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Archives of American Art

Celebrating 175: Richard Artschwager, Clippings, 1965-1969

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Matta brought the high glamour and prestige of French art to the United States, unquestionably influencing such young American painters as Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning and William Baziotes. Castelli was part of the circle- a collector and friend of the artists- whose hub was Peggy Guggenheim and her New York gallery, Art of This Century. Most of these artists did not begin to make any real money until the mid 1950's. They remember Castelli's apartment fondly for its wealth of bourgeois comforts. He remembers the time as one of waste and failure for himself. The fact that he was then a partner in a knit-goods business, which his father-in-law set up for him when he came out of the army, in 1945, is a source of profound embarrassment to him. I noted the fluster that came over him when questioned about his old business, and suggested that he might be ashamed to have been "in trade." "Well, yes, that partly." He smiled, with a nervous jiggling of the head. "But what a waste of time. That embarrasses me. I hate to think of how I squandered those years. After all, I didn't arrive at my vocation until I was almost fifty. That is shameful. I guess you might classify me as a playboy,



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CARIBBEAN CRUISES
From Boston

Sept. 21	Oct. 6	Oct. 14	Oct. 23	Oct. 29
7-days	7-days	9-days	5-days	12-days
\$250 up	\$250 up	\$325 up	\$180 up	\$430 up

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SOUTH AMERICA CRUISES
31 days from New York

June 25	Aug. 13	Sept. 3	Oct. 8	Nov. 19
31-days	31-days	31-days	31-days	31-days
\$930 up	\$930 up	\$930 up	\$930 up	\$930 up

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unpleasant as that sounds. My father sent me away from Trieste to get the playboy in me out of the system. Ileana's family was very wealthy. It made things much too easy, and other things too hard." One thing it made easier was collecting. As a collector in New York during those "wasted" years, he was considered quick and sure of eye, but timid about taking the ultimate step. One friend of de Kooning's recalls an episode in 1953, when he and de Kooning were looking at the artist's most recent picture at his studio. Castelli entered, instantly admired the painting and said he would buy it for \$3,000. This called for a celebration, according to the friend, so de Kooning brought out a bottle and they proceeded to drink. When Castelli left, de Kooning said, "He won't buy it." He didn't. A year or so later, the Metropolitan Museum of Art bought the painting for \$7,000. It is now worth six or seven times that. When asked about this incident, Castelli raised his eyebrow ironically. "Timid? Of course. I didn't have the money. I was too enthusiastic for my means." Nevertheless, during those years, he and his wife built a substantial and handsome collection of paintings. When, in 1957, the knit-goods business defunct he was about to "jump off the bridge" for want of vocation and a source of income, he decided to deal in paintings. "But I did not sell off my wall" he says, trying to be clearly understood on matters of pride. "The whole idea of selling my paintings off my apartment walls is a very unpleasant idea to me. It is like exposing one's life to the public. Or making something..."
Continued on Page 99

[[5 images]]

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