

JOHN D. GORBUTT, JR., A STUDY OF A KANSAS
ARTIST, 1931 UNTIL 1971

by 7214

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Too little has been written about our regional culture, most specifically culture as it refers to the Arts. At present, there is an upsurge of interest and action for the development of the arts in Kansas as exemplified by the creation of the Kansas Cultural Arts Commission. For both reasons there should be some evaluation and attention given to the influences and work which has led to this rising current.

John Gorbitt has been actively engaged in the creative arts in Kansas all his adult life, as a working artist in the commercial as well as in the creative art fields; and as a member of several of the art organizations of long standing in the area. In 1969-70 he served as president of the Kansas State Federation of Art, one of the older organizations that have contributed to the nurture of the Arts in the area.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

There were four major concerns of this study:

1. What is the biographical background of the midwestern artist, John D. Gorbitt, Jr., of Topeka, Kansas? It will be proven through records in primary resources that through easy access to mass

media, books, individuals, exhibitions of great art and materials an artist in the midwest had available knowledge of art from the world over.

2. What are the personal philosophies concerning his artistic productivity and creative thought methods which led to Gorbutt's creative work? It will be shown that Gorbutt demonstrated by changes in his artistic production and through interviews and his writing that his philosophy was one that recognizes the need for flexibility and experimentation.

3. With what techniques and media available to Gorbutt did he experiment in his artistic production? It will be demonstrated through a perusal of his periods of work and reproductions of and interviews about some of his works of art that he worked and experimented with a wide variety of media.

4. What are the significant periods and pieces of Gorbutt's work up to 1971? It is easily discernible by date of production, style, and materials used that Gorbutt's work up to the completion of this study falls into three periods; however, through all of the periods, there was a concern for light in all of its aspects.

Importance of the Study

In a general sense, very little has been written concerning the cultural arts in Kansas. This needs to be done. For many years there have been artists working in Kansas, art schools in operation

in which artists were trained, and art organizations that have contributed to the nurture of the Arts in the state.

There is a crescendo of interest in the development of the cultural arts in Kansas; therefore, some attention needs to be given to the activity which preceded this interest.

Specifically, John Gorbutt has been a part of the arts movement here, as demonstrated by his membership and participation in the Kansas State Federation of Art, which he served as vice president in 1968-69 and president in 1969-70; the Topeka Art Guild, which he served as a member of the Board of Directors a number of different times; the Professional Advertising Club, which he served as a member of the Board of Directors and as treasurer from 1959 until 1963; and by membership in the Topeka Symphony Society and the Community Concert Series; the Civic Center Art Gallery of Topeka of which he is owner and director; and by his creative productivity. He has won recognition for his works by having been accepted for exhibition in the Rockefeller Center, New York; Joslyn Memorial Museum, Omaha, Nebraska; A.C.A. Gallery, New York; Kansas Free Fair Sweepstakes; Pembroke Country Day School, Kansas City; Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas; Marymount College, Salina, Kansas; Topeka Art Guild; Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas; the Southwestern Artists, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas; Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia; and the 1969 National Sculpture Conference, Lawrence, Kansas.

In addition, his work is represented in a number of collections. Among owners of his work are Justice and Mrs. Gordon Sloan, Dr. and Mrs. Wallace Baldinger and Mrs. J. E. Fisher of Oregon; Mrs. L. R. Thomas and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Becker, St. Louis, Missouri; Mr. and Mrs. Lee Britton, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Buening, Oklahoma City; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Britton, Mrs. Theal White Allen and others of Kansas City, Missouri; Mrs. R. E. Adams, Sr., Maple Hill, Kansas; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ash, Wichita, Kansas; Mrs. Jacob Dickinson, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Keith, Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Sloan, Mr. Charles Cutler, Mrs. L. A. Walrafen, Mrs. E. J. Taggert, Mrs. Fred Asay, Mrs. R. E. Krueger, and others of Topeka, Kansas; also the First National Bank of Topeka and the Stockgrowers Bank, Maple Hill, Kansas.

A file has been started at the Topeka Public Library concerning Gorbutt's work.

Through the years Gorbutt has had a friendly association with a number of the individuals who have been in the area and have been influential in the arts. They include John Canaday who is now art critic of the New York Times and author of a number of art books; Wallace Baldinger, now director of the Museum of Art, University of Oregon, and author of art books; John Bashor, now chairman of the Art Department at Wyoming University; Charles Marshall, formerly State Architect of Kansas; the late Alexander Tillotson, former Chairman of the Art Department of Washburn University; and Bernard Frazer, now sculptor-in-residence at the University of Kansas,

Lawrence, Kansas; Mrs. Fayben Williams Wolfe, Former Chairman of the Art Department at Topeka High School, an active member of the Topeka Art Department at Topeka High School, an active member of the Topeka Art Guild and former curator of Mulvane Museum; V. Helen Anderson, retired chairman of the art department of Washburn University; John F. Helm, Jr., Kansas State University; the late Albert Block and Karl Mattern, formerly of the University of Kansas; Robert Sudlow, professor at the University of Kansas; and David Overmeyer, who painted murals in the Kansas State Capitol.

Procedure of the Thesis

Sources. The sources which constitute the media for carrying out this study are largely primary in nature. Newspaper articles, magazine articles, unpublished essays and one doctoral thesis were available. Books on the works of influencing artists have been used, and personal interviews and letters have been considered. Some documents are available for verification. All Kansas newspapers are verifiable in the microfilm files of the Kansas State Historical Society.

Biographical Outline. A biographical outline was compiled from the sources mentioned. This is intended as a reference for the consideration of problem number one. The biographical outline is in Appendix I of this thesis.

Philosophy of the Artist. Gorbutt's philosophy as it applied to his creative productivity was recorded both from his unpublished

essays and from personal interviews. The way in which he applied his philosophy to his compositions is demonstrated by including color photographs of his compositions as illustrated in this study. These photographs are used to consider problems number two, three and four.

Media. The media used by the artist are illustrated and verified by the use of photographs of the artist's work. The use of certain media is inherent in the whole view of the artist's life as attested in the Biographical Outline and Chapter II which gives brief attention to the biography of the artist.

Plan of the Thesis

The general plan of the thesis follows the stated problems. Chapter II contains the biographical material which is intended to demonstrate the possibility that through mass media, books, individuals and easy access to exhibitions of great art and access to materials, an artist in the mid-west had available knowledge of art from the world over.

Chapter III deals with the phases of Gorbett's work divided into groups either according to medium used, or type of work being done such as naturalism or abstraction. The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate the growth and change in both the philosophy behind his creativity and the variety of media used.

Chapter IV demonstrates the natural division of the artist's work into periods and discusses his constant concern for light which

culminated in the creation of the kinetic light sculpture. The chapter is a summary of the material relating to the four problems and states the need for a further study of Gorbett's work to include his considerable contribution through his commercial productivity.

Definition of Terms Used

Cultural arts: The term "cultural arts" will be used in the sense that it is intended by the Kansas Cultural Arts Commission; that is, it includes the plastic creative arts of painting, sculpture, and graphics, as well as music, drama, and the dance.

Creative arts: The plastic arts of painting, sculpture, and graphics will be referred to as the "creative arts" in this study even though it is recognized that certainly the other arts of music, literature, theatre and the dance can be "creative" activities.

Structurists: The structurist movement refers to the group working in Chicago in the 1960's with what Gorbett has variously called "relief painting," "wood constructions, etc." The structurists worked on more of a geometrical formula than most of Gorbett's work of this type; however, he was exploring this medium as early as 1932 (see Appendix D, Baldinger's letter).

An article "The Structurist Movement" by Harold Haydon says

. . .these structurists lay claim to an American heritage from Whitman, Louis Sullivan and Buckminster Fuller, while acknowledging a lineage that runs back through European constructivism to Mondrian, Cezanne, and ultimately to Monet.¹

¹Harold Haydon, "The Structurist Movement," Chicago Omnibus and F. M. Guide, /Chicago, Ill./, May 1967.

Plastic art or plastic paintings: Refers to the aforementioned relief paintings, not to painting with plastic paint. The word plastic refers to the three dimensional characteristic and the shaping of the forms (see Appendix D, No. 1 and 2).

Relief paintings: Refers to the three dimensional designs attached to the background and constructed of wood, masonite and plastics, sometimes lacquered in full color, others being monochromatic variously called in the press plastic paintings, Structurist, constructions, etc.

Mass media: Reference to "mass media" includes magazines, newspapers, radio and television as a group.

Media: When the word "media" is used alone it refers to the various materials or techniques which the artist uses--watercolors, oil, or gouache, acrylic, poured lacquer paintings, thrown pottery, etching, or aquatint graphics; welded steel, carved wood, and sand sculpture; or the collage and structurist compositions, to name some of the media used by Gorbutt.

Kinetic: In art the term "kinetic" refers to movement, sound and light in the creation of an artistic composition as in a mobile or the environmental art.

Kinetic sculpture: The sculpture which uses electronic means to enhance a three dimensional sculptural form with light, movement and sound.

Light sculpture: See Kinetic sculpture. Sculpture which includes neon, fluorescent or incandescent light sources and the necessary electronic equipment as an integral part of the art form.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE PRIMARY RESOURCES IN BIOGRAPHICAL ORDER

Ancestry, Birth and Youth

John Detwiler Gorbutt was born in Troy, Kansas on October 20, 1904.² His father was Dr. John Dougherty Gorbutt (see Appendix C, Portrait No. 14) who had been born November 15, 1874 in Frankfort, Kansas and died in Topeka, Kansas in 1965 and is buried in the family plot in Frankfort, Kansas. While their middle names were different, John Detwiler Gorbutt did go by the name John D. Gorbutt, Junior, through most of his life (see Appendix B for genealogical material concerning the Gorbuts).

In 1904 Dr. Gorbutt was in the general practice of dentistry, having graduated from Campbell College in Holton and then from the Kansas City Dental College. Dr. Gorbutt later specialized in artificial dentures during a time when dentists did much of their own laboratory work. He was inventive in that he developed some innovation in fastening artificial dentures, and young dentists came to him to observe. For a hobby he used his laboratory skills and an artistic bent to sculpture miniature animals from the dental materials, some in gold. For many years Dr. Gorbutt served as

²Delayed Certificate of Birth, Kansas State Board of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Topeka, Kansas. Number 69-01646 (-899-1).

secretary of the Northeast District of the Kansas Dental Association. For a number of years Dr. Gorbutt practiced in Holton, Kansas, then about 1935 he moved back to Topeka where he continued to practice until he retired when he was 87 only because the building (Central Building, Seventh and Kansas) in which he had his offices was being torn down.

The artist's mother was Mary Emma Detwiler Gorbutt who was born May 12, 1878 in Glen Elder, Jewell County, Kansas; at this writing in 1971 she is still living. Mary's great-great great grandfather was an architect who came from Holland to Pennsylvania. The architectural drawing instruments of this great grandfather Detwiler have come down to the artist. The Detwiler ancestors go back to the Bishop Henry Funk family in Pennsylvania (see genealogical material in Appendix B). The artist's mother painted watercolors as well as doing other handwork such as sewing and crocheting beautifully.

Another individual in the artist's ancestry of interest to this study was a paternal uncle of the artist's father, Dr. William B. Gorbutt who was sent by his family in Kentucky to study medicine in Paris before the Civil War. While in Paris the young medical student also studied art. He served the North as a surgeon during the Civil War. (His brothers and sisters were southern sympathizers. His brother, the direct ancestor of the subject of this thesis, was a Confederate soldier.) After the War he practiced his skills as an

artist, probably in addition to medicine. There are photographs in the family with the "Alcan and Gorbitt, Portrait Painters" stamp on the back (see Appendix B).

John Detwiler Gorbitt started to school in 1910 in Horton, Kansas. He had been sick with typhoid fever for a year and for this reason he started to school late. The family moved to Kansas City, Missouri where they lived for a time, then moved to Holton, Kansas where he finished elementary school and attended junior high school. He played the cornet in the school orchestra and the town band. The BAND CONCERT (see Appendix C) painted in 1935 perhaps harkens back to this early concern with and enjoyment of music in small towns. This painting in 1971 is owned by the First National Bank of Topeka, Kansas and hangs in their building at Sixth and Kansas Avenue.

In 1918 at the age of 13 he received a letter from the United States Government asking him to close down his radio transmitter for the duration of World War I. The Washburn Review mentions this in an article about the artist in 1963:

As a small boy, he always had a chemical and electrical laboratory. He even rigged up a wireless transmitter to send Morse Code signals during World War I.³

High school was experienced in Salina, Kansas where he lived with his Aunt Minnie Detwiler Buenning and his Uncle Herman and four

³Washburn Review, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, May 8, 1963. /n.c./ /n.p./

cousins: three girls and Paul Buening who was a violinist and became musical director of radio stations. He owned CARE of Atchison, Kansas for a number of years until 1970.

Back in Topeka with his family John Gorbitt graduated from Topeka High School in 1924.

In the fall of 1924 Gorbitt started to college at Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas where he took art courses from V. Helen Anderson among others. He studied art books from the library and painted on his own. It was during this time that Miss Anderson painted Gorbitt in a yellow slicker with his red paintbox. He became a member of Alpha Delta social fraternity and worked at Central National Bank in the general teller's department. To earn extra money and as a medium with which to experiment he made batik scarves and wall hangings.

In March of 1926 John Gorbitt married Irene Doris Ash of Topeka, an Alpha Phi pledge at Washburn. She was born November 29, 1907 in Lathrop, Missouri to Charles Samuel Ash (1880-1961) and Sarah Bell Fitz-Gerald Ash (1885-1966). Her family had moved to Topeka in 1910 where her father had continued to carry on his lumber business.

During 1926 John Gorbitt started working for Liberty Life Insurance Company as an actuarial clerk and he did commercial art for their brochures. December 22, 1926 their daughter Jeanne was born.

In 1928 Gorbutt painted with Byron Wolfe who in 1970 was a commercial artist in Kansas City specializing in western art.

Early Work

One of the earliest references in the press to Gorbutt's paintings was made by Carl P. Bolmar⁴ in his regular column "Gleanings from the Field of Art" in the Topeka State Journal newspaper, September, 1931, in which he mentions that "Mr. Gorbutt" was exhibiting in Topeka for the first time, and that he welcomed him to the fold of Topeka artists. This was in connection with the reporting of the art exhibit at the Kansas Free Fair, which during those years was considered an exhibition of some stature among artists of the state.

On June 25, 1932, Bolmar⁵ reported the announcement of Gorbutt's commission to paint the portrait of Justice E. R. Sloan of the Kansas Supreme Court to hang in the Supreme Court room at the State House.

In the article Bolmar says:

Mr. Gorbutt paints with a strong, broad brush stroke and uses medium keyed color values. Several of his portrait studies of widely known Topekans, shown at the Topeka men artists' exhibition at the high school galleries last April, were most convincing likenesses.

⁴Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," regular column in The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], September 7, 1931, [n.c.] [n.p.].

⁵Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," column in The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], June 25, 1932. [n.c.] [n.p.].

The paintings also had depth, good modeling and good drawing. Among his best works shown at that time were portraits of Alan Sells and Robert Maynard. Mr. Gorbutt is also a landscape painter of ability.⁶

During 1932 Gorbutt painted with Charles Marshall, then state architect of Kansas. They spent many pleasant weekend afternoons painting in the countryside around Topeka, usually in the watercolor media.

March 21, 1932 the Gorbutt's daughter, Anne, was born.

In September, 1932, Carl P. Bolmar devoted a good portion of his weekly column to a description of the butter sculpture Gorbutt had modeled for the Beatrice Creamery Company exhibit at the Kansas Free Fair. The content of the article explains why the record of the butter sculpture is mentioned several times in this study (see Appendix C).

. . . John Gorbutt, widely known young Topeka artist has modeled in butter a life-sized figure of George Washington. . . .

Tho' it will not be a part of the Kansas Free Fair art exhibit proper, this butter statue is a genuine work of art. Progress of the sculptor's work has been watched with keen interest by prominent members of Topeka's art fraternity, who are much pleased with the result obtained.

General Washington is shown dressed in full uniform, seated on a chair, the beautifully modeled face wrapped in deep thought. He holds a sword loosely across his knees.

Before beginning work, Gorbutt collected and studied all possible data as to the facial and physical appearance of Washington. The face is a composite of those portraits and busts which are declared to be the most authentic likenesses of THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.

⁶ibid.

In his work the sculptor proceeded exactly as sculptors do when working in the regulation clay. First a strong armature or supporting frame was built of iron rods, heavy screening and pieces of wood. The iron rods and wooden sticks support the weight of the butter, and the screening forms a clinch to keep it in place. Without such a frame butter or clay would sag and break.

The completed frame was then taken to a cold storage room, where the butter would remain at the consistency of wet modeling clay. Then the butter was applied with the sculptor's hands, and shaped with his fingers and with regulation modeling tools. At the Free Fair, the statue will be placed in a large cooling box to keep the butter firm and hard. Approximately 300 pounds of butter were used in making the statue.

Mr. Gorbutt will also display several of his portraits and landscape studies done in oil in the Kansas Free Fair art exhibit.⁷

The Nelson Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri opened in 1933.

This event made great art easily accessible to Gorbutt from that time on. It was an important year of study by the young artist because during the fall John and Doris Gorbutt traveled to the Chicago World's Fair and while in Chicago had the opportunity to study the collections at the Art Institute Museum. At this time, that museum had a large visiting collection from Europe. Gorbutt's fraternal aunt, Catherine Gorbutt, Principal of the Spanish speaking schools in El Paso, Texas, influenced him to be sure to see this exhibition (see Appendix B).

On the way home from Chicago the Gorbutts visited Grant Wood in his studio in Iowa.

⁷Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," column in The Topeka State Journal, Topeka, Kansas, September n.d., 1932. n.c. / n.p..

Later in Gorbutt's life (May 8, 1963) the Washburn Review was to give good insight into these times. They said:

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, the enthusiastic artist concentrated frequently on his painting. People turned to creative work because they didn't have money for amusement or travel. Gorbutt experimented; he painted with plastic /wrong reference to "plastic paintings" the three dimensional constructions/ and built pictures with pieces of painted wood. He painted portraits⁸ and landscapes . . . the American scene, then very popular.

The year 1933 had begun well for the artist with one of his paintings hanging, by invitation, in the Mulvane Art Museum at Washburn College.

Bolmar reports in the Journal on December 10, 1932:

An exhibition of work by Topeka artists is to be opened at the Mulvane Art Museum, Washburn College on Thursday, December 16 to continue until January 3.

Exhibition is by special invitation of Wallace S. Baldinger, director of the Washburn College school of art. Those who had accepted Mr. Baldinger's written invitation up to the time this was written were Herbert Chelsey Chives, David Overmeyer, J. W. Fazel, Helen Rooney, C. P. Buck, Irwin E. Smith, John D. Gorbutt, Grace Churchill Sargent, Fern Cooper, Francis Mitchell Wardin, and Carl P. Bolmar. . . .⁹

From the program of "Topeka Artists' Exhibition" it was learned that the painting Gorbutt submitted was GIRL IN A RED DRESS.

⁸Featured article in The Washburn Review, /Topeka, Kansas, Washburn University/, May 8, 1963, column 1-3, page 7, volume LXXXIX, number 29.

⁹Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," column in The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, December 10, 1932. /n.c./ /n.p./.

This is the same portrait of Doris Gorbutt that in later programs was referred to as RED DRESS.

In March 1933 the Journal reported at the time of the Eighth Annual Kansas Artists' Exhibit that Gorbutt's work was included. The two paintings submitted by Gorbutt, according to the program of the show were number 26 Portrait--JUDGE E. R. SLOAN and 27 Portrait--ROBERT P. MAYNARD.

The text of the article is of interest to the current study since it quotes Wallace Baldinger at some length as he gives a feeling for the condition of the arts in the area at the time:

In speaking of the annual exhibition, Director Baldinger said:

Should the gallery frequenter of the East chance to drop in for a visit at the Topeka Art Guild annual exhibition of paintings, prints and drawings by Kansas artists, he would be surprised. He would find away out "in the wilds" of the Middle West unmistakable evidence of the very tendencies which he had imagined fondly as distinctive alone of that "cultured" nucleus of the land stretching along the Atlantic seaboard from Baltimore to Boston and finding a solitary frontier outpost in the God-forsaken city of Chicago, those tendencies appearing only in communities firmly established and securely evolving a material expression of the creative urge, a vitally active art tradition which best conduces to cultural progress. A cross-section of the aesthetic life of the state this exhibition, and in it are represented works of vigorous youth, fullest maturity, and every intermediate stage in the advancement of an artistic career.

It would appear that the more traditional streams of Barbizon and Impressionist influence are in predominance, tho' some might wish perhaps that the quieter manner of the former had been permitted to temper a bit more the color glories of the latter. Out of this older tradition and the field of portraiture some fine things have been done. From among them two stand out with particular interest--one a portrait by John Gorbutt, goes well beyond the matter of mere pictorial record and attests to the creative power of the artist in the clean-cut

¹⁰Program of the Eighth Annual Kansas Artists' Exhibit, Topeka Art Guild, Topeka, Kansas, March 1933.

handling of the facial planes and the background colors designed to echo sympathetically the prevailing tone of hair and feature. The other . . . its creator Catherine Allen Mathews.¹¹

Just before the trip to Chicago Bolmar gives us the feeling that Gorbutt was hard at work:

A new and encouraging feature of the Kansas Free Fair Art exhibit this year is the unusually large number of entries from all over the state who never before have exhibited. The writer has been privileged to see some of this work sent in, and much of what he saw is of decidedly good quality. . . . John D. Gorbutt has entered a group of five oil paintings. . . .

John D. Gorbutt, talented and widely known young Topeka artist, is also a sculptor of no mean ability. He is modeling in butter, a nearly life-size statue of President F. D. Roosevelt.

This work is being done at the Beatrice Creamery Company's Topeka plant, and the statue will form a part of that company's exhibit at the Kansas Free Fair next week.

The writer was privileged, a few days ago to have a look at the nearly finished work. The president is shown in a standing position, before a sort of pulpit or reading stand in the attitude of addressing an assemblage. . . . The features are skillfully, vigorously and beautifully modeled. . . .

Last year Mr. Gorbutt modeled. . . a large seated statue of George Washington. . . This was a decidedly good piece of sculpture, and the Roosevelt statue promises to be even better. . . . In making both statues, the sculptor proceeded exactly as he would had he been modeling in clay. . . . armature. . . . then butter of the consistency of properly wet clay. . . . The shaping and modeling of form and features was done by the sculptors fingers with a few simple tools made of boxwood and wire. . . .

