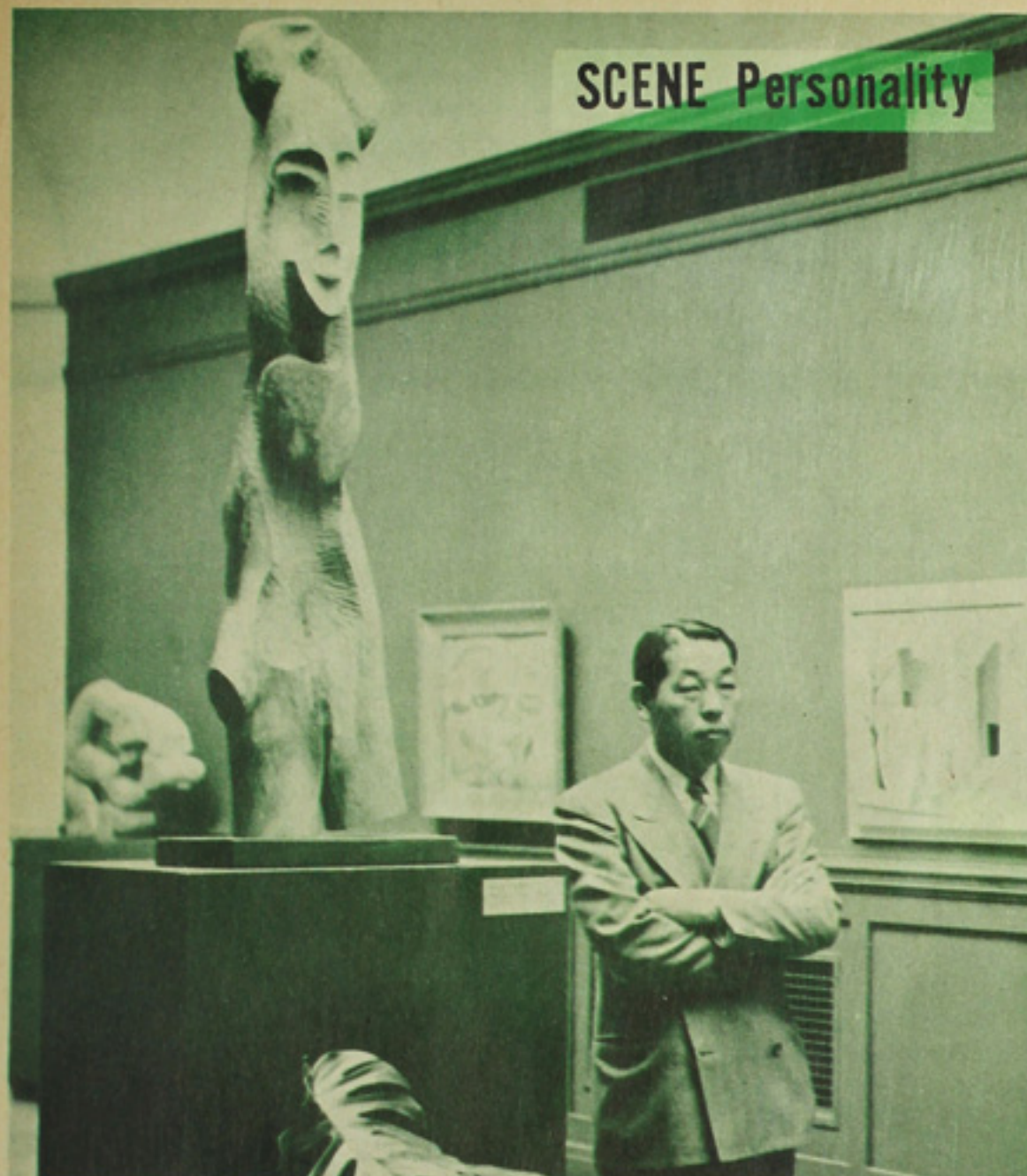


SCENE Personality



GEORGE TSUTAKAWA stands beside his driftwood carving, "Primitive Dance," which was shown at his recent one-man exhibit held in Seattle.

Artistry from the lectern

By Joseph U. Hamanaka

SCENEfotos by Elmer Ogawa

LAST SPRING, a one-man exhibition of sculptures, oil and watercolor paintings and a large fresco was shown at the Henry Art Gallery on the U. of Washington campus. The artist was George Tsutakawa, an unassuming 40-year-old art instructor who works in a large variety of media not often found in the collection of a single artist.

But Tsutakawa is not after prizes. Instead, as an art instructor at the U.

of Washington, he derives great satisfaction helping to establish an appreciation and understanding for fine arts.

His is a story of a sincere and serious love for art in any form. His story is that of an "academic" artist.

