

In 1954, Chamberlain was making sculpture indebted to David Smith. It was open, linear, and articulated more or less in one plane. The relevant differences were that the parts were not as distinct as those in Smith's work and that the linearity was loose and active rather than taut. Both differences partially concealed the expert composition. Subsequently Chamberlain was interested in de Kooning's voluminous paintings of 1955 and 1956, such as *Gotham News*. Having painted a little himself, he was impressed by the speed with which a painting could be started. He neither liked the methodical labor of sculpture nor its effect. It occurred to him that using crushed and colored metal was a way to have something in the beginning and a way to avoid conspicuous tinkering. In 1960, Chamberlain had a show at the Martha Jackson Gallery which was somewhat past the midpoint between the pieces influenced by Smith and the completely voluminous ones he is doing now. The work was primarily crumpled metal, but was usually organized in tumescent planes. Rods contrasted to the rectangular or fan-shaped planes or continued them in space. The color was already Chamberlainian, but was less clear than now, since dark and neutral colors reduced its extent. It was the only sculpture in which color was successful. The use of automobile metal was also new.

There is a three-way polarity of appearance and meaning in Chamberlain's sculpture. This is produced without an equivalent disparity of form. The work is in turn neutral, redundant, and expressively structured. The neutrality and the redundancy are not caused by separate elements. The structure is moderately separate. Jackson Pollock's paintings are the most recent instance of opposed extremes. The polarity of his work, greater than that of Chamberlain's, is based on corresponding extremes of form. A point of sensation, the immediacy of the dripped paint, is opposed to a volume of structural and imagistic forms. Chamberlain's material does not have to be distinctly transformed to appear diversely.

The diversity and the unity occur and recur; the work explodes and implodes. The proximity of the means is new. In part it is simply unique and in part it is an advance. Chamberlain's work, for example, is more consistent than Pollock's, not because Pollock's great polarity is less consistent, but because the elements which form it are so, especially the shallow space and the descriptive images.

Initially and recurrently the metal is neutral, pretty much something as anything is something. A piece always seems as if that is all it is going to be. The quality of the involuted space and metal and the shape of the structure are not easily discerned. The discovery is surprising. Even after a piece is familiar, the casual objectivity recurs. Nothing is done which will contradict the ordinary appearance of the metal; the composition and the imagery are not conspicuous; the works never have regular formats.

The sculpture is redundant. There is more metal and space than the structure requires. This voluminousness is a salient aspect of the work. This idea is Chamberlain's alone. The sculpture seems open, which, in the usual sense, it is not, since it is massed. There is not space through the work; there is a lot in it. The fulsome *Miss Lucy Pink* has a diameter of a yard. Behind the metal, enameled the colors of a display of flesh-colored fingernail polish, there is perhaps only air. The metal seems superfluous because it is folded, since flat it would be larger, or, if it were simply to extend the distance it does, smaller. The metal seems superfluous because its involutions enclose so much space; the form is not only metal but is also space. The metal surrounds space like the eggshell of a sucked egg, instead of defining it with a line, core, or plane. The hard, sweet, pastel enamels are the colors of surfaces, not of solids. The parts are not absolute definitions of their space but appear capable of change and of expansion and contraction. When the volume is compared to the main structure of a piece, the metal and space have only the live quality the disparity

produces. When the structure is analyzed, much of that metal becomes expressive detail.

*Falconer-Fitten*, a small, simple, and easily described work, is illustrative of this use of volume. A few iron braces form a short vertical and a partial base. Leaning across the top of this are a loosely crushed white kitchen cabinet, the black inside of a bent fender, and another smashed white cabinet, all more or less the same size. There are three parallel diagonals. Although they are casual and occupy a lot of space, they are definite. The volume and the metal exceed the structure which they form; the activity exceeds the order which results. Freedom and indeterminacy are antecedent to and larger than order. The order of Chamberlain's work was never a priori. The concluding order is not an essence. The order is not one of control or distillation, but of continual choices, often between accidents. An activity proliferates its own distinctions; an order forms within these. The disparity between reality and its order is the most radical and important aspect of Chamberlain's sculpture.

The structure and the details never assume forms which will vitiate the neutral appearance or the voluminousness; the two aspects never become so general as to destroy the great particularity of the structure. The sources of the divergent aspects are held more closely together than those in any other expressionistic work. The imagery, formed of the details and the structure, is, because of this, more remote than is usual. Chamberlain's sculpture is simultaneously turbulent, passionate, cool, and hard. The structure is the passionate part. The obvious comparison is to the structure of Baroque art: there is a diagrammatic resemblance and one of emotion, but certainly not one of philosophy. The success of the composition and of its fusion with the radical volume is anomalous, although less so at the present, when there are several major artists who have combined old and new elements.

*Mr. Press*, a relief eight feet across and four deep, is in part a diagonal mass across a vertical one and is in whole a radiating,

swastika structure. A dishcloth of red stripes, several fragments, and a right angle of a bumper, which trips the rotation from the center, are the highest part of the relief. The lower half of the diagonal is a white fender and a cream one, joined to leave a straight, fast cut. The high half is a cream door, folded once. Its chrome is pulled across the fold to make a reverse continuation of the lines of the fenders. The vertical section extends at the top and at the bottom and is made of dark colors, red above and a dull brownish red, a deep yellow, and a violet below. The color, as is apparent, is structural. The combination of pastel colors and dark and intense ones is characteristic, novel, and excellent. The details are decidedly structural. A cerulean stripe on a hood, for example, one of the many radial elements and intermediate between the two main sections, is canted from the horizontal slightly, partially causing the vertical mass to tilt and the whole to rotate.

*Essex*, another relief, is a large, dense, bow-shaped mass with a pendant keel. *Huzzy* is mainly a diagonal slash flipped free at the top in reversing flukes. There is one sculpture in which a white climbs and folds and a black drops as a cumbrous point. These are all magnificent. The freestanding pieces often have offset or dropped sections, horizontal parts which truncate vertical ones, or parts thrust in or out of a mass or wrapped around it. The structures and the shapes are those of the movement of things. The surfaces depict this movement. The imagery is either this alone or is organic as well. The resemblance to everything, because of the close means and the objective aspects, is remarkably remote. This allows the turbulence of the material an independent power.