He is widely known in Kansas as both a portrait painter and a landscape painter, and his work shown in midwestern art exhibitions during the last three or four years has received much favorable notice from art judges and critics. One of his recent

¹¹ Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas] p. 6, col. 1 and 2, March [n.d.] 1933.

portraits is that of E. R. Sloan, lately retired justice of the Kansas Supreme Court. This painting now hangs in the Supreme Court Chamber at the State Capitol.¹²

This article not only enumerates several pieces of work Gorbutt was doing during this period, but also in the last paragraph attests to his growing reputation in the field of art in the area. Later the Topeka Daily Capital reported that his group of five portraits and landscapes won first prize.

In November of 1933 Gorbutt participated in the Kansas Artist's Annual sponsored by the Topeka Art Guild in the Topeka High School galleries.¹³

During this period Gorbutt was working for the Beatrice Creamery Company (Meadow Gold) in charge of their advertising in Topeka; he designed and installed displays, back bars and did the butter sculpture.

During evenings, weekends and vacations he was painting and was having pleasant association with two men who were then in the Washburn University art department. Wallace Baldinger, chairman of the department who was to become director of the art museum at the University of Oregon and author of The Visual Arts¹⁴; and John Canaday

¹²Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," regular column in The Topeka State Journal, Topeka, Kansas. September 9, 1933. /n.c./ /n.p./.

¹³Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, Topeka, Kansas, November 11, 1933, column 5 and 6. /n.p./.

¹⁴Wallace Baldinger, The Visual Arts, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, /New York, New York/, August 1961, Library of Congress. Catalogue No. 59-8691 20788-0110.

who was to become art critic of the New York Times and author of a number of books concerning art.

February 4, 1934 Carl Bolmar reported that the oil portrait of Professor Wallace S. Baldinger, director of art at Washburn College, recently painted by John D. Gorbutt of Topeka, is a decidedly pleasing work.

Composition in mass, line and color are all good, flesh tones are excellent, and a certain stiffness and dryness of technique, which to the writers mind, detracted a little from some of Gorbutt's earlier works, are entirely absent in this picture. The hand which shows in the lower right hand corner is both well drawn and well painted.¹⁵

At the same time Gorbutt painted Baldinger's portrait Baldinger painted one of Gorbutt showing him in his yellow smock with his cigarette in his mouth: a characteristic pose while he was at work on his paintings. They worked in the Gorbutt home. The Baldinger portrait of Gorbutt hangs in the Gorbutt's home near Topeka in 1971. Baldinger is in possession of his portrait by Gorbutt.

During this same period Baldinger had given a talk at the Unitarian Church in Topeka.¹⁶ Bolmar quoted the title of the talk as "Art the Handmaid of Religion" and two quotations from the talk may give some hint as to the kind of interchange of ideas that may

¹⁵Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February 4, 1934. [n.c.]/[n.p.].

¹⁶Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February, [n.d.], 1934. [n.c.]/[n.p.].

have gone on between the two artists at work. Baldinger is quoted as saying "Beauty is the secondary product of artistic genius." And in a slightly different vein "The expression of truth in sensitive rhythm is the fundamental attempt of art."

Concerning the Kansas Free Fair Art Exhibition in 1934 Carl P. Bolmar reports:

I have known John D. Gorbitt for several years and have seen many excellent portraits and landscapes painted by him in oils but it was just this week that I learned what he can do in watercolors. He is now showing a group of landscapes, still life studies and flower studies painted in wash watercolor which are "knockouts." They have strength and accent; the colors work even better than his oils.¹⁷

In reporting about the Free Fair exhibition, the Journal tells that Berger Sandzen of Lindsborg [Kansas]¹⁸ "Internationally known artist, was awarded the sweepstakes art prize." C. A. Seward, of Wichita [Kansas], director of the Kansas Federation of Art and secretary of the Wichita Art Association, was the Free Fair art judge. Gorbitt won first prize for his oil still life "Yellow Bowl" (see Appendix C for pictures).

The same year Mrs. John Gorbitt won second prize for her child's bedroom in the Better Homes contest and exhibit. Shown

¹⁷Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], September 1934. [n.d.] [n.c.] [n.p.].

¹⁸Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], September 12, 1934. [n.c.] [n.p.].

in the room was a portrait of their daughter, Jeanne, by Gorbutt.

September 15, 1934 Bolmar reports that the Kansas Free Fair exhibit "will be kept together and exhibited at the Topeka High galleries until October 8." He said

I believe it is the best display of purely Kansas art ever held here. There are two or three outstanding oil portraits in the show, among them the painting of John Gorbutt by Wallace S. Baldinger. John Gorbutt showing watercolors of decided interest and beauty.¹⁹

September 30, 1934, Professor Wallace S. Baldinger,²⁰ director of the Washburn College Department of Art, announced the schedule of exhibitions for the Mulvane Art Museum during the season 1934-1935. February was scheduled to be an exhibition of paintings by John D. Gorbutt "gifted young Topeka artist." This was to be Gorbutt's first one-man show a decided milestone in a young artist's career.

Both Carl P. Bolmar in the Journal and Melba Mauney²¹ in the Capital reported that Gorbutt's portrait of his wife GIRL IN THE RED DRESS was being shown in the five-state exhibition at the Joslyn Memorial Gallery, Omaha, Nebraska, during the month of December.

¹⁹Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], September 30, 1934. [n.p.].

²⁰Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], December 22, 1934. [n.p.].

²¹Melba Mauney, Topeka Daily Capital, December 23, 1934. [n.c.] [n.p.].

The states represented were "the best painters" of Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota and Nebraska.

In a letter dated January 3, 1935,²² Paul H. Grumann, director of the Society of Liberal Arts of the Joslyn Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, Gorbitt was notified that his VEGETABLES was selected as one of the eighteen paintings from those submitted in the "Five States Exhibit" to be on display there "from time to time during the coming year." This was considered to be quite an honor by all who knew the young artist. The qualities of this particular painting in its handling of color and reflected light are concerns which are felt and displayed in the later development of the artist's work. This is the same VEGETABLES which won first prize at the Kansas Free Fair in 1934, later called YELLOW BOWL (see Appendix C for picture of VEGETABLES).

During this period Gorbitt did John Canaday's portrait which is still in the artist's possession, and studied design from him at Washburn. In the class Gorbitt did a stained glass window design which traveled in a national show.

First One-Man Show 1935

February 1935 saw the opening of Gorbitt's one-man show at Washburn College's Mulvane Art Museum. It was widely reported in the Topeka press.

²²Paul H. Grumann, Society of Liberal Arts, Joslyn Memorial, Omaha, Nebraska, January 3, 1935 letter.

Bolmar said in the Saturday evening Journal on February 2:

A showing of oil painting, watercolor paintings and "plastic paintings" by John D. Gorbutt, widely known young Topeka artist, was opened Friday at the Mulvane Art Museum, Washburn College. It will continue until February 25.

On Sunday afternoon, February 3, from 3 o'clock until 5, a public tea and reception to Mr. and Mrs. Gorbutt will be given by the Washburn College Art Department at the Mulvane Art Museum.

The "plastic paintings" mentioned above are something new to most Topekans. This will be the first time any of them have been exhibited here. They consist of a painted background with colored figures modeled in three dimensions, attached to it. I have not yet seen the ones Mr. Gorbutt is exhibiting but am told they are of the abstract type of artistic expression in which qualities are suggested rather than represented.

In December Mr. Gorbutt had one of his paintings, portrait of Mrs. Gorbutt /RED DRESS/ accepted for the Four State Show held at the Joslyn Memorial Gallery in Omaha, Nebraska. It is reported that the artist has also been invited to exhibit in a five state exhibition being organized by those in charge of the Joslyn Gallery.²³

Melba Mauney²⁴ in the Capital reported that "Gorbutt's paintings of which there are two on exhibition are abstract designs constructed of masonite and wood. They are pleasant subtleties, one expressive of rain, the other of music." She also mentioned other paintings in the show and told that Mrs. Fayben Williams Wolfe and Mrs. Frank L. Britton would preside at the tea table. Mrs. Frank Britton was mother of Lee and Paul Britton, fraternity brothers, and Lee was Gorbutt's high school buddy in Topeka. Mrs. Fayben Williams Wolfe was curator of Mulvane Art Museum when the Gorbutts attended Washburn College.

²³Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 2, 1935. /n.c./ /n.p./.

²⁴Melba Mauney, Topeka Art and Artists, " Topeka Daily Capital, February 1, 1935. /n.c./ /n.p./.

On the society page of the Topeka Journal,²⁵ it was reported that the Washburn College Art Department would entertain with a gallery tea Sunday afternoon and that Mrs. Britton and Mrs. Wolfe would be assisted by members of the Delta Phi Delta art fraternity.

Assisting through the rooms will be:

- Dr. and Mrs. L. D. Whittemore (Mrs. Gorbutt took interior decoration from Mrs. Whittemore at Washburn. She was a founder of the Washburn Art Department and a founder of Topeka Art Guild. Dr. Whittemore was in the Romance Language Department at Washburn.)
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stone (An attorney, his brother, George Stone, a well known Kansas portrait painter.)
- Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Shirer (He, an architect, she, a painter, active in the Art Guild.)
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Merriam (She a president of the Art Guild, he President of Central National Bank.)
- Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Hodge (He a photographer, she a painter and active in the Art Guild.)
- Dr. and Mrs. Byron J. Ashley (He an opthamologist and lifetime friends of the Gorbuts.)
- Dr. and Mrs. Merrill Mills (She active in the Art Guild, and he a prominent physician and surgeon in Topeka.)

²⁵Society Page, Topeka State Journal, February 2, 1935.
/n.c.7.

- Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Smithmeyer (He a Topeka businessman, she an artist and active in the Art Guild.)
- Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Gray (He a physician and active in the Art Guild. Dr. Gray was well known for his marionettes.)
- Mr. and Mrs. David Neiswanger (Active in Art Guild and Washburn University Affairs.)
- Mr. and Mrs. Beryl Johnson (She the former Lillian Stone, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stone, all active in art affairs.)
- Mr. and Mrs. Elliot White (Friends of the Gorbuts through the Central Congregational Church. In 1969 the new concert hall at Washburn University was named the Elliot White Concert Hall.)

On February 9 Bolmar reported:

John D. Gorbutt's exhibition at Mulvane Art Museum, Topeka, opened Sunday afternoon with a reception which, from the point of larger attendance was one of the most important in the history of local art exhibitions.

It is a strong and interesting show. A decided credit to the artist and to the town. There are twenty-seven pictures on display, fourteen oils, ten watercolors and three "plastic paintings."

Among the oils are several portrait studies which hold one's attention, among them PORTRAIT OF A GIRL IN RED, VIRGINIA MANLEY, PROFESSOR WALLACE BALDINGER and PRINTER Frank Taylor.

A large oil still life, BLUE BOWL, is quite one of the best paintings of the kind produced by a Topeka artist for some time. It is admired by Professor James D. Gilbert, of Washburn College, with whom I discussed it one day this week.

BAND CONCERT (see Appendix C) is another interesting painting in which the artist has worked out successfully a difficult problem in reflected artificial light. It depicts a park bandstand at night, with the lights under the roof reflected down

on the musicians. When I saw this picture two or three months ago, soon after John began to work on it, I did not think he was going to get very far. I have changed my mind.

ROCK CRUSHER is a pleasing Kansas summer landscape that most everybody will like. SNOW*, a Kansas winter landscape, has the Kansas rural character, with good indications of distance.

Many of Mr. Gorbutt's watercolors have great beauty. I am inclined to feel that he is making more rapid progress in this medium even than in his oil work.

ROYAL LILLY is a beautiful study, beautifully handled. DAD is an informal little portrait sketch of a professional man working in his laboratory.

The three "plastic paintings" consist of solid colored forms attached to colored backgrounds. These forms are entirely abstract. They are beautiful as compositions aside from what they may mean as symbolic pictures. Composition Number One is supposed to represent early morning with the renewing life and resuming activities of another day. You may get the idea, you may not. Composition Number Two represents a summer shower with pattering rain drops, singing birds, etc. Composition Number Three suggests music.

The Gorbutt exhibition will continue until February 25. Do not fail to see it if you have not already done so.²⁶

On February 26, 1935 Melba Mauney²⁷ reported that Gorbutt's exhibition of paintings which just left Mulvane Museum opened in the city library at Holton, Kansas, under auspices of Holton High School and would remain for two weeks.

September 1935 saw the Free Fair again with a butter sculpture by Gorbutt in the Meadow Gold refrigerated display case and the art

*Bought by Leona Haskell McDaniel.

²⁶Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February 9, 1935. [n.c.] [n.p.].

²⁷Melba Mauney, "Topeka Art and Artists," Topeka Daily Capital, February 26, 1935. [n.c.] [n.p.].

exhibition. The Journal²⁸ reports that prize winning work came from Kansas City, Kansas, Wichita, Salina, Manhattan, Abilene, Lawrence, Lindsborg, Winfield, Alma, Kingman, Columbus and Courtland.

The sweepstakes of \$10.00 was won by Birger Sandzen; Gorbitt won first prize for the best collection of three pieces painted in oils. "Gorbitt also entered snappy work in watercolors."

It is also interesting to note that a long time acquaintance of Gorbitt's, Bernard Frazer, won recognition for a piece of sculpture A YOUNG COLT. Many other well known Kansas artists were mentioned as having exhibited.

Recognition of a Wider Scope

In 1936 Gorbitt's art work began to achieve some recognition of a more national than regional character. The Topeka Journal reports it thus:

THE BANDSTAND an oil painting by John D. Gorbitt of Topeka, has been selected by a group of St. Louis, Missouri artists headed by the widely known Joe Jones, for an exhibition of middle western art which is to be opened about May 1 at the A.C.A. Galleries in New York City.

An unusual feature of this show is that the pictures for exhibition in it were selected from photographs of the works sent to the above-mentioned group.

Those who organized the exhibition and selected the exhibits are Joe Jones, Fred Conway, Joseph P. Vorst, James Turnbull and Oscar Tralinger.

²⁸Topeka Daily State Journal, September 13, 1935.
/n.p.7.

The idea behind this exhibition is the assembling in New York of a typical and representative showing of American art, to revise the flagging interest of art patrons in the eastern part of the United States. This group of five men believe that such a representative exhibition can come only from the country's interior.²⁹

Melba Mauney³⁰ in the Capital also reported the "pleasant news" of Gorbett's selection by the Jones Committee and further explained that the photographs from which the show was selected were solicited by invitation only.

During the fall of 1936, the Gorbett's had a trip to St. Louis to deliver the BAND CONCERT to Joe Jones and visit with him. They saw the art collections and on the way visited Thomas Hart Benton while he was painting the murals in the state capitol.

Then in May of 1936, Gorbett was invited to submit photographs of from six to ten of his best paintings and sculpture for the files of the department of paintings and sculpture, United States Treasury Department. The invitation came through Oscar Thalinger of the City Museum of St. Louis, Missouri. The files were kept in Washington as a means of selecting commendable artists to decorate the federal buildings.

²⁹Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings in the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, Topeka, Kansas, April 11, 1936, column 1-3, page 34.

³⁰Melba Mauney, "Topeka Art and Artists," Topeka Daily Capital, April 12, 1936, column 3, page 19B.

Melba Mauney³¹ says "the excellent quality of Gorbutt's BAND CONCERT in the Joe Jones exhibition now showing in New York brought the request." Oscar Thalinger, one of the five St. Louis men who are sponsoring the show sent a letter of recommendation to Washington and it was followed by a letter to Gorbutt from the Treasury Department.

Carl P. Bolmar³² in the Journal had also reported this important invitation.

News that BRICK YARD had won third prize in the watercolors division of the Midwestern Artists Exhibition at the Kansas City Art Institute in 1937 was a milestone in Gorbutt's artistic endeavor, since the same painting was to be one of five to represent the State of Kansas in the Second National Exhibition of American Art, conducted by the Municipal Art Committee of the City of New York in the American Fine Arts Society Galleries in that city. The exhibition in New York lasted from June 16 through July 31, 1937. The Midwestern Artists Exhibition in Kansas City had opened February 7 of the same year. A photograph of Gorbutt's BRICK YARD was included in the catalogue of the show.³³ Concerning the importance of the exhibition to the artist, Bolmar said:

³¹Melba Mauney, "Topeka Art and Artists," Topeka Daily Capital, May 24, 1936, page 6C. /n.c.7.

³²Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings in the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 23, 1936, column 5, page 5.

³³Catalogue of the "Midwestern Artists Exhibition," Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, Missouri, March 1, 1937.

Owing to the strictness of entrance requirements it is a distinction to have one's work accepted for the Art Institute's Annual Midwestern shows even though one receives no awards. To get an award of any kind, even honorable mention is an honor indeed.³⁴ (See Appendix C)

A look at the listing of the prizes awarded in that exhibition, as reported by The Kansas City Journal Post³⁵ reads like a "Who's Who in Midwestern Art."

On Sunday, January 31, 1937, The Topeka Daily Capital ran a reproduction of Gorbutt's BRICK YARD with an article by Dorthea Pellett. The headlines of the article read "Art for Arts Sake Is Paying Topeka Artist John Gorbutt, Places Third in Midwestern Artists Exhibition Division at Kansas City. Student of practical Art." Mrs. Pellett went on to say that the winning watercolor sketch was made in ten minutes and won because of its color values. Not until this year has a Topekan captured a prize. In describing the painting Mrs. Pellett says:

. . . . /It/ is a very rapid sketch painted last summer at the brickyard out by the high bridge. BRICK YARD was painted without preliminary design and without thought of making a finished picture. In fact Mr. Gorbutt had not been painting in watercolor for some time, having done most of his recent work in oils.

In the ten minutes he spent on BRICKYARD he achieved a successful watercolor sketch of his colorful subject by using both dry brush and wash technique. Interest and rhythm are

³⁴Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, January 30, 1937, column 5, page 5.

³⁵Report in the Kansas City Journal Post, January 24, 1937. /n.p./.

set up by dark lines making patterns and form of the shapes that are developed in a few deft strokes of the color a little lower in key than those of his oils.³⁶

The article by Pellett goes on to mention the portrait of Judge E. R. Sloan and that Gorbitt was presently painting a portrait of Mrs. E. R. Sloan.

Carl P. Bolmar³⁷ reports in the Journal the list of Kansas artists who were to represent Kansas in the Second National Exhibition of American Art, which opened June 16 in the International Building, Rockefeller Center, New York. Karl Mattern and Albert Block, Lawrence /who were both on the faculty at the University of Kansas and were to be among the teachers of the Gorbitt's daughter Jeanne/; Birger Sandzen, Lindsborg; William Dickinson, Clayton H. Staples, Glenn Goton, Wichita; John D. Gorbitt, Topeka; John Stewart Curry, Dunavant, now artist in residence at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; also Bruce Moore, Wichita, now living in New York City.

These artists were chosen by a committee appointed by Governor Huxman consisting of John F. Helm, Jr., of Manhattan, director of the Kansas Federation of Art, D. M. Swarthout, Dean of Fine Arts, University of Kansas. "Because of their wide knowledge of Kansas art and artists, C. A. Seward of Wichita, president of the Kansas State Federation of

³⁶Dorthea Pellett, The Topeka Daily Capital, January 31, 1937, column 1-3, page 5.

³⁷Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 29, 1937, /n.c./ /n.p./.

Art and Fayben Williams Wolfe of Topeka, secretary of the Topeka Art Guild were later placed on the committee."

Since all of the 1936 paintings selected were oils it was decided by the committee that the 1937 showing from Kansas would be watercolors.

Bolmar further reports:

Since the City of New York Municipal Art Committee which is sponsoring these national art shows, has decided that they are to be annual affairs, the Kansas State Federation of Art is petitioning Governor Huxman to ask the Legislature for an appropriation to defray expenses of gathering the Kansas representation and shipping it to New York. . . .

The watercolor by John D. Gorbett selected for the showing is a painting of the brick plant on the Kaw River bank, north of Gage Park. This picture won a prize at Kansas City Art Institute Annual Midwestern Exhibition this spring.³⁸

Further documentation of this honor is from a news release from the Municipal Art Committee of New York City. It reads in part:

BRICK YARD. . . represents the state of Kansas in the Second National Exhibition of American Art conducted by the Municipal Art Committee of the City of New York in the American Fine Arts Society Galleries, 215 West 57th Street, June 16 through July 31.

The entries were selected and sent to the National Exhibition as State Exhibits by all of the forty-eight states and by five of the American possessions and territories. The exhibition is a feature of New York's Third Annual Summer Festival of Music, Art, Dance and Drama.³⁹

³⁸ Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], May 29, 1937. [n.c.] [n.p.].

³⁹ News release from Municipal Art Committee, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, 1937.

The program of the show lists:⁴⁰

263 John Gorbutt -- BRICK YARD -- watercolor

264 Karl Mattern -- EARLY SPRING -- watercolor

266 Birger Sandzen -- MOUNTAIN LAKE -- watercolor

In the Art Exhibition of the 1937 Kansas Free Fair Gorbutt was "especially fortunate" according to Carl Bolmar⁴¹. Gorbutt won the sweepstakes prize for his oil still life showing a loaf of bread and break knife on a red and white checked table cloth, a first prize on still life in oils and first prize for a mural design.

In October, Bolmar reported:

Beginning about December 1, a showing of watercolors by three of Topeka's most promising and progressing artists, is to be held at the museum /Mulvane, Washburn College/. These artists are John D. Gorbutt, Charles L. Marshall and Robert Service.

Mr. Gorbutt's paintings have received favorable notice in eastern exhibitions during the last two years and the watercolors of Marshall and Service were among the strongest features of the 1937 Kansas Free Fair Art Exhibit which many competent judges considered one of the best showings of Kansas Art ever assembled and, by the way, Gorbutt won the sweepstakes prize in oil painting at the Free Fair.⁴²

Starts Gorbutt Advertising Company 1939

March 1, 1939 Gorbutt founded Gorbutt Advertising Company.

He rented the second and third floors of 601 Kansas Avenue, Topeka,

⁴⁰Program of Municipal Art Committee City of New York, June 16 - July 31, 1937.

⁴¹Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, September 15, 1937. /n.c./ /n.p./.

⁴²Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, October 4, 1937, column 5-7. /n.p./.

a 25 foot by 150 foot building.⁴³ Departments A and B of the Gorbutt organization went into operation with the founding of the company. Department A executed all types of commercial art, displays, signs of all kinds, truck lettering, floats and signs for parades, store fixtures which included some commercial interior decorating, and the butter sculpture for Beatrice Creamery Company. The pattern files from this department were acquired by B and B Sign Company, Topeka, in 1961.

Department B was the Silk Screen Process department which at various times did all types of silk screen process from signs and decals, cloth banners and for one period did gold detailing on Hallmark Cards. The silk screen department did outdoor advertising posters for the Department C after its organization in 1946. The silk screen department (B) was sold to General Printing, a subsidiary of the Fleming Company, in 1961.

