

BROADWAY 1602

XANTI SCHAWINSKY

BROADWAY 1602

1181 BROADWAY FLOOR 3
NEW YORK NY 10001
T +1 212 481 0362

gallery@broadway1602.com
www.broadway1602.com
www.facebook.com/broadway1602

Front Cover:
Eclipse (2834), c. 1960
Airbrush on canvas
70 x 49 inches (179.75 x 124.5 cm)

BROADWAY 1602

- EVELYNE AXELL
- EXPERIMENTS IN ART AND
TECHNOLOGY (E.A.T.) ARCHIVE
- SYLVIA PALACIOS WHITMAN
- MARK ALEXANDER
- BABETTE MANGOLTE
- PAUL P.
- PENNY SLINGER
- ROSEMARIE CASTORO
- MARGARETE JAKSCHIK
- ANNA MOLSKA
- XANTI SCHAWINSKY
- LENORA DE BARROS
- GINA PANE
- LYDIA OKUMURA
- BARBRO ÖSTLIHN
- LAURA COTTINGHAM

XANTI SCHAWINSKY

Flowing Architecture, 1927
Brush and airbrush on cardboard and paper
20 x 14 inches (50.8 x 36 cm)



Xanti Schawinsky at the Bauhaus, c. 1924

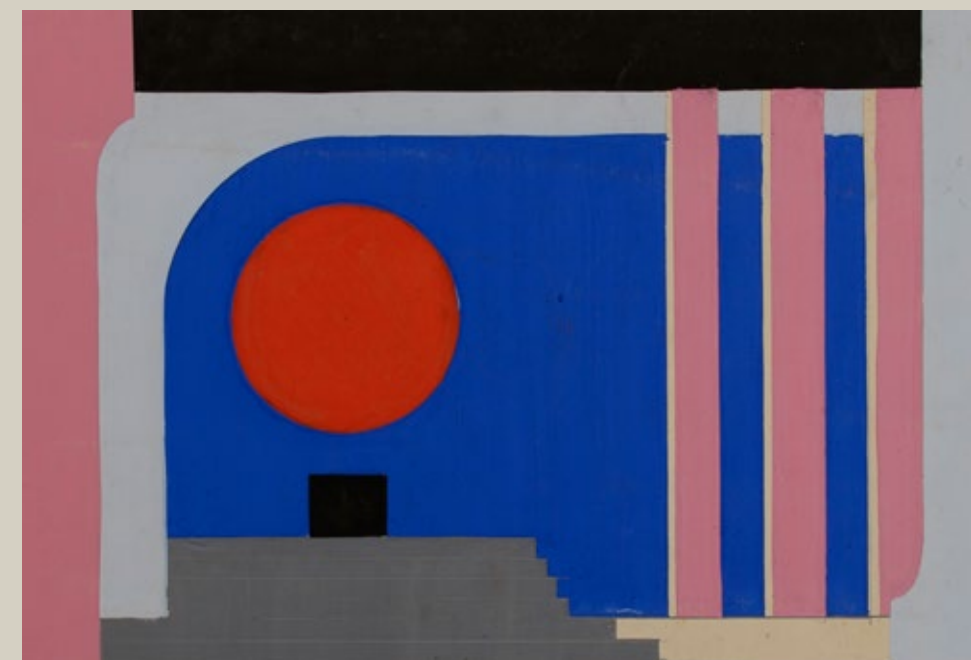
Since 2012 a majority of the still existing oeuvre returned to the family of the artist. The newly founded Estate of Xanti Schawinsky represents all phases of the artist's practice from the 1920s to the 1970s as well as an extensive archive vividly documenting the Bauhaus years and beyond in the form of correspondence and manuscripts. The Estate and its Curator Anke Kempkes of BROADWAY 1602 aims to give a new focus on reintroducing Xanti Schawinsky's work to an international contemporary audience. As a result of the new curatorial engagement with Schawinsky's oeuvre retrospective exhibitions are currently being held worldwide in prominent museums contexts.

I am the Ghost that haunts the Bauhaus....

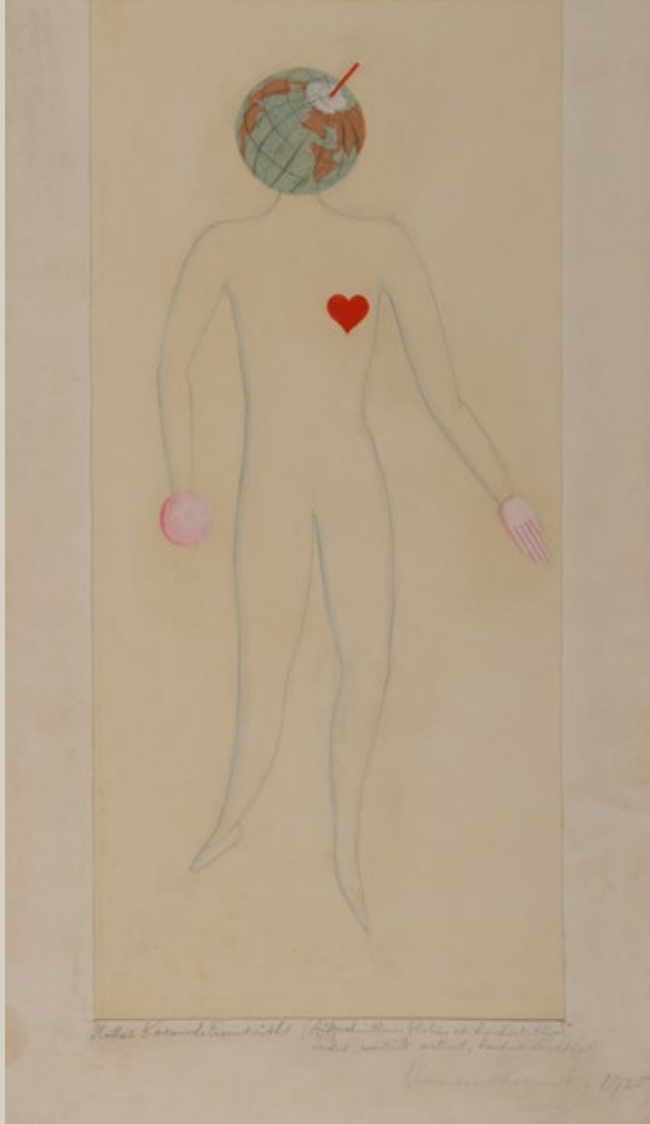
The rediscovered oeuvre of first generation Bauhaus artist Xanti Schawinsky offers to the contemporary art world a genuine reservoir of aesthetic memory of the 20th century avant-garde. Schawinsky's highly original oeuvre covers a whole domain of genres and media that is very characteristic for the interdisciplinary approach of the Bauhaus school: his prolific practice spans from paintings to drawings, from experimental photography to stage design, from jazz music and complex theater work to exhibition design, commercial graphic and product design.

Schawinsky was one of the most protean characters at the Bauhaus. He initiated and inspired many activities at the Bauhaus with a verve that revealed him as a true performer, a modernist dandy and a Bauhaus protagonist par excellence. Schawinsky's work communicates today still across generations and his artistic vision opens up a direct dialogue with a contemporary aesthetic sensibility.

Due to limited accessibility to the oeuvre in the past two decades, the last retrospective of Xanti Schawinsky took place in 1986 at the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin. In 2010-11 a selection of his 1940s drawings and paintings were newly exhibited in the contemporary art milieu in New York (at BROADWAY 1602) and London.



Stage Set Design
Hebbel: Herodes + Mariannchen, 1926
Mixed media, watercolor and pencil on paper
11 x 12 inches (29 x 32 cm)



Clockwise, From Top Left:
Motto: Kosmische Exzentrizität, 1925
 Mixed media, pencil and paint
 22 x 11.75 inches (58 x 30 cm)

Motto: Sachte Neulichkeit, 1925
 Mixed media, pencil and paint
 20 x 9 inches (51.6 x 23.8 cm)

Female Students at Bauhaus Party, 1928
 Vintage black and white photograph
 11 x 14 ½ inches (29 x 38 cm)

Opposite Page:
Untitled (XS 489), 1925
 Mixed media, collaged photograph,
 watercolor, and pencil
 19 x 25 inches (50 x 65 cm)

BAUHAUS 1924 - 1933

Born in 1904 in Switzerland, to a Jewish family of Polish decent, Alexander “Xanti” Schawinsky enrolled at the Bauhaus in 1924 where he studied with Walter Gropius, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Josef Albers, Oskar Schlemmer and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Schawinsky had a significant presence at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau. He was particularly active in the theater department and strongly inspired by Schlemmer, whose position as teacher he took on and developed further. Photos from the early years of the Bauhaus show Schawinsky as a dynamic personality in many of its experimental extra-curricular activities. Among them was the influential Bauhaus Jazz Band where Schawinsky introduced his *Step Dance versus Step Machine* style of mechanical music and dance to pounding rhythms coupled with dramatic lighting effects and performance elements.

Theater became the very core of Schawinsky’s aesthetic universe throughout his life. Schawinsky’s works of the early Bauhaus years are paintings, sketches and photographs illustrating his innovative theater plays, such as *Circus*, *Olga Olga*, *Tiller Girls* and *Feminine Repetitionen*. Some photographs show the artist as performer in fantastic costumes.



At the Bauhaus Schawinsky began developing his ground-breaking concept of *Spectodrama*.

Spectodrama represented an early idea of total theater where all aspects of the stage become independent agents. Schawinsky continued the work on *Spectodrama* at the Black Mountain College in the United States after his immigration, and he revisited this work in the 1960s and 70s in Europe. The original concepts and scripts are located in the archive of the Estate of Xanti Schawinsky in Zurich, as well as an extended body of work of stage photographs and sketches.

Schawinsky's multifaceted role at the Bauhaus was documented in the original 1938 Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, organized with the help of Herbert Bayer, fellow Bauhaus student and teacher, and Walter Gropius, founder and director of the famed 20th century school. This pivotal show of MoMA's early days included a prominent group of Schawinsky's theater and architecture paintings, his experimental photography, innovative graphic designs, ultra modern costume, set and exhibition designs, and his avant-garde theater and music work.

