

**ADOLF HOFFMEISTER Faces and Collages**

**Arthur Jeffress Gallery 28 Davies Street London W1**

Office Copy

ADOLF HOFFMEISTER Faces and Collages

18 February to 14 March 1964

Arthur Jeffress Gallery 28 Davies Street London W1

This exhibition is both a record of our time and a statement on it. Hoffmeister's life among the leading cultural and political figures of the twentieth century, his commentary on them and his passage through their midst, provides us with a distillation of his friendships, affections and *betes-noires*. But this is only one aspect of a creative personality as diversified as Renaissance man.

ADOLF HOFFMEISTER was born in Prague in 1902; read law at the Charles University graduating and with an LL.D. in 1925. At the age of 17 he became secretary of 'Devetsil', the group which was the hub of Czechoslovakian avant-garde literature and art. All his life he has travelled widely, published articles, short stories, and has written 50 books, the majority self-illustrated, which have been translated into several languages. He first painted in a primitive style and exhibited with the 'Devetsil' group. In 1927, the year in which he drew the portrait of the great Soviet poet Mayakovsky, he exhibited his first caricatures. During the thirties he became acquainted with and drew Auguste Peret, Le Corbusier, George Grosz, Tatlin, Lytton Strachey, Tretyjakov, Otto Gutfreund, and Picasso. In 1939, when Czechoslovakia was overrun, he fled from the Nazis to the U.S.A. via France, Portugal, and Morocco; he broadcast regularly to his home country, and published anti-fascist cartoons which were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and later in England.

Returning to Czechoslovakia after the war he was put in charge of the Department for Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Culture, became Ambassador to Paris from 1948 to 1951, and is now permanent delegate for Czechoslovakia to UNESCO. He travels widely as Czech 'unofficial cultural

ambassador'; is Professor of the Department of Film Cartoon at Prague Art Academy (he took part in producing Jean Effel's film, *The Creation of the World*) and is President of the Carlsbad Film Festival for 1964. Since 1945 his work has been shown in Paris, East and West Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw, Prague and is found in many private collections and public museums.

Hoffmeister has made a most significant contribution to contemporary art, one which indeed overlaps the border of art and collage as such and spreads into decoration, advertising and related fields. He invented typographical collage, he was the first artist to use typography as a total compositional medium regardless of the meaning of the actual words, concentrating only on the visual image. Its origins are unusual. Hoffmeister found himself in the Caucasus without crayons, paints or brushes. He picked up the local newspapers, printed in Georgian script which he could not read but which he could visualize in terms of imaginative space. Thus was born the first of his Caucasian landscapes.

In his first London exhibition Hoffmeister reveals himself as possessing one of the rarest talents of this troubled century, the gift of the laughing pen held in the disciplined hand. On the subject of his portraits he has himself said:

'I think that an artist must know his model well. I knew all the people you see portrayed in this show, I have talked at length with them and I know their works. . . .

'Some of them I drew many times – I made my notes of their noses, their ears, their deportment, their human weaknesses and greatness. Then in my own house I distilled their likeness. That is my ideal – a pure distillation. . . .'

ERIC ESTORICK

## A note on Collage by Adolf Hoffmeister

It happened about three o'clock one afternoon before the first world war, in May 1912 in fact. Many critics would say 'understandably' or 'of course' in Paris, but I don't believe it. Many an original artistic idea has cropped up outside Paris, quite far away from it in fact, and suppressing the 'understandably' or 'of course' does not take away a single jot of Paris cultural glory.

Pablo Picasso, that headstrong modernist and stubborn realist whose realism knows no limits, was struggling with a small oval cubist still life with glass, newspaper headline, lemon, knife and pipe, or rather the stem of a pipe. Picasso always wrestled passionately with a painting till it was actually finished – until he acknowledged that it was finished.

That May afternoon he was not satisfied with the lower left half of his picture. Finally he cut out a piece of oil-cloth the pattern of which resembled a wickerwork chair, and stuck it on the painting. In order that the painting, or shall we say the painted part of the picture, should be logically unified with the stuck-on part, he framed the oval with sailor's rope. Picasso still has this picture at home. Art historians claim it is the first collage.