In 1940 the business moved to 719 Quincy, a rented, one-story building 150 foot by 50 foot. With this move the name was changed to Gorbutt and Company.⁴⁴

⁴³The documentation of this can be found in the United States Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Census of Business 1939; from the telephone book listings and on file with the Gorbuts can be found copies of the first letterheads.

⁴⁴The documentation for this continued business activity would be the United States Federal Social Security Employers Number 480240210 and the Topeka Telephone Directory 1940. On file with the Gorbuts are copies of letterheads, clippings of newspaper ads and photographs of work.

As will be brought out later in this thesis a study of Gorbutt's commercial design and his business activities could constitute an entirely separate thesis. This brief summary is included in this study to account for a vast expenditure of time and creative energy during the period when we see little activity from Gorbutt in the fine arts field. The entire Gorbutt and Company business was based on Gorbutt's artistic design and engineering abilities.

Bought Building in Downtown Topeka

In 1945 Gorbutt bought the building at 112-114 East Seventh Street⁴⁵ and moved his business to the first floor and basement areas of it. The second and third floors at that time contained a number of apartments.⁴⁶

In 1946 Department C came into being with the purchase of the franchise from Ad-Ver-Tis-Er, Inc., Fort Wayne, Indiana. These outdoor advertising panels constituted an active part of the business until they were sold to Stan Emerson Advertising Company in 1959.

Department D was the Neon Department which was organized in 1948. This department executed neon signs from small window displays to giant pylons. The neon plant was sold to Barnard Signs, Incorporated, Lawrence, Kansas in 1961.

⁴⁵Shawnee County Register of Deeds Book 874. Deed filed January 2, 1945.

⁴⁶The documentation of the business activities during this time are the Kansas State Employment Security Division Employers account number 32593-089-731 and Kansas State Sales Tax Number 3-1268.

Department E constituted the Gorbutt-Bowman Pottery Division of Gorbutt and Company and did not have separate business identification numbers. It was located in the adjoining building at 629 Quincy. The pottery manufactured was art objects, dinnerware and advertising pieces using Kansas clay and glaze raw materials. Gorbutt did some of the designing for the pottery division and the Gorbutt's daughter Jeanne was active in the pottery division, developing designs and clay and glaze formulae until the pottery was sold to VanBruggle Pottery, Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1955.

In 1956 the business was incorporated becoming Gorbutt Incorporated in the State of Kansas, July 1.⁴⁷

In January of 1960 the business was moved to 629 Quincy, a 25 foot by 150 foot building and the 112-114 East Seventh Street building was remodeled to contain rental space for businesses and professional offices.

In December 1961 Gorbutt, Incorporated was dissolved and Gorbutt Company was organized to constitute the Gorbutt's other business interests.

Interest Turns to *Sailing* 1942

Gorbutt played as hard as he worked. When Lake Shawnee was being built near Topeka, Gorbutt decided to build a sailboat and

⁴⁷Documentation constitutes receipt from the Kansas State Corporation Commission, letterheads, ads, seal, account books and the United States Treasury Department Employers Identification Number 480625595.

with all of his enthusiastic drive he delved into the fine points of sailboat building and racing. He checked out books from the library, bought books, ordered magazines on sailing and sent for plans and information. Mrs. Gorbutt shared his interest and they read aloud to each other in the evenings the "how to sail" books.

The first Snipe Class sailboat that Gorbutt built was built in 1943 and registered 4830. Louis Rake and John Armstrong helped part of the time in the building of the "Gale" and then Louis Rake became the Gorbutt's crewman especially during the heavy winds and regattas. Gorbutt's daughter Jeanne crewed most of the time several summers and Anne and Mrs. Gorbutt were called into action at other times. The sailing was a family activity and many happy days of sailing with picnics at the lake, and regatta trips were enjoyed by the Gorbutt's.

There were a number of times when mention was made in the press, with pictures, of the Gorbutt's sailing. One on the sports page of the Capital Journal March 31, 1947 says:

John Gorbutt was elected commodore of the Topeka Yacht Club in the first meeting of the organization of the year at Municipal Auditorium Monday night.

Vice-commodore elected was Jake Dickinson, with Chet Ebbe as rear commodore. Leon Armstrong was named recording secretary.⁴⁸

Gorbutt enjoyed many friendships in the Yacht Club. Two others were artists among the membership; Wynn Fazel and Russ Cheezam.

⁴⁸Capital-Journal, Topeka, Kansas, March 31, 1947. [n.c.]
[n.p.].

The Gorbuts traveled to regattas, in Wichita, Kansas; Grand Lake, Oklahoma; and Kansas City's Lake Lotawana, among others.

The Topeka Daily Capital sports page July 10, 1949 reports:
 "Thousands see Lake Shawnee Sports Festival. Thrilling boat races highlight Ten-Event Schedule of action. . . John Gorbutt's sailboat took the light sloop prize. . . ." ⁴⁹

Another mention in 1949 was:

"The Gale," piloted by John D. Gorbutt, Jr., with Louis Rake as crew, won the Shawnee Yacht Club light sloop race at Lake Shawnee yesterday.

After the four mile race Gorbutt was awarded permanent possession of the light sloop trophy by Commodore Bill Schwartz. It was the third time Gorbutt has won the event. He did the job in 1944 and 1948, also. . . . ⁵⁰

In relation to Gorbutt's interest in sailing, it is interesting to note that while undoubtedly the beauty inherent in the sport appealed to him, he never painted a picture of sailboats or otherwise used it in his art.

Some of the Trips to Museums

During the years when Gorbutt's greatest amount of creative energy was going into the designs produced by his business (one might say in view of recent developments, his "pop-art" period), the Gorbuts

⁴⁹Topeka Daily Capital, [Topeka, Kansas], July 10, 1949.
 [n.c.] [n.p.].

⁵⁰Ibid. [n.d.].

did get away from the business for some trips. It can be assumed that nearly every art gallery along their various routes would have been viewed by the Gorbuts. In 1942 they picked up their daughter Jeanne at Camp Shawnee near Warrensburg, Missouri and traveled with their two daughters to Colorado. The Colorado Springs and Denver museum collections were viewed, the Colorado Springs museum building being fairly new at that time and the American Indian Collection in Denver being of particular interest to the family.

In 1948 when their daughter Anne went to Camp Lake Hubert near Brainard, Minnesota, the Gorbuts visited galleries and pottery factories in North Dakota and Minnesota. They viewed Mount Rushmore and toured the Red Wing potteries at Red Wing, Minnesota.

The following year, 1949, after the pottery division of Gorbutt and Company was started, they had a trip to the Philbrook Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Art Festival. Bernard Frazer was director of the museum during that time.

In 1950 they went to Chicago again to engage a manufacturer's representative to represent the line of pottery products in the Merchandise Mart there. Every time they were in Chicago they were sure to spend time at the Chicago Art Institute Museum. They traveled through Indiana seeing galleries and museums as they went.

In 1952 Gorbutt did some "art for art's sake" again for the first time after quite a period of intense concentration on commercial work. On a trip to Taos and Santa Fe he painted several watercolors

at the scene from life. One, a sunset, which inspired the artist to stop and record it with his brush as they were driving in the country in New Mexico, now hangs in their daughter Anne's home near Maple Hill, Kansas.

When the Sadler Wells Ballet came to the United States in 1956 the Gorbuts planned a trip to see it with their friends Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Dickinson. The Gorbuts and the Dickinsons had shared an interest in ballet for some time, having seen performances in Topeka and Kansas City together. The couples traveled separately, meeting in New Orleans. On the drive to and from their stay in New Orleans the Gorbuts viewed the art in the capital buildings in Little Rock, Arkansas, Baton Rouge, Louisiana and visited the art museum in New Orleans.

Serves on Building Committee of
Central Congregational Church

Another way in which Gorbutt contributed to his community through his artistic talents was by serving on the building committee of the Central Congregational Church from 1956 until 1958. This was during the time the sanctuary was being redesigned and completely rebuilt, preserving only the shell of the historical building.

In the dedication program⁵¹ it is recorded that plaques were presented to the building committee members. They were:

⁵¹Program, Dedication Ceremonies, Central Congregational Church, Topeka, Kansas, January 5-12, 1958.

Tom J. Moore--Chairman
John D. Gorbutt, Jr.
Thomas F. Martin
Oscar S. Ekdahl, ex officio

Mrs. Frank E. Wells
Warren R. William
Rev. Ned Burr McKinney,
ex officio

In the presentation it was brought out that Gorbutt was the "artistic member of the committee to bring beauty to our church."

The idea for the lighting behind the cross above the altar in the new sanctuary was Gorbutt's and the lighting was a gift to the church from him.

Topeka friends of the Gorbutts, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Kennedy, owner-publisher of Midwest Industry Magazine, owned a house in Estes Park, Colorado, which the Gorbutts visited several summers. In 1955 while there Gorbutt painted a series of watercolors.

In 1956 the Gorbutts traveled to New York City with Mr. and Mrs. William Myers, owner of Myers Yearbook Company. While there they saw the New York City Ballet and of course "did" the galleries. Gorbutt spent several days in the Metropolitan Museum and cancelled some of their other plans in order to spend more time there studying the collections.

An interesting side trip to the stay in New York was a visit in Connecticut with friends of the Myers who owned an interesting two hundred year old house on the Sound and a large sailboat.

Gorbutt executed another collection of watercolors on a trip to Arizona in January 1957. The occasion was the American Cattlemen's Association meeting which the Gorbutts attended with their daughter Anne, son-in-law Raymond Adams, Jr., and the Raymond E. Adams, Sr.

The Gorbuts traveled in the special Cattlemen's train which had come through Topeka. They then rented a car in Arizona. On that trip, Gorbutt visited Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West, talked with the people there and subsequently visited a number of Wright-designed houses.

Builds Home and Studio in 1956-57

On a beautiful hilltop site overlooking the Kansas River west of Topeka, Gorbutt built his home and studio. The nearly twenty-five mile view in all directions was the reason the Gorbuts selected the farm to buy in 1952. During 1956 Gorbutt worked on the plans and architectural work and in 1957 did the actual contracting. He incorporated some of his art work into the structure by making a relief sculpture in the cast concrete retaining wall at the side of the car port and did a welded steel sculpture using the wheat motif for the front entry porch. The relief sculpture also takes its motifs from the site.

After moving into the home the beauty of both the structure itself as well as the valley view was a constant source of inspiration for Gorbutt's creativity. The series of abstractions as well as the Reflection Series found their source largely in the visual responses to the country place. Names of his works bring this out: "Valley View," "Burning Pastures," "Environment," "Nature Rhythm."

The convenience of having his studio on the lower level of his home was probably conducive to the amount of work Gorbutt has been

able to produce at various times since it is his habit to work late or get up extremely early to work in his studio. An additional building on the hilltop site is a workshop in which Gorbutt creates his steel sculptures, does wood carving and other constructive work which takes heavier equipment.

Gorbutt Enters Exhibition Again 1958

Dorothea Pellett announced in the Capital Sunday, March 16, 1958 the six winners in the Kansas Artists Exhibit. It was the thirty-fourth annual exhibit, with Ward Lockwood of the University of California judging. Lockwood was spending the year as artist-in-residence at the University of Kansas. Describing the show Pellett said:

John Gorbutt, Topeka artist and commercial designer won third place in oils for an abstract WINTER SCENE. His material is a slick-finished enamel-like paint which shows absolutely no brush mark in the finished composition, creating a flat field with its only depth the thickness of the flowing paint. This contrasts with the Schira /first place winner/ painting whose brush strokes and apparently controlled area-placement give depth and tactile feeling. The Gorbutt painting is strong and whimsical at the same time, its twisting rhythms of color accents creating a field of memory imagery that each looker imprints on the painting.⁵²

⁵²Dorothea Pellett, Topeka Daily Capital, /Topeka, Kansas/, March 16, 1958, column 4-6, page 19A.

One-Man Show February 1963

Gorbutt had broken his long silence in the exhibiting of his work and was entering a crescendo of activity in creating paintings and sculpture. With the closing of Gorbutt, Incorporated in December 1961 he devoted all of his considerable energies to preparing for a one-man show which opened with a tea in the Topeka Art Guild Galleries in Topeka High School on Sunday afternoon February 10, 1963. Both the Capital⁵³ and the Journal⁵⁴ had several write-ups concerning the teas and show. Wednesday preceding the opening tea it was announced that the following people would assist at the opening: Professor and Mrs. Alexander Tillotson (chairman of the Washburn University Art Department), Judge and Mrs. E. R. Sloan (subjects of two of Gorbutt's portraits and long time family friends), Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Adams (owner of the XIT ranch and parents of the Gorbutt's son-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. Hampton Shirer (architect and artist friends of the Gorbutts through the Art Guild), Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kearns (WIBW and TV and friends through the Professional Advertising Club), Mr. and Mrs. Charles Marshall (architect and long time art cronies), Mr. and Mrs. Roger Berquist (newspaper owner and friend

⁵³Topeka Daily Capital, [Topeka, Kansas], February 6, 1963, column 1, page 8.

⁵⁴Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February 8, 1963, column 8, page 6.

through the Professional Advertising Club), Mrs. E. E. Sallee (mother of Gorbutt's son-in-law), Mrs. Fayben Wolfe (long time friend through art activities) and Eugene Sallee, Jr. (son of Mrs. E. E. Sallee).

At the tea on Sunday, February 17, 1963 it was announced that the following people would assist:⁵⁵ Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Dickinson (lawyer and long time personal friends), Mr. and Mrs. Bailey Axton (owner of a radio station KTOP and personal friends), Mr. and Mrs. Karl Kennedy (owner-publisher of Midwest Industry Magazine and personal friends, re: trip to Colorado), Mr. and Mrs. William O. Myers (owner of Myers Yearbook Company and personal friends, re: trip to New York), Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Ekdahl (architect and friends through church), Mr. and Mrs. Willard Haskell (Beatrice Creamery Company, long time friends and business associate), Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Krueger (owner of Steel Fixtures Corporation and long time friends and neighbors), Mr. and Mrs. John Sticher (friends through sailing activities), and Mr. and Mrs. Claude Shortman (owner of the Dodge dealership in Topeka and long time friends and neighbors in the country).

The "Causerie" in the Journal had this to say about Gorbutt's show:

⁵⁵Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February 15, 1963, column 1. [n.p.].

It was not only a successful one-man show at Topeka High School Art Gallery last Sunday but a brief reunion for John D. Gorbutt, Jr., and an old friend, Brad Thompson of New York City, formerly of Topeka. Brad was passing through Topeka on a business trip and when he heard John's paintings were on display he dashed out to see them and to have a short visit with the artist. The pictures will be on display the rest of the month and a tea is scheduled every Sunday.⁵⁶

In addition to the interest in the artist engendered by the teas as demonstrated by the large crowds of friends, acquaintances and interested persons in attendance, the show had other side effects in the artist's life. He received many letters and notes of congratulation from people, some of whom he had not seen in years. Among the communications were: a telegram from V. Helen Anderson, notes from Jean Saylor, Gorbutt's Aunt Alla, other relatives; and from the Wallace Baldingers then residing in Eugene, Oregon. The Capital-Journal had reported that over two hundred visitors had attended the opening tea. Some of that which was written follows:

Gorbutt's show has fifty-four paintings and one large piece of sculpture.

Active for many years in the Professional Advertising Club of Topeka, Gorbutt has in recent years turned to creative work. During the last year he has painted what he calls a "nature rhythm" capturing mood and mist as he sees it with an artist's eye at his home in the country near Valencia.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Topeka State Journal, "Causerie" [Topeka, Kansas], February 15, 1963, column 1. [n.p.].

⁵⁷Topeka State Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], February 17, 1963, columns 3-4, page 22A. Photo of Gorbutt and BURNING BUSH sculpture.

Part of the exhibition "shows versatility" including portraits among which are paintings of Mrs. Arthur Clausen, Judge E. R. Sloan and Robert Maynard, the article went on to say.

For the last tea in connection with the February 1963 exhibition the following people were invited to assist, according to the Journal's "On the Social Scene";⁵⁸ Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Stone (painters and friends), Mr. and Mrs. Earl Palmburg (business associates, Kansas Power and Light official), Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Wilke (mayor of Topeka and friend in Art Guild and Young Women's Christian Association), Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Claussen (lawyer and life time friends), Mrs. M. N. Wakeman (artist and life time friend), Dorothy Paramore (advertising executive and friend in Advertising Club), Royce Fleming (art teacher and active in Art Guild).

Six hundred people had signed the guest book by the end of the show.

It is interesting to note at this point that during the spring of this show Gorbett was taking some classes at Washburn University. His attitude toward his work at this time comes through clearly from the themes he was writing for an English course. In one dated February 25, 1963 he said, "Painting to me is more than putting on of paint, it is a way of life; therefore, I must be infused with

⁵⁸"On the Social Scene," Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 21, 1963, column 1-3, page 12.

ideas so my interpretations can be projected according to my convictions."⁵⁹

Later in the spring Gorbutt wrote about welded sculpture. These thoughts are interesting to note in view of the fact that the show included BURNING BUSH, a graceful, uplifting piece of welded steel sculpture. He said:

Welded sculpture needs to be out-of-doors to be in its natural environment. It is characteristic of welded cut-out shapes to be rugged, powerful, contrasting, sharper than the objects about them. . . . There are other factors that make welded sculpture a natural decoration for out-of-doors, such as the colored patina and painted metals and the natural colors of the non-corrosive metals, stainless steel, aluminum and chrome. . . . Whether the piece of sculpture is a gesture in space or a constructive creation, each has a spirit of its own. . . . The infusion of character and permanent inner meaning into welded sculpture is inevitable. The artist working in welded sculpture today is able to have a closer emotional relationship with his tools and materials than the worker in plastic and bronze castings. . . . Let welded sculpture live out-of-doors, where it can share the serene and dynamic unity, a unity in multiplicity, created by nature in grass, rocks, trees and air.⁶⁰

This phase of the artist's work and his philosophy are brought out in Chapter III of this thesis.

A further note on Gorbutt's attitude toward his paintings is from the postscript to the program listing of the works exhibited in the 1963 show. He said: "These paintings are for you to enter

⁵⁹"On The Right Track," John Gorbutt, February 25, 1963. Unpublished theme III for Washburn University English course.

⁶⁰"Welded Sculpture Out-of-doors," John D. Gorbutt, May 1963. Unpublished theme for Washburn University English course.

and receive a stimulating response. Identify them for your own satisfaction."⁶¹ -- John Gorbutt.

The paragraph from the program about the artist, written by Dorothea Pellett, will be quoted in its entirety.

John Gorbutt hints, but rarely tells, of the artists' world of light, wonder, and imagination.

The adventuring viewer may glimpse a horse, a tree, or a man -- but not for long. Quickly his exploration sweeps to some new involvement conjured by the canvas.

John Gorbutt's authority and sound craftsmanship mark these examples, his adventuring in manner and materials for more than 25 years, right up to last week's studio work, the seven-foot welded sculpture still warm from the burnishing torch!

From Gorbutt's first One-Man Show, in the '30's at Mulvane Art Museum, *BAND CONCERT* was selected by Joe Jones for the nationally-circulated 12-States Regional Exhibit opening in New York.

Then later, portrait commissions, and the color sketch, *OLD BRICK PLANT*, winner of two honors: a prize in Kansas City Art Institute's Midwestern Annual; and acceptance in the Second National Exhibition of American Art for Rockefeller Center.

LOAF OF BREAD won the sweepstakes at the Kansas Free Fair the same year that Gorbutt won firsts in still life and in mural design. *VEGETABLES*, in the Six States Artists Annual at Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, received additional honor of a year's gallery showing.

ORANGE LIGHT, honored by acceptance in the 1962 Missouri Valley Exhibition, suggests Gorbutt's view through his private prism where lines create rather than define, and palette and perspective imagine rather than describe.

Inspiration and guidance John Gorbutt credits to his artist-teachers and painting partners, among them especially his first Washburn art professor, V. Helen Anderson, and later Wallace Baldinger, John Canaday, and Alexander Tillotson.

⁶¹ Program of the Topeka Art Guild Exhibition by John Gorbutt, February 10 to 28, 1963, Topeka High School Gallery, Topeka, Kansas.

A Topeka Art Guild member, Gorbutt shows regularly in their sponsored exhibits with the Topeka Men, Topeka Artists, and Kansas Artists.⁶²

Sunday, April 21, 1963 the Kansas Artists Show opened with a tea and an announcement in the Topeka Capital-Journal:

Kansas Art Show Opens Here Today

Five Topekans have been named winners in the Kansas Artist Show opening today at the Topeka High School Art Gallery, Jim Hunt, Washburn University professor of art said Saturday.

The show which includes more than 50 entries will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. today at the high school gallery and will be on display for two weeks.

Winners are. . .oils, Bernard Stone for WINTER HILL, first; Walter Hawk, SALVAGE, second; and John Gorbutt, TREE TRUNK, third.⁶³

In a write up of the show the following week the same paper⁶⁴ described the painting by Gorbutt as one ". . .in which reds predominate." It was one of his paintings of "nature rhythms" in which a subject from nature is rendered in such a way as to almost appear abstract. The abstract qualities of nature's design are emphasized.

Prior to a show at the Union Building of Washburn University May 13 until June 6, 1963 the Washburn Review⁶⁵ ran a feature article

⁶²Dorothea Pellett, "About the Artist," Program of the Topeka Art Guild Exhibition by John D. Gorbutt, Topeka High School Gallery, Topeka, Kansas, February 10 to 28, 1963.

⁶³Topeka Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], April 21, 1963, column 4, page 4A.

⁶⁴Topeka Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], April 28, 1963, column 4. /n.p./.

⁶⁵The Washburn Review, feature article, Topeka, Kansas, May 8, 1963, column 1-3, page 7, Vol. LXXIX, No. 29.

about Gorbutt and his work. The article is full of inaccuracies; however, it does contain a fairly accurate outline of his professional life. Reference was made to this article earlier in this thesis in relation to its allusions to other periods.

It was by invitation of Mrs. James Metzger (Mary Lou Martin) that Gorbutt had his show at the Washburn Union. She was the director of Student Union Activities at the time.

The list of pieces shown included BAND CONCERT, BREAD, MAIL BOX, GOLD ON BLUE, SNOW SCENE, EVENING MOOD, TREE TRUNKS, AFTER THE RAIN, and RED SHEET METAL: a very diversified collection.

During the summer of 1963 Gorbutt painted the portrait of his daughter Jeanne while she was spending the summer in Topeka with her family. Gorbutt was doing a considerable amount of painting at this time and among other paintings started the portrait of daughter Anne which was finished later. In 1971 each daughter was in possession of her own portrait. (See Numbers 9 and 11, Appendix C.)