Kombinations-Kulissen (Olga-Olga)
aufgeführt in Dessau, 1926
Mixed media, tempera paint and
pencil on paper
15.4 x 21.7 inches (39 x 55 cm)

Right:
Olga Olga Stage Scenes, 1928
Vintage black and white photograph
6 x 9 ¼ inches (17.5 x 23.6 cm)
Photography by T. Lux Feininger



MILAN AND
BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
1933 - 1938

When the Bauhaus closed in 1933 Schawinsky first went to Italy. In Milan he worked for the Studio Boggeri, the newly founded state-of-the art advertising studio. He designed outstanding poster and product designs for Motta, Illy coffee and Cinzano. He also co-designed for Olivetti the typewriter *Studio 42*. Schawinsky’s posters and products were to become classics of commercial design of the 1930s. A prominent collection of Schawinsky posters entered in later years the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

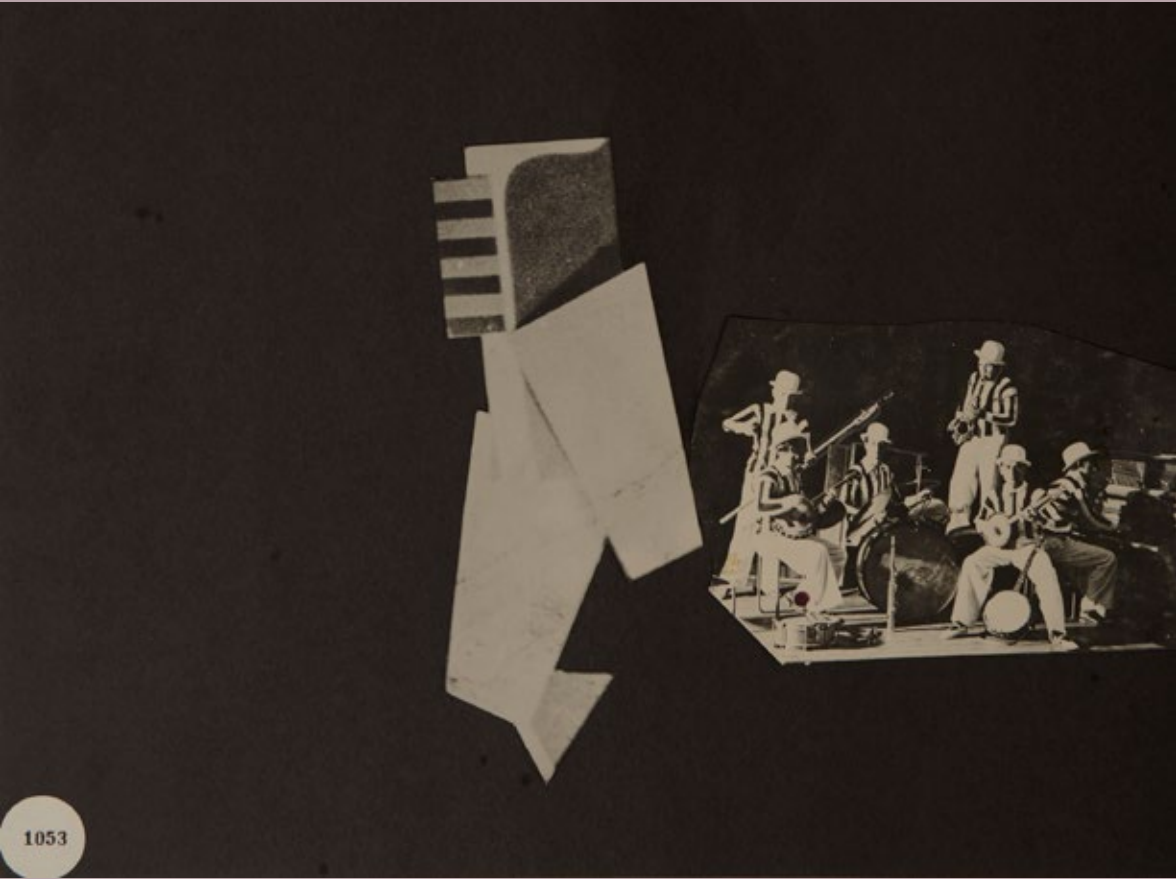
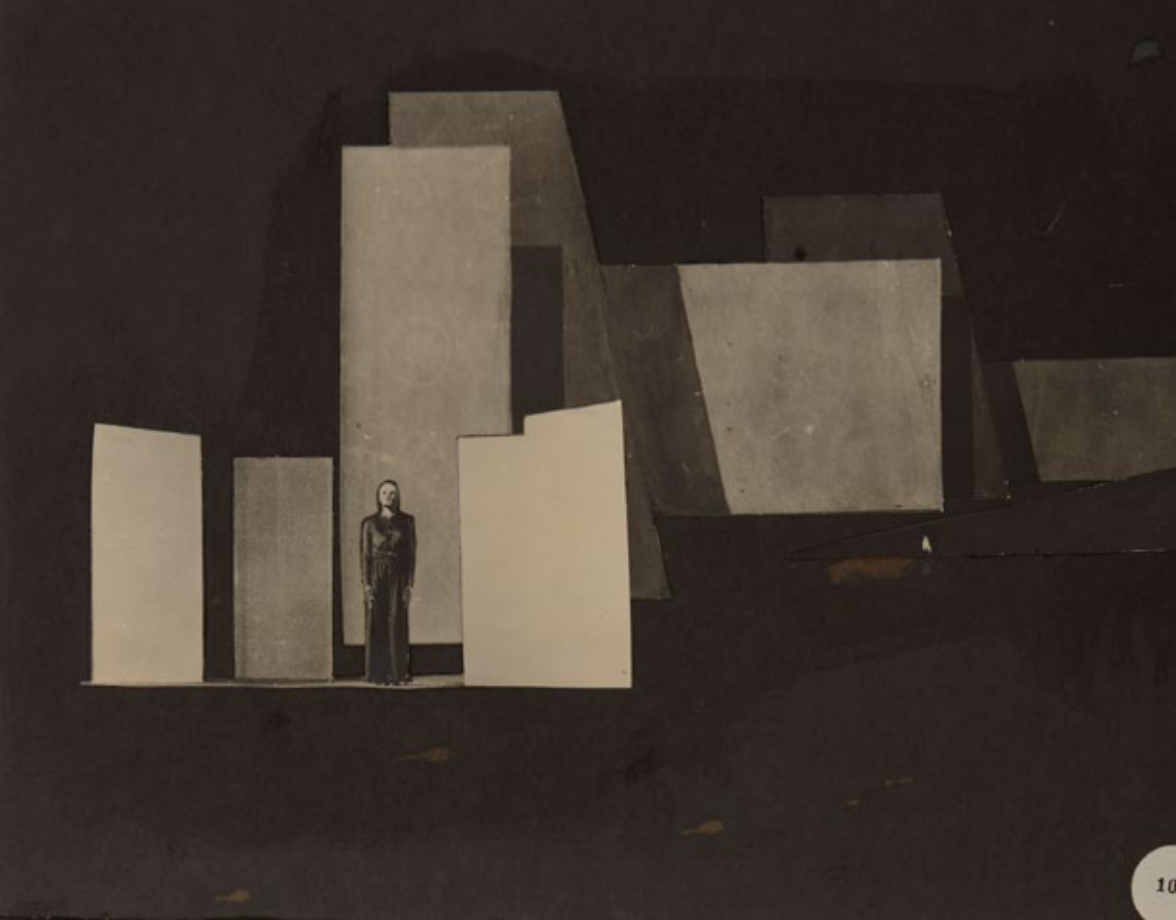
In Nothern Italy the artist met Marinetti and Giorgio de Chirico, whose work co-influenced the growing Surrealist tendency in Schawinsky’s work of the 1940s. During this time Schawinsky remained in close exchange with Walter Gropius. He actively promoted the Bauhaus ideas and planned to bring out a book about the Bauhaus years, which remained unpublished. In 1935 the political situation in Italy forced him to leave once more. Schawinsky went to London where he married Irene von Debschitz, the daughter of the director of the Debschitz-School in Munich, an art school having anticipated some of the Bauhaus ideas.



Pamphlet for Olivetti M40 typewriter, 1934
Color print
12.5 x 9 inches (31.8 x 22.9 cm)

Left:
Poster "Olivetti", 1934
Color print
21 x 13.5 inches (53.7 x 34.3 cm)

In 1936, Hans Albers secured Schawinsky and his wife safe passage to the United States to teach at the later legendary Black Mountain College in North Carolina. In charge of theater arts, Schawinsky expanded his ideas for experimental theater to a multi-media "total experience." His productions of *Spectrodrama* and *Danse Macabre* demonstrated these ideas and importantly laid the foundations for the work of John Cage and others at the College in the post-war time. It can clearly be argued that Schawinsky brought the radical and avant-garde Bauhaus theater to the United States, a relation that has been receiving special attention recently. In 1938 political disagreements among the faculty led him to move once more; this time to New York City. Upon his arrival he collaborated on prize-winning pavilion designs for the 1939 World’s Fair with colleagues Walter Gropius, Herbert Bayer, and Marcel Breuer. Schawsinky’s intense participation in the designs for the World Fair inspired a series of visionary paintings in the 1940s of breathtaking futuristic architectural and urban landscapes.