As he says: "I like teaching very much. I'm interested in educating the public, showing and helping them to appreciate what the artists

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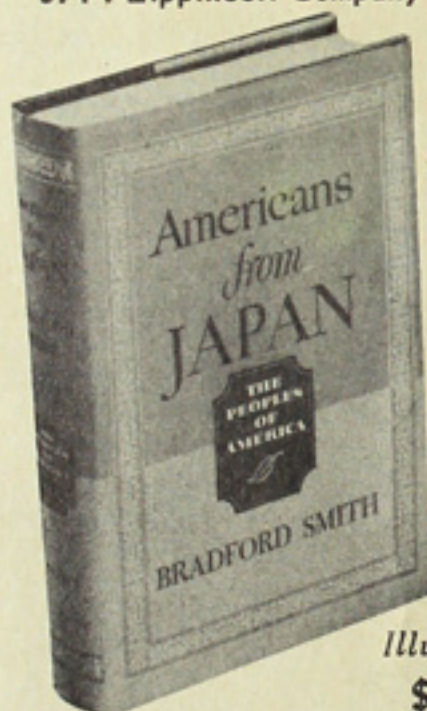
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STEP BY STEP work on Tsutakawa's latest abstract titled "Family Group" is shown in this partial picture of the artist's attic workshop.

are doing. I enjoy my daily contacts with students."

Tsutakawa never does any sustained work on one thing. For example, "Primitive Dance," a carving made from dogwood, was finished three years after he found the wood. He feels, too, that an artist should not confine himself to one medium. He believes in simplicity of form and an abstractness in approach. While critics label Tsutakawa a sculptor, he divides his interests equally.

An artist of the modern school, Tsutakawa avoids the realistic. He holds that "the modern artist does more than merely reproduce the physical aspects of what he sees. He puts his own interpretations and im-

pressions into the work of art."

In "Primitive Dance," a wood carving vaguely resembling a woman, Tsutakawa attempts to convey the element of suspense in a dance when the dancer momentarily ceases all motion. It is that moment when the observer will anticipate the next movement of the arms, hands and legs, Tsutakawa explains. For this reason, these appendages are left out in the sculpture.

Like many Japanese-American artists, Tsutakawa, he is told, shows Japanese influence. However, he says that "it's unconscious." His art training has all been in this country, thus Western in approach. However, having spent his early years in Japan, Tsutakawa does feel the significance of Oriental art and expresses desire to study it.

Tsutakawa was born in Seattle and went to Japan at the age of seven, finishing high school there. Returning to Seattle, 17-year-old George had to learn his ABC at a special school. In 1932 he was graduated from Broadway high school and received his bachelor's at the U. of Washington in 1937.

George managed a food store until 1942 when he was inducted into the army. After several years in southern camps, including Camp Shelby,



THIS FRESCO called "Transfusion" was one of the art pieces submitted by Tsutakawa for his master's degree.

Miss., he was transferred to Fort Snelling, Minn., where he taught Japanese. He was discharged in 1946.

All during the war years, Tsutakawa was a "Sunday painter."

He returned to Seattle and taught Japanese at his alma mater for a semester before doing graduate work in art. In 1947 he became an instructor in the school's art department, teaching basic design and water color. That year he married Ayame Kyotani of Sacramento.

Tsutakawa has exhibited regularly in the Northwest Annuals at the

Seattle Art Museum since 1933 and was represented in the Western Washington Fair Exhibition in 1948 and 1949.

Tsutakawa observes that many people do not understand the new schools of art just as they did not understand the music of Beethoven for many years. "I think these new schools of art are here to stay," he says.

As for his own future, he says simply: "The greatest difficulty of contemporary artists is making a living. Teaching is something you can fall back on."



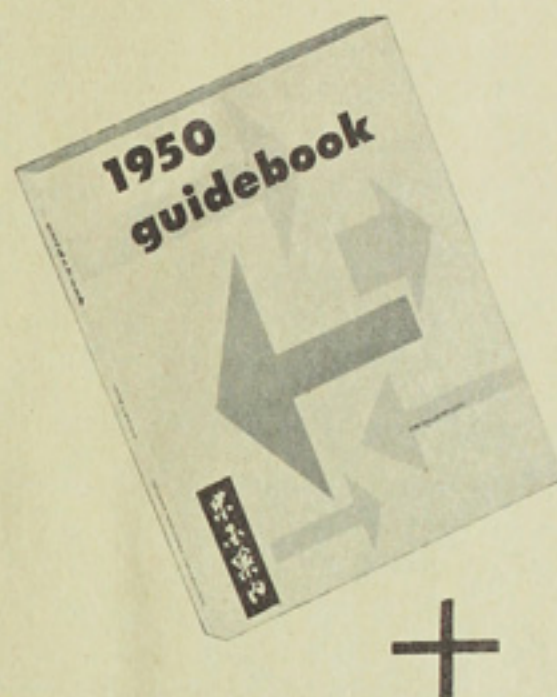
"THE HERMIT," an abstract cedar carving, is considered by Tsutakawa as one of his best works. It is now up for exhibit at the Denver Art Museum.



TSUTAKAWA'S FAMILY is composed of his wife, Ayame, and two children, Gerald, 3½, and Mayumi, 4 months. Tsutakawa made his own furniture (all nail-less).

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