



FANTASIST—Bernard Reder.

Sculptor Of Fantasy

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

THE Whitney Museum's first exhibition of the season, opening Wednesday, will be the largest one-man show it has ever held and the first time it has devoted all three floors to the work of a single artist. This extraordinary recognition is being given to the sculptor Bernard Reder who, at 64, and after forty years of work, is little known to the New York public.

The Whitney showing is a landmark on the long road that Reder has traveled. He was born in Czernowitz (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), served in the Austrian Army in World War I and thereafter took up his studies and travels. He worked in Prague studios and later in Paris. The Nazi occupation forced him to flee to Spain, to Cuba, then to the United States, where he has been since 1943.

From this varied life—including strong roots in the mysticism and joy in nature of his Hasidic Jewish origins—have come the spirited nymphs, brides, dwarfs, birds, beasts and architectural fantasies that the Whitney is showing. Reder draws upon folklore and mythology, the Bible and Rabelais, and his own whimsical invention for his themes. His sculpture, he says, is "volumetric"—always contained within a defined space and equally meaningful from every aspect.

Creating fantastic people, he has gone even further—he has designed a fantastic world for them. The exhibition includes a group of architectural models of visionary, bubblelike structures. These plastic pavilions are pleasure domes for joyous living, imaginative flights into the stratosphere of pure architectural fancy. As such, they are not likely to be built as realities, although their sculptured shapes have been adapted to Buckminster Fuller's principles of light metal construction.

In Reder's ideal and touchingly human world, art and life are inseparable and his enjoyment of both is contagious.



"WOMAN WITH SPHERE AND PYRAMID"
 —This sculpture by Reder unites the circle, triangle and female body. It is a "reaction against abstraction—it is not necessary to break things."



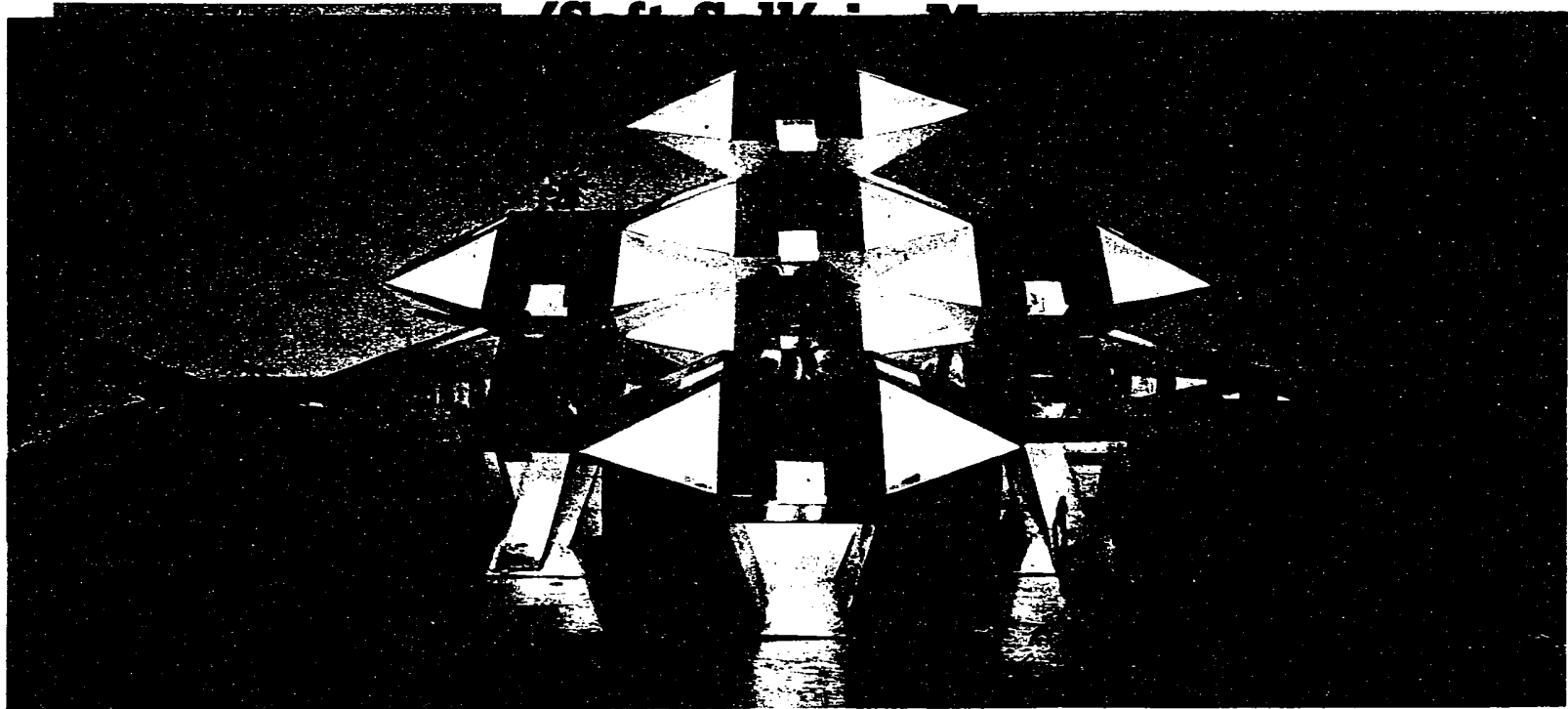
"TWO WOMEN IN THE JUNGLE"—This is one of the artist's largest, most impressive sculptures, alive with motion and vibrant light and dark. The Whitney show includes Reder prints and drawings.