Late in the summer the Gorbutts went on what they called their "gallery hopping trip." They went to St. Louis where they spent several days exploring the newly expanded museum there, then went to Indianapolis; drove through Ohio where they spent several days at the Cleveland museum. They had spent one day in each of several other cities on the trip. The Toledo, Ohio museum was of interest to them and Detroit contained several pleasant surprises. They had an especially enjoyable experience hearing the Detroit

Symphony concert in Bell Isle park, enjoyed the lighted fountain there and spent some time at the museum. It happened that the extensive Ancient Egyptian Collection then touring the United States was being shown at the museum in Detroit. Mr. Gorbutt especially enjoyed seeing the mural by Diego Rivera there.

Reflection Series

With a considerable number of paintings prepared and still working to explore further the possibilities he was discovering, Gorbutt exhibited several times during 1964. He had started his "Reflection Series" after his show in 1963 and was still painting in this mode early in 1964. This series is explored at some length in Chapter III (see Appendix C for pictures of the Reflection Series).

January 19 until February 9, 1964 two of Gorbutt's watercolors were on display in the Topeka Art Guild's exhibition of paintings by professional watercolorists.⁶⁶ The collection was assembled by the Guild by invitation. Numbers 11 EVENING SKY and 31 MOUNTAIN TREE were listed as those being shown by Gorbutt. (See Appendix C for pictures of watercolors.) The opening tea January 19, was well attended.

⁶⁶Program of the Exhibition of paintings by Professional Watercolorists (Topeka area) Assembled by the Topeka Art Guild, Topeka High School Gallery, Topeka, Kansas, January 19, 1964.

In March the 41st Kansas Artist Exhibition⁶⁷ sponsored by the Topeka Art Guild included numbers 9 GREEN VALLEY and 61, a water-color by Gorbutt.

In October of that year (1964) is the first record of one of the Reflection Series being shown. The Capital-Journal had this to say on October 11:

Two Topeka artists--John Gorbutt and Walter Hawk were honored by having pictures included in the Sixth Annual exhibition of Southwestern American Art which will hang through November 1 in the Oklahoma Art Center.

Gorbutt is showing his large oil on canvas 5 feet long by 6 feet named REFLECTIONS.

The exhibition contains 125 pieces by 103 artists. It was selected by Philip R. Adams, director of the Cincinnati Art Museum from 927 works submitted by 392 artists in an eight-state area.

Mr. and Mrs. Gorbutt attended the reception for participating artists last Friday at the Oklahoma Art Center.⁶⁸

Several people called to Gorbutt's attention the mention of his work in the Oklahoma City Advertiser, among them Bernard Frazer. The piece had this to say:

John Gorbutt's REFLECTIONS is a tour de force of light and color and line and distance, and all the Southwestern sun and outdoors. Wouldn't it be great in the entrance to the Cowboy Hall, a signal reminder to everyone of those coveted coming tourists that the Southwest lives today, too, and not just for plaques.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Program 41st Kansas Artists Exhibition, Topeka Art Guild, Topeka, Kansas, March 8-22, 1964.

⁶⁸Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], October 11, 1964. [n.p.].

⁶⁹Aline Jean Treanor, Oklahoma City Advertiser, [Oklahoma City, Oklahoma], October 15, 1964, column 6-8, page 7.

It was learned from the program⁷⁰ of the show that Gorbutt's REFLECTIONS was 42 in the listing of the show. His listed price for the painting at that time was \$1,500.00.

At the time of the Bazaar at Central Congregational Church Wednesday, November 8, 1964⁷¹ the church held an art show in which Gorbutt showed:

17	BAND CONCERT	\$600.00	1971 owned by First National Bank of Topeka
18	ENERGY CONTAINED	\$500.00	1971 in possession of Mrs. James E. Sallee
19	SUMAC	\$100.00	

In December of 1964 the show at Pembroke Country Day School opened with a tea December 9 in the White Hall.⁷² It was the first time that the entire "Reflection Series" was shown publicly. The show had been scheduled by the Gorbutt's daughter Jeanne, then chairman of the Art Department at the school. Many interested people from the Topeka as well as the Kansas City areas attended the tea which was planned and presented by the Mothers of the Parents Association of the school. Mrs. Donald Hall, wife of a son of Joyce

⁷⁰Program, Sixth Annual Exhibition of Southwestern American Art, Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, September 26-November 1, 1964.

⁷¹Program, Bazaar Central Congregational Church, Topeka, Kansas, November 18, 1964, 2 - 8:30 p.m.

⁷²Invitation to opening tea at Pembroke Country Day School, December 9, 1964.

Hall, founder of Hallmark Cards, was chairman of the tea arrangements.

Richard L. Brown, art editor of the Kansas City Star had this to say about the exhibit:

The artist, a Topeka resident, has worked in several styles ranging from 1930's realism through an organic abstraction and back to a congenial representational mode. His latest, and most interesting work is a large open canvas on which he carefully arranges realistic subjects in a transparent manner that resembles a photographic double-exposure. . . .the concept shows some original thinking and the execution carries a sunny, orderly mood. Gorbitt's world is neatly filled in splendidly compatible layers, and one is less aware of his job of painting, than his apparent joy of living.

CATTLE FEEDING, which I prefer, has strong composition and pleasant color.⁷³

In the Kansas Artists Annual Exhibit⁷⁴ in 1965, Gorbitt won second prize in oils for his SELF PORTRAIT. It was the same painting which had been exhibited in Oklahoma City and Kansas City under the title REFLECTIONS. It is a self portrait but one in which the total composition far outweighs any mere facial representation in its impact on the viewer.

Two Shows at Once in 1965

During April and May of 1965 Gorbitt was honored with having had invitations for two one-man shows which were to hang concurrently.

⁷³Richard L. Brown, Kansas City Star, [Kansas City, Missouri], December 6, 1964, column 7, page 4F.

⁷⁴Topeka Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], March 14, 1965, column 1-4, page 14A.

That he had a sufficient quantity of high quality work ready attests to his productivity and diligence during the preceding few years in creating his new work.

The Baker University show opened with a tea⁷⁵ honoring the artist Sunday, April 25 at 4:30 p.m. in the Student Union. Seventeen large paintings were included in the show which had come about partly through the efforts of Robert Russell, husband of Gorbutt's daughter Anne's sister-in-law, Ann Adams Russell. Notice of the show appeared in the Topeka⁷⁶ and Kansas City papers and people made the drive from both areas to Baker University to attend the opening tea.

The opening tea⁷⁷ for the show at the Studio Gallery Frame Shop, 1511 Huntoon Street, Topeka, Kansas, was held the following Sunday, May 2, 1965 from two until five p.m. The paintings shown were smaller, in keeping with the comparative size of the gallery. Gorbutt had prepared for larger paintings a number of his small studies which are works of art in themselves and in some cases have a spontaneity and sparkle that any larger work of art by comparison may lack. The Capital-Journal in an article which included a picture of Gorbutt had this to say about the show:

⁷⁵Invitation and Program to the Baker University showing of paintings by John D. Gorbutt in the Baker Student Union, opening tea Sunday, April 25, 1965, 4:30 p.m.

⁷⁶Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], April 25, 1965, p. 23A.

⁷⁷Invitation to Gorbutt Show opening tea, May 2, 1965, 1511 Huntoon Street, Topeka, Kansas.

Gorbutt, a well known Topeka artist will show 25 water-colors, pastels and gouaches. The watercolors were painted last fall in Colorado. The others are smaller paintings, some abstractions of some studies from his studio and are sparkling in bright colors.⁷⁸

The Sunday Capital-Journal added that ". . .in recent years /Gorbutt/ has given most of his time to painting."⁷⁹ And the next Sunday:

John Gorbutt's mixed media paintings at the Studio Gallery and Frame Shop include unusual small creations of intense, jewell-like colors. Several works named are: BLUE PRINT, FANTASY, YELLOW MOON AND EVENING MOOD. Slightly larger and just as charming are BURNING PASTURE, WELDING, ENVIRONMENT and MISTY MORNING. . . ./the show/ has been attracting many visitors and interesting comment.⁸⁰

Remodels Building at 629 Quincy,
Topeka, 1966

The remodeling of the building at 629 Quincy took place in 1966. Gorbutt did the architectural work and contracting himself which accounts for most of his working days during the period.

An invitation from Mrs. Jack Lungstrum (Helen Watson, formerly of Topeka) was extended to Gorbutt and his daughter Jeanne to show at the Asbury Hospital Auxiliary Fashion Show at

⁷⁸Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 1, 1965. /n.c./
/n.p./. With picture of Gorbutt.

⁷⁹Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 2, 1965, column 6 and 7, page 14A.

⁸⁰Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 9, 1965. /n.c./
/n.p./.

the Fine Arts Building of Marymount College, Salina, Kansas in September of 1966. The show also included works by Blanche Carstenson of Kansas City and Robert Browning Reed (a collection of Reed's prints were being circulated by the Old Bergen Art Guild on a national tour). Gorbutt's work decidedly dominated the show.

The Program of the Fashion Show included this write-up about Gorbutt:

John Gorbutt, a native Kansan, is a widely known and respected regional artist. A selection from Mr. Gorbutt's first one-man show in the 1930's was circulated nationally at a regional exhibit opening in New York City. Later works claimed more honors in showings in Topeka, Kansas City and Omaha.

For over twenty-five years Mr. Gorbutt operated Gorbutt, Inc., a Topeka firm based on his commercial design abilities. In recent years he has devoted most of his time to painting and sculpturing and he has had shows at Baker and Washburn Universities, the Topeka Art Guild Gallery and Pembroke Country Day School in Kansas City. Portraits and paintings are included in a number of private collections.

John Gorbutt hints but rarely tells of the artist's world of light, wonder and imagination. The adventuring viewer may glimpse a horse, a tree or a man -- but not for long, quickly his exploration sweeps to some new involvement conjured by the canvas.⁸¹

The Salina Journal⁸² ran a feature article about Gorbutt and his daughter and quoted the artist as promising a 20% commission from the sale of any paintings sold from the show at Marymount to be given to the Asbury Hospital Auxiliary.

⁸¹Program, Asbury Hospital Auxiliary Fashion Show at Fine Arts Building, Marymount College, September 1966.

⁸²Salina Journal, feature article, Salina, Kansas, September 11, 1966, column 1-8. n.p.. Pictures of Gorbutt and daughter Jeanne.

The Crosby Brothers Store on Kansas Avenue in Topeka held an exhibition of Gorbutt's portrait paintings in December, 1966. A duplicated notice of the show said,

For personal or ancestral portraits to be painted by John Gorbutt see Crosby Brothers representative. Mr. Gorbutt will contact you immediately about painting your portrait and arranging for your sittings.⁸³

The notice included a price list which ranged from "life-sized portraits of head in two color pastel on Venetian red background with powder blue mat covered with glass in 18X20X3/4 gold frame, \$160.00" to a "full length portrait figure in oil on canvas 4 foot to 6 foot high \$1200 to \$1800."

Opens Civic Center Gallery,
629 Quincy, Topeka, 1967

The year 1967 began with an invitation from J. Cranston Heintzelman, director of the Kansas Federation of Art, to show in the Federation's "oil paintings by mid-west Artists" exhibit.⁸⁴ Cranston said "It" is about to go on tour with a full schedule." Gorbutt sent CATTLE FEEDING, a portrait of Raymond Adams, Jr., which went on tour with the show.

⁸³Notice of Show of Portraits at Crosby Brothers Store, Kansas Avenue, Topeka, Kansas, December 3, 1966.

⁸⁴Invitation from J. Cranston Heintzelman, Manhattan, Kansas, January 4, 1967.

Friday, January 6, 1967 Peggy Greene reported in the Topeka Daily Capital the following:

When crowds flow through the Statehouse Monday evening from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for the inaugural reception, they will find a collection of paintings in the rotunda of the second floor.

This is the first time, it is thought, that an inaugural has included an art exhibition.

R. J. Hunt, chairman of the art department at Washburn University was asked to assemble paintings for the display.

He has included a wide variety of subject matter and media from a representative number of artists. About 24 pictures will be hung, all oils. Hunt is working with Ernest J. Rice, co-chairman of the reception committee.

. . . John Gorbett has taken inspiration from the country around his home near Valencia in what might be termed a farm study.⁸⁵

January 22 was the opening tea for Gorbett's one-man show in the Topeka Art Guild Galleries at Topeka High School according to the Capital-Journal's "Calendar for Leisure Hours."⁸⁶ It mentioned "the exhibition of paintings by John Gorbett, Jr., including his large oils in a new technique he calls 'environment and reflections'" There also was a notice in Newsflash⁸⁷ the newspaper of the Professional Advertising Club of Topeka about Gorbett's show from January 22 until February 15.

Sunday, March 18, 1967 the 44th Annual Kansas Artists Exhibition opened with a tea in the Art Guild Galleries in Topeka

⁸⁵Peggy Greene, Topeka Daily Capital, [Topeka, Kansas], January 6, 1967, column 1-4, page 2.

⁸⁶"Calendar for Leisure Hours," Topeka Capital-Journal, January 22, 1967, [n.c.] [n.p.].

⁸⁷Newsflash, [Topeka, Kansas], February 6, 1967.

High School. From the program of the show Gorbutt's entries were listed thus:

No. 2	John Gorbutt	RAYMOND JR.	\$600.00
No. 5	John Gorbutt	ENVIRONMENT	\$1200.00

The Capital-Journal had a notice of the tea and said that there were 50 works being shown by invitation of the Art Guild. Gorbutt's daughter Jeanne was among the exhibitors. The newspaper article said, "Presiding at the tea table will be Mrs. F. J. Rost whose husband is president of the Guild, and Mrs. Charles I. Marshall. Assisting hostesses will be Mrs. John D. Gorbutt and Mrs. R. B. Stevenson."⁸⁸

During 1966 Gorbutt had spent most of his time remodeling the 629 Quincy building into office space. Gorbutt does the general contracting and architectural work for his projects of this kind. It is interesting to note that the law firm of which the recently mentioned Jack Rost is a member rented the first floor front suite of offices when the building was opened.

In October 1967 Gorbutt opened his Civic Center Gallery which is located in the first floor rear suite of the 629 Quincy building. That suite utilizes the basement of the building for workshop and storage space. The Gallery opened with a show of Berger Sandzen pieces which Gorbutt had secured to sell from an estate.

⁸⁸ Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], March 18, 1967, column 5, page 15.

On the "Let's Talk Business" page of the Topeka Capital-Journal the following appeared:

Art Gallery to Open

John D. Gorbitt, Jr., Topeka artist and property manager will open the Civic Center Art Gallery at 629 Quincy, Suite 102, Monday.

"I've thought for a long time Topeka needed a downtown art gallery and I had space available," Gorbitt said. Special lighting has been installed in the suite and it has been carpeted.

New showings will be presented about every two weeks. On display this week will be lithographs of the late Berger Sandzen of Lindsborg. Oils, watercolors, wood cuts, etchings, serigraph prints and sculpture will be among the types of work shown. Most works will be for sale.

Gorbitt has shown his paintings at the 11 state Southwest American Art Show in Oklahoma City and at many other shows in the mid west.⁸⁹

Invitations to the opening and a program were sent to a large mailing list. Each month Gorbitt scheduled a different show with openings. The shows which followed Sandzen's works were collections by John Helm, Manhattan, Kansas, a printmaker; Charles Marshall, Topeka, Kansas, a watercolorist; and Rebecca and Jack Wright, Topeka artists, a painter and a potter, respectively. Gorbitt decided to represent artists of the region who were doing work of high quality. In addition to any one show which is going on at a time the gallery shows works of art by the stable of artists being represented.

In 1968 Gorbitt began building the kinetic light sculptures and doing more of the relief paintings from plastics and wood.

⁸⁹Capital-Journal, Topeka, Kansas, November 5, 1967, column 3, page 40.

March of 1968 saw another Kansas Artists Exhibition (45th Annual) of the Topeka Art Guild to which Gorbutt sent entries. He was awarded first prize in oils for PINK ORGANISM by the jury. However, on April 9, 1968⁹⁰ Gorbutt sent a letter to Jack Rost, president of the Art Guild in which he said, "I am sending back the \$50.00 check for first prize in oil painting in the Kansas Artists show." This he explained was because he was on the Board of Directors of the Guild. He asked that the prize be awarded to the second prize winner.

Kinetic Light Sculpture

In 1969 Gorbutt spent most of his time creating his collection of kinetic light sculptures in preparation for his one-man show at Washburn early in 1970. Of course he was also busy directing his gallery and other business interests.

The Wichita Eagle and Beacon Magazine section ran a feature article about Gorbutt, his gallery and his light sculpture Sunday November 9, 1969.

Concerning the gallery the article says:

John Gorbutt of Topeka opened this [the article had just given the location] distinguished private gallery 18 months ago. He is a painter and sculptor himself. For many years he owned and operated Gorbutt, Inc. . .

His gallery is modern and well-designed. It is large and functionally attractive. Here objects of art are shown to their best advantages in an atmosphere of light and comfort.

⁹⁰Letter from Gorbutt to Jack Rost, president of Topeka Art Guild, April 9, 1968.

The exhibitions show only the art of Kansas artists known best in the state and region. In my visit I found art by Kansans and a new awareness of the fine work created by the nucleus of artists represented.

The paintings and graphics and sculptures of artists like Robert Sudlow, Raymond Eastwood, Robert Ault, Charles Marshall, Rebecca Wright, John Helm, Warren Brinkman, Lester Raymer, James Bass, J. C. Heintzelman, Grogan Ebberts, Collette Bangert, Charles Rogers and Charles Capps, the only Wichitan, present an evocative sight of excellence in Kansas art.

The article goes on to tell about some of the artists represented in the gallery, then turns to a mention of Gorbutt's recent work.

Gorbutt is currently involved in creating kinetic light art. He is using "real" light and movement in his sculpture. Kinetic light art is made possible by natural phenomena permitting the control, transmission and transformation of energy.⁹¹

Early in 1970 Gorbutt's light sculptures and a film of them were featured at the National Sculpture Conference at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

February 1, 1970 the show of kinetic light sculpture for which he had been preparing opened at the Mulvane Art Center, Washburn University, Topeka. The program said:

John Gorbutt is a familiar name to art lovers in Topeka and for good reason. He has been known and respected for his excellent paintings through the years but less recognized for his experiments with print media, metal, wood, plastics

⁹¹ John P. Simoni, Wichita State University professor of art, Wichita Eagle and Beacon Magazine, [Wichita, Kansas], November 9, 1969, page 9C, [n.c.]. Two-column picture of Gorbutt in his gallery with light sculpture.

and light. Unlike many "light sculptors" on the contemporary scene, Gorbutt brings human feeling to his work. These are not factory produced works done according to the artist's specifications by impersonal craftsmen, nor are they mechanical contrivances put together for practical uses. Rather they are constructed by the artist with apparent love and delight in materials. Because they serve no practical purpose we are freed to contemplate them as self-sufficient objects of aesthetic worth such is a necessary condition for any work of art.⁹²

The names of the works are of significance because they reveal something of the artist's thinking (see Chapter III).

An old friend, Peggy Greene, wrote an excellent article about the artist and his work which appeared in the Capital-Journal at the time of the show (see Appendix D). She said in part:

Gorbutt brings many skills to his work; he is both artist and artisan. He paints in oils and watercolors, makes silk screen prints and etchings, carves in wood. He is equally adept at welding, soldering, wiring and doing any kind of construction work with metal, wood, glass and plastic.

His sculpture shown here for the first time, fills the south gallery with a glow of colored lights, some flashing on and off, some changing colors and others reflecting an infinity of images. . . .

The pieces stand individually five to seven feet high. They are made with structural steel, structural glass, mirror pane, plastic neon tubing and some other materials to create a special image. Each is one of a kind, designed and hand-made by Gorbutt, held together by his skill and knowledge of new plastic glues.

The relief paintings are wood, with small wood carvings attached to a background to form a design. A few are cast plastic--a cone was cast from a Dixie

⁹²Program "Sculptures by John Gorbutt," Mulvane Art Center, Topeka, Kansas, February 1-March 1, 1970.

cup. One called MUSIC is all in pale blue gray. RAIN is in brighter colors (see Appendix D and 1935 show).

Of importance to our study are Greene's comments about Gorbutt's gallery since a considerable amount of his energies were going into the gallery which gives some insight into his character.

Three years ago Gorbutt started his Civic Center Gallery. . . .

Gorbutt, who owns the building where the gallery is housed, thought the arrangement of a section of rooms was ideal for a gallery. He talked with artists over the state and found them interested and cooperative. He read books on how to start a gallery. Most of them were discouraging, but he is not easily discouraged. In addition to 2,000 square feet in the rooms, Gorbutt hangs paintings in the hall of the building which also houses office space.⁹³

An excellent article "Fanciful Voyage in Artistry" appeared in the Washburn Review about the show and Gorbutt's work:

For anyone who still thinks of sculpture in terms of smooth-musclcd statues and bland-eyed busts, the exhibit in the south gallery of the Mulvane Art Center is worth taking in.

To sit in the center of the gallery with your eyes closed is something like being on the inside of a well-oiled computer. The only noise is that of humming electrical circuits and nervously twitching neon tubing. However, when you open your eyes its more like Times Square through a kaleidoscope, or being "somewhere over the rainbow" in search of the Wizard of Oz.

The Wizard of Oz in this particular case is Mr. John Gorbutt, a local artist and artisan whose experiments with metal, wood and plastics have made him a favorite of many Topekans over the years. He is also a "light sculptor," and his present dazzling array is proof enough that Edison's famous invention just is not what it used to be. . . .

⁹³Peggy Greene, Topeka Capital-Journal, February 1, 1970, column 3, page 6. Two-column picture of Gorbutt and his work.

If you can imagine a room full of five to seven feet tall steel, glass and neon sculptures in a dark room, quietly raining sheets and blotches of colored light back and forth, flashing, blinking and scintillating in a myriad of turned-on colors, then you've got the general picture of Gorbutt's kinetic light sculpture exhibit. The effect is almost hypnotizing.⁹⁴

It was prior to this kinetic light sculpture show (and the others that were to follow) in which the relief constructions were included, that a member of the "Structurist" group in Chicago had seen one of Gorbutt's constructions in the hall of one of his buildings. MUSIC was the relief painting in question and the man did show real surprise that anyone had been working in that medium as early as the 1930's. The Gorbutt's wrote to Wallace Baldinger, then director of the University of Oregon Museum of Art, for verification of the dates of Gorbutt's early constructions. Baldinger wrote a letter of verification on June 19, 1970 (see letter reproduced in Appendix D).

