

Mosaic 1960

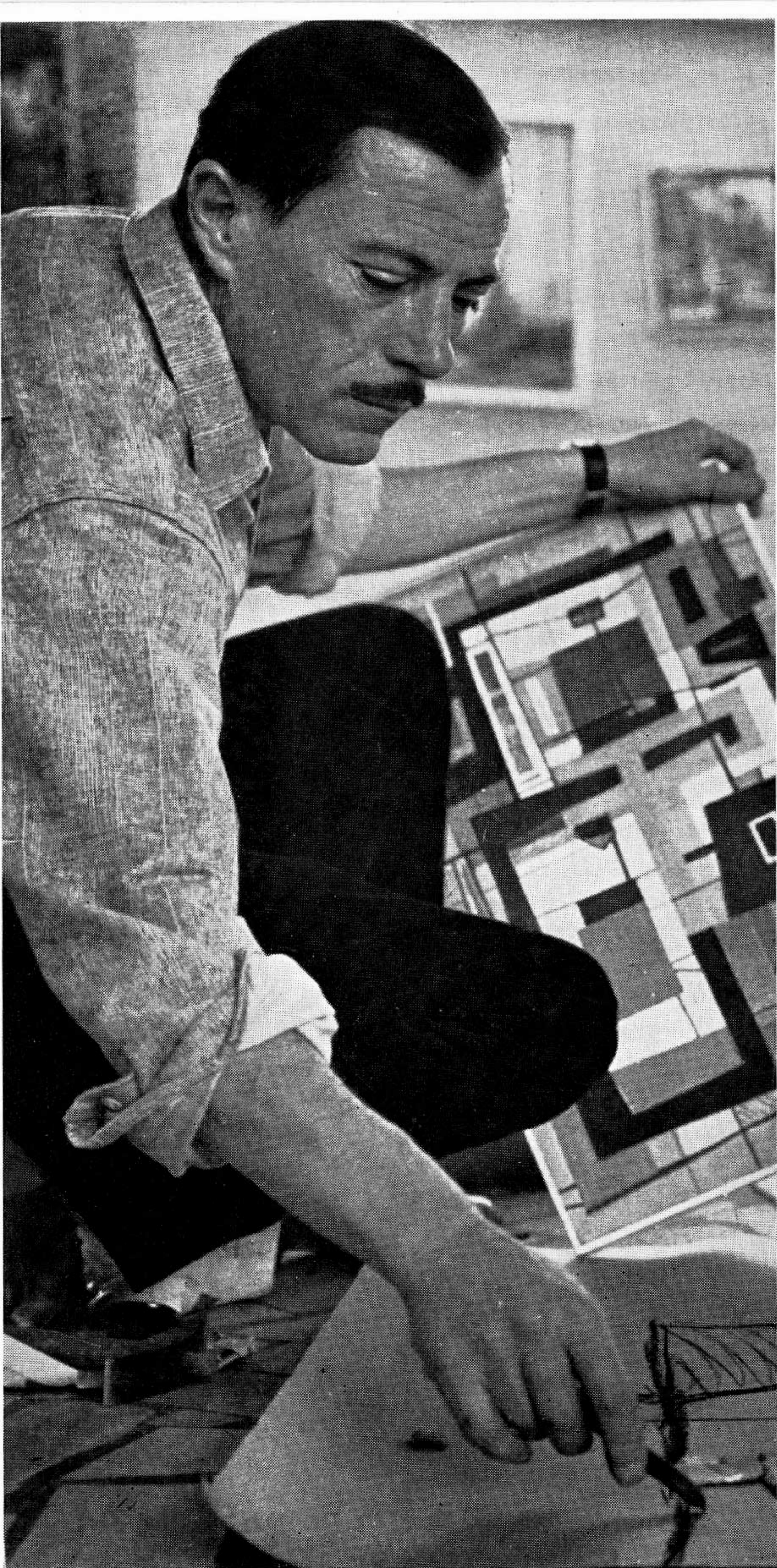
QUEENS HALL
ART GALLERY

Cor. Plein and Claim Sts.
Johannesburg Tel. 23-0822



ARMANDO BALDINELLI

B38



Armando Baldinelli was born in Ancona, Italy, and received his preliminary education there. In 1925 he proceeded to Rome, where he studied at the Accademia Belle Arti until 1931. Thereafter he went to Modena Scuola Superiore d'Arte, and received the Degree of Maestro d'Arte. At the same time he studied as an external student of the Bologna Liceo Artistico. Military training interfered with his studies to some extent. Nevertheless he was able to get under way with his profession and soon revealed himself as one of the promising younger men. An invitation to exhibit at the Biennale when still a young man confirmed his intention to devote his life to a career as a professional artist. He travelled in Europe extensively and was greatly stimulated by what he saw. The acquisition of his works by European galleries and private collectors will be referred to later. In 1949 the Italian Ministry of Public Education made him an award in appreciation of his artistic activities. One of the most picturesque prizes which he won in Italy, was the Suzzara Prize of 1950, a prize awarded by an Italian Agricultural Organisation, to stimulate interest in the Arts amongst people engaged in agriculture. The prizes were quite picturesque. First Prize was a calf, the Second a horse, and the Third a rowing boat.

In 1953 Baldinelli visited South Africa. He found the country very agreeable and decided to make it his home. He received his first commission, a mosaic in the foyer of the Capitol Cinema, Bloemfontein. A succession of commissions followed. A list of these is also included. From a perusal of it, it is clear that Baldinelli has received a steady flow of work, which would indicate that his artistic skill has been appreciated in this country. Baldinelli lives in Johannesburg. The indications are that he will continue to take a prominent place in South Africa's artistic life.

Armando Baldinelli spent his youth as an artist in Italy between 1925 and 1953. After studying Art in Rome, Modena and Bologna, he acquired a variety of skills which included the execution of woodcuts, engravings, frescoes and mosaics. His advancement was rapid, and between 1936 and 1950 examples of his work appeared in many important Exhibitions in Europe. These were of a national or group character. Other Exhibitions comprised one-man shows held in many Italian towns. As he matured, Baldinelli's works were acquired for public and private collections. Amongst the former it is interesting to note that he is represented in galleries in London, Rome, Florence, Venice and in many other cities. Some have also found their way into private collections in Brazil, Mexico, Cuba and Peru. A feature of his career in Italy is the wide experience he acquired executing mosaics and frescoes. He also worked in Sicily.

