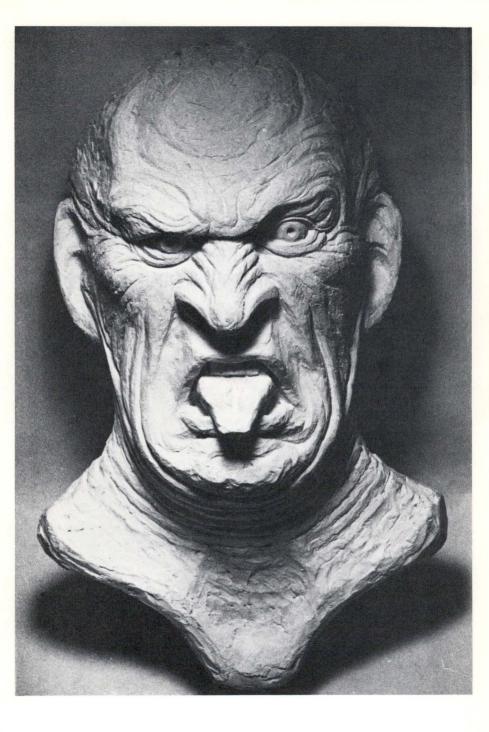
GORDON PAYNE

UNDER SATURN

work in progress

PASSAGE

plaster, 45 cm high, unfinished. photography: Gordon Payne.

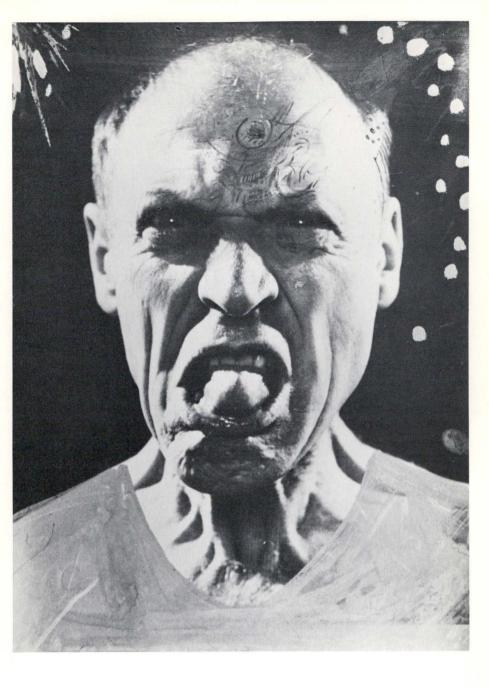


VANCOUVER PORTRAIT: ARTIST IN PARADISE

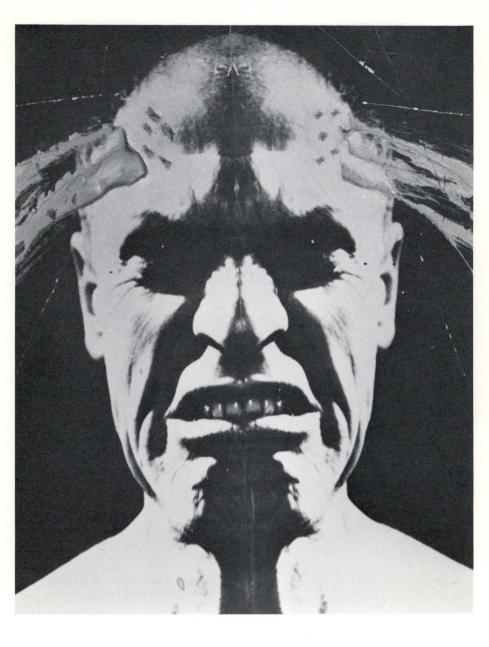
soft-ground etching and mixed media, 76 x 56 cm, unfinished. photography: Gordon Payne.



