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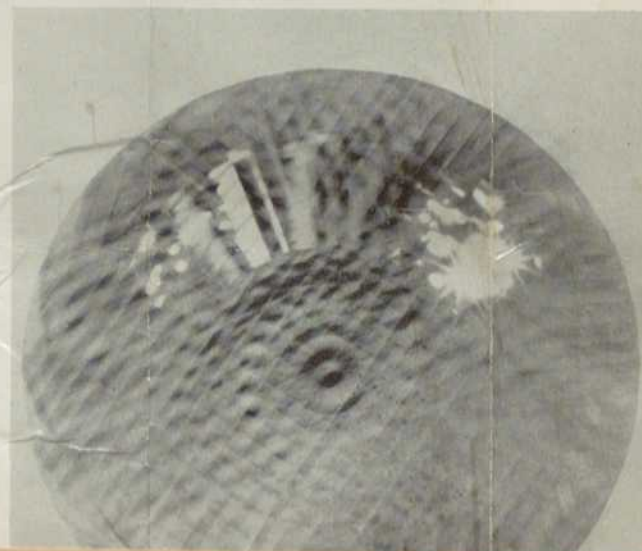
# The 4th Biennale of Paris

by Georges Orley

In its fourth manifestation, the Biennale de Paris justifies its existence as much for its negative qualities as its positive achievements. Fifty-four countries participate in the emission of paintings, drawings, sculpture, prints and *travaux d'equipe*, the last-named being one of the most successful categories established since the inception. This year the foreign award for group projects went to Great Britain, earned jointly by students of the Royal College of Art, London, and Newcastle University.

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Given the impossibility of a common level of achievement in 14 countries not to say 54, there does appear a spreading infection of non-exclusive imagery that overall suggests a depressing proliferation of new figuration stemming it seems from adaptation of partly-digested gleanings of Francis Bacon, Dubuffet, Goya and Roy Lichtenstein in varying degrees. Painting in its plastic purity has lost, for most young artists on the evidence here produced, a great deal of its material attraction. Colour has become distorted or overlaid



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with drawing or used in tints that have commercial associations or is applied as it comes in paper collages. The result generally is a flatness and a degree of stillness in contrasts. Exceptions are Yvan Theys of Belgium who has painted a large canvas described as a tryptique after the central panel of the Holy Lamb by Jan van Eyck in the Church of St. Bavon, Ghent. In its large abstracted masses of colour it gives a moving effect that divorces it from the original. Kimmo Kaivanto of Finland in large informal oils carries the presence of winter through dark hatchings that become the shadows of leafless trees.

Figures having clean cut profiles with no kinship to