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ART

H-BOMB  
ART IS  
SUCH A  
MISERY

From PIERRE JEANNERAT

PARIS, Sunday

THE world really is in a mess, judging from the third Paris Biennale which has just opened its doors in the Paris Museum of Modern Art.

This is a huge show window placed every two years at the disposal of the world's young artists, aged between 20 and 35.

They have seized the opportunity with both hands, crowding vast galleries with thousands of works from 60 countries.

I emerged thoroughly depressed. Not because of an absence of skill, imagination and audacity, on the contrary.

But a Martian landing straight in the exhibition from his planet could believe that our earth is staggering out of the shambles of an H-bomb war.

A feature of the Biennale is a set of team efforts by burgeoning architects, painters and sculptors, occasionally assisted by musicians and poets.

Wind-tunnel

One of these set-pieces, from Italy, looks like the wrecked wind-tunnel of an aircraft research station, in it lies a life-size bronze of a skinned corpse and two life-size bronze orphans clinging together.

A second, French, presents the appearance of a radar post, its antennae still moving jerkily, with hisses, shrieks and the cries of frightened birds coming from somewhere near.

A third, also French, is gruesomely called the Slaughterhouse and is filled with human bodies.

Sculpture from the United States, Morocco, Germany, Canada and elsewhere consists of lumps of metal and wood, odds and ends of broken machinery and smashed stonework that seem to be the result of particularly violent explosions.

There is too much vitality for me to speak of a death-wish, but I feel the presence of a kind of bomb-wish.

It is as though the generation that has not known, or hardly known, World War II, but has grown under the threat of the bomb, were completely unbalanced by this threat.

Of course, one meets with exceptions. Britain's contribution of pop art, pictures by Peter Blake, Derek Boshier, David Hockney, Allen Jones and Peter Phillips, reflecting the atmosphere of juke-box arcades, introduces an amusing note.

L'Art de la bombe H. est une misère.

Si un martien venu de ~~sa~~ planète atterrissait au milieu de cette exposition il croirait que notre monde surgit des ruines et des débris causés par une guerre avec la bombe H.

L'Italie présente une sorte de tunnel où des sculptures en bronze représentent une bombe déchargée et deux orphelins à l'achèvement ensemble.

La France montre l'apparence d'un radar avec une antenne, des sifflements, et des cris d'oiseaux Terrifiés. Aussi l'Abattoir, qui contient des corps humains.

La sculpture des E. Unis, Maroc, Allemagne et Canada consiste dans des morceaux de métal et de bois, de bronze et mécanismes qui semblent être le résultat d'une explosion violente.

Il semble que cette génération qui n'a pas connu, on s'oppose la guerre mondiale est né sous le menaç d'une bombe, menace qui a désigné libre les esprits.

Il y a des exceptions: la contribution de la Grande-Bretagne et du "pop art" (Blake, Boshier, Hockney, Jones, Phillips) introduit une note amusante.