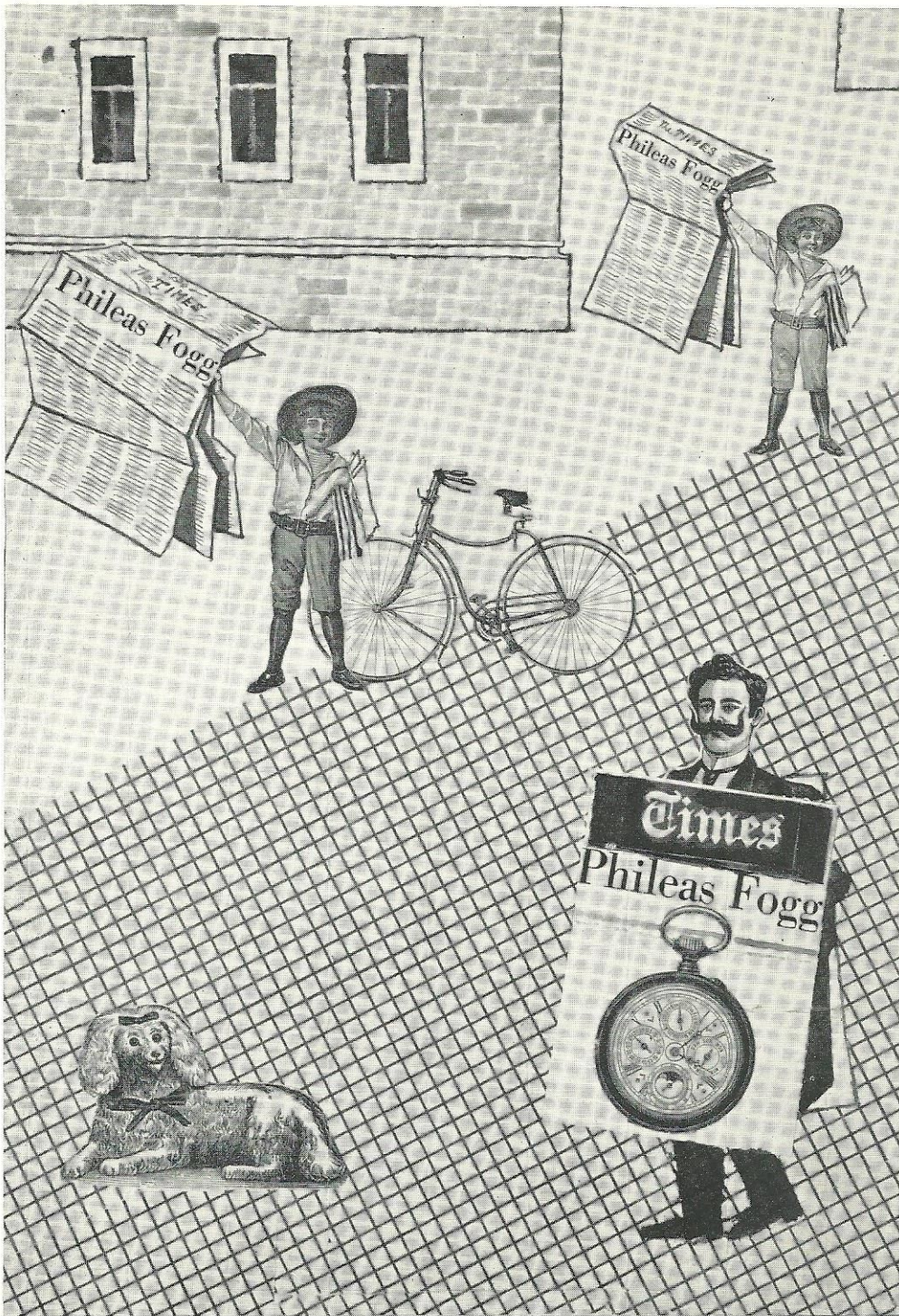
I don't know if this true. Maybe they made collages in Crete, or in Ur, in Benin or Pallenque, but either we know nothing about them or haven't yet realized the fact. We still have to decide what collage really is. I do not know why the charming Vocásek of the Rychnov gallery failed to stick playing-cards on his appealing still lives. Nor why the malicious Manet didn't just fix postcards on the wall above Emile Zola's desk. Why did the 15th-century Flemish and Italian painters, Crivelli for instance, try so hard to fool their audience? All it amounted to was an attempt to deceive the eye: experiments and tricks known as *trompe l'oeil*. But collage is not *trompe l'oeil*. Collage does not fake reality.

Collage is reality itself and this reality takes pride in being an element foreign to the creative act of expression. A platypus would feel more at home in the Czech village of Nebeská Rybná (Celestial Fishpond) than a piece of torn wrapping-paper does

on a painted guitar. Collage is an element of reality transferred to the work of art. It is a kind of quotation from reality. This is not just my opinion. No one, I hope, is going to doubt that reality is real, though of course all the relations of a particular bit of reality to its environment change as soon as it is cut out and transplanted from its real space to the imaginary one of the picture. Between this scrap of the real world and the artistic world of the picture a kind of inner unity is reached. The final impression made on the spectator comes from the interacting tension or interdependence of each component. It depends upon their self-contrasting co-operation.

From the outset collage has had a quality of contrariness that is the natural weapon of all the revolutions in art of the first decades of the 20th-century, since they were all levelled against bourgeois society. Their purpose was to insult and harass and their weapons had often a single aim – *épater les bourgeois*. In every Picasso collage there is irony, wilfulness and roguishness in good measure. Therefore all the artistic trends which jostled one another for position at the time also found expression in collage. For they were all young, bent on demolishing the old to make room for the new. There were the Dadaists, Futurists, and Surrealists. Each trend had its own method of collage. The Dadaists were the most consistent. Heartfield and Lissitski thought up *photomontage*. Schwitters created total collage, excluding artistic media such as colour or drawing. The Futurists, headed by Marinetti who later became tainted by fascism, sought to release words and even letters from the bonds of syntax and meaning. Surrealism contributed to collage the painter Max Ernst. His 'Dream of a Young Girl who Wished to Enter a Nunnery', 'Femme 100 tête' and 'Week of Goodness' became classic examples of total collage. A tradition had been founded.