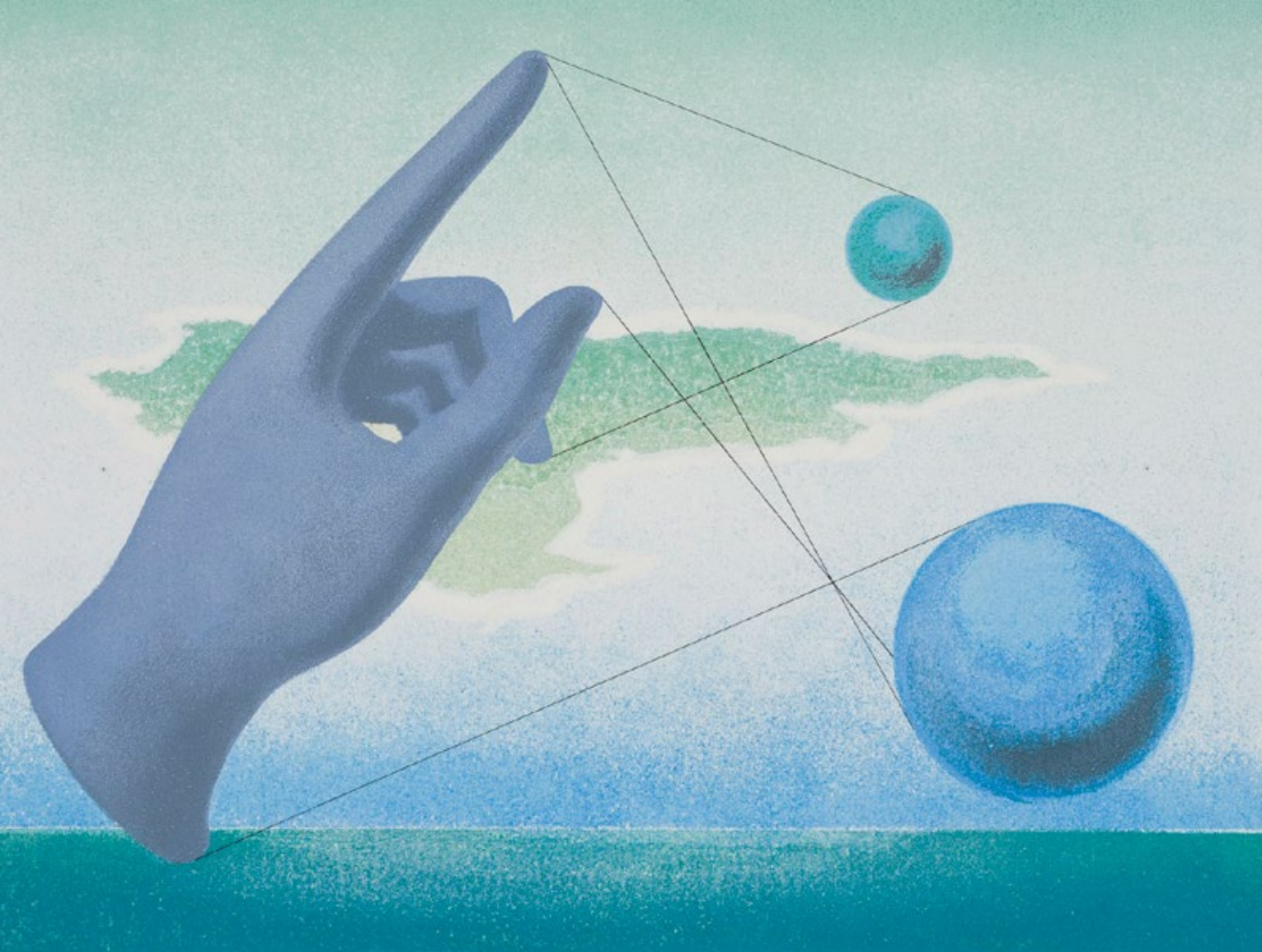


Top and Bottom:
Untitled (Stage), Black Mountain College
Collage to illustrate the "Spectodrama" (1925-38), 1938
Black and white photographic collage with pencil
11 x 14 inches (28 x 36 cm)



Architectural Design, 1945
Mixed media, watercolor and black pen on paper
20.75 x 28 inches (52.7 x 73.4 cm)

xanti schawinsky
1945



Cielo animato, 1926
Color lithograph
15 x 16 inches (40.3 x 43 cm)

FACES OF WAR - 1940s IN NEW YORK

In New York among the tight-knit expatriot cultural community centered on the activities of gallerist Julien Levy, Schawinsky for the first time experienced again a sense of safety and integration. His status as a new-comer afforded him unique and new perspectives on his life and the arts. He had the freedom and burden of confronting his own identity and purpose in "life during wartime."



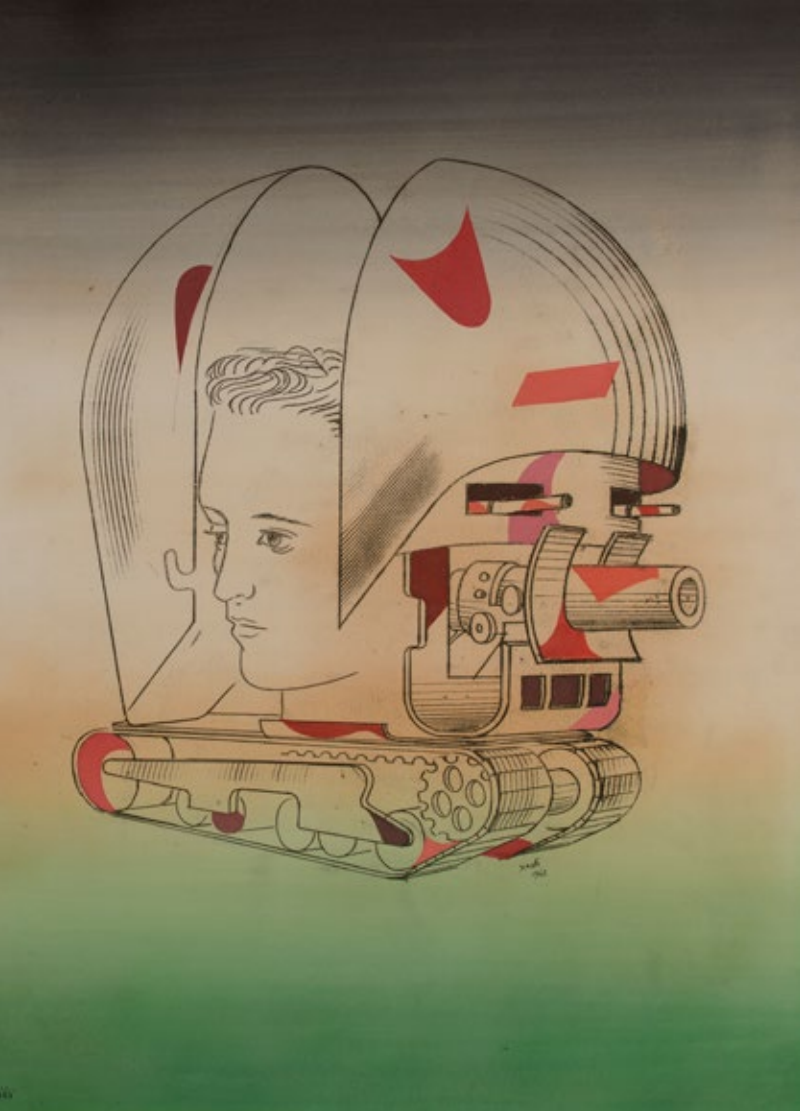
Above, Left to Right:
Variation 3 (Variations on Gropius), 1943
Vintage black and white photograph on cardboard
9 x 7 inches (23 x 17.5 cm)

Variation 4 (Variations on Gropius), 1943
Vintage black and white photograph on cardboard
9 x 7 inches (23 x 17.5 cm)

Left, Opposite page:
Frauenportrait (Variations on Lady), 1944
Black and white photograph on glossy paper
9 x 7.25 inches (24 x 18.5 cm)

From work Schawinsky did for the "Visual Problems Unit" of the Army Air Corps designing anti-aircraft targeting patterns for artillery manuals, he conceived his 1940 series *The Faces of War*. In these imaginative tempera and graphite drawings Schawinsky expressed a fundamental despair that the time of the utopian man-machine equations of the Bauhaus years had turned for the machines of mass destruction in the dystopian theaters of war. He made each drawing a camouflage-painted robotic *golem* – a man-machine – that could be interpreted as both a threatening enemy or a powerful avenger.

In his series of photo collages, *Theme and Variation on a Face: Walter Gropius*, he reflected upon his creative father/mentor and friend, sending the portrait of the famed architect through a parcoure of shifting cultural and parodistic identities. In the photo collages *The Variations on a Face Series (Woman)* he confronted the enigmatic disembodied face of a woman, floating in a variety of spaces – landscape, night sky and topographically diagrammed space.