Another interesting sidelight to these times was an article reproduced in the "30 Years Ago Column" of the Capital-Journal on September 4, 1970:

A statue of liberty standing 6 foot tall and being carved from solid butter will be exhibited at the Kansas Free Fair by Beatrice Creamery Co. Using 350 pounds of butter, John Gorbutt winner of the 1937 Free Fair sweepstakes in art will carve the statue under refrigeration. It will be exhibited in a large refrigerator.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Washburn Review, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, February 25, 1970, column 1-3, page 3.

⁹⁵Capital-Journal, "30 Years Ago, September 4, 1940," September 4, 1970. /n.c./ /n.p./. /Topeka, Kansas/.

The fall showing of the light sculpture at the Kansas State University Union Art Gallery was planned for and looked forward to by Gorbutt. The original invitation to show at Kansas State had come from Oscar Larmer, Chairman of the Art Department. August 11 Gorbutt received a letter from Allan L. Jones, chairman of the gallery in Manhattan, Kansas. The letter said in part:

I would like to thank you and Mrs. Gorbutt for your fine hospitality to me during my recent visit to your gallery and your home. Please thank Mrs. Gorbutt especially for the much appreciated assistance she gave in aiding the compilation of material for the show brochure.⁹⁶

The letter goes on to discuss plans for the brochure and for the show. The dates of the show were September 6-20 and the gallery was open 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

The program (see Appendix D) had a good write-up about the artist, listing the shows he had had and mentioning his professional advertising art as well as his Civic Center Art Gallery. It continued:

Lately Mr. Gorbutt has returned to wood and plastic constructions (having done some early work in that area) which he calls "relief paintings." Most recently he has concentrated on a series of kinetic light sculpture. He at one time owned and operated a manufacturing and advertising business which no doubt contributed considerably to his interest in neon light and the undertaking of his

⁹⁶Letter signed by Allan L. Jones, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, August 11, 1970.

recent work. His series of kinetic light work was first shown in February 1970 at the Washburn Mulvane Art Center in Topeka, Kansas.⁹⁷

A complete listing of the works shown is given here because the names give a definite clue to the artist's thinking about the construction of the pieces:

1. PISTON ACTION 1969, neon and argon tube, incandescent, steel
2. SHELL AND SPHERE 1970, relief painting plastic, lacquer
3. STARS AND STRIPES 1970, neon, argon, sheet metal steel, lacquer
4. FOUR FRAMES 1969, relief painting, cast plastic, acrylic
5. TRI-MODULE 1970, structural and mirropane glass, neon
6. AMBER, GREEN AND ROSE EQUALS WHITE 1969, mirropane and structural glass, neon
7. RAIN 1932-34, relief painting, wood, lacquer
8. 1-2-3-4 1969, metal, exposed parts, neon
9. MUSIC 1932-34, relief painting, wood, lacquer
10. RECTANGULAR FORM WITH MIXED RED AND BLUE LIGHT 1970, plexiglas, stainless steel
11. WHITE ON WHITE 1969, relief painting, paper, fiberboard, wood, acrylic
12. LIBRA 1969, neon, argon, plexiglas
13. 3 C's 1970, plastic construction
14. TICK, TACK, TOE 1970, neon, mirropane glass, steel
15. CONE 1969, relief painting, cast plastic, lacquer

Wide publicity about the Manhattan show included notices in the Midway Magazine section of the Capital-Journal⁹⁸ and an article and a picture in the Kansas State University newspaper (see Appendix D).

⁹⁷Program, Kinetic Light Sculpture by John Gorbett, Union Gallery, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, September 6-20, 1970.

⁹⁸Midway, magazine section of the Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, September 20, 1970, page M10. /n.c./.

Mr. Donald R. Johnson, director of the Art Gallery at Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, wrote a letter⁹⁹ to Gorbitt October 1, 1970, verifying the dates of the show there. The show opened November 8, 1970¹⁰⁰ in the College art gallery in the Humanities Building on the campus at Emporia State. The invitation included a full color picture of Gorbitt's kinetic light sculpture.

The Wichita Eagle-Beacon ran an article about the show. It called it a three-man art exhibit featuring the work of Steve Scott, Joel Myers and John Gorbitt.

Gorbitt, whose work has been exhibited in Topeka since the 1930's is a native Kansan who attended Washburn University. He has worked with a variety of media but is best known for his paintings. His work with kinetic light sculptures is a throw-back to the days when he was in the electric advertising sign business.¹⁰¹

During the showing and manufacture of the kinetic sculptures a four-minute 16mm color moving picture film was made of the creations by a young and gifted friend of the Gorbitt's, Fred Andrews, an air force photographer. The films were shown in color on WIBW-TV at the time of the showing of the sculptures at Washburn University. The film takes full advantage of the motion picture medium and

⁹⁹Letter, Donald R. Johnson, director of art gallery, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, October 1, 1970.

¹⁰⁰Invitation to art show, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, November 8, 1970.

¹⁰¹Wichita Eagle-Beacon, [Wichita, Kansas], November 15, 1970. [n.c.] [n.p.].

coupled with the dynamic nature of the subject matter, it is an outstanding product of creativity in itself. On December 7, 1970 Gorbitt received a letter¹⁰² signed by Cas Weinbaum, librarian of the Topeka Public Library, thanking Gorbitt for the gift to the library of a copy of the light sculpture film and notes on the light sculpture. A file of clippings, etc., had been started at the library concerning Gorbitt some time earlier.

"Sculp Scoop," the Sculpture Club Bulletin of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, featured Gorbitt in its bulletin December 9, 1970. It included a large cartoon of Gorbitt creating his light sculpture with "John Gorbitt", his name, included in the design in lights. The bulletin read:

Sponsored by the Sculpture Program and Sculpture Club:
John D. Gorbitt, light sculptor and owner director of the Civic Center Gallery, Topeka, will informally discuss electronics and neon sculpture components Wednesday evening at 7:30, Dec. 9, 1970 at the Sculpture Studio, Bailey Annex.

Mr. Gorbitt has a long standing interest in art; however, much of his energies have been directed toward a career in the manufacture of signs. In recent years, he has turned his technical knowledge to sculpture. It is this technical knowledge and insight he wishes to share.¹⁰³

The notes which Gorbitt prepared for use with this lecture are included in this thesis in Chapter III under the section, Light Sculpture. The invitation to speak had come to Gorbitt from Elden

¹⁰²Letter, Cas Weinbaum, Topeka Public Library, Topeka, Kansas, December 7, 1970.

¹⁰³"Sculpture Scoop", Sculpture Club Bulletin, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, December 9, 1970. /n.c./ /n.p./.

Teft, head of the Sculpture Department of the University of Kansas.

The most recent of Gorbitt's clippings to the time of the completion of this thesis is an article in the Capital-Journal¹⁰⁴ about his having been elected to a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Shawnee County Historical Society.

It should be repeated at this juncture that there is a considerable body of material concerning Gorbitt's commercial and business interests as well as his hobbies such as sailing which is not utilized for this thesis. The artist is still producing art work at this writing and is busy remodeling another of his pieces of downtown property.

¹⁰⁴Capital-Journal, [Topeka, Kansas], January 24, 1971, page 12. [n.c.].

CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL PERIODS OF THE ARTIST'S PRODUCTIVITY: MEDIA AND PHILOSOPHY

Procedure Used in this Chapter

The material used in this chapter was secured through summary of the historical data verified in Chapter II; through perusal of notes taken by the artist during his work, and his information duplicated for use with his lectures; through informal interviews with the artist; and through structured interviews with the artist. The following questions were mimeographed and notes taken concerning each period and a number of individual works of art:

1. What was your motivation for doing this piece (or going into this period)?
2. What problem or experimentation had you set for yourself?
3. How did your approach differ on this piece (period) from your earlier work? Why did you change?
4. Was there any contact with other people--artists, teachers, etc.--which influenced you?
5. Did what you were studying currently for commercial or creative work influence you to do this or the way in which you carried it out?

As the interviews progressed it became apparent that number 4 was a "loaded question" because implicit in the question was an implication that the artist was not original. This was certainly not the intent and as the interviews progressed this question was

deleted in most cases or answered in a general sense as to the influence going on in the artist's life or thinking at the time.

American Scene and Realism

The American Scene painting was a very real regional movement, a reaction to the economic conditions of the time, in which many artists were participating as a perusal of the programs of the shows during the period will testify. A few names stand out when American Scene painting is mentioned in 1971 but it was a very real movement which involved a number of working artists. The depression and drought years caused a feeling that perhaps traditional things like the band concert were about to be lost. Money was not available for people to study in Paris and this economic fact coupled with a growing feeling that our own culture was a valid subject to record or use as a point of departure for self-expression caused a definitely regional art to develop. It was a revolt by mid-western artists. Artists in New York were painting more like Europeans at the time and the 30's are in definite contrast to our affluent society in the 60's and 70's when it is said that there is no regional art but that such movement quickly becomes a worldwide movement. Time will tell whether this is really a kind of supreme egotism on the part of the New York school but it appears to be true in 1971.

FEED LOT is a painting of what was happening around the country. In 1971 it contrasts with the more recent painting CATTLE

FEEDING in which cattle are lined up for a quarter of a mile at a mechanical feeder. Gorbitt said FEED LOT was started when he was out sketching, partly done on location, and finished in the studio. "I wasn't copying nature," he said. "These paintings were inventive, creative. Starting with an idea in mind you built it." In view of the symbolism and his methods of work, this was realism not naturalism.

One viewer of the painting said it looked like a soup line with the people waiting for the soup kitchen to open. The intent of the artist certainly was to express the total tone of the depression.

BAND CONCERT, painted in 1935, portrays an event that occurred every Saturday or Wednesday night in a town square or in a park. Gorbitt had experienced it as a child in Holton and was experiencing it at the time of the painting. There was a shortage of money for entertainment and little if any air conditioning so the band concert in every town square was a decidedly enjoyable experience on hot summer evenings. Gorbitt also painted a dance pavilion and street scenes at this time. Gorbitt said, "Some of the people who had stands on Kansas Avenue then, now have big businesses here." Another depression scene was a painting of an old truck with a boy going up and down an alley picking up boxes to sell.

In answer to the question about his problem or experimentation Gorbitt said he was trying to give a feeling of vibrations of noise

and music in the squiggly /my word/ lines in the light. A change from even earlier work, when he experimented with the painting knife, was his use of oil glazes and the added atmosphere which this gave to the band stand lights. His reason, he said, was that the artist is limited with a palette knife. He had added a number of tools: all kinds of brushes from brights to camel hair, red sable liners as well as the knife which was used for highlights.

The question of influences from other people brought the response, "The people I was dealing with were the people in business, all day long, and I got away from people to do my own thinking. I stayed up all night one or two nights to produce BAND CONCERT. It was a struggle. It was painted in a week of spare time and a weekend."

Question number 5 was answered in this way: "This painting at that time was a release from the mechanics of making a living and from commercial art." /He was working at the Beatrice Creamery Company. 7 He was studying books like Materials of an Artist by Max Dorner which John Canaday had been reading and had recommended. "Also a book by Meyers which covered technical questions about grounds and colors. I was experimenting with grinding my own dry colors and using dry ground color with casein dry powder to make an emulsion. This was not used with oil."

There is a great deal concerning BAND CONCERT in the biographical material in Chapter II.

YELLOW BOWL, done at this time, and the other still lifes, are grouped with the American Scene paintings for several reasons. They are all realistic paintings; all were painted concurrently; and each records some form of Gorbett's environment at the time (see Appendix C).

The remarks Gorbett made in response to the questions include the following: "I was painting in the evening by artificial light at that time doing still lifes and some portraits. I was studying the possibilities of my medium using it in an opaque way, experimenting with transparencies, studying reflected light, the depth of transparent glazes and textures and the purity of color in glazes. This was in contrast to painting directly with opaque oil and putting glazes over it."

"Any new experimentation was in the study of light and values, color, reflected light and reflected color both in its effect on perspective and composition. One of the concepts I wished to convey in this painting was the light and color being reflected from other objects not in the painting."

Portraits

In discussing his portrait painting in general Gorbett's comments are amusing because they are so true in view of the depression years and the necessities of life. Concerning his earlier motivations for doing the portraits he said, "Every once

in a while I would sell one." At first he said, "I was looking for people to pose for me. I would paint them in two evenings and a Saturday afternoon, for instance." He wanted to paint and the portraits were one of the facets of his earlier work. In painting them he was looking for a likeness, for textures, light, and was always working with composition (see Appendix C).

Concerning the problem of experimentation he said, "There are only certain things you can do in a formal portrait." There are technical limitations such as being able to tell where both hands are. The placement of the face in the composition is important since it is usually in the aesthetic center, or the nose in the center of the painting. Concerning the achievement of a likeness Gorbutt said that "the nose doesn't mean too much--the likeness is around the end of the nose and the mouth. The eyes aren't as important for getting a beautiful likeness--they are the easiest part of a portrait--the mouth is the hardest part."

While some of the portraits were his earlier work, he said in answer to question number 3 that the change was to try portraiture. "A portrait is a demanding thing. You have an appointment so you paint even if you're dead tired from working a ten-hour day." He had people lined up to pose two nights a week and did still life studies in between. "It keeps you working." These comments, while brief, give a very real insight into the stamina of the artist and his personality or philosophy in relation to his own productivity.

When asked about influences the artist said, "The portraiture was as creative as I could make it; but most of my portraits were pretty tight at that time early work. People say painting naturalism doesn't have a lot to it; that you have to paint abstractions to have something to it; but if a painter can see, there are unlimited things a painter can do with reflected light--the reflected light from outdoors, from trees and all the things around them. A person's skin picks up all of those colors just like a mirror." In these earlier portraits the glazes and colors made the skin live with a depth to the transparency of the skin tones. "In a youthful skin there are changing reflections of light from clothes, walls, and from outside the window."

It should be made clear that Gorbitt has continued to do portraits even during the periods when he was creating his most abstract work.

Printmaking

The motivation for doing the early prints, Gorbitt said, was to try new media. Some of the prints were drawn outdoors directly on the zinc plate with the etching needle. Gorbitt went to Highland Park to do street scenes and did roads in the country. One especially interesting subject was a snow scene which he did from the car in the cold. "Because of the contrasts, it was a perfect subject for the medium: black and white," he said.

Concerning the problem of experimentation, Gorbett said that he could make only about five copies because the burr would wear off. He tried to take advantage of the burr which was a natural result of the process. A comment was "You're working in reverse on the plate and it was a challenge to get a good composition in reverse directly from the subject." He had drawn on everything else, canvas, paper, etc., and this was drawing on metal.

The contact with other people involved going out to sketch with John Canaday who was also drawing directly on zinc in the dry point medium. A press, which was a necessary adjunct to doing any printmaking, was available for use at Washburn University. Gorbett had been doing silk screen process commercially and this was a different, more direct medium, which was a relief from the more mechanical serigraph as done commercially.

It is interesting to note that Gorbett made his own dry point and etching tools from discarded dental tools which were of good steel. These, of course, he had secured from his father, a working dentist.

Also among Gorbett's early experimentation with printmaking was lithography which he did when offset printing was being developed. A friend, Bill Myers, who owned Myers Yearbook, printed Gorbett's drawings on his presses after Gorbett had drawn the image on an aluminum plate.

Gorbutt continued to work with printmaking both commercially and in the fine arts field. During the 1960's he did a series of serigraphs of Kansas and Flinthills subjects including ones of the old church at Maple Hill, Kansas, and a study of sunflowers. A print of the church hangs in the Stockgrowers Bank in Maple Hill in 1971.

Watercolors

Early in his life Gorbutt was doing watercolors. V. Helen Anderson, one of Gorbutt's first art professors at Washburn, painted his portrait in a yellow slicker with the red paint box he had made for himself. Remarking about his watercolor work Gorbutt said, "I have always used watercolor paints, dry crayons, chalk and pastels as sketching media. Before acrylics and tube casein were available I used casein glue ground with dry colors, then added water.

"Transparent watercolor on a good grade of watercolor paper was used mostly in outdoor sketching as the equipment and materials are not as bulky as oil colors and canvas and do not pick up the blowing dirt and weeds as readily. I work in this medium mostly on my knees with my drawing board on the ground. Excess equipment is usually tied down with rocks or other available movable objects."

"Crayon, chalk, pastels and opaque watercolor have been used in combination quite often on a hardboard background prepared by

the use of an abrasive mixed with a gesso. Pastels have been used alone on this same prepared background with the use of a spray fixative. I have used different grades of abrasives for different effects."

Discussing his motivation or inspiration and problems or experiments in doing his watercolors Gorbitt said, "It was a learning process. My watercolors have all been outdoor sketches with few exceptions which included still life studies of contrasts and reflections of one subject on another. It was a kind of freedom to go outdoors and sketch as I did on vacations in the mountains, for instance. I was always trying to get an impression of the mountains or trying to interpret the landscape in values and forms or shapes. Most of my watercolors have a kind of design not just a copy of nature. I would pick up a tree against a certain area and try to put it together with other forms to make a design: putting things together to give a feeling for the whole view. I was looking for contrast of meadows and mountains, rocks and trees, hills and plains, and combining all of the different phenomena--shapes--objects.

"I never did paint with groups but mostly by myself."

At a few points in this thesis it has been mentioned that Gorbitt painted with certain people but these were rare instances in the over-all picture of his methods of work.

Wood Constructions

The wood construction designs have been variously called plastic paintings, structurist paintings, and three-dimensional designs, to name some of the ways people have referred to them in the press (see definition of terms used). At any rate, we are referring to the relief designs constructed of wood, masonite, and in later years of plastics, mounted on a background usually framed and sometimes in full and glowing colors.

The interviews concerning this area of Gorbett's work were done on several of the individual pieces of this type, so his total feeling for the medium can be constructed from what he had to say about these individual works. Two of the constructions that were subjects of interviews, MUSIC and RAIN, were included in his first one-man-show in 1935, therefore they can be considered "earlier work." In the 1960's he again explored this type of expression and interviews were done on SHELL AND SPHERE and BLACK AND WHITE LIGHT.

MUSIC: (See Appendix D, No. 1) In discussing his motivation and inspiration for doing MUSIC, Gorbett said that he started with an idea in his mind, not a sketch. "The process is not like copying nature but a process of the thing being born from your mind. The shapes have to be made so it is a slow developmental process. Like any creative thing you do you start out with a picture in your mind."

The forms he shaped out of wood and put together in a rhythmical arrangement with contrast of curved and straight lines.

In discussing the problem of experimentation he brought out the fact that he did not use color on this piece. "Color was superfluous. In a work of art you can go only so far and to go further doesn't do anything for it. It reaches a point of completion of the THOUGHT. The whole thought was completed"--without or before the introduction of color in this case.

Question number 3 was somewhat irrelevant since this was "earlier work" but Gorbust did have several observations. "The approach wasn't different, just the shapes and forms." He said, "I wasn't working like the Structurists today work. They have only vertical and horizontal lines. I was using any shapes that were *harmonious*. I like the limitations of the Structurists if you are going to be mechanical about it." He said that the vertical and horizontal lines in painting work together and "invariably when you incorporate lines off of vertical and horizontal you achieve perspective. This was not Structurist but abstract construction. The names tied into nature but they were abstractions of natural forms generally not taken from any specific natural form."

Concerning influences he said that he did see a relief wall mural and a picture of some things done in Europe that "made me think--I was groping for a way to express myself. Here I'm sixty-four years old and still am /seeking a means of self-expression7.

At that time I was looking for a way to express the aesthetic urge-- a desire to create something that hadn't been created before." And these three-dimensional abstract forms became that means.

Gorbutt said there was a definite interaction between his commercial work and these constructions. He had a woodworking shop at Beatrice Creamery Company where he was working when these earlier constructions were made and he was doing back bars, animated store displays and window displays. Of course, the butter sculpture was a more traditional approach to sculpture and he did one relief sculpture in butter (see Appendix C) for Meadow Gold.

RAIN: Concerning RAIN and the motivation or inspiration for doing this piece Gorbutt said, "It was an organic thing like abstract painting except it was constructed from enameled wood. I made a form like earth and one like sky and had pieces of bent reed like blowing rain." It was meant to be a happy piece with the fresh, clean earth and the implied joyful sound of a bird after a summer rain.

In relation to the problem or experimentation involved the artist again discussed color. In this piece he used subdued colors, while in 1969 at the time of the interview he was using pure colors. He said, "there were some things that needed color but color wasn't the object." Concerning his later works in this medium he said, "I think when I got into color it became more machine-like--a mechanical thing." An example is CONE which

implies parts of an airplane. In the earlier piece the thoughts during creation were not concerned with machinery even though he used machinery to produce the shapes. These earlier constructions were abstractions being done at the same time some realistic creations were being done.

More Recent Constructions

SHELL AND SPHERE is number two in the listing at the 1970 Kansas State University show. The Gorbuts nicknamed it "Sock-It-To-Me" because the design suggests taking the spherical shape in hand and throwing it into the concave form. Speaking of his motivation or inspiration for doing the piece, Gorbutt said he started out simply to use the basic shapes and see what he could get from an art form as simple as possible in relief. "This was the sphere. I also did the cone." He always asked himself "What is the effect of this thing on people?--What is the emotional reaction?" Creative people in the "audience" seem to get more of a reaction. One said to Gorbutt that it gave her a feeling of "psychological excitement."

"I added color to all of them," Gorbutt said, in speaking of the problem or experimentation he was undertaking in this series of pieces. "For instance, the color yellow remains in place." (The ball is yellow.) Experimenting with color in relief he asked himself, "Would it reduce the roundness of the sphere? If I had made it black there would be no highlights. It would reduce itself to a

circle. The lighter in color I got the shape became less obvious. It became just an outline. Yellow seemed to explain the shape more fully. Then by using the complimentary colors the feeling of a sphere in space was enhanced."

The way in which his approach differed on this piece from the other wood constructions was that he was using simple shapes. His reason for changing was that it seemed more important to find out more about the influence of the shapes on each other and "I used color." "All form is made up of these basic shapes. I felt that if I learned what the limitations of these shapes are I would know how far you have to go before adding a plane or for instance, the concave area."

In answer to question number four Gorbett said, "No. It was exploration on my problems. It was after this that I came into contact with the 'Structurist Group.' One of them from Chicago saw MUSIC hanging in the hall of the 114 East Seventh building and was surprised to find how early it was done--1931 (see Appendix D, Baldinger Letter).

Question number five brought the response, "No, I was not doing commercial work but running the gallery at the time. I had some casting material and had the limitation of working in the small area in the gallery. I did install a fan to draw out of the gallery the smell of the plastic casting. The ball is just a rubber ball. The dimestore is close with lots of beautiful shapes--toys-boxes-rings, and spheres. The possibility of casting them was exciting.

The cone is just a Dixie cup cast in plastic." This whole series is in contrast to the elaborate sculpture techniques used in the butter sculpture. "I enjoyed the simplicity of the thing--back to basic simplicity."