Among significant artists who have made use of collage as an independent art form are: Picasso, Braque, Juan Gris, Marcel Duchamp, Schwitters, Carra, Balla, Malevich, Picabia, George Grosz,



73 Phineas Fogg - Sensation collage 13½ × 9½ ins

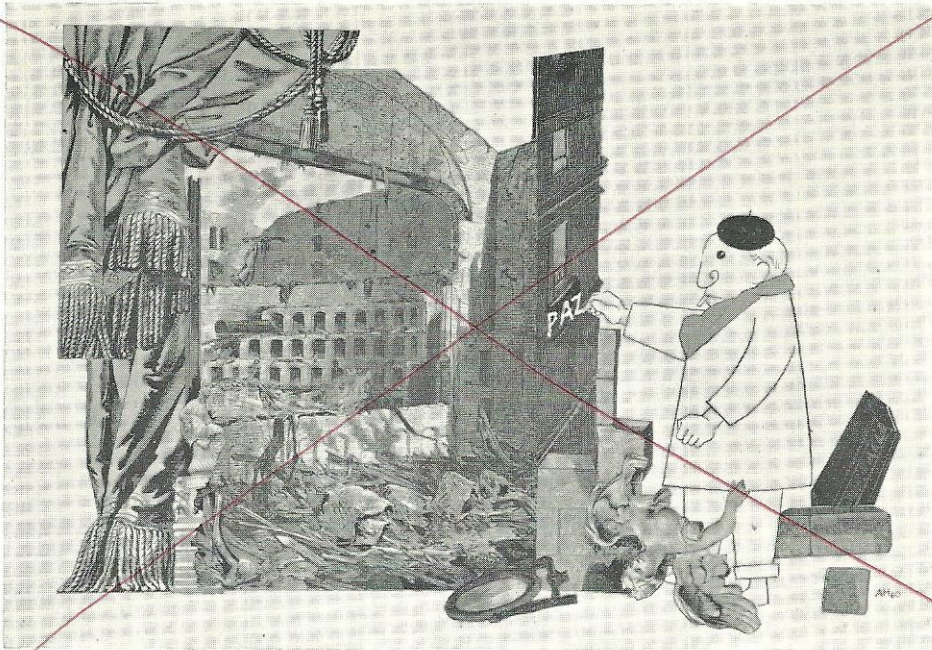
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John Heartfield, Man Ray, Seligman, Baargeld, Max Ernst.

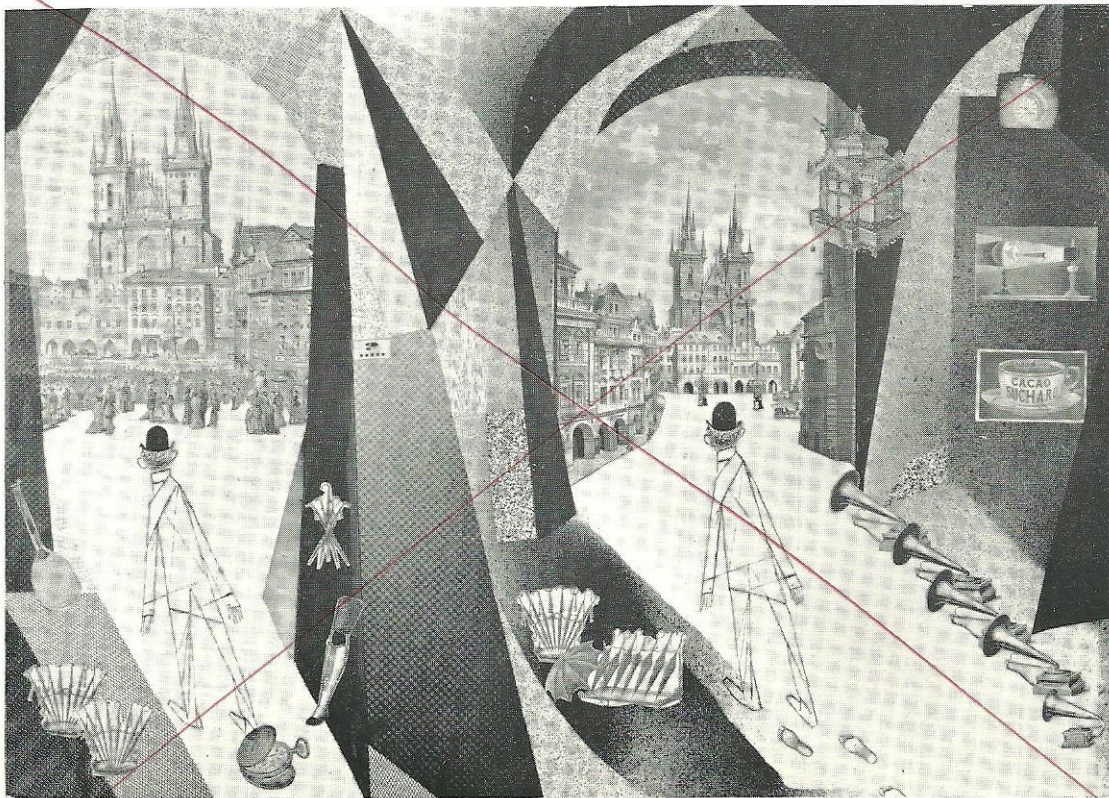
The first Czech collage I drew and put together about 1927. During the Surrealist period Teige, Styrský and Toyen went in for collage, and after the liberation in 1945 it was taken up by caricaturists like B. Stepan. Its foremost representative in the most recent period is perhaps the poet, Jiri Kolar, whose meticulous collage and *rolaz* are known throughout the world. Others include Toman, in photomontage, and E. Radok, in animated cartoon. And one wouldn't believe how many secret collagists there are who do their work at home and never let on.

Today the *Lettristes* often turn to collage. English Pop-art, the vulgarized urban poetry of British life, stems from it. And within the context of Pop-art, collage reveals a further virtue that is not always apparent at first sight. It has within it, consciously or unconsciously, the overt or covert humour of our century; and most subtly it expresses the ironic poetry of our time.