OPENING THE EYE OF THE FLESH



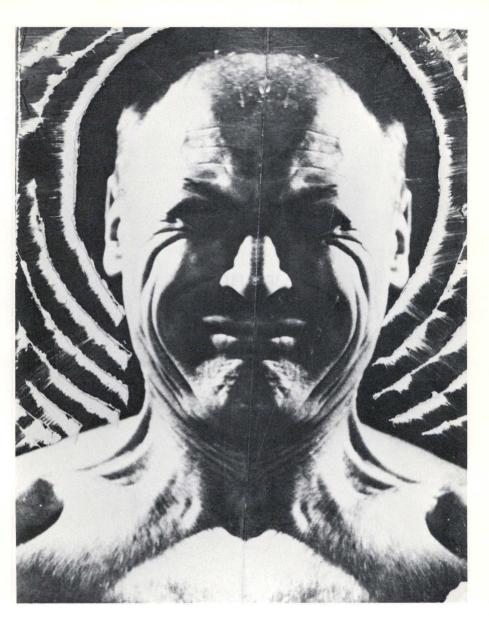
THE MASK THINKS



SCHIZO MASK

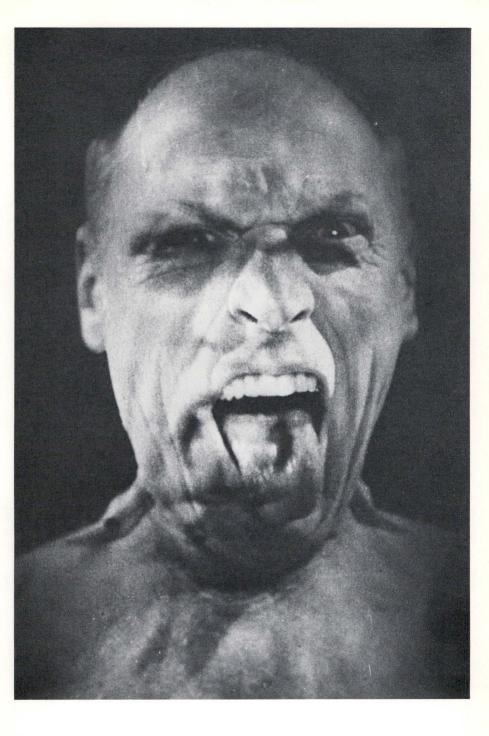


SMILING PERSONA



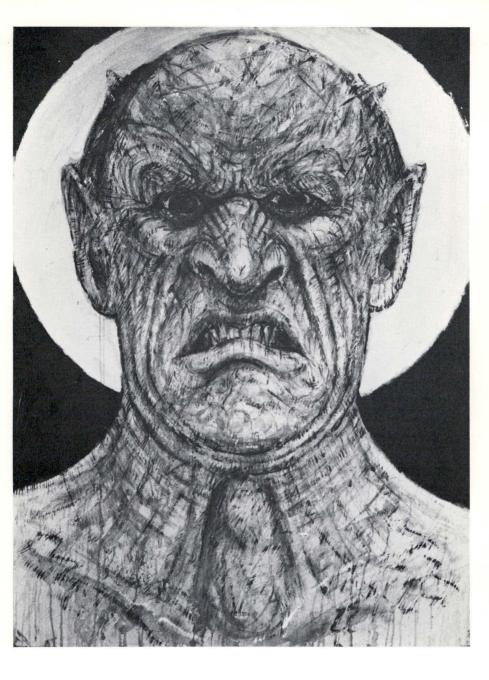


photograph, 24 x 16 cm.



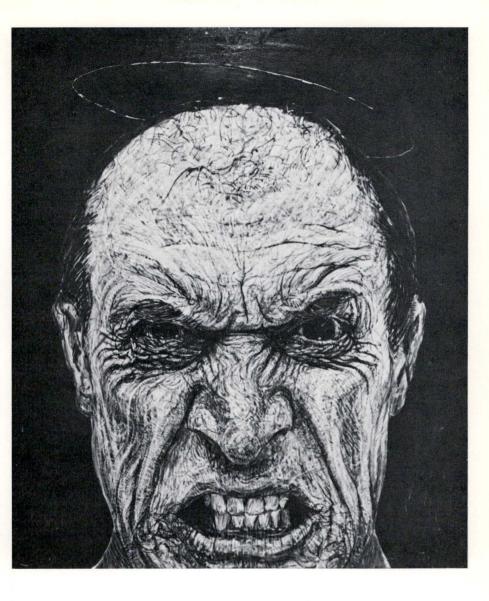
RAGE

mixed media painting on canvas, half of an unfinished dyptych, 167 x 124 cm. photography: Gordon Payne.