In 1953 when he decided to settle in South Africa, Baldinelli was a mature artist with a comprehensive knowledge of the technical basis of his profession. His rapid assimilation into a new milieu is an interesting example of the manner in which valuable skills acquired in one country enrich another. Shortly after his arrival a few architects and a number of interested people recognised Baldinelli as a gifted and experienced artist. Commissions for mosaics for buildings were entrusted to him. The result is that Baldinelli has had very little time to devote to the preparation of exhibitions. The present occasion is the first comprehensive presentation of his work in Johannesburg.

Baldinelli's arrival in South Africa coincided with a moment in the development of contemporary architecture when architects were exploring the possibilities of decorating their buildings in a manner which would be relevant and integral with their design and construction. The use of mosaic, a medium with a great tradition in ancient Rome and Byzantium had possibilities, for it is durable, offers an extensive colour range, resists fading, and when applied becomes part of the fabric. Baldinelli's technical mastery of mosaic, learnt at the ancient sources of this art, proved to be of inestimable value locally. Moreover, his industry, and ability to co-ordinate his work with the requirements of building contracts with their time limits, ensured a steady flow of commissions. I have a vivid recollection of the mosaic he prepared for the main entrance facade and wall above the High Altar of the

Church of the Holy Trinity in Durban. These large finely executed mosaics merge into the overall architectural character of the building very well indeed. They add brilliance to a fine conception.

During the past seven years Baldinelli has concentrated on mosaics and paintings. These activities have absorbed his attention almost exclusively. The Exhibition displays the results. A striking feature of his latest manner in painting is its complete freedom of expression. The freedom with which Baldinelli paints at present is no doubt a welcome release from the painstaking work of assembling mosaics. His paintings reflect trends which have been evident in many countries for some time.

It is not possible to analyse Baldinelli's approach to his art in a short introduction of this nature. Many of his mosaics reveal an individual interpretation of cubism. He employs a fragmented array of planes. Their directions and rhythms are deployed to concentrate interest where required, and also serve to establish the essentially two-dimensional character of the designs which thus integrate with their architectural settings. Baldinelli's own comments are of interest. He says: "Mosaic taught me to appreciate the genuine purity of colour which by its very presence expresses form and finds its place in a work in a manner which allows of no substitute. Mosaic, and equally so fresco and woodcut, has furthermore clarified a fundamental truth for me, namely, the inconvertibility of the means of expression; in other words, the laws of one technique have no validity in another; an oil cannot be transferred into fresco; each means of artistic expression is thus conditioned and limited by its technique". Baldinelli succeeds in expressing his media admirably.