BLACK AND WHITE LIGHT though in some ways quite different from the other constructions, is grouped with this type of work because basically it is relief sculpture. The difference in this case is that it is free standing and that its controlled light is part of the designs while the others are shown in natural light or a gallery spotlight (see Appendix D). Gorbitt says frankly that part of his motivation for doing the piece was that it was planned for a show. It was to be used with spotlighted wall constructions and with the tube light kinetic sculpture. He wanted to show the effect of black light in the gallery. It was planned to be placed at one end of the gallery with no spotlights where it was lighted with a vertical light source sitting in front of it so people could walk between it and the source of light. The idea was that the panels hung on rods could be moved about to change the effects. The college people enjoyed the effect of the black light on their clothes.

To appreciate it fully, Gorbitt said, "You have to have the level of light equivalent to twilight in the room," then it turns on brighter. He was working with the possibilities and limitations of light effects and the first limitation is the brightness of light in the room.

The way in which his approach differed in this piece was in using a different type of controlled light.

There are definite influences from his commercial art work since it is built of materials and techniques used in building convention displays. It can be assembled or disassembled and crated. The vertical panels come apart and wing nuts go through the rods to hold the work together. During his commercial art years, he had done sculptural displays and charts for the Menninger Board of Directors meetings, for the annual meetings of the Kansas Power and Light Company and Santa Fe Railroad and their traveling displays as well as fair and convention displays for many companies. They were all very artistic and creative using black light, animation and sculptural shapes.

Abstractions

Gorbett's group of abstractions was created during the late 1950's and early 1960's when interest had returned to painting. He said, "I had to find a material that suited me for expression and the abstractions were mostly experimenting. The limitations of the materials caused me to do abstracts." Concerning the experimentation he said, "The materials affected the abstracts as much as anything. They are different from watercolor or oil." He used sand, lacquer, acrylics, enamel, proxlyn, gold and silver leaf, string, smaltz, glow beads, cardboard, white lead paste, plastics,

glue and other materials for collage. The earlier of the abstractions (see Appendix C) were done by pouring the pure basic colors available in DuPont lacquer.

The names of the abstractions are revealing as to the source of the inspiration for the pieces, though in some cases the abstractions came first and the design suggested a name.

HELICOPTERS AND AUTUMN LEAVES, a poured lacquer creation, was one of a projected series of the seasons. Only the fall and winter ones are done at the time of this thesis. The inspiration came from the look of sun shining through colorful autumn leaves. Helicopters from Fort Riley, Kansas, were going over Gorbett's hill at the time of the work on the piece and he included forms to suggest this phenomenon. Of course the joy of experimenting with the materials was itself a source of inspiration for the artist.

BURNING PASTURES is one of several paintings done as a result of watching pastures on neighboring farms being burned (see Appendix C). Gorbett said "The movement of burning being seen behind hedges, foliage and other objects carried different effects. Then seeing different shapes form as the fires flickered and the leaves of the trees moved in the breeze made fantasies like a group of moving things." All of the fantasy shapes resulting from these phenomena were well adapted for developing into abstractions.

R.F.D. (Appendix C) " . . . is a design developed from our rural mailbox containing the New York Times, Christmas packages,

on one of which I put a star; and other mail, making the box so full the door wouldn't close." With the open door as a mouth the resulting pattern turned into a clown. This is another example of the humor or satire which crops up in Gorbutt's work from time to time.

The use of the medium in this one was a method of shaping pieces of canvas and fastening them to the background canvas by the old method of using white lead and oil, the latter being the method often used in the past for fastening a mural to a wall.

ENERGY CONTAINED is a painting for which the motivating force was a grain of wheat symbolic of growth. The writer of this thesis owns and lives with this painting and it is well loved for the constant source of inspiration that it conveys. Gorbutt took a grain of developing (not fully-matured) wheat from the wheat field on his farm and cut it in two. The central theme of the composition is this nucleus of energy. The horizontal forms at the bottom suggest the landscape from which it grows and the other forms are the uplifting forces of growth. Some people see in the central form the suggestion of a human brain. It takes very little contemplation to see in that thread of thought ENERGY CONTAINED. The medium is sand, smaltz and oil paint.

PINK ORGANISM is one of Mrs. Gorbutt's favorite abstractions which hangs in the Gorbutt's living room most of the time. The inspiration for it started with the barn swallows which were nesting,

feeding and flying around the car port at the Gorbutt's home. The medium is another adaptation of the oil paint with sand. Some of the pinks and violets seem to have been a development in color somewhat different from some of Gorbutt's other work.

Reflection Series

REFLECTIONS, a self portrait, probably the first painting completed in this series, was inspired by the beautiful home Gorbutt had built on a farm west of Topeka in 1957. He said, "My studio and home have lots of glass. A window is a mirror in areas where there are dark planes behind it and it makes nice geometric designs. You can see in front of you, behind you--both directions and see reflections from four directions. There are both color and light reflections."

What led up to the Reflection Series, the artist said, was having been expressing his environment in the abstractions in which he eliminated the horizon line and perspective. "The abstractions meant more to me than a tree, a house and a hill," he said. The latter was referring to the traditional approach to landscape. "Your environment is more dynamic.--It isn't as sentimental as just a traditional landscape. It is limiting when you are looking in just one direction to paint when you can really see and feel the entire encompassing feeling of your surroundings. Another thing that has always bothered me is that landscapes are so full of

horizontal lines that they almost always seem to need to contain a tree to introduce a vertical line. This way of thinking can be carried much further and become quite abstract but it is not necessary."

Gorbutt did preliminary sketches (some quite finished) for these paintings. In relation to those sketches he said, "There is more involved in the painting than the sketches contain. I thought about the world all around me. When you paint a self portrait you use a mirror but I used the mirror of the window and thought about the use of all of the compositions in the windows."

Answering question number three, Gorbutt said, "Some of my earlier work incorporated geometric principles. When I first started to study art I studied a book on dynamic symmetry in composition which is a study of the mathematical and geometrical system of producing composition. It was then that I started seeing things as squares, cones, cubes, ovals and rectangles at different angles. Years ago I had thought of composition as a plane. One of the best ways of doing a landscape is to see a tree as a vertical, land as a plane, a cloud comes back as a dome with other clouds on different planes."

Concerning influences, it was discovered that there was definitely not any outside influence that caused the artist to do these paintings. He was spending all his time painting during this period. Solving problems intimate to the artist involved in his work caused the growth which led to the production of this series.

ENVIRONMENT was done on the continuum of the growth of the "Reflection Series." Anyone who sees this series (see Appendix C) and also is familiar with Gorbitt's home and studio can see that the whole series is an expression of his environment as discussed under "Reflections."

Question number one concerning motivation or inspiration brought these comments from Gorbitt: "I was looking through the window in the front doorway with a reflection of a figure in the composition. I was inside the environment there." Though the painting is an almost realistic representation of Gorbitt's environment, many people have read into it a great deal of symbolism, especially those who know that the artist's personal religious philosophy means a great deal to him. Yet he has never painted religious paintings and this one is in no way guilty of any sentimentality, often characteristic of religious art. "The clock suggests time, the candles and the stairway going up (which I built myself) and looking through a doorway" all have symbolic connotations. The candles could symbolize a birthday with all the reflections going back indefinitely. "This was done near my sixtieth birthday."

Question number 5 brought the response that the technical aspects of the overpainting and glazing were items of concern and study in carrying out this painting. The object was to give a feeling of mystery and time. The transparent fog in front of the clock and the misty feeling in other portions of the painting became

a concern of technique. The technique to develop that feeling was to become one of building one plane over another with transparent glazes.

The creative thought processes used in this series and for doing the abstractions is of interest. The artist would compose a sentence and keep it in mind; sometimes keeping a copy of it written on a piece of paper before him all the time the painting was progressing. For this painting he thought, "After the end of the rain the sky in the south was red; the sky in the north was yellow." Reflection painting was a way of showing both or as the artist expresses it "the total environment."

LOOK TO THIS DAY differed from the other Reflection Series paintings, in that it was the first one that "I did not enter myself, as an image, into the painting. This was Doris' environment instead of mine as are REFLECTIONS, a self-portrait, and ENVIRONMENT. This is a portrait, so the painter is not shown in the painting as in ENVIRONMENT, but he is observing. Thus it is more mystical which creates a problem; nevertheless, the painting still shows reflections without the creator.

In answer to his problems and motivation for his Reflection Series, Gorbett said that reference was not only to visual but also to mental reflection. "It was all mental. On the other side of that . . . window is another environmental area, in this case the inside of the house was Doris' environment; a complete area you

look through and then through the far window another complete area. Then of course there is the area behind reflected. You are looking back infinitely and also looking on into infinity. If your mirror is wavy or conceived as slanted you can look through and see what is happening on both sides of you. To fully appreciate these paintings you have to get your mind oriented to thinking this way. The idea for this series started while sketching out on the sun deck, looking through the windows and becoming conscious of the reflections. I want people to enjoy what I see as much as I do or if I have a feeling of being depressed I want them to be just as depressed upon seeing the painting as I am." Gorbitt's comments along this line are important because they do come through in his paintings. He started to follow the foregoing with "But basically I am a joyfully happy person," then changed to "I am not contented at all" and followed with "I'm a discontented happy person--or I wouldn't be working so hard." With a laugh at the humor inherent in this we continued the interview.

Question number five brought further comment about LOOK TO THIS DAY being different because this one was a portrait and his own image was not in the painting. He said, "If I had wanted to concentrate on composition the things could have been carried further." Concerning influences he said, "Creativity is a constant rhythm of thought. It changes. When science makes a statement, it has proof. In creative work the 'statement' is developmental.

The rhythm of creativity is true as of 30 years ago or 30 years from now."

CATTLE FEEDING. Inherent in the problem and motivation for this painting was the idea that the painter is not portrayed in the picture, yet reflections are used. "It changes the whole meaning of the reflections. One of the problems I was working on was the realization that this way of thinking could be carried to great lengths."

"The reason I made most of the Reflection Series paintings large is that it seemed to fit the way I was thinking and the subject matter," he said in relationship to problem or experimentation. "This is a broader concept of painting. It is not copying nature but trying to get across the concept of total environment or that of the portrait subject."

The painting was a change in that "I was doing a portrait of Raymond in his environment," after doing a portrait with a geometric feeling. "This one still didn't satisfy me." Gorbett did several of a ranching cowboy theme in different sizes through this period. The painting of this type which Gorbett likes best hangs over the mantle in the Raymond Adams, Jr. home in 1971.

Concerning influences, it should be noted that Gorbett was spending all his time painting during this period so one painting or group of paintings led to others. He said, "In doing those abstract things I was doing before, I did not get as much satisfaction. (However, many of the abstractions were inspired by actual

places or experiences in the artist's life.) He said "With my temperament, I get more satisfaction out of painting an apple with all of its planes and reflected light, reflected color and atmosphere than pure abstractions. Amateur painters always seem to have to have a horizon line but it is possible to look up or down. In the gallery I see the reaction of people to all these horizon lines. One man who flies got the emotional feeling from an abstraction that he got from flying. It didn't have a horizon line so the implication is that it is above or below the viewer." A realistic view from an airplane can seem to be an abstraction. The artist's comments concerning his abstractions are important because that period had immediately preceded the Reflection Series which was a further development in the "rhythm" of his creativity.

Also in connection with his comments on influences he said, "I enjoy working with materials whether they are varnish, canvas, oil, sand, lacquer or welding rod.

"IF I ONLY HAD SOMETHING TO WEAR", one of the Reflection Series, is a small study of a sunbather. The artist says it is in the same category, in his thinking, as the BAND CONCERT. It is satire or humor, portraying the frustrations of other people and their performance. "I get a great enjoyment out of people's inconsistencies." This kind of comment provides insight into the artist's personality. He added, "I get as much enjoyment out of the fool things I do--when there aren't enough hours in a person's life to do all of the goals I have set for myself."

Light Sculpture

The first encouragement Gorbett had to do his collection of light sculptures was from Grogan Ebberts of Emporia, who was organizing the "Flinthills" Artmobile. The artmobile was to travel to towns and schools in a number of counties through the Flinthills area of Kansas. Gorbett did his first kinetic light sculpture especially to be included in the collection of art in the artmobile. Then encouragement came from Jim Hunt, Chairman of the Art Department at Washburn University who asked Gorbett to have a show of light sculptures and constructions in the gallery at the University in February 1970. Many of the sculptures were done in preparation for that show. The artist took a year and devoted all his time to creating a group of pieces using his knowledge of technology and permanent materials: steel, stainless steel, plastics, aluminum and glass, and his knowledge of equipment and methods such as soldering and bending sheetmetal and glass, along with many methods of fastening materials together. He said he was not trying to produce any new technology but was taking some media already available to the use of controlled light and to create works of art. The message and thought are in the shapes and colors and in their combination with materials such as mirrors, semi-opaque glass and movement, etc. Some of the materials that became inherent parts of the design were the high voltage transformers, electrodes, housings, tube lights,

incandescent lights, tube stands, high-frequency wire, low voltage wire and materials of the glass blower like asbestos, mechanical templates and asbestos patterns. Some of the problems in planning these pieces were the determination of how much transformer it takes to burn the footage and size of glass used, and the planning of timing of the flashes.

Concerning influences the artist said that all the years of commercial work were certainly an influence but during the commercial work there were always necessarily limitations. "It was free for me to try to express myself through this medium," he said. "I have taken the materials, tools and machinery with which I am familiar and constructed artificially lighted sculptural forms. Activated by electrical circuits and showing the control of light and color by contrast, reflection, transmission, penetration rhythm and timing."

Gorbutt said, "Fantasy did not enter into the creation of these sculptural pieces. Each one was created by my everyday conservative thought processes, exhilarated by the acceptance of artificial colored light as an art medium. I have tried to use artificially colored light and reflective surfaces for creative expression. There were no restrictions, demands or outside influences limiting my freedom of expression during the construction of these sculptural pieces. And I hope I have found out some things about the medium that may be of help to other creative people. Each

one of the light sculpture pieces was a different and exciting experiment and experience."

Gorbutt remarked further, "My ego demands of me continuously that I take the materials, tools, and machinery with which I am familiar--and produce creative art forms."

The notes and observations made by Gorbutt during the building of the light sculpture will be quoted directly from a duplicated hand-out that Gorbutt prepared for use when Elden Teft, head of the sculpture studio at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, asked Gorbutt to talk to some of his students December 9, 1970. Gorbutt also showed his *four-minute 16mm film of his light sculpture* and about 40 slides. The notes follow:

1-2-3-4. In planning the construction of any animated light display it is necessary first to take in consideration the timing of the various components that produce the movement and mixture of colored light. Diagrams are made and each separate component is given a number. A stop watch and graph are used in recording the speed of the changes.

1-2-3-4-problem--show the basic inside and outside mechanics of this piece by the use of Mirropane glass and clear glass incandescent lamps inside and red neon gas glass tubing, blue argon gas glass tubing and yellow fluorescent coated tubing on the outside flash one after the other then they all come on. When the clear white lamps come on the exterior lights go off and the mechanical part of the display is exposed for a few seconds. The tree tube lights on the outside continue to operate 1-2-3. 4 is the count for the clear white lamps on the inside.

PISTON ACTION. What sensation will a viewer receive if there are a number of circles of light, each being a different color arranged in a cylinder shape and suspended horizontally in the air with colored lamps moving back and forth within the cylinder, while at the base of the construction a light under a green plastic dome flashes on and off in unison with the moving lights six feet above?

Built with metal tubing, plastics, sheet steel and the usual glass tubing, housings, electrodes, transformers, motor driven switches, etc.

TRI-MODULE. What sensation would a viewer receive if he is surprised at intervals by light forms appearing on the inside of hard edge solid black architectural shapes?

TRI-MODULE was the experiment with 1/4" gray translucent plate glass. Three architectural shapes grouped on a blue plane. The edges cemented together with silicone glue. For seven seconds the black shapes are exposed to the room illumination. Then, the viewer receives a surprise sensation when on the inside of each rectangular form appears a red neon gas filled tube light shape which flashes off and on three times, then comes on for seven seconds then turns off. This sequence is repeated indefinitely.

STARS AND STRIPES. The barrage of reactionary scenes from the news media and the day to day experiences with the economy stimulated sentimental patriotic feelings relating in my mind to red, white and blue and stars and stripes.

The flashing action and the infinity images of the white star and red and blue stripes on the mirrorpane plate glass is intended to give the viewer an exhilarated feeling like he receives when he hears the playing of the Star Spangled Banner.

ROSE, GREEN AND AMBER EQUALS WHITE. The sculptural piece ROSE GREEN AND AMBER EQUALS WHITE is an example of the combination of three different colored lamps all the same shape, length and diameter, with the same voltage and amperage applied, making a white light. This can be demonstrated by holding a piece of white paper near the lamps.

TICK-TACK-TOE. During the showing of a number of light sculpture pieces and a black light display in February 1970, I became aware of the images reflected from the companion light pieces on the mirrored, gray glass and plastic surfaces of the individual pieces. These reflected images had the effect of adding depth and additional dimension to the spatial effect of each light sculpture.

On TICK-TACK-TOE I concentrated in one piece reflected images as observed previously, by adding adjustable mirrors extending from each side of the basic light box.

MIXED RED AND BLUE LIGHT. A dark gray plate glass rectangular form containing mirrorpane panels set at 90° angles between which are 2 red and 2 blue 10mm shaped, colored tube lights. The blue lights come on for a few seconds then go off, then the red comes on, then both the red and blue come on making a mixture of blue, red, violet and purple. Each side of the sculptural piece gives a different effect because of the transparency of the mirrors and the dark gray plate glass.

The transformers, flasher, switches and wiring are mounted below the light box and covered by a stainless steel skirt.

LIBRA. This piece is basically a two sided mirropane glass display 4' thick with one set of animated neon tubing reflecting back and forth from one side to the other creating an illusion of depth, infinity and balancing action.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE CONCLUSIONS

Through a perusal of the primary resources as reported in Chapter II and in the Biographical Outline in Appendix A it has been shown that Gorbutt did see exhibitions of great art; was in contact with other individuals who were active in the field of art, sometimes that association being brief, sometimes long. A few references in the press about Gorbutt's studying books on his current field of interest only hints at the fact, brought out in personal interviews, that he has been studying constantly. Through a review in Chapter III of the materials with which Gorbutt experimented it can be determined that these materials were available to an artist in the mid-west.

Summary of Material Relative to Problem 2

It has been demonstrated both in the biographical material and through the interviews about the different groups of Gorbutt's work, that his philosophy is one that recognizes the need for flexibility and change. He was constantly experimenting with new materials and his work falls naturally into groups stylistically. These two facts also substantiate the foregoing contention. In this case change can be called growth.

During the interviews, several of Gorbutt's working habits came to light which gave insight into his creative thought methods. One was the way in which he put an idea verbally before him while he worked. Some of these ideas were so picturesque as almost to be poetic. He also was in the habit of making quick sketches and diagrams which looked unrelated to the finished composition but were portraying visually the steps his thinking was taking as the creative process developed. Sometimes single words conveying concepts to be emphasized were superimposed upon these diagrams.

A Synopsis of the Considerations Involved in Problem 3

The techniques and media with which Gorbutt experimented are discussed in Chapter III. Appendix C contains selected photographs of the works showing some of the media used. In addition to the traditional media of oil, watercolor, etching, dry point, serigraph and welded steel sculpture, Gorbutt used for his abstractions sand, lacquer, acrylics, enamel, proxlyn, gold and silver leaf, string, smaltz, glow beads, cardboard, white lead paste, plastics glue and other material for collage. In the case of the kinetic light sculpture he used steel, stainless steel, plastics, aluminum glass tubing, mirrors, semi-opaque glass and any other structural materials necessary for carrying out his design. The steel includes tubing, angle iron, H beams and sheet steel. (See Appendix D for pictures of the light sculpture.)

Discussion of Problem 4

The three periods into which Gorbutt's work fall are: first, the early period of naturalism which started when he began painting and continued through the group of American Scene paintings, printmaking, portraits and watercolors; second, the period which began about 1958 when Gorbutt began painting again after having spent most of his creative efforts for a time on his business. This second period included the abstractions and the reflection series (see Appendix C). Then the third period began with the creation of the kinetic light sculptures about 1968 and could be said to include the wood constructions that were made at about that same time. All of this third period concerns three dimensional design either free standing or relief. However, perhaps even more than the other periods the creations of this period concern light in all its aspects.

The works of the early period applied the concern for light in representing different types of light pictorially. For instance, the BANDSTAND (Appendix C) portrays the reflections of artificial light at night while YELLOW BOWL is one of the best examples of Gorbutt's concern for reflected light and color both from objects inside the picture area and outside the field of vision.

The second period was concerned with light in a different way since Gorbutt's comments about the fantasies suggested by burning pastures was an application of naturally occurring sources

of light to the inspiration of abstract designs. The abstractions were concerned with the portrayal of light in the suggestive representation of non-realistic designs.

The third period concerned controlled light in the kinetic light sculptures. Gorbutt experimented with "black light" reflected from various surfaces as well as sources of light as art forms. In addition to the impact of the linear and three dimensional design Gorbutt was interested in the effect on people of the movement and flashing of lights and in the way people see light such as in ROSE, GREEN AND AMBER EQUALS WHITE. The kinetic light sculpture was a kind of climax in the progression of Gorbutt's concern for all the aspects of light in his creative work.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF JOHN D. GORBUTT

- 1904 Born October 20 at Troy, Kansas. Father John Dougherty Gorbutt (1874-1965), dentist. Mother Mary Emma Detwiler (1877-).
- 1910 Attended elementary school in Horton, Kansas; moved to Kansas City, Missouri, then completed elementary school in Holton, Kansas.
- 1916 Attended junior high school in Holton, Kansas. Played the cornet in the school orchestra and town band.
- 1918 Received a letter from the United States Government asking him to close down his transmitter for the duration of World War I. (See Chapter II.)
- 1920 Began high school in Salina, Kansas where he lived with his Aunt Minnie Detwiler Buenning.
- 1924 Was graduated from Topeka High School. Entered Washburn College, took art courses from V. Helen Anderson among others. Studied art books from the library and painted on his own. Made batik scarves and wall hangings to sell. Worked at Central National Bank in general tellers department. Held membership in Alpha Delta social fraternity.
- 1926 Married Irene Doris Ash of Topeka. Worked for Liberty Life Insurance Company as an actuarial clerk and did commercial art for their brochures. Birth of daughter, Jeanne, December 22.
- 1928 Painted with Byron Wolfe. Did watercolor landscapes outdoors.
- 1931 Held first showing at Kansas Free Fair.
- 1932 Painted with Charles Marshall, then state architect of Kansas, doing watercolor landscapes. Birth of daughter Anne, March 21.

