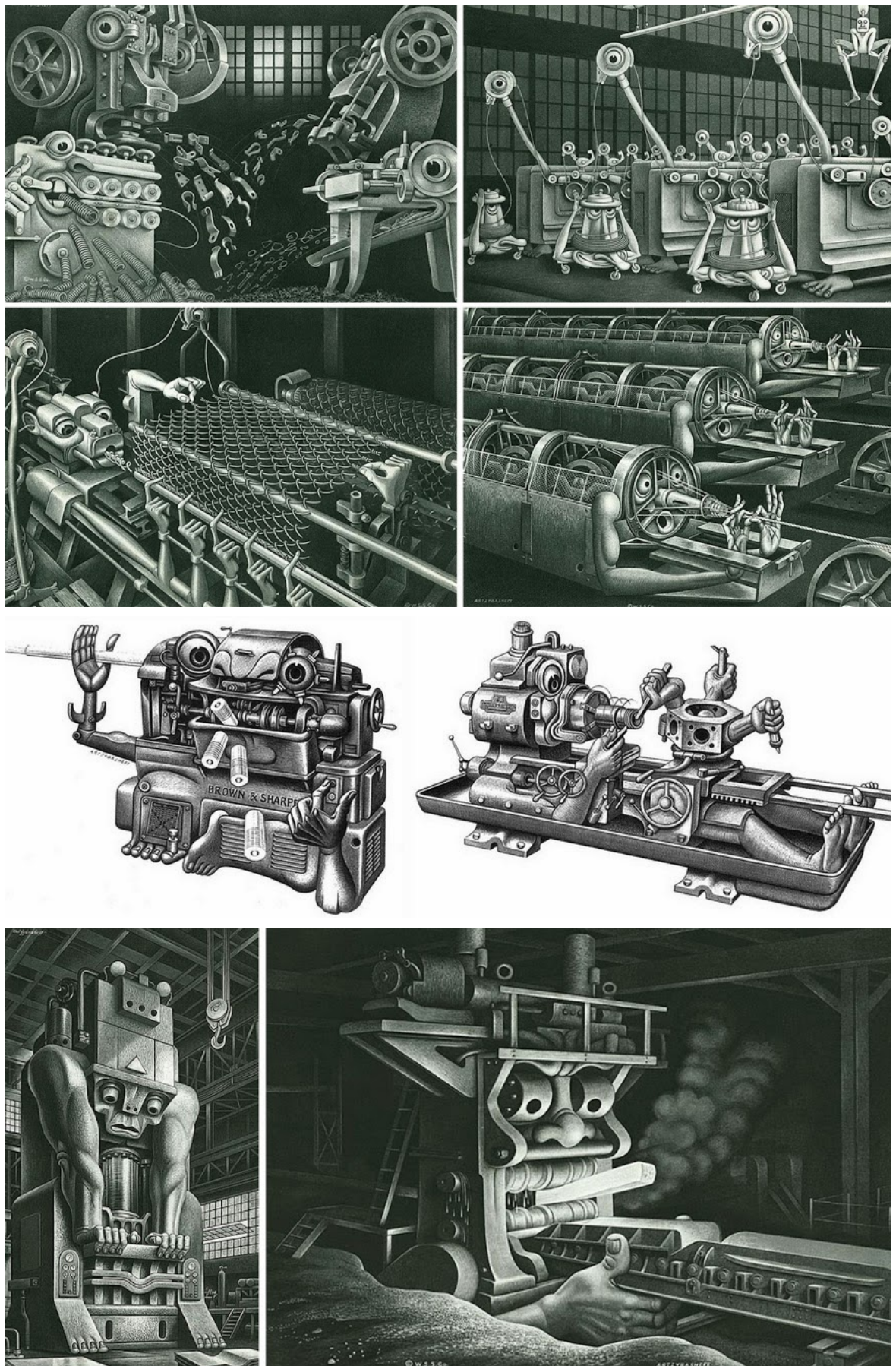
Machines that enjoy their work, toil with endless determination and cheerfully pause to proudly expound upon their parts and purpose:

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Writers

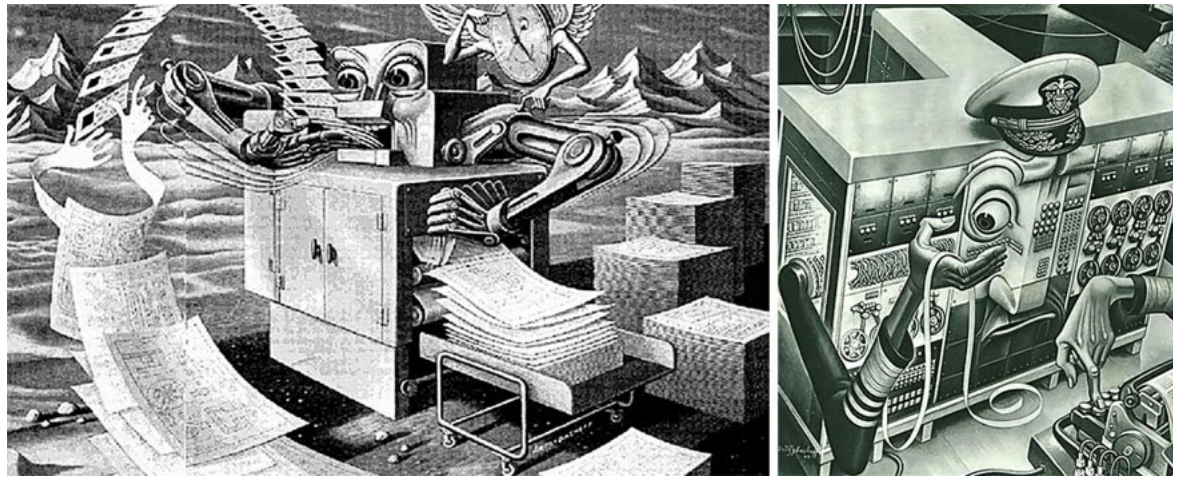
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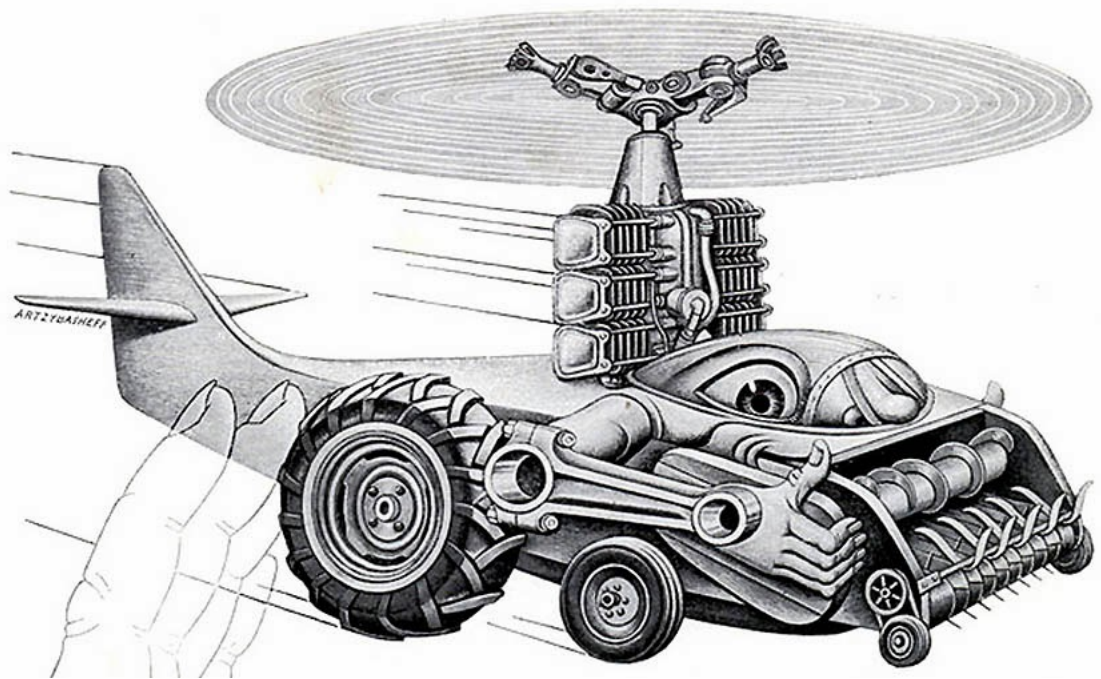
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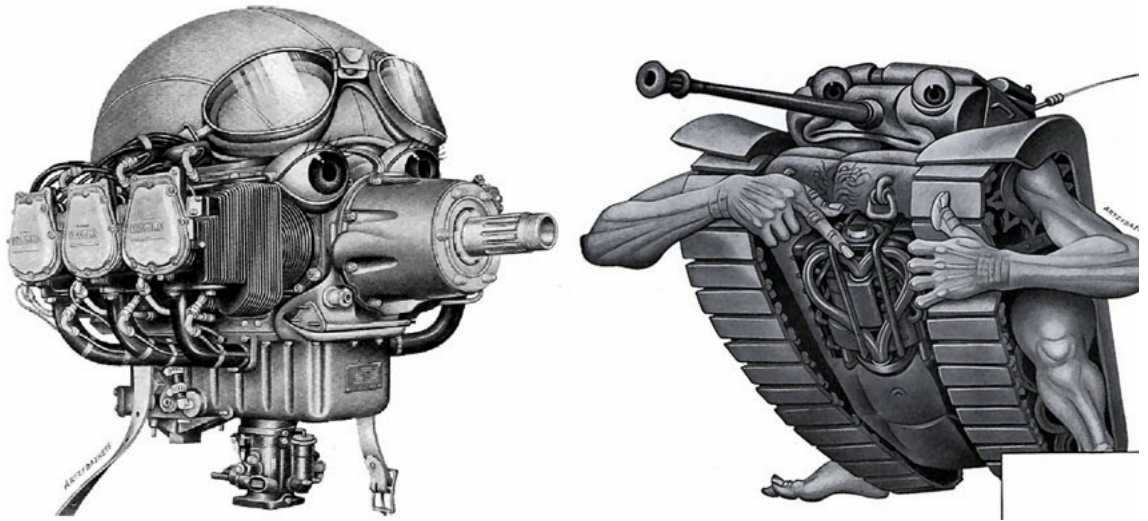
That copier really wants to get the work done and to get ahead (in vain, it seems)... and a NAVY computer has a lot to think about (right image):