Of his paintings, he says, "Form and colour are established in their indivisible existence, free to be alone without reference to the familiar world; within their limits, be they narrow or broad, they are not imitative".

In concluding this introduction, I believe that during the few years he has lived in the Union, Armando Baldinelli has earned a place in the front rank of South African artists. His special contribution lies in the development of mosaic as a living and vital medium. Baldinelli's technical mastery of it has revealed its potentialities to a wide and appreciative circle of interested people. His work is always characterised by a feeling of good taste and elegance.

PROFESSOR JOHN FASSLER

LIST OF THE MORE IMPORTANT EXHIBITIONS

BIENNALE OF VENICE

(By invitation from 1933 to 1950).

At the XXI Exhibition, won the Competition for a fresco which was executed in the Festival Hall of the Biennale. The work was bought by the Government and was later placed in the Naval Academy of Venice.

QUADRIENNALE ROME

Participated in the first, second and fourth Exhibitions. During the 1937 Exhibition his work "Diana" was purchased by the Government Commission and placed in the Gallery of Modern Arts, Rome.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF SACRED ART

Held at Rome in 1934.

ART EXHIBITION AT MARSEILLES

Held at Marseilles in 1934, was invited to participate by the Biennale Authorities.

EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN ART

Held at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, 1935.

EXHIBITIONS OF ENGRAVINGS

Organised by the Biennale of Venice and held in a number of European Capital Cities.

XIX BIENNALE AT VENICE

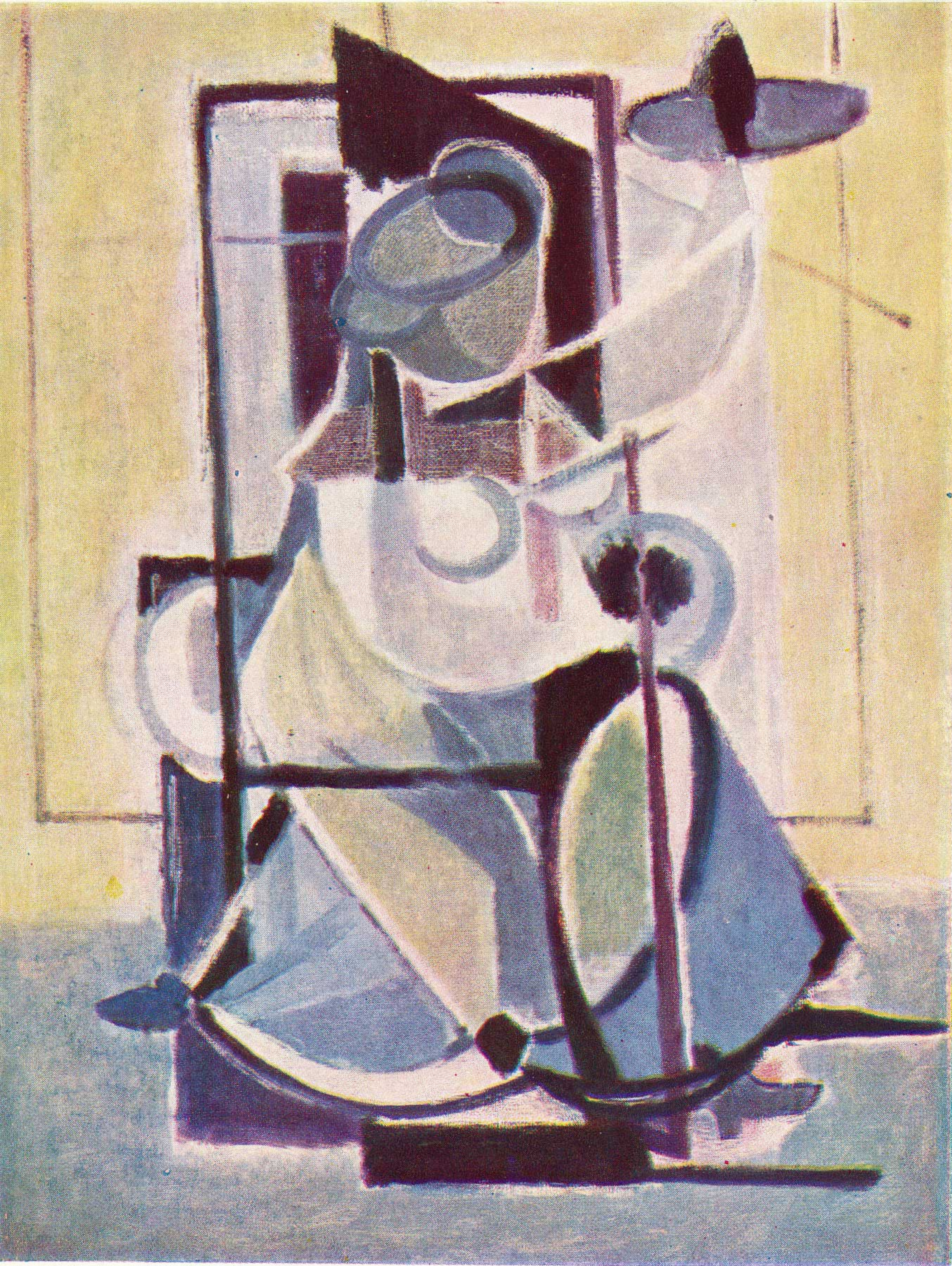
A Government Commission purchased his work "Profughi" for the National Modern Art Gallery, Rome.