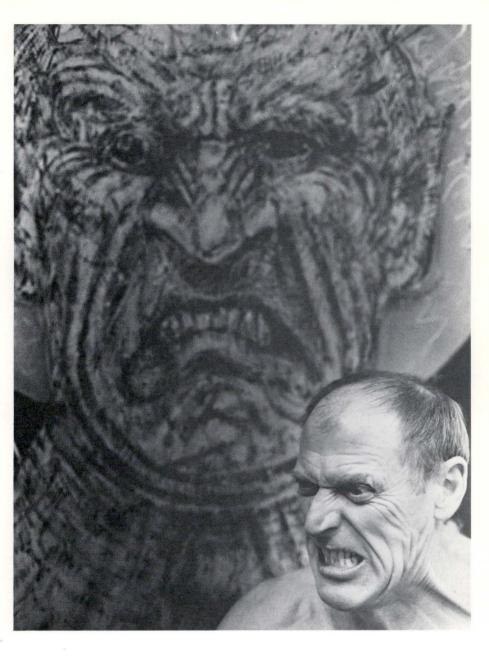
UNDER SATURN: SCHIZOPHRENIA

egg tempera on board, 29 x 24 cm, unfinished. photography: Gordon Payne.



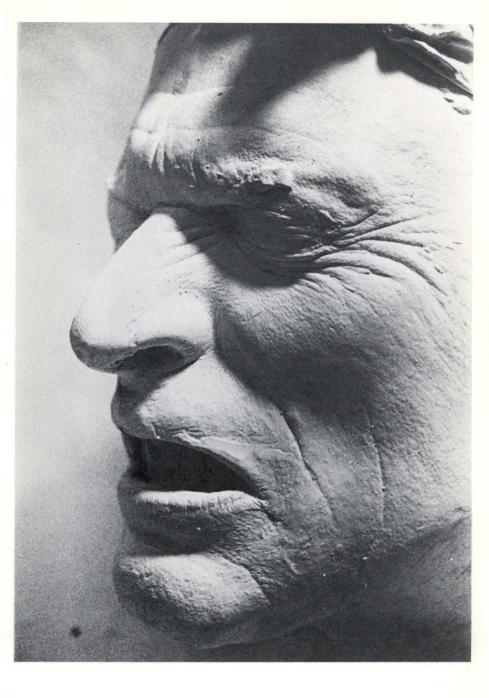
THE ARTIST IN HIS STUDIO

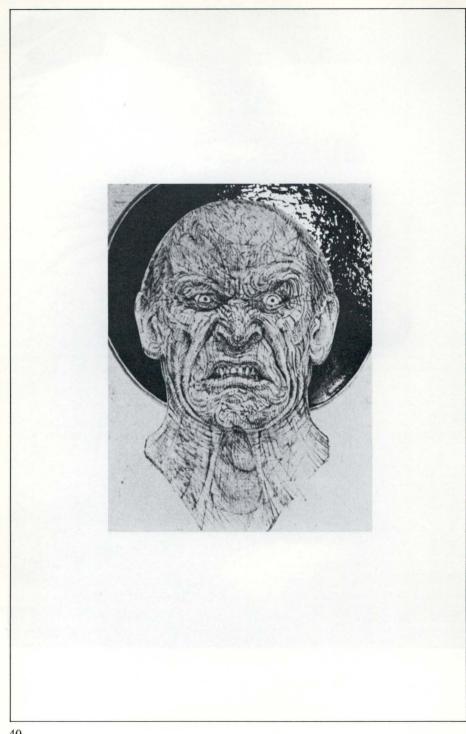
1985. photography: Anji Smith.



VISAGE

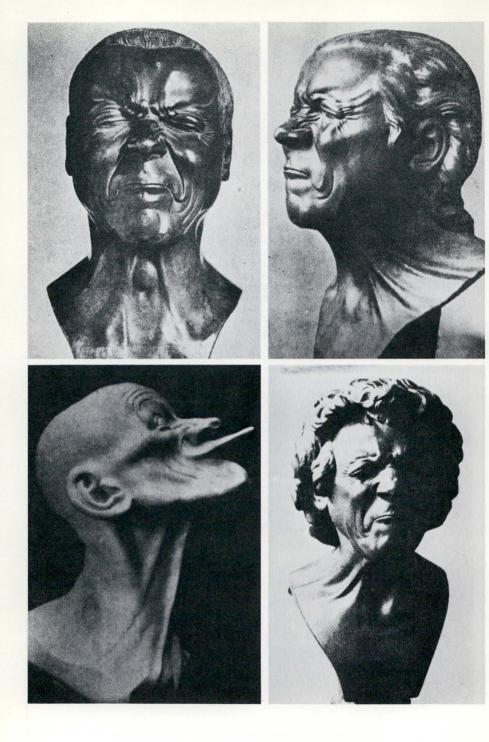
life mask, plaster. Made by George Rammell.