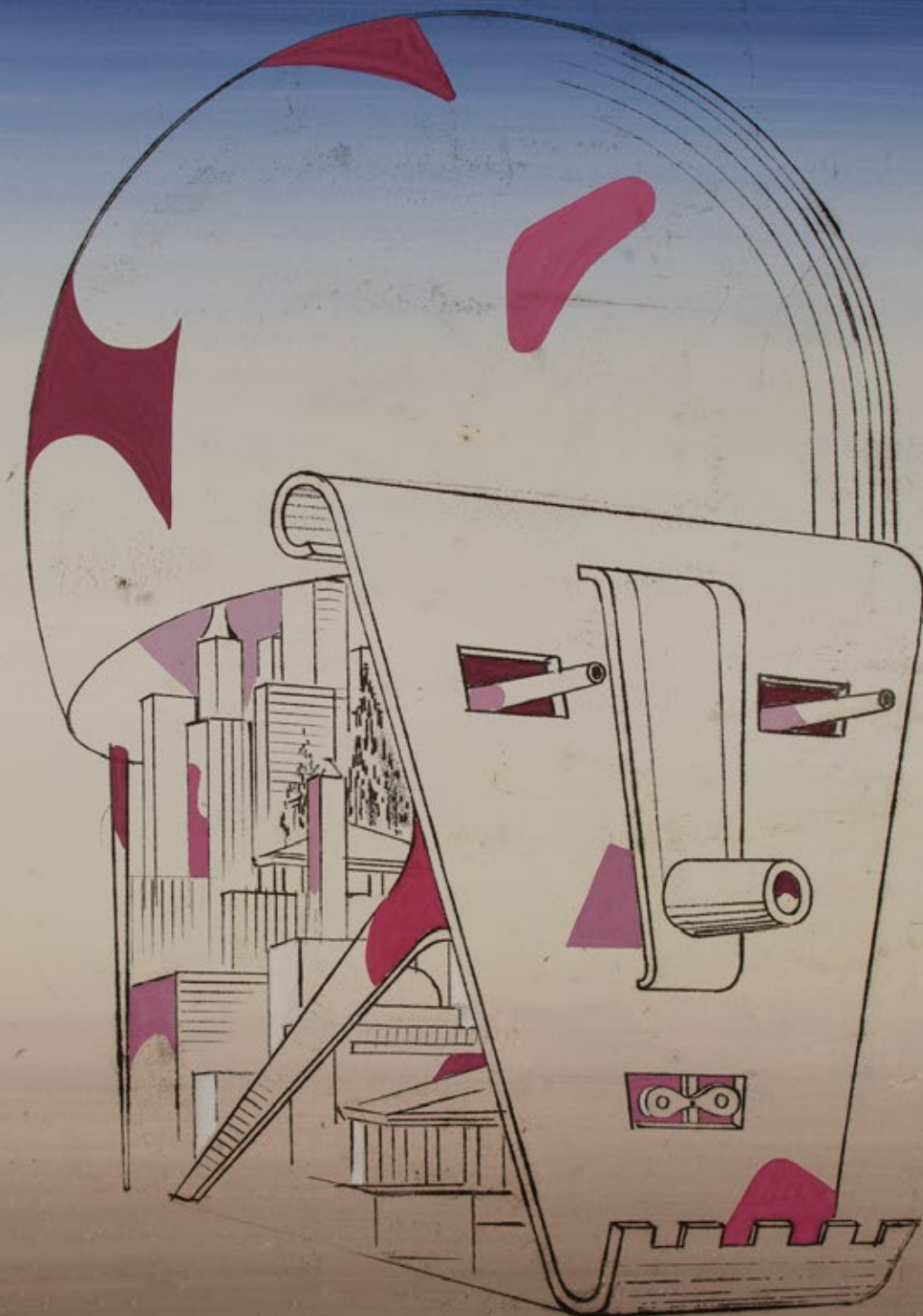
Soldier's Rest (Faces of War), 1942
Mixed media, watercolor and pen on paper
29 x 21.5 inches (74.5 x 54.5 cm)

Schawinsky's powerful work from the 1940's particularly draws attention to not yet explored dimensions of the afterlife of Bauhaus ideals subject to the pressures of war and forced immigration. It is an aesthetic with a more existentialist and dystopian face, distinct from the positivism and bravura of the Bauhaus architects' further achievements in the U.S. after the decline of the influential school in Europe.

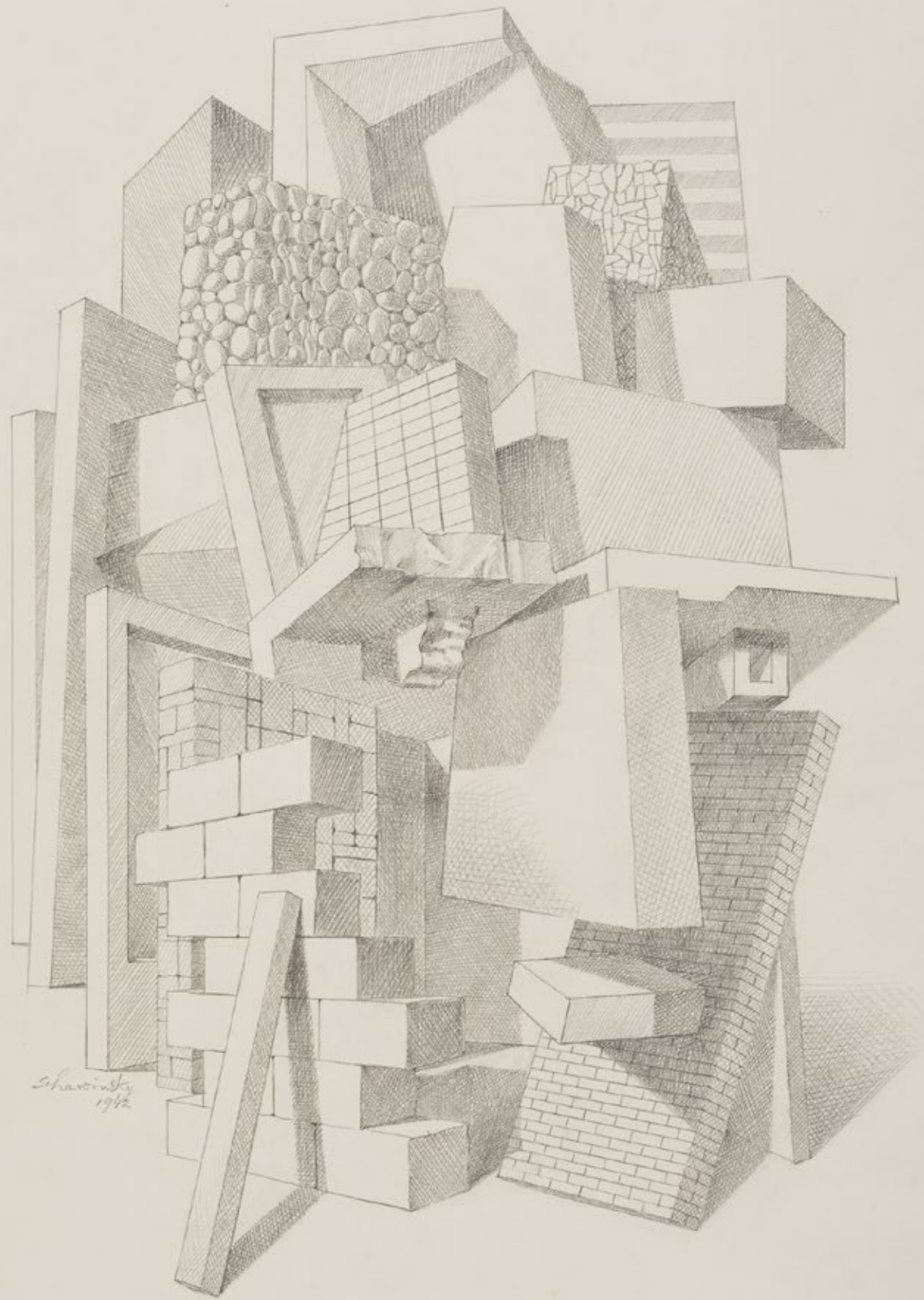
Kurt Schwitters said that during the war years artists had to rebuild themselves from scraps and Schawinsky, possibly inspired by Czech poet Vítězslav Nezval's 1937 poem *The Man Who Composes His Own Portrait With Objects*, did so in his 1940s character *Head Series*.



Housing Week, 1944
Color print on board
24 x 16 inches (61 x 41 cm)



The Home Guard (Faces of War), 1942
Mixed media, watercolor and pen on paper
29.5 x 21.5 inches (74.8 x 54.6 cm)



Walls and Stones (Head Drawings), 1942
Graphite on paper
31 x 22.5 inches (78.74 x 57.15 cm)

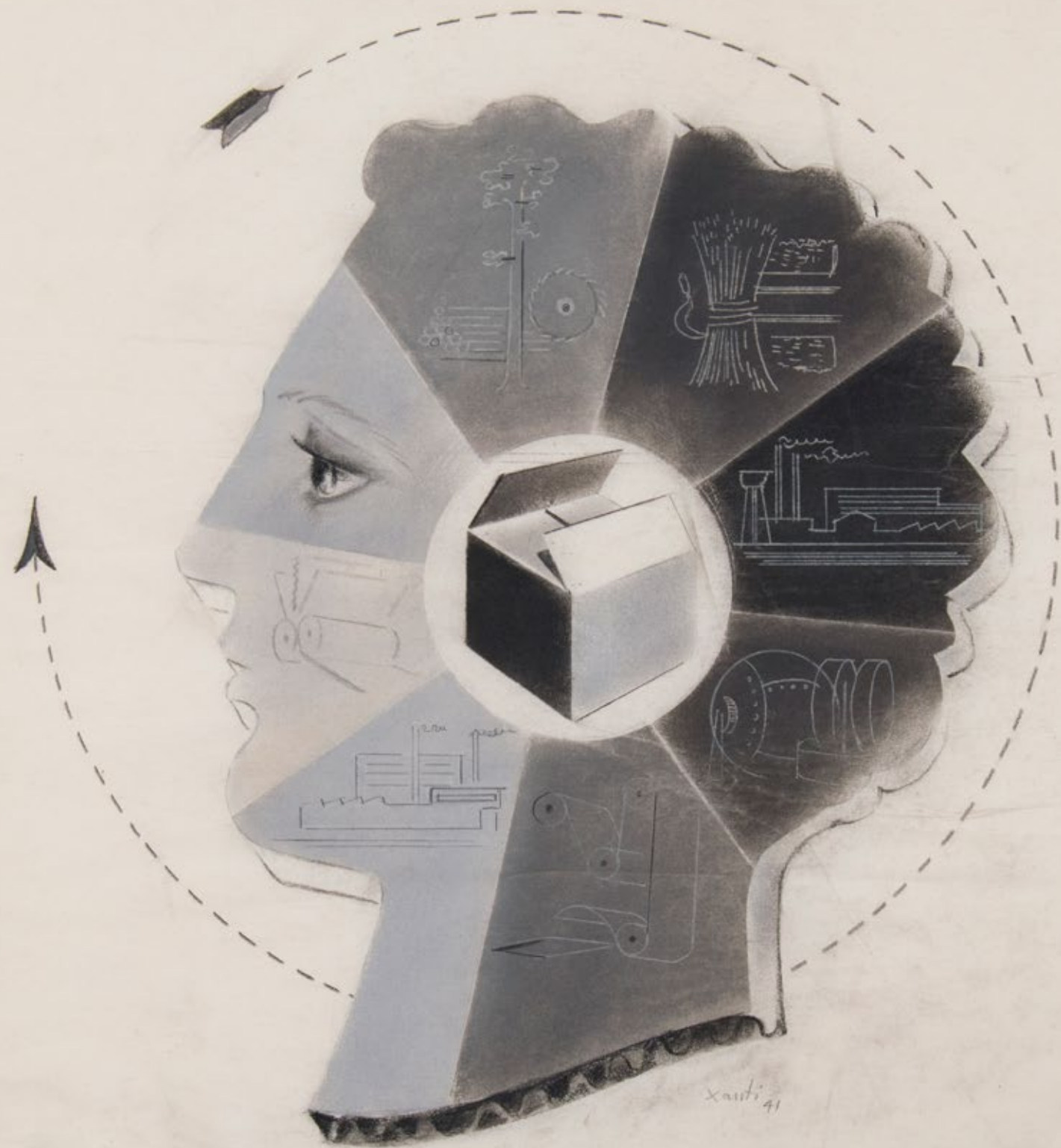


Above, Left to Right:
Sewing Hour, (Head Drawings), 1941
Graphite on paper
30.5 x 22 inches (77.5 x 55 cm)