XXV BIENNALE AT VENICE

Was awarded one of the prizes awarded by Canada through "Unesco" for a work entitled "Ritmi di danza".



Painting 1960



"Dancer" - Painting 1947

LIST OF MORE IMPORTANT WORKS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS ITALY 1940-1953

Fresco in St. Vincent College, Bologna, 1940.

Mosaic in Bologna Cemetery, 1945.

Large mosaic in the Church of St. Benedict in the Via Appia Nuova, Rome, 1942.

Mosaic "The Resurrection of Christ", in the Cemetery at Assisi, 1948.

Frescoed surfaces of Apse and Dome in Noto Cathedral Syracuse, 1951-1952.

Frescoes in the Sanctuary and Apse of the Church of St. Anthony in Reggio Calabria 1952.

Fresco at the Naval Academy of Venice from the XXI Biennale.

SOUTH AFRICA 1953-1960

Mosaic in the Foyer of the Capitol Cinema, Bloemfontein, 1954.

Mosaic Panel at Rhodan School, 1954-1955.

Fresco in the Twentieth Century Cinema, Port Elizabeth, 1955.

Eight Mosaics in the Catholic Seminary in Pretoria, 1956.

Fresco at the entrance to Rapallo Building, Johannesburg, 1956.

Mosaics on Main Facade and above Altar, Holy Trinity Church, Durban, 1957.

Mosaic in Barclay's Bank, Pretoria, 1957.

Mosaic in the Register Building, Pretoria, 1957.

Mosaic at the Military Academy, Saldanha Bay, 1959.

Two large mosaics in the Maryvale Church, Johannesburg, one above the High Altar, and another forming the greater part of the facade. On the back wall of the interior is also a large fresco, 1959-1960.