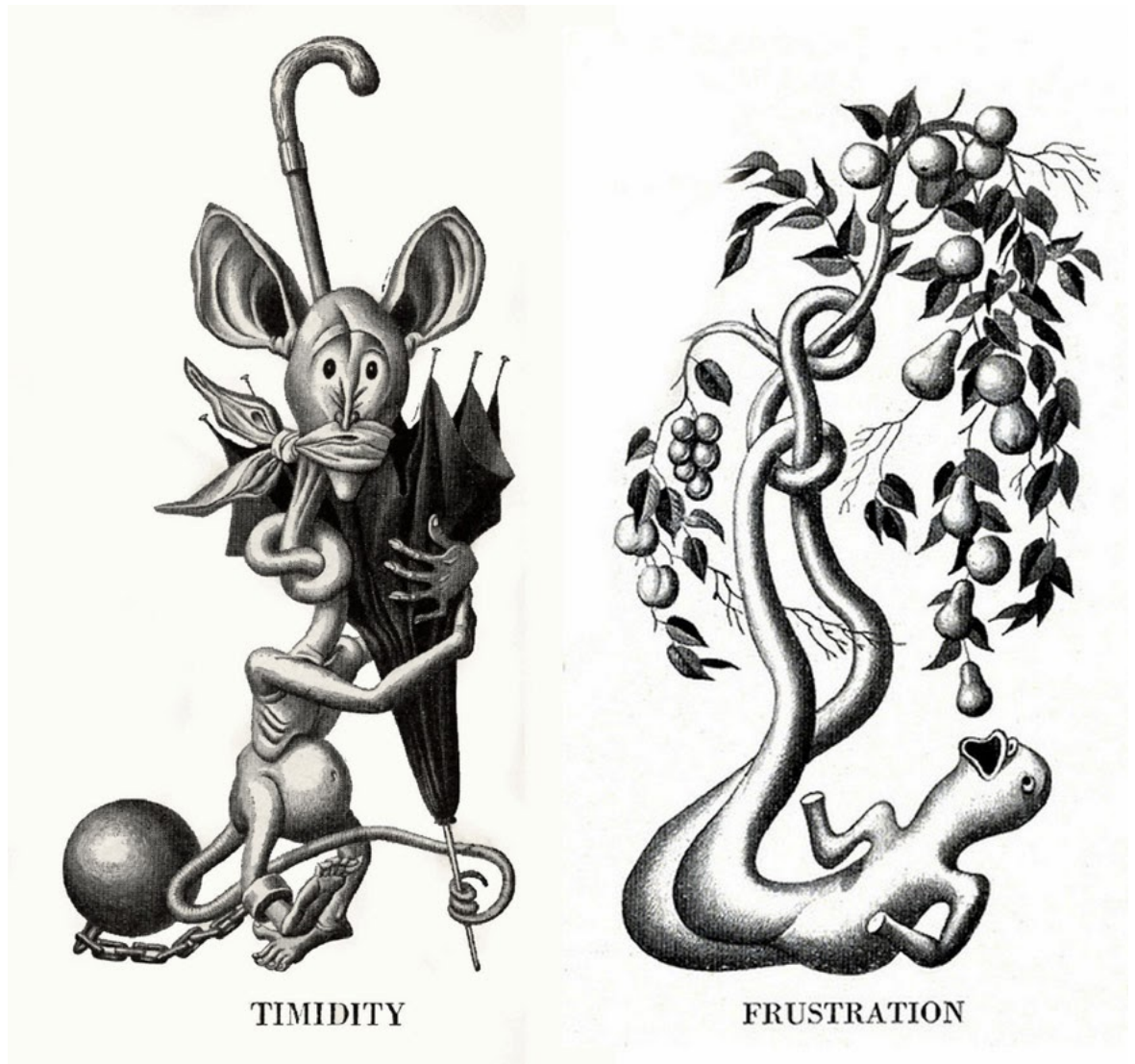
Boris Artzybasheff's work is not currently very well-known - and [this Flickr set](#) is definitely the best collection on the Internet; it's quite detailed and shows a wider scope of his talent. Check out this unspeakable hybrid, a combination of various machines made by Lycoming: the accompanying ad is all about "precision manufacturing" - and indeed, to keep all these disparate parts together would require remarkable precision, plus a total breakdown of an engineering mind:



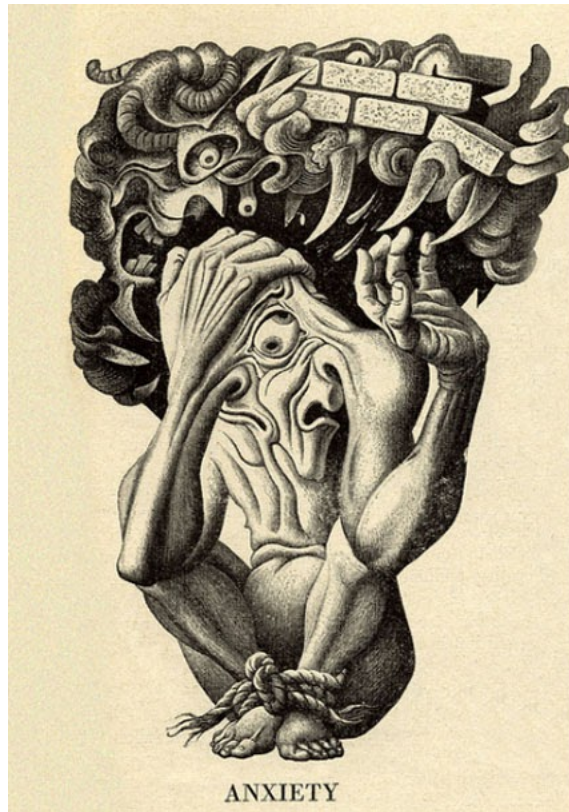
More examples of "anthropomorphizing": a plane engine; a tank looking like a bug, with a cold, cold heart inside... -



