



Review

Peter Reginato sculptures

By MIMI CROSSLEY
Post Art Writer

Peter Reginato's new pieces of sculpture showing at the Watson/De Nagy Gallery appear as relaxed and collapsible as Turkish puzzle rings. Yet each of the tall — slightly larger than human size — works is spare, lean and necessary, with all non-essential parts honed away.

This show for the Dallas-born, Manhattan-based sculptor is the culmination of 10 years of working and exhibiting, announcing a new place in his maturing style as well as an emerging new place for younger American sculptors.

REGINATO, rightly considered one of the important artists developing in this decade, has gone from containing space within closed abstract frames — as in "High Plains Drifter," the large outdoor work placed at One Allen Center in downtown Houston as a result of a 1972 national competition — to open fretwork constructions with tubing, pedestals and platforms in his last few shows.

Like other innovative sculptors today — Michael Steiner, for one — Reginato has gone back past the Abstract Expressionist sculptors to Cubism for his ideas,

aligning himself with Picasso, Gonzales and the looming presence of David Smith.

Those ideas, however, have seemed equally a barrier for sculptors in the past ten years — Smith's geometric, welded, totemic pieces like human figures reduced to their essentials were thought to the ultimate conclusion of the Cubist ideal, and after his death in the early '60s, contemporary sculpture gave way to the anti-heroic statements of the Minimalists: barely altered construction materials as sculpture rising off the floor but a few inches, artist-designed but sent-out-for-fabrication boxes.

AND literally in the air were other new ideas of sculpture as a kind of additive, three-dimensional drawing extending itself into open space, experiments launched by Charles Ginnever, works executed by Mark di Suvero as pure drawing, endlessly additive, jazz-like pieces by Anthony Caro.

Reginato has always been concerned with two primary formal ideas in sculpture — reduced, elemental forms in free-hand style resembling a leaf, a horseshoe, a zigzag, a corral; and defining three-dimensional space by mark-making. Reginato's own drawing in space with welded steel tries to combine

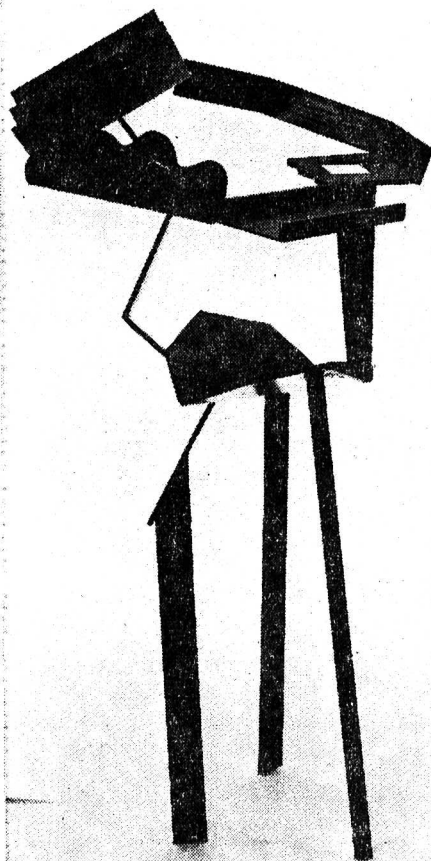
freedom of the open gesture with the enclosure of space.

In the new series, Reginato announces a move away from the Minimalist ideas that have dominated younger sculptors by getting his works up in the air and off the floor, removing platforms and large pedestal stages.

FOR the first time, he takes on the ghost of David Smith by building his own figure-like vertical works, "Waiting, Wandering Woman," "Veronica Lake," and the smallest of the six works, "Matthew at Three," barely 42 inches high. Yet unlike Smith, Reginato keeps his works airy, open and slightly mysterious.

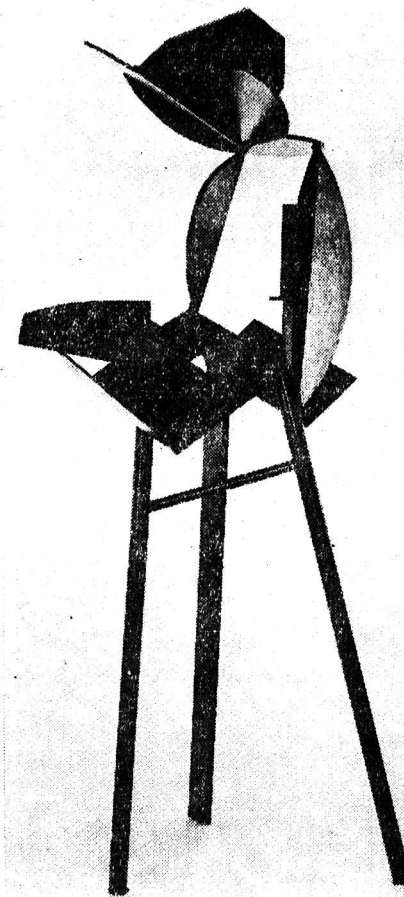
Though each is a three-legged construction, Reginato plays with weight-bearing points, hiding his connections in abutments and angles. He creates punched-out squares next to scalloped shapes like variations on a Cubist theme.

Many of the shapes, in fact, seem to relate more to the early works of Fernand Leger, or the cutouts of Henri Matisse, with the same bare hint of Art Deco, at least in "Veronica Lake." Yet each of the highly accomplished works is more important than style. The exhibition will be up through Feb. 1.



Peter Reginato's 'Anjin'

1978



'Blue Ubangi'