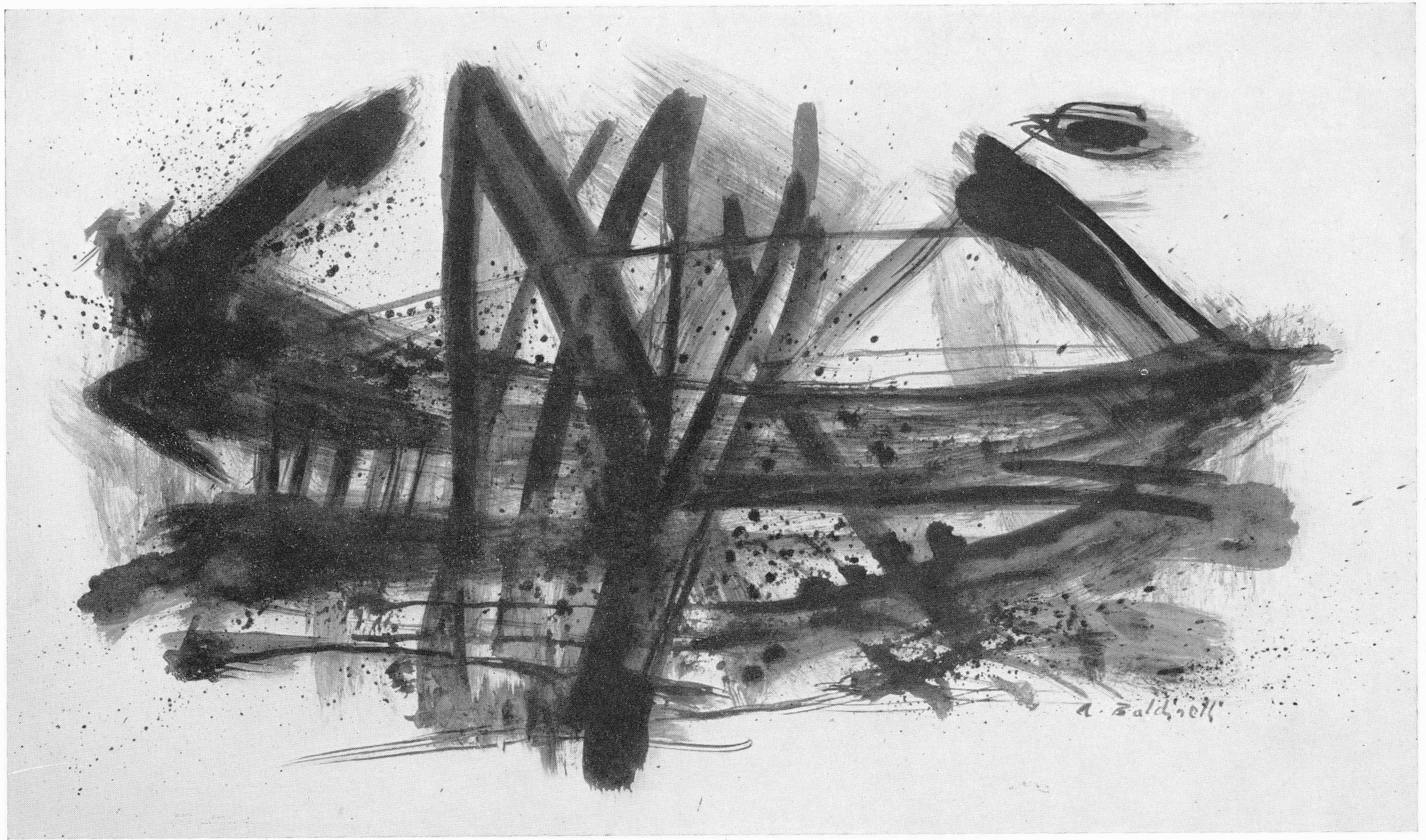
Mosaic in the Government Pavilion, Milner Park, Johannesburg, 1959.

Three small mosaics in St. David's Church, Pietermaritzburg, 1960.

Mosaic in the Foyer of the Addington Hospital in Durban, 1960.

WORKS IN PREPARATION

Two Mosaics for the Provincial Headquarters Building at Pretoria, 1960.



Drawing 1960

*U word vriendelik uitgenooi na die opening van 'n uitstalling
van skilderye, mosaikwerk en tekeninge deur*

*You are cordially invited to the opening of an Exhibition of
paintings, mosaics and drawings by*

ARMANDO BALDINELLI

Die uitstalling sal deur

The exhibition will be opened by

PROFESSOR JOHN FASSLER

Hoof van die Departement van Argitektuur en Rektor van die Fakulteit van die Universiteit

Head of the Department of Architecture and Dean of the Faculty at the University

op Dinsdag, 15 November, 1960, om 8 n.m.

at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 15th November, 1960.

*Die kunstenaar sal in 'n rolprent "Faces of Stone" die tegniek
en ontwerp van sy mosaikwerk illustreer op 22 November om
8.15 n.m.*

*A film entitled "Faces of Stone" illustrating the technique of
designing and executing his mosaics, will be shown in the Gallery
on Tuesday, 22nd November, 1960, at 8.15 p.m.*

*Die Gallery is oop van 9.00 v.m. tot 11.30 n.m. Maandag tot
Donderdag. Gesluit gedurende die naweek vanaf Vrydag 4.30 n.m.*

*The hours of the Gallery are from 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. Monday
to Thursday. Closed over the week-end from Friday 4.30 p.m.*

Vry Parkering

Free Parking