- 1933 Opening of Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Made great art easily accessible to Gorbutt from this time on. Visits Chicago World's Fair and studied collections at the Art Institute Museum. At this time, that museum had a large visiting collection from Europe. Visited Grant Wood in his studio in Iowa on this trip.
- 1934 Gorbutt and Wallace Baldinger, Chairman of the Art Department at Washburn, painted each others' portraits at Gorbutt's home. Became acquainted with John Canaday, now Art Critic of the New York Times who was then in Washburn's Art Department. Gorbutt did Canaday's portrait and studied under him at Washburn where Gorbutt did a stained glass window design that traveled in a national show.
- 1935 February: Held first one-man show at Washburn University. YELLOW BOWL invited to remain for one year at Joslyn Memorial Museum, Omaha, Nebraska.
- 1936 Received request for photographs of his paintings from the United States Treasury Department, Division of Painting and Sculpture. Took trip to St. Louis collections and visited Thomas Hart Benton while he was painting murals in Jefferson City.
- 1937 BRICKYARD became one of five representing Kansas in Second National Exhibition of American Art by the Municipal Art Committee of the City of New York. Won Third Prize for BRICKYARD at the Midwestern Artists Exhibition, Kansas City Art Institute. BAND CONCERT sent to Twelve-State Midwestern Art Show in A.C.A. Gallery, New York City, organized by Joe Jones, St. Louis.
- 1939 Started Gorbutt Advertising Company which was to take most of his creative force for some years.
- 1942 Made trip to Colorado, saw Colorado Springs and Denver art collections. Built first Snipe class sailboat to sail on Lake Shawnee, "Gale" 4830.
- 1945 Bought building at 112-114 East Seventh and moved business into ground floor.
- 1946 Became Commodore of the Shawnee Yacht Club.
- 1947 Continued as Commodore for second year. Bought house at 1299 Pembroke Lane, Topeka, Kansas. December, daughter Jeanne married to James Larry Bowman (divorced in 1951).

- 1948 Trip to North Dakota and Minnesota, visited potteries, art galleries and Mount Rushmore. Daughter Anne attended camp at Camp Lake Hubert near Brainard, Minnesota.
- 1949 Organized Pottery Division of Gorbett Company. Visited Philbrook Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Oklahoma Art Festival. Built Gale II Snipe 7079.
- 1950 Made trip to Chicago Merchandise Mart to secure manufacturer's representative for pottery, visited galleries.
- 1951 Bought Albert Block painting. Daughter Anne married to Raymond Edmond Adams, Jr. First grandchild, "Brad" Bradley Tyler Bowman born to daughter Jeanne, January 17 (adopted by James E. Sallee in 1954).
- 1952 Took trip to Taos, Santa Fe; painted watercolors. "Eddie" (Raymond Edmond Adams III) born to daughter Anne January 30. Bought farm near Valencia, Kansas.
- 1953 Granddaughter born to daughter Anne; Marie Adams, February 2.
- 1954 Made trip to New Orleans to see Sadler Wells Ballet with the Jacob Dickinsons. Saw art in Little Rock, Baton Rouge and museums. December 21 granddaughter "Sally" (Jessie Sara Adams) born to daughter Anne. Daughter Jeanne married to James Edwin Sallee, November 28.
- 1955 Made trip to Colorado to visit Karl Kennedys; painted watercolors.
- 1956 Went to New York; saw New York City Center Ballet, art exhibition and museums. Traveled with Mr. and Mrs. William O. Myers. Grandson Bruce Everett Sallee, born to daughter Jeanne, June 30.
- 1957 January: Made trip to Arizona, American Cattlemen's Association meeting with Raymond Adams; did watercolors and saw Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West. Built house and studio-workshop on farm. Served on the building committee of Central Congregational Church.
- 1958 Elected to Board of Directors of the Professional Advertising Club.
- 1959 Elected Treasurer of Professional Advertising Club; served for four years.

- 1960 Granddaughter Annette Irene Sallee and grandson John Charles Adams, both born August 18.
- 1961 December: Closed Gorbett Company and started producing a number of compositions.
- 1962 Enrolled in Washburn University. Was in elevator accident.
- 1963 Made Gallery "hopping" trip to St. Louis, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit. Held one-man show at Art Guild.
- 1964 REFLECTIONS self-portrait entered in Southwestern American Artists Show in Oklahoma City; attended opening September 25. Held one-man show at Pembroke Country Day School, Kansas City, Missouri, opening December 9. Made Colorado trip, painted watercolors in Estes Park. Visited galleries in Denver.
- 1965 Held two one-man shows running concurrently: Baker University Show and Studio Gallery Frame Shop Show. June 30 grandson Clay Stewart Adams born to daughter Anne.
- 1966 Participated in Asbury Hospital Auxiliary Fashion Show showing of art at Marymount College, Salina, Kansas. Remodeled 629 Quincy building into office suites.
- 1967 Opened Civic Center Art Gallery, 629 Quincy, Topeka, Kansas, first show being works by Birger Sandzen.
- 1968 Started building kinetic light sculptures and made more relief paintings from plastic and wood. November 6, grandson "Charlie" Charles Ash Adams, born to daughter Anne.
- 1969 Painted and worked on kinetic light sculpture and chromatic welded steel sculpture. 1-2-3-4 traveled in Flinthills artmobile. Created a four-minute film of the light sculpture with Fred Andrews.
- 1970 February: Held show at Washburn of new kinetic light sculpture and the relief paintings; movie of sculpture shown on WIBW-TV during show. Participated in show at Kansas State University; and in show at Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia. These shows were all of the kinetic light sculpture and relief paintings. Film and five sculptures featured at 1970 National Sculpture Conference, Lawrence, Kansas.
- 1971 At time of this study is being completed Gorbett is remodeling another of his downtown buildings on 118 East Seventh, Topeka, Kansas. A Flinthills Series of paintings has been started.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

GENEALOGICAL DATA

Gorbutts

Information concerning the Gorbutts comes from testimony of the artist, gravestones at Frankfort, Kansas, and from James Sloan, lawyer.

- I. Joseph Gorbutt was born December 13, 1809 in Manchester, England and died in Frankfort, Kansas, August 15, 1869. He married Johanna Brown Gorbutt who was born in Paisley, Scotland June 9, 1814 and died in Frankfort, Kansas, July 2, 1892. Joseph Gorbutt started the woolen mill in Milltown, Kentucky for which the town is named. They were parents of four children.
- II. 1. Dr. William B. Gorbutt was born January 30, 1832 in Milltown, Kentucky and died March 6, 1897. Dr. William Gorbutt is the uncle who studied medicine and art in Paris, was a surgeon in the Civil War for the Union. He had one daughter by his second wife: Lillian who married Francis Pierce. Dortha Willis Jones, a niece, has bills for his art supplies and some of his paintings as well as the photographs of the family.
2. Phoebe Gorbutt was a school teacher also educated in Europe.

3. Joseph Gorbitt born 1836 in Milltown, Kentucky, died 1914 in Frankfort, Kansas and is buried there. See write-up about him which succeeds this section. He is the grandfather of John D. Gorbitt, Jr.
4. Margaret Gorbitt married S. W. Willis. Their daughter married H. S. Wadham and their daughter Dorthea married Aaron Jones who lives in Hoopestown, Illinois, 513 East Lincoln and has the original data.

Joseph Gorbitt married Sallie Dougherty who was born in 1840 in Franklin County, Kentucky near Frankfort, Kentucky; died in Frankfort, Kansas in 1919 and is buried there. They had five children.

III. Children of Joseph Gorbitt

1. Anna, born August 15, 1866 in Kentucky and died 1960 in Topeka, Kansas, buried in Frankfort, Kansas. She married Henry Kennedy and had one daughter, Kelma, who was childless.
2. Catherine, born November 13, 1868, died June 1960 in Topeka and buried in Frankfort, Kansas. She was the educator who was a principal of the Spanish Speaking Schools in El Paso, Texas, attended Columbia and Stanford Universities and was active in instigating one of the first low rental housing projects in the United States for the people of El Paso. She was respected by the family for her interest in cultural pursuits.

3. Will, born in Kentucky and died in Lawrence, Kansas and is buried there. Had five children.
4. Rose, born July 22, 1873 in Frankfort, Kansas and died in Topeka July 1964 and is buried in Frankfort, Kansas. She married Benjamin F. Cobb, Chicago publisher.
5. Dr. John Dougherty Gorbutt (father of the subject of this thesis), born November 5, 1874 in Frankfort, Kansas, and died in Topeka in 1965 and is buried in Frankfort, Kansas. The Gorbuts in Frankfort, Kansas, were Methodists. Dr. John D. Gorbutt married Mary E. Detwiler December 5, 1900 in Beloit, Kansas and was divorced February 8, 1949. They had two children:

IV. Children of John Dougherty Gorbutt

1. John Detwiler Gorbutt married Irene Doris Ash Gorbutt in March 1926 and they have two children.
2. Leonhard Detwiler Gorbutt who had no children.

V. Children of John Detwiler Gorbutt

1. Jeanne Gorbutt Sallee.
2. Anne Gorbutt Adams.

(See Biographical Outline for additional information)

From the

Portrait and Biographical Album of Marshall County, Kansas
Printed by Chapman Brothers, Chicago, November 1889
Copy in the Kansas State Historical Society Library

Joseph Gorbutt. Among those who took part in the labors incident to the opening up of Wells Township and whose success is due wholly to their own unceasing industry and practical ability is the gentleman above named, who owns and operates a fine farm on sections 14-15. His first settlement in Marshall County was made on section 14 where he homesteaded 80 acres of government land. Deer, coyote and other wild animals roamed over the prairies when he took possession of his claim. Their haunts have now become a highly productive and attractive estate. Since his first settlement, Mr. Gorbutt has added 80 acres by purchase of railroad land making his present acreage 160.

The gentleman whose name heads this sketch was born in Woodford County, Kentucky, January 10, 1836. He is the son of Joseph and Johanna Gorbutt. The father was a native of Manchester, England and the mother of Paisley, Scotland. They emigrated to America when young and settled in the Blue Grass State /Kentucky/ where the father died in 1869. The mother is now living in this country.

Our subject was reared to manhood in his native county and received his education in the common schools which at that time did

afford such advantages as at the present. His father, being a woolen manufacturer, was raised to that business which he followed until about 35 years of age.

In August 1862, he enlisted in Company A, Fifty Kentucky Confederate Cavalry which was first attached to the command of Glen A. Buford and later was transferred to that of General Morgan. Mr. Gorbutt participated in the Battles of Perryville, Stone River and numerous others of minor importance. He took part in the celebrated Morgan Raid in Ohio and with the brigade was captured at Buffington. He was confined to Camp Douglas, Illinois for about 18 months. Receiving a parole at the expiration of that time, he returned home to Kentucky and resumed the duties of a civilian.

On November 1865, Mr. Gorbutt was united in marriage with Sally Dougherty who was a native of Franklin County, Kentucky. The union has been blessed with five children. Annie and Kittie are engaged in Public School teaching while J. William, Rose and John still reside under the parental roof.

In 1870, Mr. Gorbutt left his Kentucky home and settled in this county. He has not only shared in privations of pioneer life, but has also suffered from the elements. During what is known as the Irving Cyclone that caused so much destruction a few years ago, Mr. Gorbutt lost all his personal property including his house, barn, etc. This clean sweep put him at quite a disadvantage but he has overcome his obstacles and now stands on a firm financial basis.

The gentleman of whom we write has served for several years on the School Board. He is a member of the Christian Church. In politics, he is a staunch Democrat. As a man of upright character and a citizen, he is interested in the upbuilding of the locality where he has made his home. He merits and receives the respect of his fellow citizens.

Detwilers

Information concerning the Detwilers (maternal grandfather of the subject of this thesis) comes from "A Brief History of Bishop Henry Funck and other Funck Pioneers" by Rev. A. J. Fretz of Milton, New Jersey, published 1899 by the Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana. Also from birth certificates and from written testimony of living relatives.

1. Bishop Henry Funck, born in Europe, Holland or Palatinade, emigrated to America in 1719. Settled at Indian Creek, in Franconia Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where he died in 1760. He was married to Anna Myers, daughter of the pioneer Christian Myers, of Stafford Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, who emigrated from Europe in 1700. Anne, wife of Henry Funck, died July 8, 1758. Children, John, Henry, Christian, Abraham, Esther, Barbera, Anne, Fronicka, Elizabeth. One of the

first ministers of the Mennonite Church and bishop.

Miller, large land owner, author.

- II. Rev. Christian Funck, born 1731, died May 31, 1811. Married Barbera Casel, daughter of Yellis Cassel, from Knesheim, Germany in 1727. She died December 29, 1792. Children, Anne Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine, Barbera, Sarah, John, Abraham, Susanna. Miller, farmer, author, minister of the Mennonite Church, until the Revolutionary War, when he was excommunicated for political reasons. Esponsored the Continental Congress. Buried at Delphe cemetery.
- III. Catherine Funck born January 12, 1759 died May 12, 1808. Married John Detwiler, born January 8, 1747, died July 1, 1826. Owner of Bishop Henry Funck's old mill. Miller, farmer, Mennonite. Children, Susanna, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Sarah, John Christian, Catherine, Abraham, Daniel.
- IV. Abraham Detwiler, born Franconia Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, June 13, 1790. Died December 10, 1832. Married Mary Horning, daughter of John Horning, son of Louis Horning (born 1755, died 1803) who married Elizabeth Hall, March 28, 1809. Elizabeth Hall born September 15, 1761, died October 16, 1824. Mary Hall Detwiler, born December 31, 1790, died March 27, 1879. Farmer, miller, Mennonite. Children, Elizabeth, Catherine, John, William, Isaac, Hanna, Mary Abraham, Daniel Benjamin.

- V. John Horning Detwiler, born November 12, 1815, died April 26, 1877, buried in Conches Cemetery, Athens Township, Jewell County, Kansas. Born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Married Elizabeth Longabaugh, born April 4, 1820, died February 26, 1908. Miller, farmer. Children, Barton, Samuel, George, Clara, Emma, John, Frank.
- VI. Samuel L. Detwiler, born July 2, 1844 in Pottsgrove Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, died February 16, 1903, buried Glen Elder, Mitchell County, Kansas. Married Augusta Henrietta Leonhard, born April 16, 1844 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, died August 24, 1921, buried Glen Elder, Mitchell County, Kansas. Children, Louisa Elizabeth, Minnie Amelia, John Frederick, Mary Emma, Clara Agnes, Georgia Etta, Anna Mary, Alla Augusta. Samuel L. Detwiler and his wife came to Kansas in 1869 and lived in Severance Mills where the three oldest children were born, then homesteaded in Jewell County, Kansas where Mary and Agnes were born.
- VII. Mary Emma Detwiler, born May 12, 1877 in Glen Elder, Jewell County, Kansas, still living at this writing. Married John Dougherty Gorbutt, born November 15, 1874, in Frankfort, Kansas, and died in Topeka, Kansas 1965. Two children, John Detwiler Gorbutt, subject of this thesis, and Leonhard Detwiler Gorbutt.
- VIII. John Detwiler Gorbutt (see biographical outline for further information).

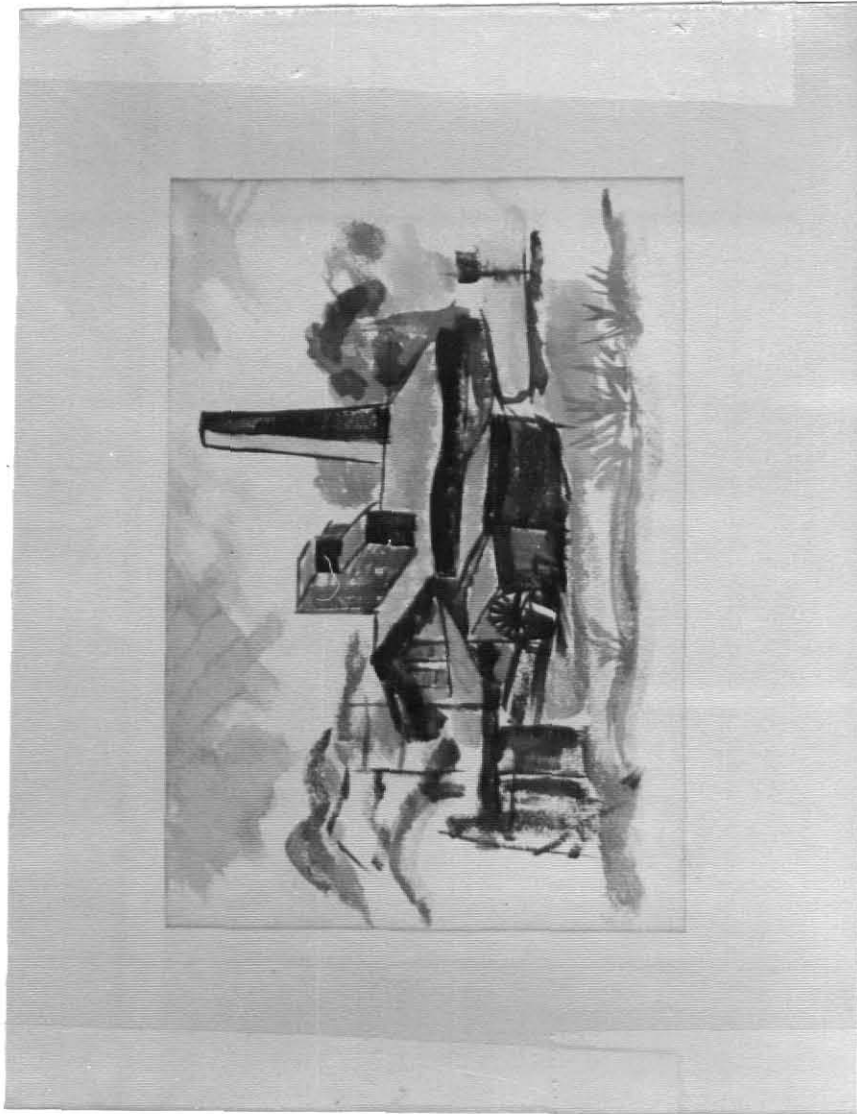
APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

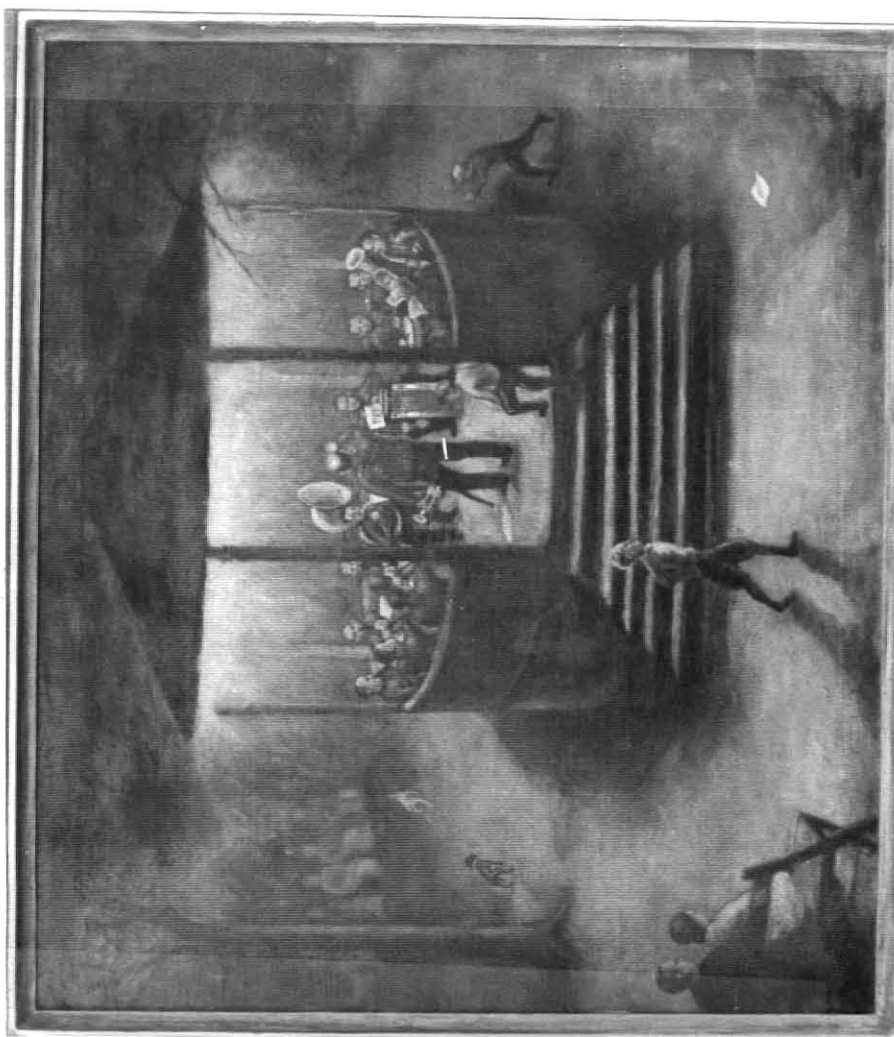
REPRODUCTIONS OF SELECTIONS
OF GORBUTT'S WORKS OF ART

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS
PICTURES THAT
ARE ATTACHED
TO DOCUMENTS
CROOKED.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**



BRICKYARD 1934



BAND CONCERT 1935



YELLOW BOWL 1934
(also called VEGETABLES)



REFLECTIONS 1964
A Self Portrait -- Reflection Series No. 1



LOOK TO THIS DAY 1964
Reflection Series No. 2

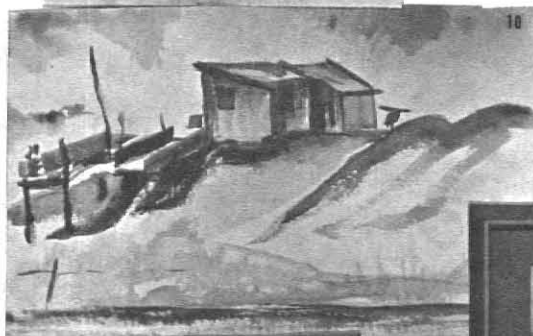
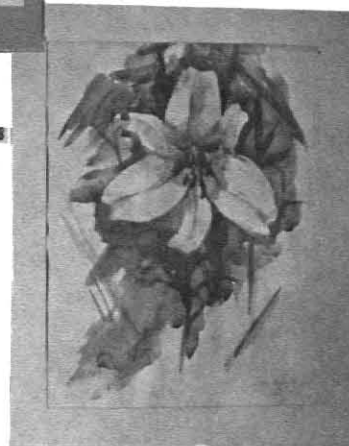
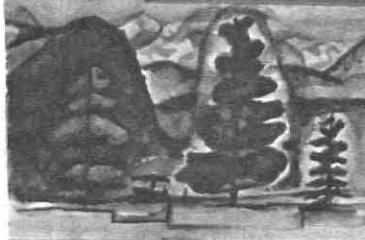
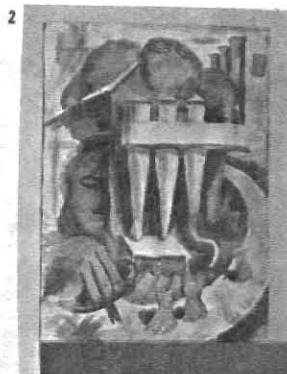