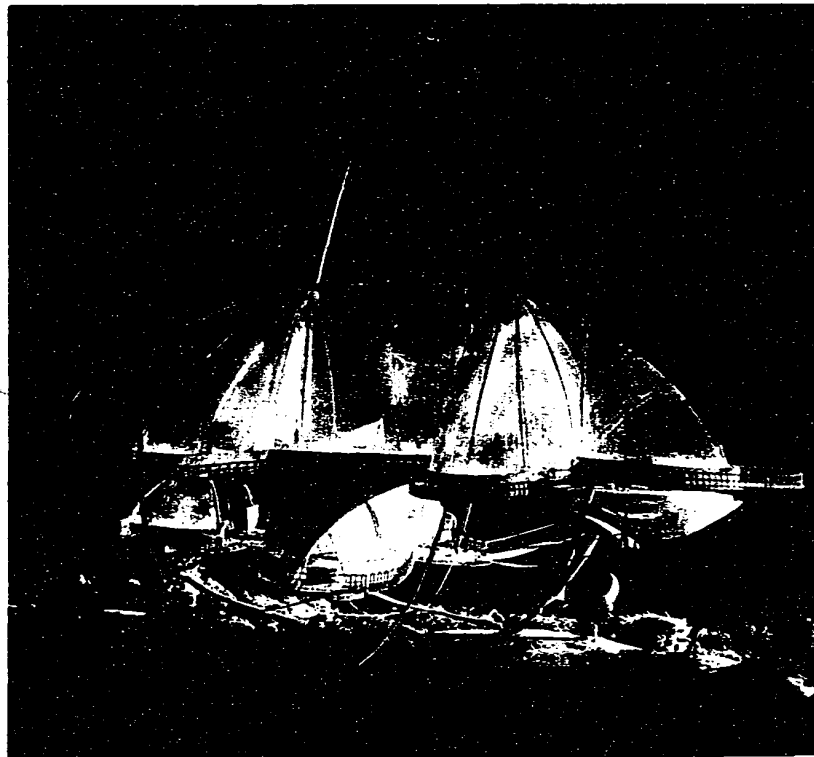
"DWARF AND CRAB"—An odd subject, dictated by pure fancy, draws on childhood memories. The exaggerated design of the crab's jagged claws add free-standing ornament to the small figure.