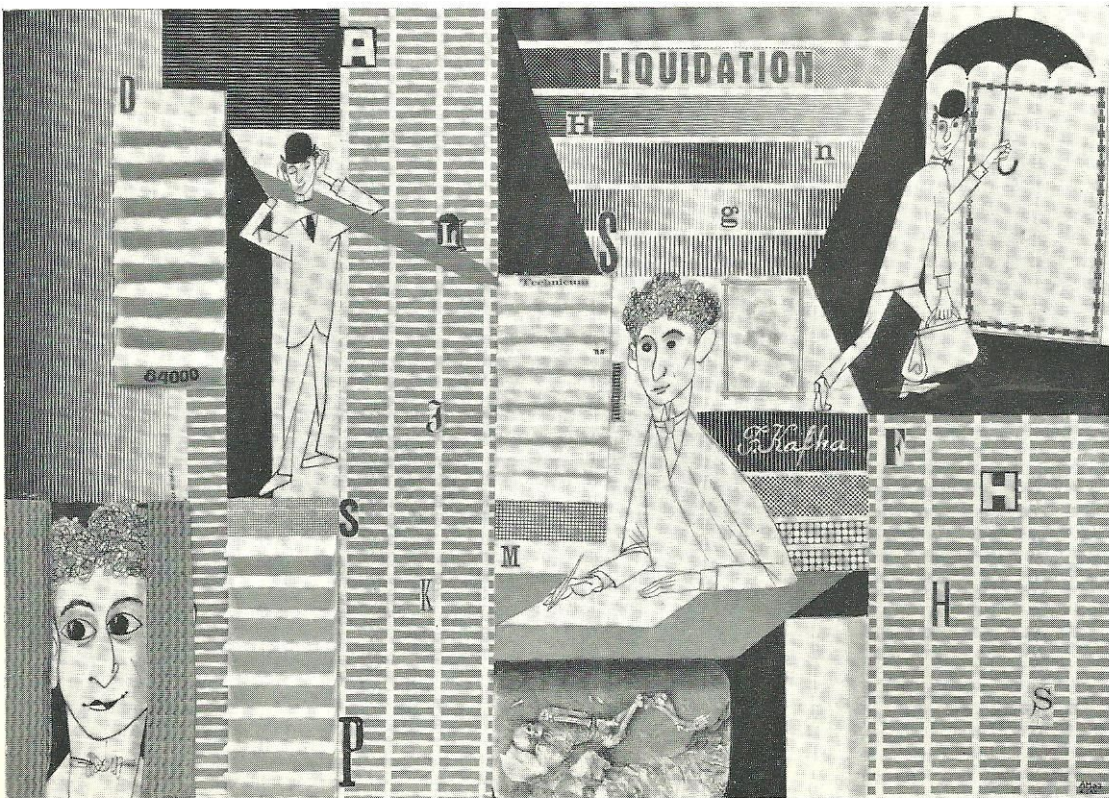
\*The Czech poet Jiri Kolar coined the term (from the Czech for a window blind) to describe the type of collage in which the picture is cut into strips.