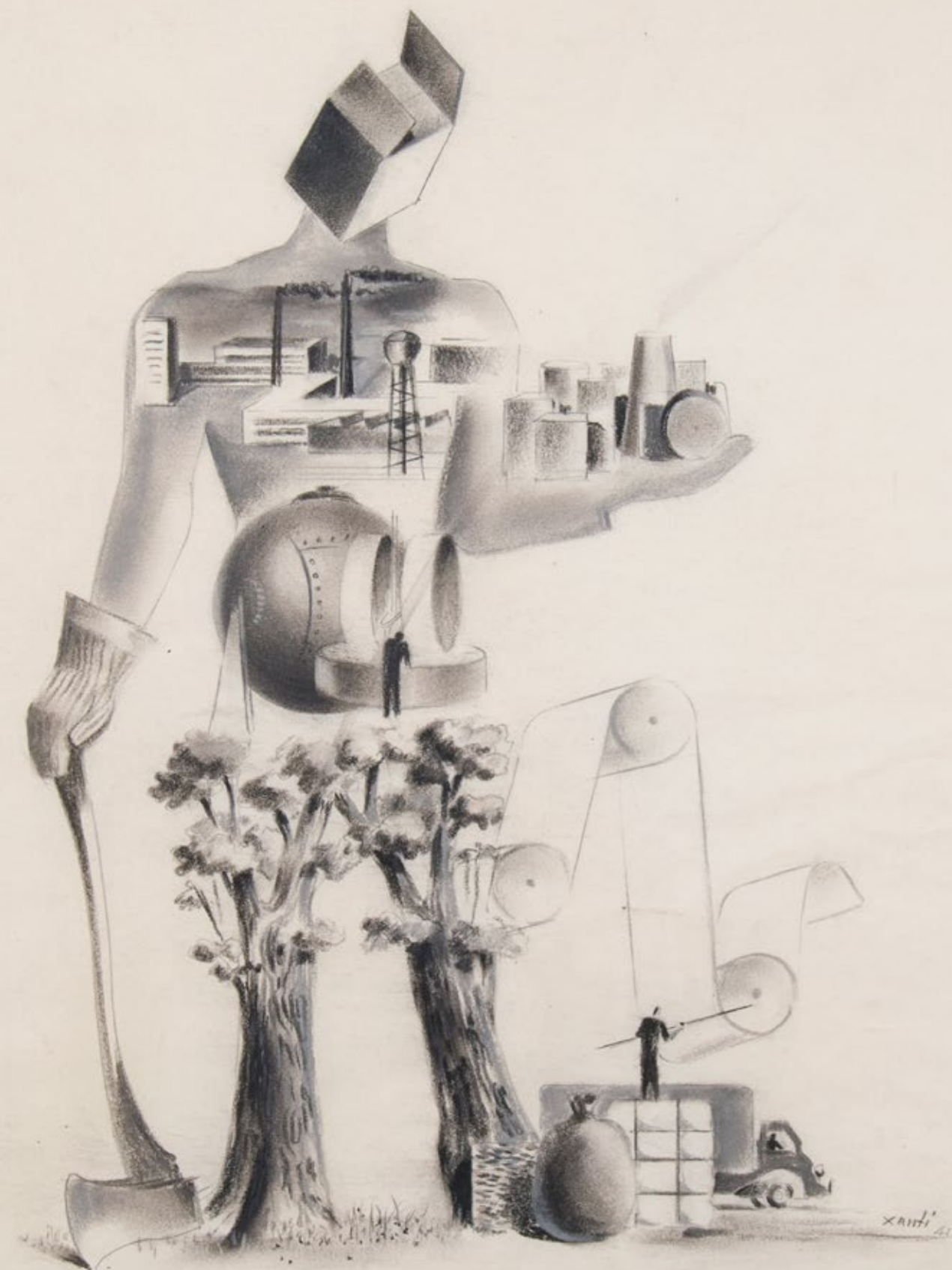


Antique Shop (Head Drawings), 1945
Graphite on paper
31 x 22.5 inches (78.5 x 57 cm)

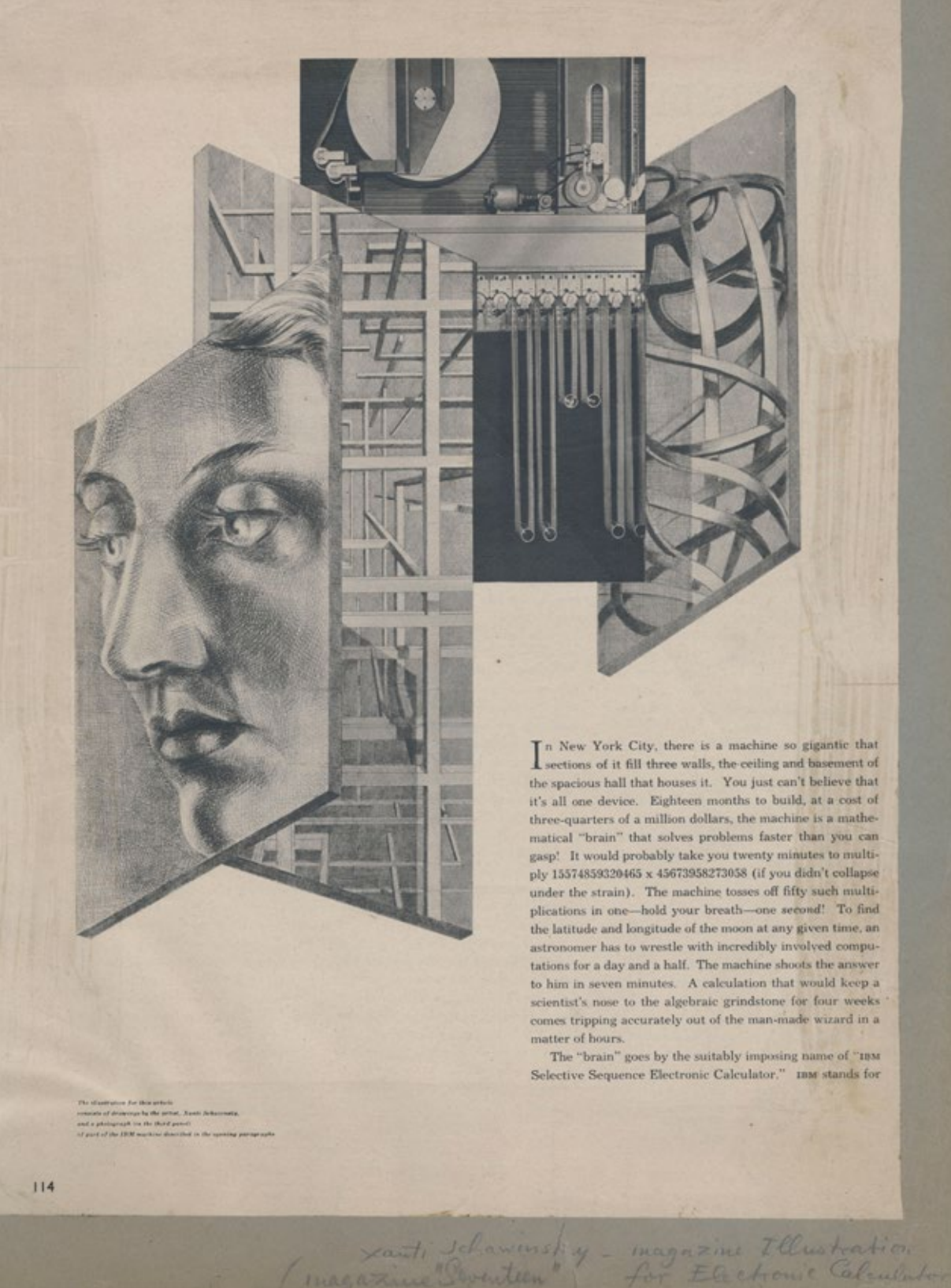
Xanti Schawinsky always linked existentialism with science and the effects of industrialization. In 1941 Schawinsky created in New York two drawings, which likely were commissioned illustrations for some branches of the U.S. industry in the aftermath of his exhibitions designs for the World Fair. These drawings, like in many of Schawinsky's works subtly shift status between design and autonomous artistic vision. One of the drawings is inspired by his *Untitled (Spectrum Color Head)* from 1935, a stylized self-portrait in the form of a painter's palette segmented in a post-Bauhaus educational color spectrum. For the drawing from 1941 *Untitled (Spectrum Head Industry)* Schawinsky chose a woman for the stylized palette-head. In the segments of the head we see illustrations of different stages and areas of industrialized paper production. Inside of the center hole of the palette he drew a cardboard box. In the next drawing the box becomes the head of an eerie giant figure with 'tree-legs' holding an axe, the body composed – with high allegorical tension for a design work - of elements of nature and industry. "The drawing reminds me of the Tin Man in the *Wizard of Oz* but with overtones of eco-agitprop reminiscent of late Kraftwerk" (M. Bracewell, Aug. 2014).