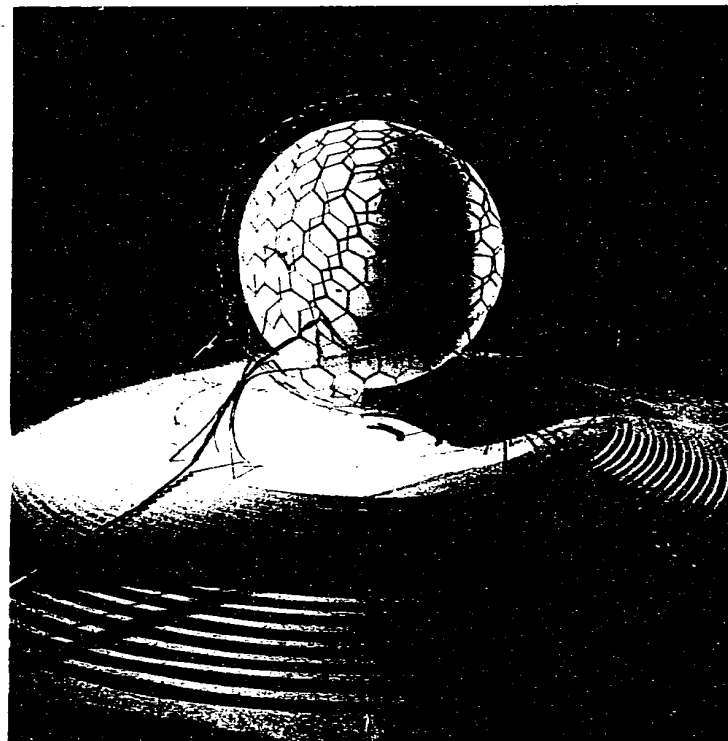
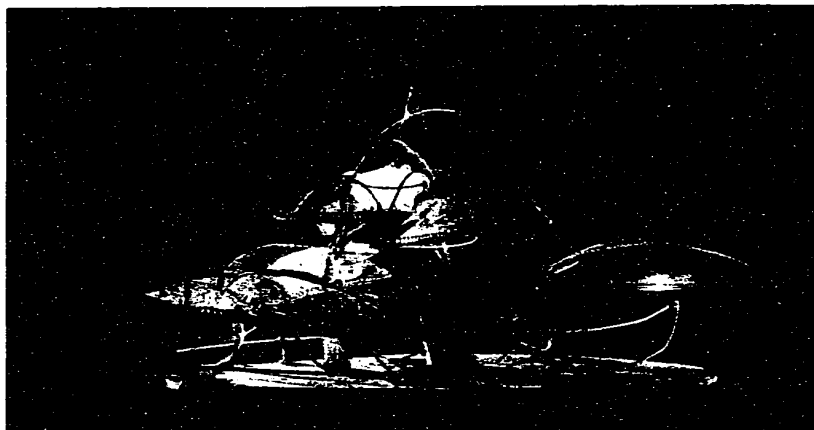
"BRIDE AND BULL"—The decorative pattern of a fanciful headdress frames gentle figures of woman and beast in this imaginary group. Reder's romantic fantasy is part invention, part folklore.



TOMORROW'S MUSEUM—Sculptor Reder's arrangement for viewing sculpture would be a group of faceted units with no vertical walls. A small floor area enclosed by ramps and stairs allows viewers to see exhibits from above and below, as well as from the sides.



Left—PLEASURE DOME—Reder's house of the future—a "one-family pavilion" with a living-music-swimming room above and bedrooms below—is designed to be moved by helicopter. Plastic-covered aluminum construction engineered by C. D. Sides Jr. of Synergetics, Inc.



THEATRE-IN-FULL-ROUND—A stage inside the sphere is surrounded by a spiral of slowly moving seats for full "volumetric" viewing. "Even the soles of the actors' feet would give pleasure, like acrobats on a high wire." Reder has written two "volumetric" plays.

Left—DREAMLINER—This imaginary ocean vessel travels on an air cushion and has all accommodations in plastic bubbles above the water. Each would have about forty rooms. "There are not catacomblike cabins, and every passenger has a view of the sky and stars."