25 Pablo Picasso – La Paz 1960 collage 15½ × 21¼ ins



56 Franz Kafka in Prague 1963 collage 19 × 27 ins



55 Franz Kafka 1963 collage 19×26 ins

X



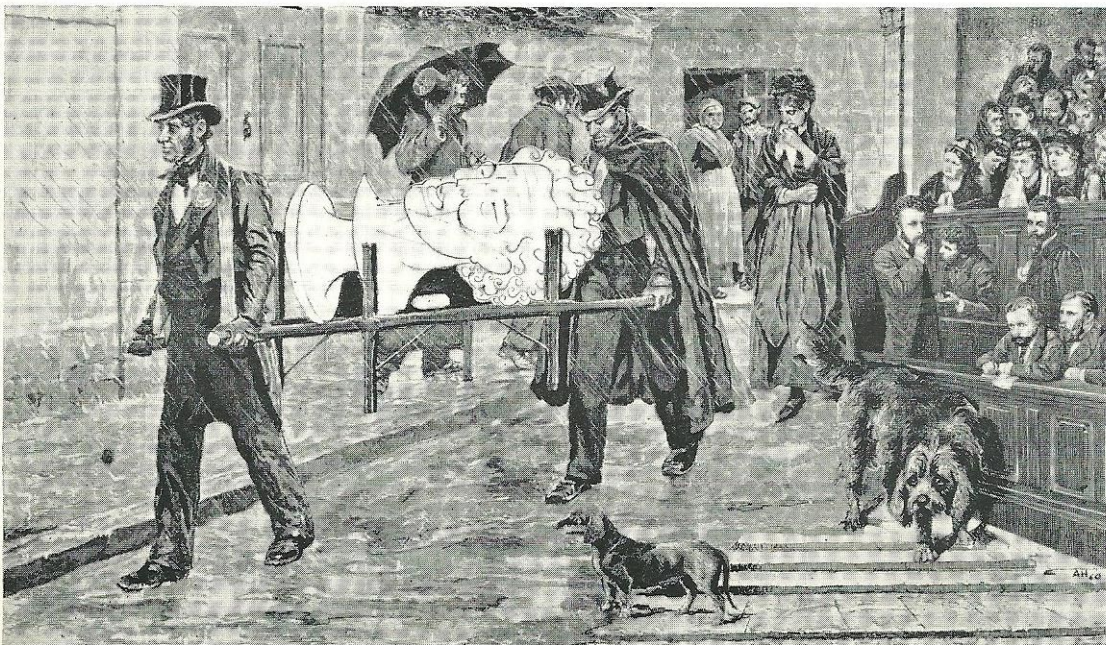
- 1 Vladimir Mayakovsky, 1927  
ink drawing  $20\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 2 Auguste Perét, 1928  
collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 10$  ins
- 3 Lè Corbusier, 1928  
ink drawing  $15\frac{3}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 4 Jean Cassou, 1929  
ink drawing  $20 \times 15$  ins
- 5 George Grosz, 1930  
ink drawing  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  ins
- 6 Vladimir Tatlin, 1931  
ink drawing  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 7 Lytton Strachey, 1934  
collage  $22\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 8 Sergey Tretyakov, 1934  
collage  $23 \times 15\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 9 Pablo Picasso  
ink drawing  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 10 Otto Gutfreund, 1937  
ink drawing  $14\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 11 Tristan Tzara, 1934  
ink drawing  $13\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 12 Salvador Dali, 1949  
ink drawing  $16\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 13 Fernard Léger, 1955  
ink drawing  $15 \times 11$  ins
- 14 Picasso flying to the Wroclaw Peace Conference, 1956  
ink drawing  $17 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 15 Jean Cocteau Member of the Academy, 1956  
ink drawing  $16\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 16 Jiri Trnka, Puppeteer, 1956  
ink drawing  $17 \times 13$  ins
- 17 John Steinbeck, 1957  
ink drawing  $17 \times 12$  ins
- 18 Marc Chagall, 1957  
collage  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 19 Albert Giacometti, 1957  
ink drawing  $17 \times 12$  ins
- 20 Pablo Picasso with Yellow Waistcoat  
ink and wash  $12 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 21 Pablo Picasso with Red Scarf  
ink and wash  $19 \times 11$  ins
- 22 Triumphal Arch for Joan Mirò, 1959  
collage  $17 \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 23 Maurice Utrillo  
collage  $16\frac{3}{4} \times 12$  ins
- 24 Jacques Prévert, 1960  
ink drawing  $10\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 25 Pablo Picasso – La Paz, 1960  
collage  $15\frac{1}{2} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 26 Pablo Picasso at the Exhibition of Italian Sculpture, 1960  
collage  $23\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 27 John Werich as Ubu Roy, 1960  
collage  $24 \times 16\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 28 Louis Aragon and the Critics  
collage  $8 \times 17$  ins
- 29 Jean Paul Sartre, 1962  
ink drawing  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 30 R.I. Rozdestvensky, Moscow, 1962  
collage  $16\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 31 Laco Novomesky, 1963  
ink drawing  $12 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 32 Jose Clemente Orozco, 1963  
ink drawing  $19 \times 15\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 33 Jose David Alfaro Siquieros, 1963  
ink drawing  $19 \times 15$  ins
- 34 Max Ernst  
collage  $17\frac{3}{8} \times 13$  ins
- 35 The Wind of Surrealism (Max Ernst), 1960  
collage  $23\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 36 The Funeral of Surrealism (André Breton), 1960  
collage  $9 \times 15\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 37 Tram Habit (the poet Nezval), 1960  
collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 38 The Martians landed in Southern England. The Police succeeded in keeping this event secret, 1961  
collage  $9 \times 16\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 39 Detective Story, 1961  
collage  $10 \times 13\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 40 The Swing in the Galaxy, 1960  
collage  $9 \times 8$  ins
- 41 The World of Franz Kafka, 1961  
collage  $15 \times 23\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 42 Finally Free  
collage  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 43 Endangered family life, 1963  
collage  $9 \times 12\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 44 Vive le . . . , 1963  
collage  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 45 She didn't even bring her red gloves!, 1963  
collage  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 46 Her Majesty the cat, 1963  
collage  $15 \times 10$  ins
- 47 All her former lovers came to her wedding, 1963  
collage  $8\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 48 Sunday morning execution, 1963  
collage  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 49 The Decorative Style is coming back, 1963  
collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 50 London, 1963  
collage  $27 \times 39$  ins
- 51 The Prague Jewish Cemetery, 1963  
collage  $27 \times 39$  ins
- 52 Cote d'Azur, 1963  
collage  $27 \times 39$  ins
- 53 Franz Kafka, 1963  
collage  $16\frac{1}{4} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 54 Franz Kafka, 1963  
collage  $16 \times 11$  ins
- 55 Franz Kafka, 1963  
collage  $19 \times 26$  ins
- 56 Franz Kafka in Prague, 1963  
collage  $19 \times 27$  ins
- 57 The Americans bring their freedom to Africa  
collage  $12\frac{3}{4} \times 23$  ins
- 58 Sicilian Puppet Theatre  
collage  $11\frac{1}{4} \times 16$  ins

- 59 Kids and Beasts  
collage  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 60 Nezval always wanted to play D'Artagnan, 1960  
collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12$  ins
- 61 Greeting the Hussars  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9$  ins
- 62 Maison de Rendez-vous  
collage  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- S 63 The Reform Club, 1963  
collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12$  ins
- 64 The first telescopic photograph from paradise  
collage  $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 65 The Machine for turning hot air into water  
collage  $23\frac{1}{4} \times 16\frac{1}{4}$  ins
- 66 Caucasian Landscape, 1959  
typographic collage  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 67 Sicilian Landscape, 1961  
typographic collage  $15 \times 23\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 68 Skyscraper Landscape, 1962  
collage  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- LES MALHEURS DE SOPHIE  
by the Comtesse de Ségur
- S 69 Through 'The Times' printing press  
collage  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{3}{4}$  ins