Spectrum Head Grey, 1941
Graphite and paint on paper
24 x 18.5 inches (60.6 x 47 cm)

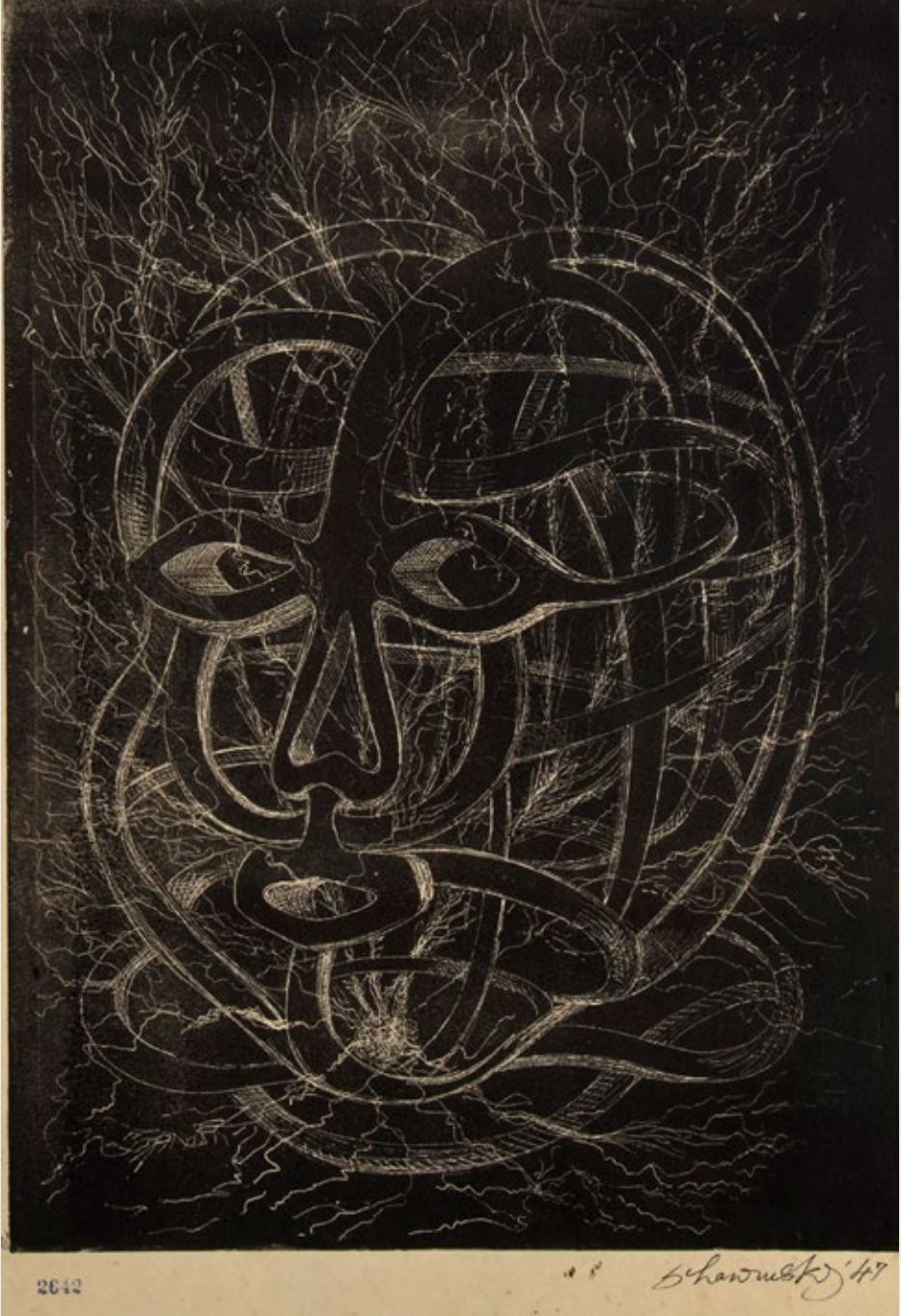


Industrial Man, 1941
Graphite on paper
24 x 18.5 inches (61 x 47.3 cm)



Advertisement for IBM Selective Sequence Graphic Calculator from "Seventeen" magazine, 1948
Vintage archival document

In his *Head Drawings* the inside of the giant heads are opened up like metaphysical 'windows' for the viewer showing abstract landscapes and sceneries. Poignantly, fragments of Schawinsky's *Head Drawings* with these elaborate visions of the modern 'brain' structure were used to illustrate an article in the late 40s on the first IBM Selective Sequence Electronic Calculator, an early computing device.



Clockwise, From Top Left:
Untitled Etching of Motif for "Above the Waters", 1947
Etching on paper
19.75 x 13 inches (50.2 x 33 cm)

Untitled Etching of Head Drawing Motif, 1944
Etching on paper
15.5 X 11.25 inches (39.4 X 28.9 cm)

Untitled Flower Head, 1945
Hand colored etching on paper
12.4 x 9.8 inches (31.5 x 24.9 cm)





Schawinsky focused his practice in the following years on painting, drawing, experimental photography and commercial graphic design. He experimented with glass negatives for a series of collaged photograms, the motifs often based on the ultra-urban skyline of Manhattan. In 1946 he started working on a book on Walter Gropius.

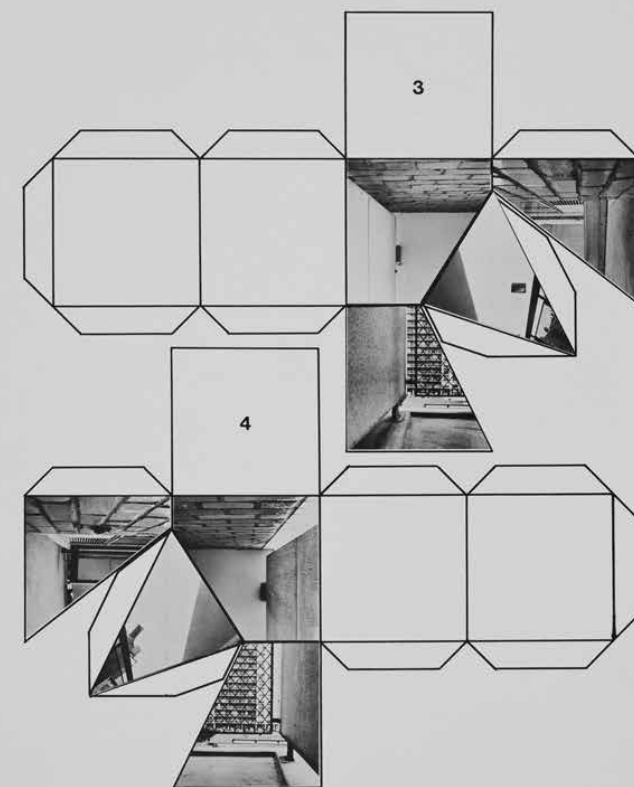
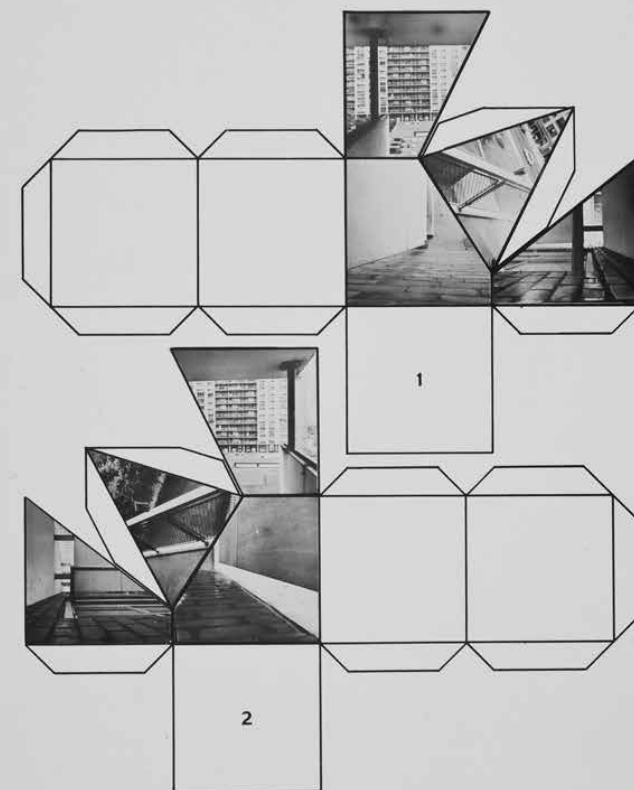


Above:
Light Painting, 1950
 Black and white photograph
 25 x 20.25 inches (63.50 x 51.56 cm)

Left:
Light Painting, 1950
 Black and white photograph
 9.5 x 7.5 inches (25.3 x 20.3 cm)

Left, Opposite page:
Untitled, c. 1946
 Vintage experimental photographic print
 20 x 16 inches (50.5 x 40.5cm)

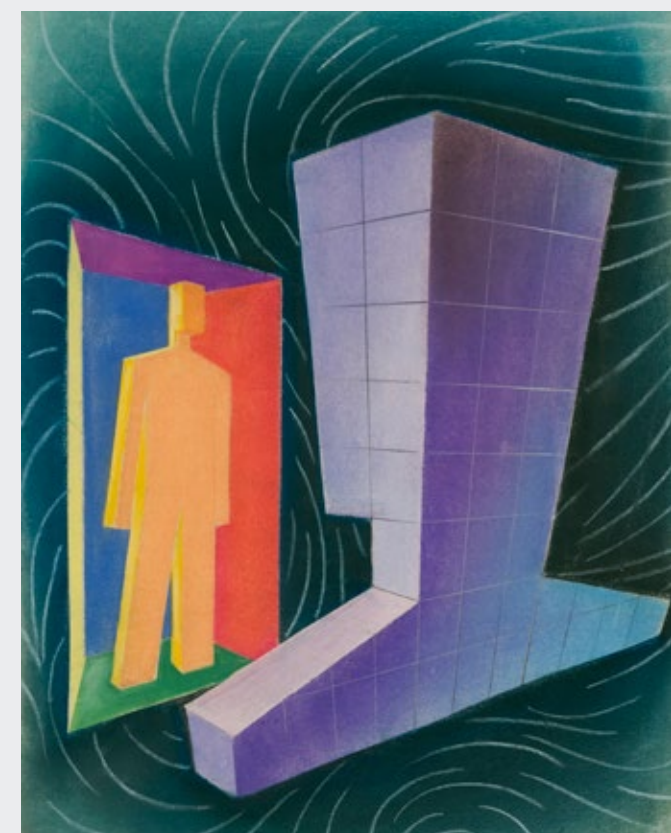
Untitled (Architecture), c. 1940
Mixed media, watercolor and pen on paper
28.9 x 20.9 inches (73.41 x 53.09 cm)



From 1943-54 Schawinsky taught at the New York City College and at the New York University. In his architectural box study from the 1950s, probably used for his teachings, Schawinsky collaged photos from the NYU campus.