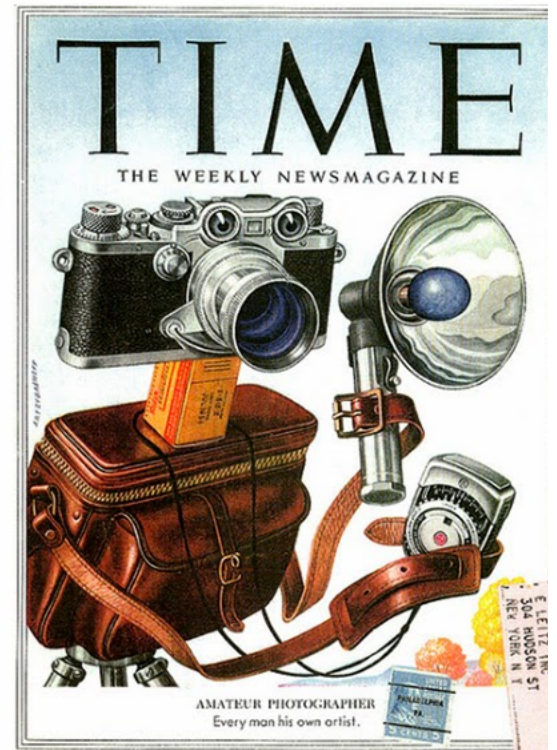
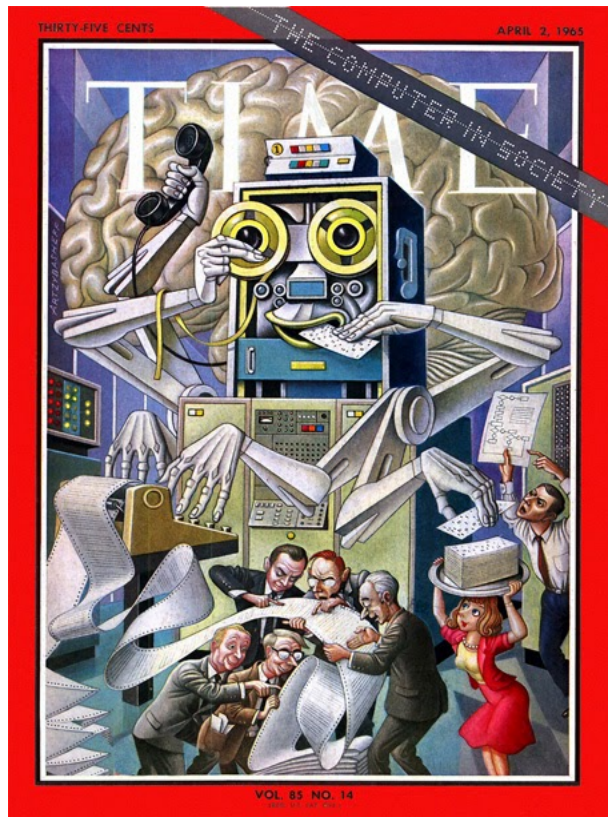
Boris Artzybasheff also created a few psychological sketches, and they are certainly worth seeing - full of tongue-in-cheek observation and deep insight. is the definiton of "discombobulated" ("Timidity" on the left) and of "frustration"... oh, yes, just look at it -



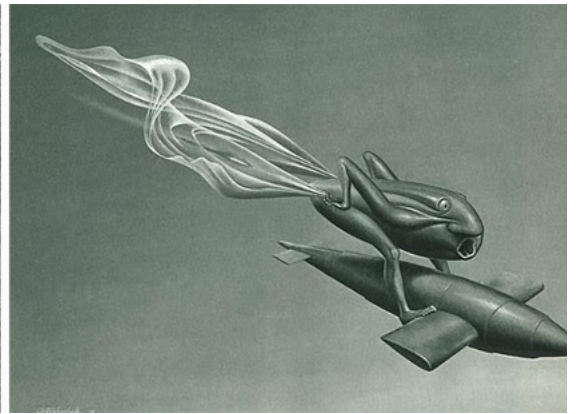
... and on a darker note, great depictions of anxiety and suppressed hostility, for example:



Boris Artzybasheff has been blessed with wide recognition of his work during his lifetime, his illustrations were highly sought after, with some even used for covers of the *TIME* Magazine in the 1950s and 1960s:



Post-World War Two and Cold War era realities did not escape his satirical eye, either:



And we finish with this satirical masterpieces, dedicated to the freedom of the press and "Overseas Press Club of America" (done for "Dateline"):



(all images via [James Vaughan](#))

Boris Artzybasheff's art encompassed multiple variations and subjects: including portraits, fairytales, maps and even psychology. But it is for his machine is famous. Almost like a proud parent displaying snapshots of his offspring, it is Artzybasheff's persona of the mechanical that resonate for our technolog age.

Article by James Vaughan (of [James Vaughan Photo](#) and [X-Ray Delta One](#)) and Avi Abrams, Dark Roasted Blend.

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2 Comments:

Bill Swallow said...

Very nice piece on Boris Artzybasheff. I have a copy of 'The Circus of Dr. Lao', with interior illustrations by Artzybasheff. I wish you had included some of his work for that novel. Artzybasheff's illustrations were a perfect match for Charles G. Finney's bizarre, magnificent writing. If you ever find a copy of this version - Buy It!

Jon Richfield said...

I too love Artzybasheff and am repeatedly stunned by how his work has dropped out of sight. A fine page you supplied, and I stopped to look at a few more. I am most impressed; your blog should be an example to a lot of other sources.

Good luck, go well, and thanks,

Jon Richfield

—

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