- 70 Barricade in the nursery  
collage  $7 \times 11\frac{3}{4}$  ins
- 71 And she dropped down  
collage  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 72 London Sunday  
collage  $11\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$  ins

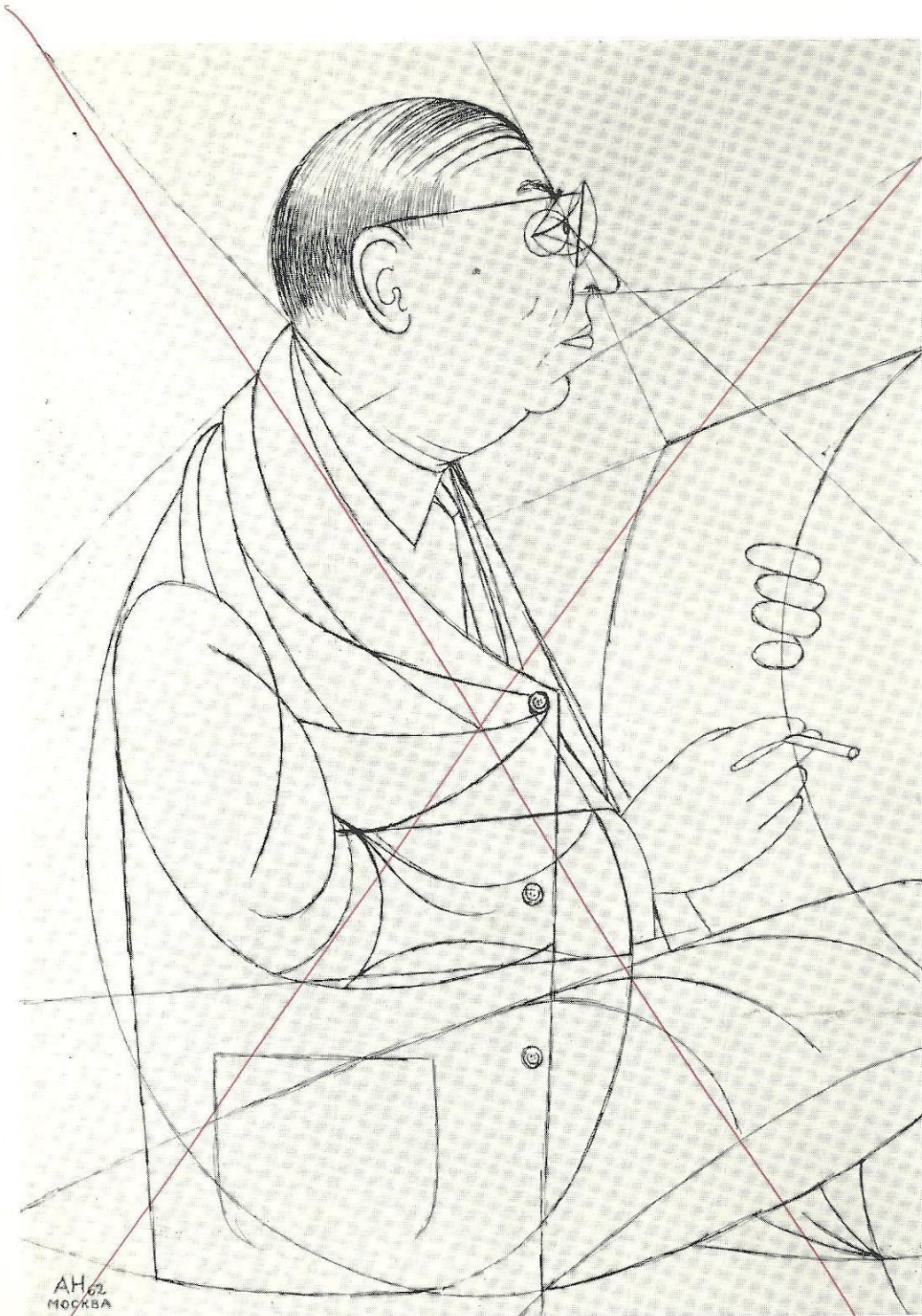
ROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS  
by Jules Verne, 1959

- 73 Phileas Fogg - Sensation  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 74 Sharp Shooter  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 75 Time, time, time  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 76 At sea  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 77 Boston  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- 78 Rain in Europe  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- S 79 Phileas Fogg in person  
collage  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  ins
- S 80 Kafka in his environment  
collage  $19 \times 26$  ins