Above, Left to Right:
Untitled (Architectural Box Graphic I & II), c. 1950
Teaching Model for New York University course
Print on paper
17.25 x 11 inches (44 x 28 cm)

Untitled, 1945
Pastel on paper
24 x 18 inches (61 x 45.75 cm)





Untitled, 1954
Pastel on colored paper
25 x 19 inches (63.8 x 48.3 cm)

THE PHYSICAL IN PAINTING – THE 1950S IN NEW YORK

In the late 1950s Schawinsky begins to experiment with his *Dance* and *Track* paintings using the performance of his body and of his car to create large-scale paintings. For the *Track* paintings (1960) Schawinsky drove with his convertible sports car over giant color-prepared canvases on Washington Square.



Schawinsky while creating the *Track*
Paintings, 1960

Above, Right:
Track Painting, 1959
Paint on paper
20.875 x 14.125 inches (53 x 35.9 cm)



Al-di-là (Eclipse), 1965
 Airbrush on canvas
 65.2 x 42 x 0.9 inches (165.6 x 106.7 x 2.3 cm)



Striped on Brocade (Eclipse), 1968
 Airbrush on patterned canvas
 48 x 52 inches (124 x 134 cm)



Eclipse (2832), 1967
Airbrush on canvas
53.75 x 42.75 inches (136 ½ x 108 ½ cm)

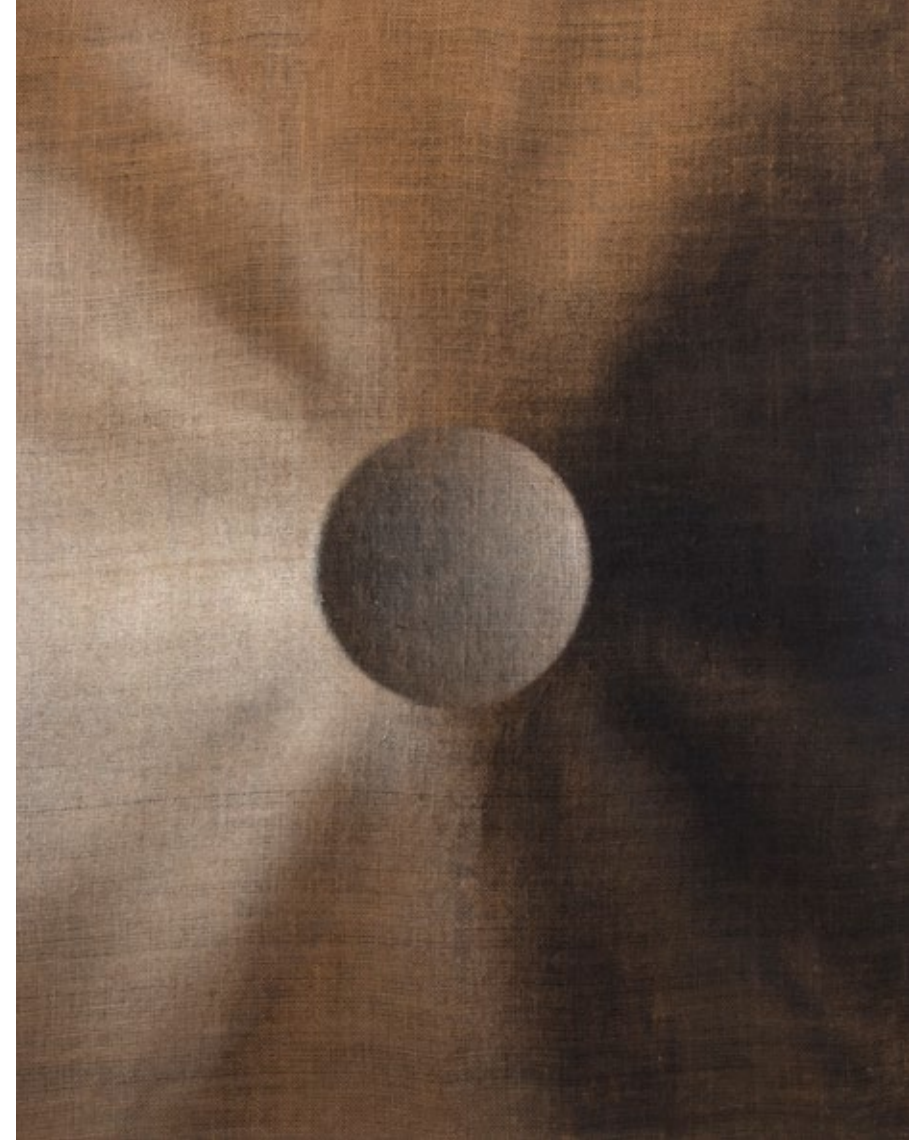
ECLIPSES AND SPHERAS - 1960S

In the 1960s Schawinsky entered a new phase of creation with an intense and enigmatic body of work of abstract and optical paintings, the *Eclipses* and *Spheras*.

The first experimentation of the Eclipses originates in the 1940s as early airbrush works on paper. Schawinsky crumpled and airbrushed the paper to a dramatic landscape of structures in which he achieved a delicate balance of chance operation and compositorial control.

The expressive character of the early *Eclipses* was timelessly enhanced in the 1960s *Eclipse* paintings when this experiment came to full unfolding. In prominent tableaux of dramatic color and from compositions, Schawinsky created abstract landscapes with strong illusionary underpinnings.

In some *Eclipses* we experience a sense of anthropomorphy, an existentially stripped figure dominating the scenery in a trapezoid stretch reminiscent of a dancer or stage figurine.



Sphera (Sp-1), 1969
Airbrush on canvas
36 x 20 inches (91.4 x 50.8 cm)

Left:
Eclipse (E-199), c. 1960
Airbrush on canvas
34 x 44 inches (86.4 x 111.8 cm)

The pre-dominant allusion in the *Eclipses* is the one of mountain landscape, - and as the experiment started in the 40s the artist probably had strong reminiscences in exile of his early life exposure to the mysteries and stern beauty of the Swiss alpine world.

This is the moment where the *Eclipses* and *Spheras* have an intimate connection in the experience-based vision of the artist as one form experimentation



Eclipse (2836), c. 1960
Airbrush on canvas
54.75 x 36.5 inches (139 x 92.75 cm)

morphed out of the other.
"As he experienced a total Solar eclipse in the mountains of Canada he began the series: Eclipse. This is the expression of the sun and shadow upon the rocks; the bones of our planet. Upon finding he had worked through this expression and he added two colored circles partially overlapping over those bare bones. (...) Two spheres moving in space, overlapping and creating a quality that is like no other; enigmatic as would be agreed by anyone who has experienced a total eclipse. (...)

These spheres then morphed into leaving the mountains behind and he drove headlong into the *Sphera* series, searching through the magic of overlapping donuts and spheres, colors, and shapes. This metamorphosis began during the 1960's as many people were expressing and experiencing deeper/higher states of existence. The exploration of that which is beyond our day-to-day awareness was accelerating. Quantum physics was coming into its own as we understood that life is more mysterious than we thought and imagined.

Our mystery is that we are fourth dimensional beings immersed in time and space which includes movement. We have full understanding of and control over the first, second, and third dimensions and the fourth, in which we are steeped, is enigmatic. Xanti painted and airbrushed the *Spheras* on two surfaces, one being a translucent screen, giving us the illusion of a third dimensional image and as we move sideways the image moves with our vision. We are presented with an extra dimensional experience, causing a resonance with our fourth dimensional paradox."

-Memories of Benjamin Schawinsky,
New York 2014



Sphera (Sp-118), 1970
Airbrush on gauze and canvas, two strainers
37.2 x 37.2 x 1.5 inches (94.5 x 94.5 x 3.2 cm)



Sphera (Sp-159), 1971
Airbrush on canvas
48.5 x 48.75 x 1.25 inches (123.5 x 123.8 x 3.5 cm)



Eclipse (2825), 1967
Airbrush on canvas
59 x 43.75 inches (150 x 111 cm)



Sphera (Sp 27), 1969
Airbrush on gauze and canvas, two strainers
54 x 47 inches (136.8 x 119.1 cm)

Right:
Sphera (2868), c. 1968
Airbrush paint on two layers of
stretched guaze on frame
43.5 x 69 inches (110.5 x 175.25 cm)