ENVIRONMENT 1964
Reflection Series No. 3

WATERCOLORS

Layout of Selections of Gorbutt's Watercolors

1. DRY GULCH AT ESTES PARK (DITCH) 1961
2. FLOUR MILL 1936
3. YELLOW ASPENS 1963
4. PINK LEAVES 1962
5. PINK FLOWER (ESTES) 1961
6. WEED 1936
7. THREE TREES AND MOUNTAINS 1961
8. REGAL LILY 1934
9. STEAM LIFT 1935
10. COAL MINE AT BURLINGTON 1934
11. ROARING RIVER 1963
12. PINE TREE AND MOUNTAIN 1961



PORTRAITS

Layout of Selections of Gorbutt's Portraits
Shown on Page

1. MOTHER AND CHILD (Mrs. Gorbutt and Anne) 1933
2. PRINTER (Frank Taylor) 1934
3. JOHN CANADAY 1933
4. LOOK TO THIS DAY (Mrs. Gorbutt) 1964
5. RAYMOND II (Raymond E. Adams, Jr.) 1964
6. CIRCUS MAN (Alan Sells) 1934
7. MRS. W. O. MYERS 1963
8. GIRL IN RED (Mrs. Gorbutt) 1934
9. ANNE (Daughter, Mrs. Raymond E. Adams, Jr.) 1963
10. ROBERT MAYNARD 1932
11. JEANNE (Daughter, Mrs. James E. Sallee) 1963
12. LUCILLE (Mrs. Frank Thomas) 1932
13. INDIAN GIRL (Camilla Wishkeno) 1963
14. DAD AT THE LATHE (Dr. Gorbutt) 1935
15. REFLECTIONS (Self-Portrait pictured when it was in the Oklahoma City show) 1964



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ABSTRACTIONS

Selections of Gorbutt's Abstract Paintings

1. NATURE RHYTHM I 1966
2. U. S. RURAL FREE DELIVERY 1952
3. WINTER SCENE 1958
4. ENERGY CONTAINED (mixed media) 1964
5. RED AND GOLD 1962
6. AUTUMN LEAVES AND HELICOPTERS 1957
7. FANTASY 1963
8. RED MOON ALOFT 1957
9. EVENING SHADOWS 1962
10. NATURE RHYTHM II 1966
11. ENERGY CONTAINED (pastel) 1964
12. PINK ORGANISM 1965



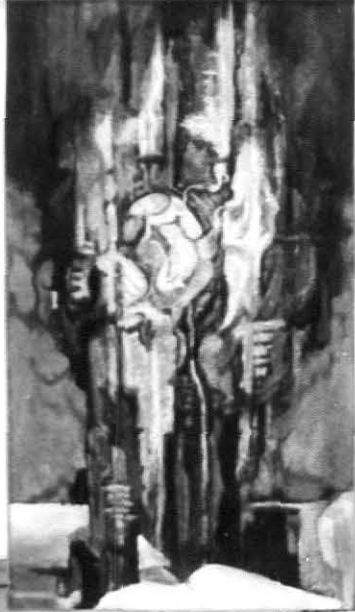
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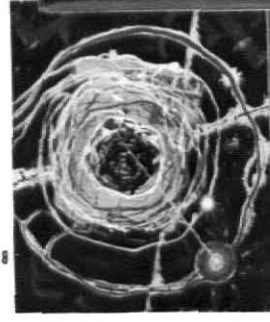
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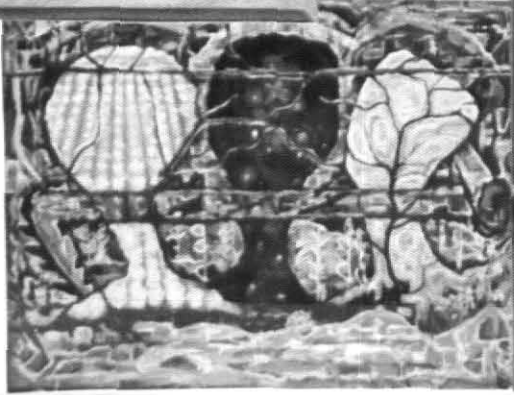
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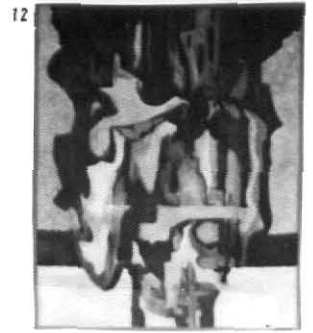
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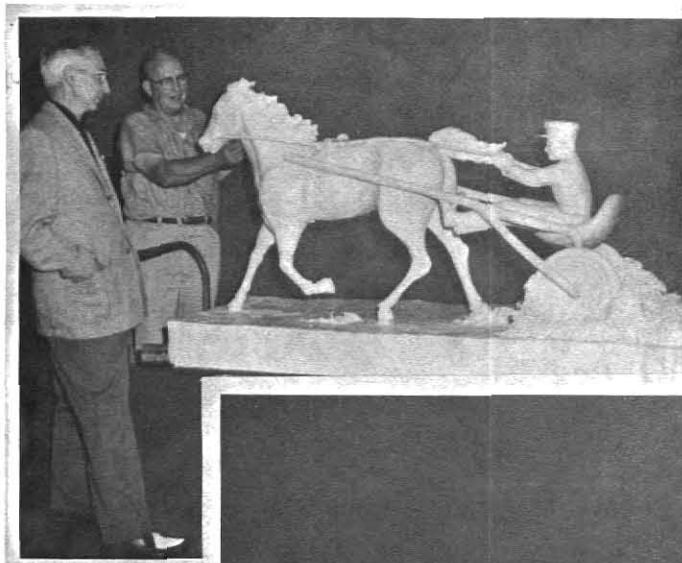


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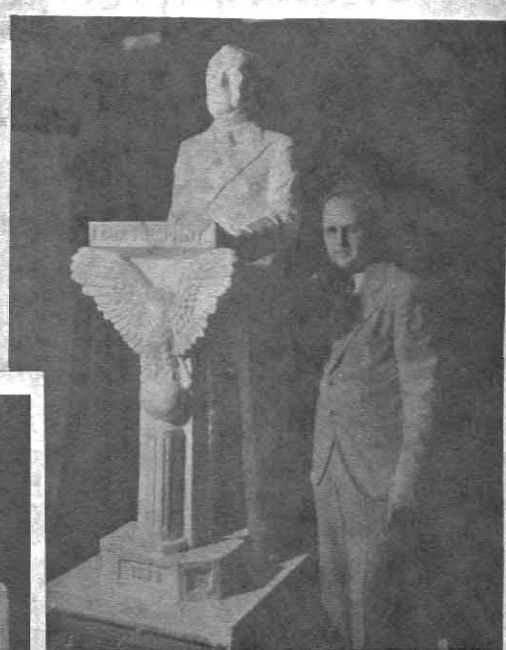
BUTTER SCULPTURE

Selections of Gorbutt's Butter Sculpture

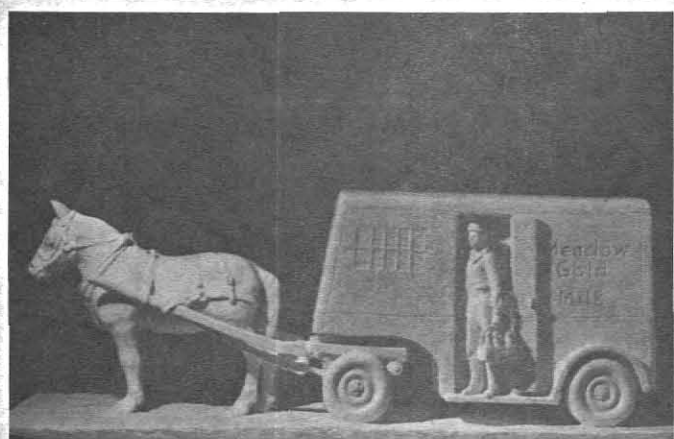
1. HARNESS RACER (with Willard V. Haskell and Gorbutt) 1958
2. ROOSEVELT (with Gorbutt) 1933
3. MEADOW GOLD MILK WAGON 1942
4. PEACE AND WAR 1944
5. THE HERO OF BATAAN (General MacArthur) 1943
6. THE FARMER'S BEST ASSET (Heifer Calf)
7. DUTCH GIRL 1937



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APPENDIX D

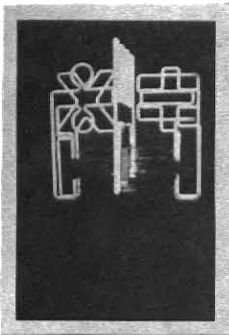
APPENDIX D

REPRODUCTIONS OF SOME PRIMARY RESOURCES

APPENDIX D

Selections of Primary Resources and Photographs of Work

1. MUSIC
2. RAIN
3. TICK-TACK-TOE
4. MIXED RED AND BLUE LIGHTS
5. MIXED RED AND BLUE LIGHTS
6. ROSE, GREEN AND AMBER EQUALS WHITE
7. LIBRA
8. MATH SYMBOLS



The World of Art Gallery Features Kansas Artists

By JOHN P. KENNEDY
Wichita Free Press

TOPEKA, Kan. — The Civic Center Gallery at 401 Quincy in Topeka is located across the street from the new Shawnee County Courthouse and City Building.

John Gorbett of Topeka opened this distinguished private gallery 18 months ago. He is a painter and sculptor himself. For many years he owned and operated Gorbett Inc., an advertising design agency to serve the business and industrial communities of Kansas and Missouri. He studied art at Washburn University in Topeka.

The gallery is modern and well-designed. It is large and functionally attractive. Many volumes of art are shown in their best advantage in an atmosphere of light and comfort.

THE EXHIBITIONS show only the art of Kansas artists known best in the state and region. In my visit I found a

made possible by natural phenomena permitting the

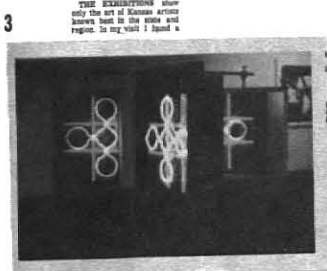


Kansas State Collegian

VOLUME 77

Oct. September 8, 1970

NUMBER 7



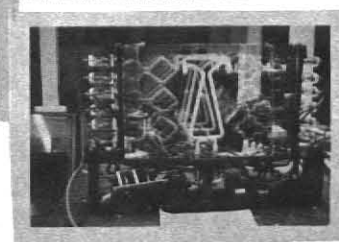
And it
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Hans said
I quit
diamonds
I am
"I
sady and
be it."
1969-1970
WGI home
is an
road
and work



decided to go ahead with the new system a girl guerrilla captured in an abortive attempt. Bandy to Alphonse as he said to Alphonse. Her new companion was shot dead.

PFLP ALAO demanded the release of its guerrillas jailed to trade in exchange for Israeli passengers on the two planes reported to number about 10.

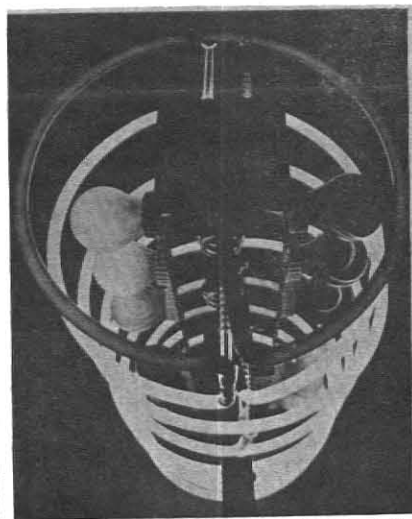
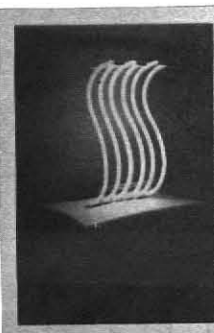
While the negotiations continued, the passengers and crew waited hungry and thirsty in the two glittering metal aircraft under a blistering Jordanian sun with a veritable army of armed guerrillas outside and bombs rigged on the planes' fuselages.



Zap!

A KINETIC LIGHT sculpture created by Topeka artist John Gorbett, part of the current oneman show in the Union art gallery, flashes its neon and argon tubes and blinks its colored lights.

— Photo by Nick Glasco



6

7

APPENDIX D

Selections of Primary Resources and
Photographs of Kinetic Light Sculpture

1. TICK-TACK-TOE
2. View of Gallery at Washburn University
3. BLACK AND WHITE LIGHT



FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Museum of Art

Eugene, Oregon

Toledo, Ohio
(enroute to New York City)
June 19, 1970

Dear John and Doris:

Ellen and I were delighted to receive your good letter of March 6 and its impressive clipping-enclosure. It awakened many fond memories of our close association with you both and your good family during those eight years back in the 'thirties when we were fellow enthusiasts in the cause of the arts in Topeka.

Yes, there is no question about it, John, you were already engaged in creating outstandingly effective assemblages, "constructivist" reliefs, when we first met you in our first year of teaching at Washburn College: 1932-33, and I jumped at the chance to have a one-man show of your works at Mulvane Art Museum; it must have come in the fall or winter of 1933-34. You were already doing well creatively as well as courageously, and I think you still are.

I am just retiring from my directorship of the University of Oregon Museum of Art, effective July 1, although I shall continue teaching full-time this coming school year. We are squeezing in a two-week trip East. Only half of the month's vacation with pay I am due for but will never get the rest of, due to my own bad planning! We are visiting our daughter, Marna, and her Dutch U. of Toledo Ph.D. Ed. teacher-husband, Jan Broekhoff, 5 mos. along in their expectant-parenthood. Tomorrow we go onto New York to visit in Mamaroneck, just N. of N.Y.C., our son, Richard, and his wife, Luisa, who have a daughter, Edith, whom we are, after 5 months of blooming growth, to meet for the first time. I have back to Eugene to start a catalogue of our permanent collection and get finished a - building our new retirement house on the Oregon coast at Delgashan. Come out on visit is there!

Cordially,

Thally (and Ellen) Hallinger

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- _____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, December 22, 1934. /n.c./ /n.p./.
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- _____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, February 9, 1935. /n.c./ /n.p./.
- _____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, February 9, 1935. /n.c./ /n.p./.
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- _____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, April 27, 1936. /n.c./ /n.p./.
- _____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, May 23, 1936, column 5, page 5.

Bolmar, Carl P. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, January 30, 1937, column 5, page 5.

_____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, May 29, 1937. /n.c./ /n.p./.

_____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, September 15, 1937. /n.c./ /n.p./.

_____. "Gleanings From the Field of Art," The Topeka State Journal, October 4, 1937, column 5-7. /n.p./.

Bolmar's column in the Journal provides an excellent source for the art activities in the area for the many years that he was art critic.

Brown, Richard L. Regular column in The Kansas City Star, December 6, 1964, column 7, page 4F.

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Greene, Peggy. Article, The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 1, 1970, column 1-3, page 6.

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Kansas City Journal Post. Article, January 24, 1937. /n.c./ /n.p./.

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Mauney, Melba. "Topeka Arts and Artists," The Topeka Daily Capital, /Topeka, Kansas/, December 23, 1934. /n.c./ /n.p./.

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Mauney's column in the Capital was a real service to the arts in the area and can be considered an authoritative source.

Newsflash, Professional Advertising Club of Topeka, Kansas,
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The Topeka Daily Capital, article, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 6,
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1963, column 3 and 4, page 22A.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, April 21, 1963,
column 4, page 4A.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, April 28, 1963,
column 4, /n.p./.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, October 11, 1964.
/n.c./ /n.p./.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, March 14, 1965.
/n.c./ /n.p./.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, March 18, 1967,
column 5, page 15.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, April 25, 1965,
page 23A. /n.c./.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 1, 1965.
/n.c./ /n.p./.

The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 2, 1965,
column 6 and 7, page 14A.

- The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 1, 1965,
page 23A. /n.c./.
- The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, May 9, 1965, /n.p./.
- The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, January 22, 1967.
/n.c./ /n.p./.
- The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, November 5, 1967,
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- The Topeka Capital-Journal, "30 Years Ago," /Topeka, Kansas/,
September 4, 1970. /n.c./ /n.p./.
- The Topeka Capital-Journal, Midway Magazine, /Topeka, Kansas/,
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- The Topeka Capital-Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, January 24, 1971,
page 12. /n.c./.
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- The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 2, 1935.
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- The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, February 15, 1963,
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sculpture.
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- The Topeka State Journal, /Topeka, Kansas/, March 18, 1967,
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- The Salina Journal, Feature article, /Salina, Kansas/, September 11,
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- Sculp Scoop, Sculpture Club Bulletin, University of Kansas,
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Simoni, John P. Wichita State University Professor of Art,
Wichita Eagle and Beacon Magazine, /Wichita, Kansas/,
 November 9, 1969, page 9C. /n.c./.

Treanor, Aline Jean. Feature article in The Oklahoma City
 Advertiser, October 15, 1964, column 6-8, page 7.

This article was sent to Gorbett by Bernard Frazer who
 happened to see it. It included comments about a number of
 the works in the 1964 Southwestern Artists Exhibition then
 showing in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Washburn Review, The, of Washburn University /Topeka, Kansas/,
 feature article, May 8, 1963, column 1-3, page 7, Vol. LXXIX,
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Washburn Review, The, of Washburn University /Topeka, Kansas/,
 article, February 25, 1970, column 1-3, page 3.

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/n.c./ /n.p./.

Programs and Invitations

Program of "Topeka Artist's Exhibition," Mulvane Art Museum,
 Topeka, Kansas, December 16, 1931 to January 3, 1932.

Program of "Midwestern Artist's Exhibition," The Kansas City Art
 Institute, 4415 Warwick Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri,
 February 5-28, 1933.

Program of the "Eighth Annual Kansas Artists' Exhibit, Topeka Art
 Guild /Topeka, Kansas/, March 1933.

"Midwestern Artist's Exhibition" Catalogue, Kansas City Art
 Institute, Kansas City, Missouri, March 1, 1937. /n.c./
/n.p./. /Photograph of BRICK YARD/.

Program of Municipal Art Committee, "Second National Exhibition
 of American Art, City of New York, New York, June 16 - July 31,
 1937.

Dedication Program, Central Congregational Church, Topeka, Kansas,
 January 5-12, 1958.

Program, "35th Annual Kansas Artist's Exhibit," Topeka Art Guild,
Spring 1958.

Program, "16th Annual Missouri Valley Exhibition of Oil Painting,"
Mulvane Art Museum, Topeka, Kansas, November 20 to December 9,
1962.

Program of the Topeka Art Guild Exhibition by John Gorbett,
February 10-28, 1963, Topeka High School Gallery, Topeka, Kansas.

Documentation, "Kansas Artist's Annual Exhibition 1963," April 1963.

Program, "Exhibition of Paintings by Professional Watercolorists,"
(Topeka Area), Topeka, Kansas, January 19 - February 9, 1964.

Program, "41st Kansas Artists Exhibition," Topeka High School
Gallery, Topeka, Kansas, March 8-22, 1964.

Program and Invitation, "Sixth Annual Exhibition of Southwestern
American Art," Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,
September 26 - November 1, 1964.

Program, Central Congregational Church Art Show, Topeka, Kansas,
November 18, 1964.

Invitation, Pembroke Country Day School, White Hall, Kansas City,
December 9, 1964.

Program and Invitation, Baker University, Baker Student Union,
Emporia, Kansas, April 23 to May 23, 1965.

Invitation, Studio Gallery Frame Shop, 1511 Huntoon, Topeka,
Kansas, May 1-31, 1965.

Program, Asbury Hospital Auxiliary Fashion Show at Fine Arts
Building, Marymount College, Salina, Kansas, September 1966.

Notice of Show of Portraits, Crosby Brothers Store, Kansas Avenue,
Topeka, Kansas, December 3, 1966.

Invitation, J. Cranston Heintzelman, Director, Kansas Federation of
Art, "Oil Paintings by Mid-West Artists", January 5, 1967.

Program, Topeka Art Guild Show, Topeka, Kansas, January 20 to
February 1, 1967.

Program for One-Man Show, Topeka Art Guild, Topeka, Kansas,
January 22 - February 15, 1967.

Program, "44th Annual Kansas Artist's Exhibition," Topeka Art Guild, Topeka, Kansas, March 19, 1969.

Program, Mulvane Art Center, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, February - March 1, 1970.

Program, "John Gorbett Exhibition," Union Art Gallery, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, September 6 - 20, 1970.

Program and Invitation, College Art Gallery, Humanities Building, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, November 8, 1970.

JOHN D. GORBUTT, JR., A STUDY OF A KANSAS
ARTIST, 1931 UNTIL 1971

by

JEANNE GORBUTT SALLEE

B. F. A., University of Kansas, 1948

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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The purpose of John D. Gorbutt, Jr., A Study of a Kansas Artist, 1931 Until 1971, historical in nature, was to show that there was active participation in the arts in Kansas prior to 1971. The purpose was accomplished through the study of one artist's productivity in the fine arts field up to that time. The artist, John D. Gorbutt, Jr., is still living and producing art work at the time of the close of this study. Another phase of his life, his advertising and industrial design, were not included as a part of this study.

The four major concerns investigated were:

1. A compilation of biographical background from primary resources revealed that through easy access to mass media, books, individuals, exhibitions of great art and materials an artist in the mid-west had available to him art from the world over.
2. Through personal interview and perusal of his works of art in existence it was determined that Gorbutt's personal philosophy concerning his artistic productivity is one which recognizes the need for flexibility and experimentation.
3. Through a review of his periods of work, and photographs of and interviews about some of his works of art it was demonstrated that he has worked and experimented with a wide variety of media.
4. The significant periods and pieces of Gorbutt's work up to 1971 became easily discernible by date of production, style and materials used. It was revealed that through all the periods there was a constant concern for light in all its aspects.

A study about art and an artist's work seemed to be meaningless without providing visibility of the art works in question. Therefore, photographs of Gorbutt's creations, both in black and white and in color, are included in the study.

It is suggested that further studies of Gorbutt's advertising and industrial design and his work after 1971 could prove to be of value because at this writing he seems to be entering a new period of Flinthills studies, a return to realism.