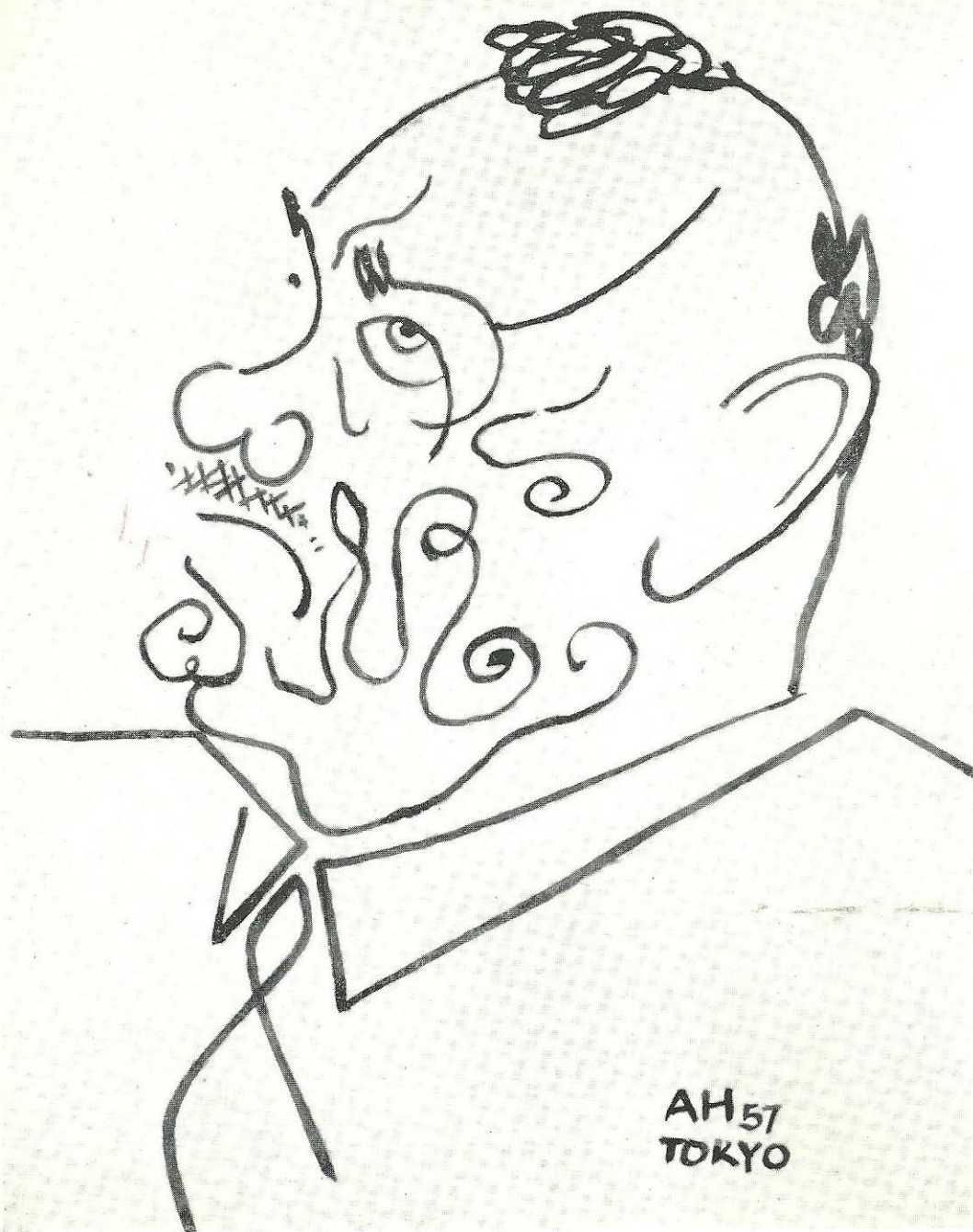
36 The Funeral of Surrealism (André Breton) 1960 collage  $9 \times 15\frac{1}{4}$  ins

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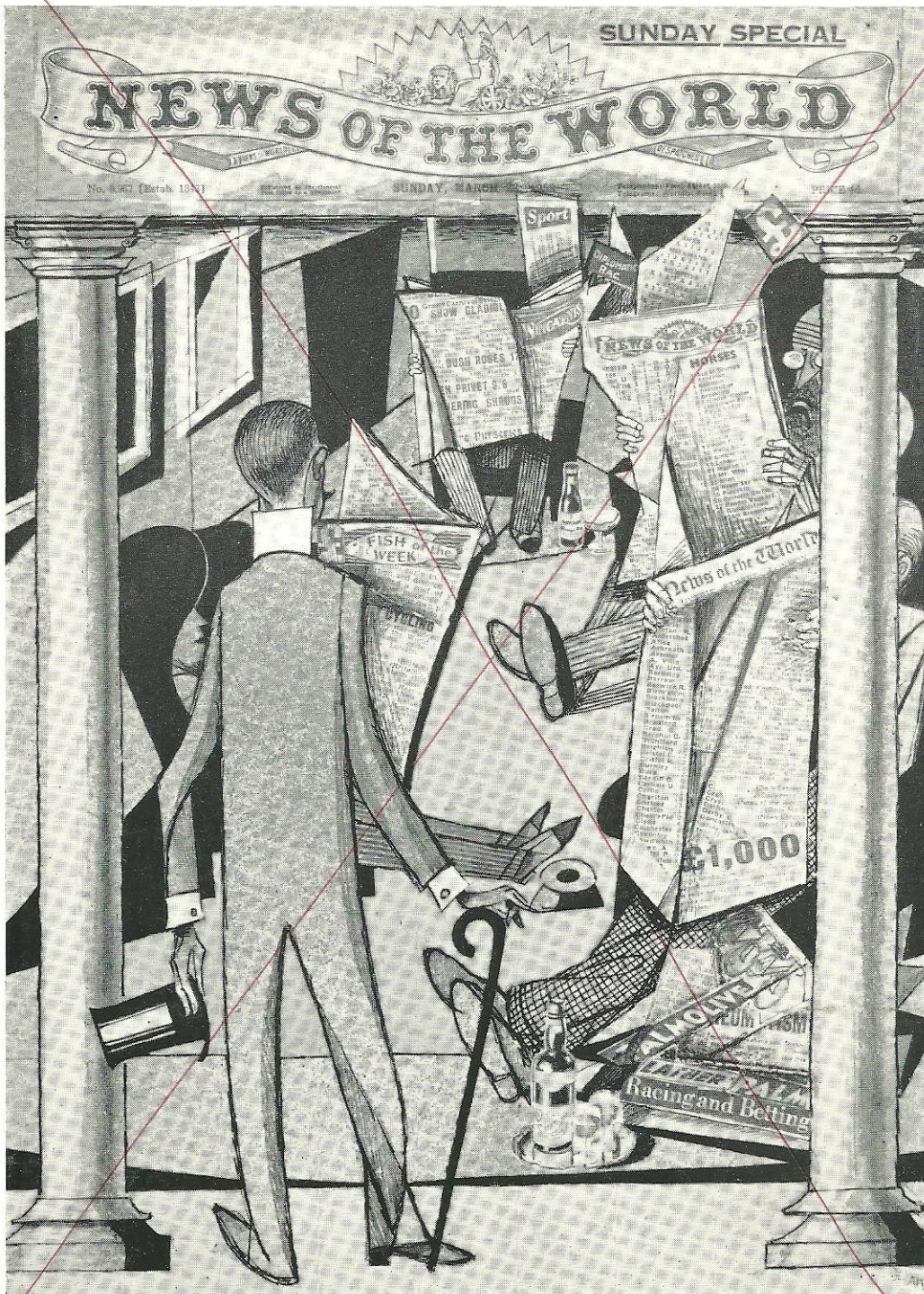
29 Jean Paul Sartre 1962 ink drawing 16½ × 11½ ins