... By some primordial decree, which I could never make out, I was appointed "to negate" while, as a matter of fact, I'm genuinely kind-hearted and not at all good at "negation." "Oh, no, you go and negate, for without negation there is no criticism," and what sort of periodical is it if it has no section for criticism? Without criticism there would be nothing but "hosannah." But "hosannah" alone is not enough for life. It is necessary that this "hosannah" should be tried in the crucible of doubt, and so on in the same vein. Still, it is none of my business. I didn't create the world, and I am not answerable for it. Well, so they have chosen their scapegoat, made me contribute to the section of criticism, and life was the result. We understand that farce: for instance, I frankly and openly demand annihilation for myself. No, they say, you must live because there'd be nothing without you. If everything on earth were rational, nothing would happen. Without you there would be no events, and it is imperative that there should be events. So I serve with a heavy heart so that there should be events and perform what is irrational by order. People accept all this farce as something serious for all their indisputable intelligence. That is their tragedy. Well, of course, they suffer, but - they live, they live a real and not an illusory life; for suffering is life. Without suffering, what pleasure would they derive from it? Everything would be transformed into an endless religious service: it would be holy, but a little dull. Well, and what about me? I suffer, but I do not live for all that. I am the x in an indeterminate equation -I am a sort of phantom who has lost all the beginnings and ends and who has even forgotten what his name is. You are laughing.... No, you are not laughing. You're angry again. You're always angry. All you care about is intelligence. But I tell you again that I'd give up all this life above the stars, all my ranks and honours, to be reincarnated into a sixteen-stone merchant's wife and offer candles to the Lord.

> - Dostoevsky, "The Devil Speaks with Ivan Karamazov," The Brothers Karamazov



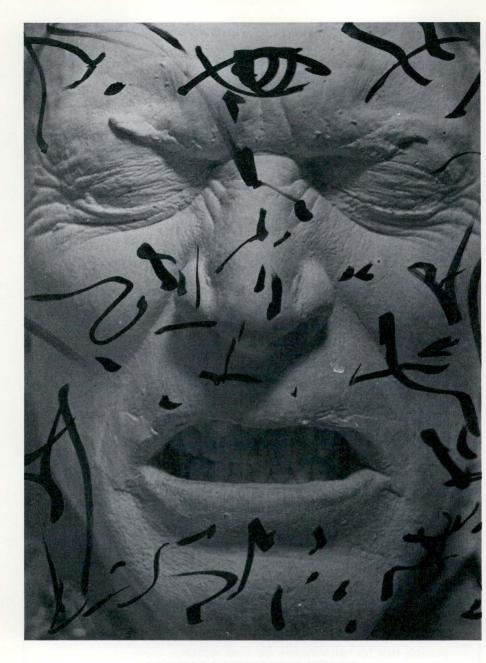
... too late for the gods and too early for Being. — Heidegger.

THE DISTORTION OF F. X. MESSERSCHMIDT (1736-1784)

How to explain Messerschmidt's phsyiognomic distortions? Messerschmidt said he was subduing the "demon of proportion," who, envious of his mastery of proportion, violently attacked the artist's body. Messerschmidt contorted the parts of his visage which corresponded, according to "physiognomy," with the areas of his anatomy afflicted by the demon. Working from a mirror and copying his grimaces (making images of the demon and "pinching the devil back"), he magically controlled the evil spirit.

Good proportion (the ratio) was the *form* of the ideal and stood for God; as an example, the pentagram, made up of numerous combinations of the golden section, was a magical device used to ward off evil. Why then did Messerschmidt see the "spirit" of proportion as a demon, a devil, rather than as a god, or deity? His delusion seems to express an *ontological inversion*.

The 18th century is a high point of philosophical idealism and rationalism. Are Messerschmidt's distortions a reaction to an imbalance between essence (the ideal) and existence? Is it possible that his hallucinatory fetishism represents a kind of pyschic/ontic compensation mechanism? Do we see in his distorted heads the symptom of a *metaphysical disorder*?



MASK WITH WRITING

photograph and felt pen with overlay, 24 x 16 cm.

On the morning of one of the days I was making prints for this article I had a dream full of anxiety. In my dream I was producing Xerox copies of myself — I was the Xerox machine. The paper sheets "flaked off" me in the manner of a paramecium reproducing itself; they made a disorderly pile on the floor. The images were all identical; a line drawing of myself standing, workmanlike, in a studio setting. I was anxious about my lack of control over the quality of the copies: too dark, too light, poor resolution, out of focus, etc. I remember thinking that my only hope for salvation was to collage together all these bad copies and make some overall image that might "work."

Mary said she thought the dream was a "classical example of a personality-integration dream."

- From Dream Book: March 23, 1987.