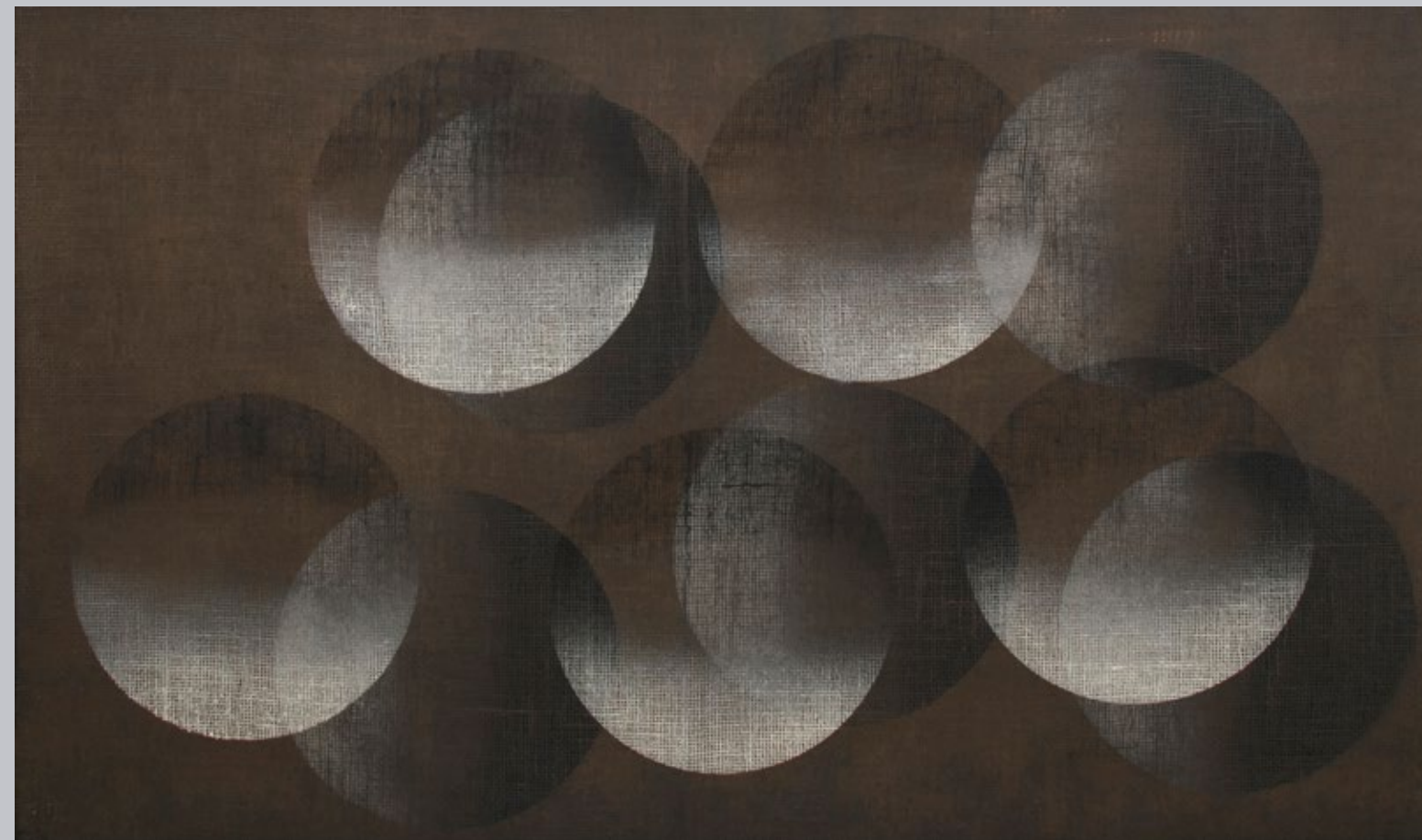
The 1960s abstract paintings, the *Eclipses* and *Spheras*, can be seen as a logical yet new and far more existentially felt continuation of the Bauhaus teachings on geometry, optical and color theory. However precise and educational - in the sense of the Bauhaus legacy – his intentions were in the advancement in techniques and execution, e.g. demonstrated in his seminal text “About the Physical in Painting” (Great Britain, 1969), Schawinsky never fully revealed the methodical process of the *Eclipses*. He always kept some mystery in his work.

Witnesses report that he always painted to Baroque music. He had a huge collection of over 400 records, catalogued - like all of his artwork - with a numeric system. They were standing sleeve-less in racks in his studio covered with paint splashes and kept without much concern for their condition. The music was ‘material’ to be used like everything else, and the process of constant exposure to the ground bass principles of Baroque lead him to paint ‘polyphonically’.

Xanti Schawinsky was a genuine “channeling artist” of the 20th century:

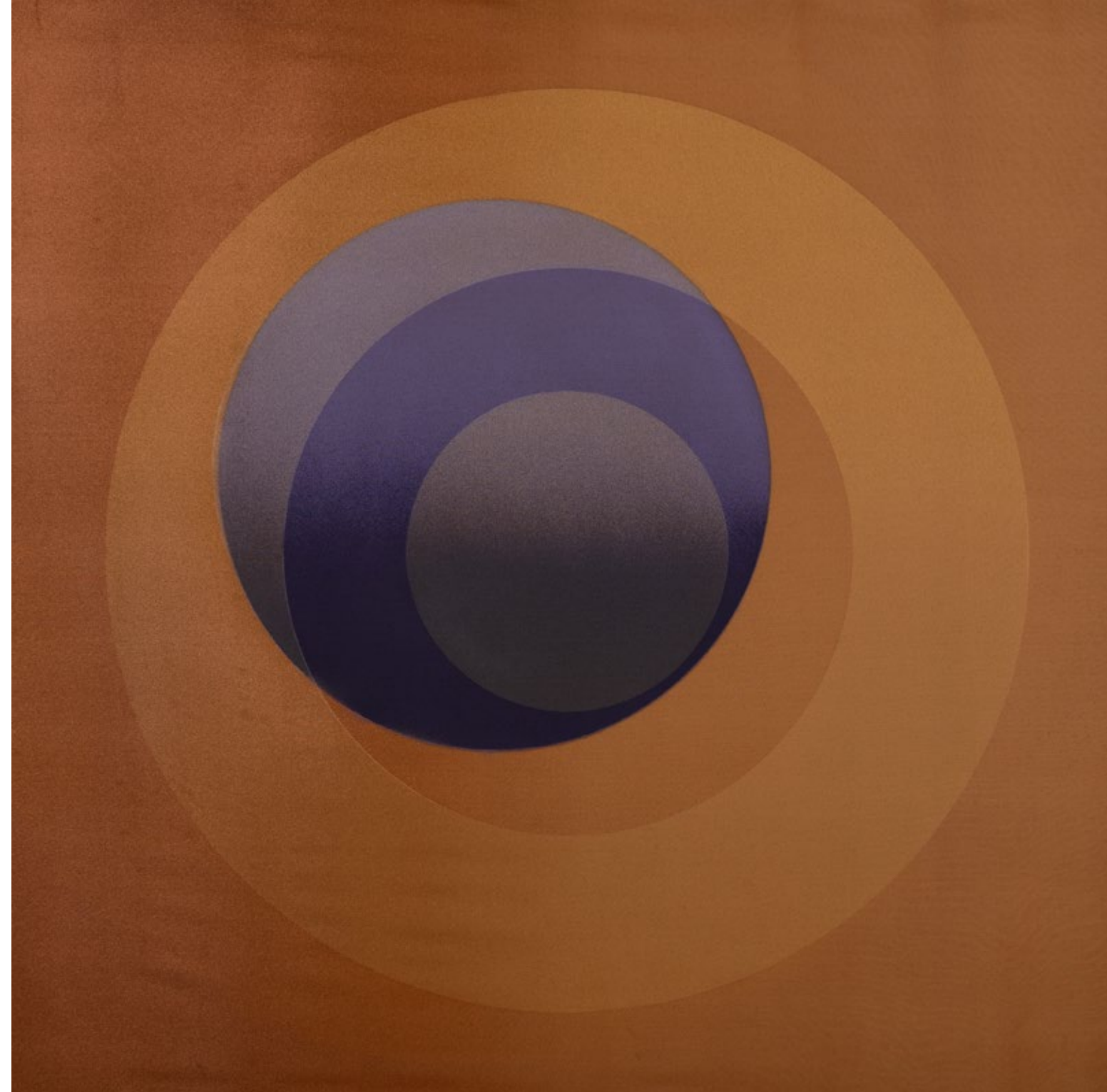
“Artists are in the world searching on one level or another and that searching serves as an expression of a part of society’s existence that it is often not in touch with. This search brings about a place in the artist that is a disappearance of self, a place wherein s/he loses all sense of identity and thereby begins to channel what is coming through. In this state the artist is a channel and it is quite possible that s/he is not consciously in touch with ALL of what is coming through and being expressed. It is because of this that sometimes someone cannot explain their feeling about a work of art and I would include all art forms.”
- Memories of Benjamin Schawinsky, New York 2014

Anke Kempkes





Stereon (XSds27 ste-158), 1975
 Airbrush on gauze and canvas
 44.5 x 40 x 2.5 inches (112.5 x 102.1 x 6 cm)



Sphera (sp-434), 1972-1976
 Airbrush on gauze and synthetic fabric
 41.5 x 41.5 x 2 inches (105.4 x 105.3 x 5 cm)



Sphaera (Sp-146), 1971
Airbrush on gauze, canvas, and two strainers
40 x 40 x 1.5 inches (102.1 x 101.6 x 3.3 cm)

XANTI SCHAWINSKY

Born in 1904, Basel, Switzerland
Died in 1979, Locarno, Switzerland

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *Human Space-Machine. Stage Experiments at the Bauhaus* , National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea
Xanti Schawinsky, Autobiography, published by JRP Ringier, Zurich
Xanti Schawinsky Restrospective, Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland, curated by Raphael Gygax, catalogue published by JRP Ringier, Zurich
Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957, ICA Boston, Massachusetts, curated by Helen Molesworth, traveling to the Hammer Museum (2016), Los Angeles, and to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2016), Catalogue
- 2014 *Human Space-Machine. Stage Experiments at the Bauhaus*, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway
Xanti Schawinsky: Head Drawings and Faces of War, Drawing Center, New York, curated by Director Brett Littman, Catalogue
- 2013 *Human Space-Machine. Stage Experiments at the Bauhaus*, curated by Artistic Director Torsten Blume and Christian Hiller. International curators: Milena Hoegsberg and Lars Mørch Finborud (Oslo) and Jienne Liu (Korea), Catalogue

Gallerist
Anke Kempkes

Director
Aniko Erdosi

Head Archivist
Lauren Pascarella

Assistant Archivist
Odyssea Rigau

Publication and Design
Stephanie Marie Garcia

We would like to thank Benjamin and Daniel Schawinsky for their invaluable input and support.

All images courtesy of the Xanti Schawinsky Estate and BROADWAY1602, New York