**SOLD: Miss. Jennifer Adams**  
no photo.



17 John Steinbeck 1957 ink drawing 17×12 ins

X

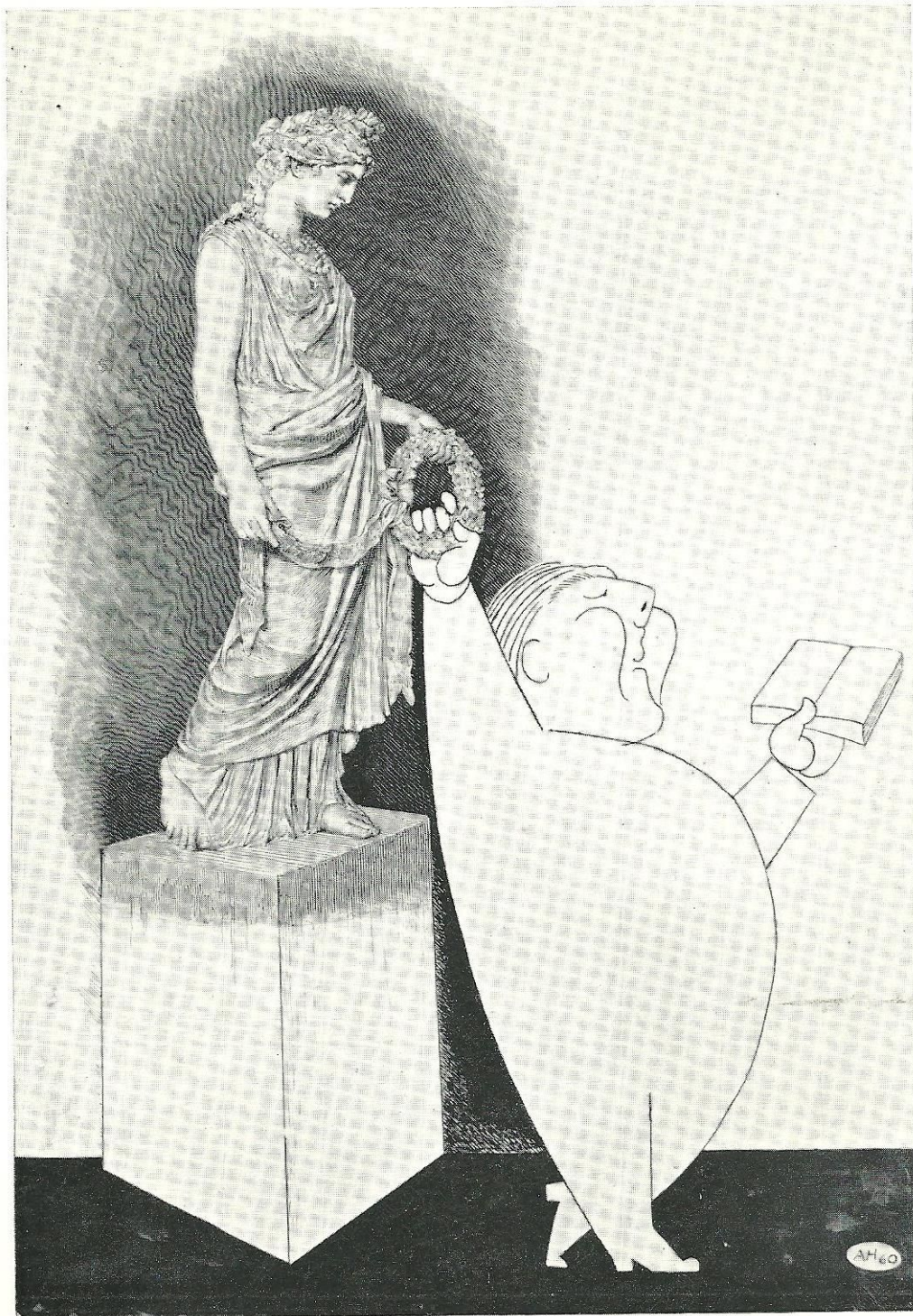


63 The Reform Club, 1963 collage 16½ × 12 ins



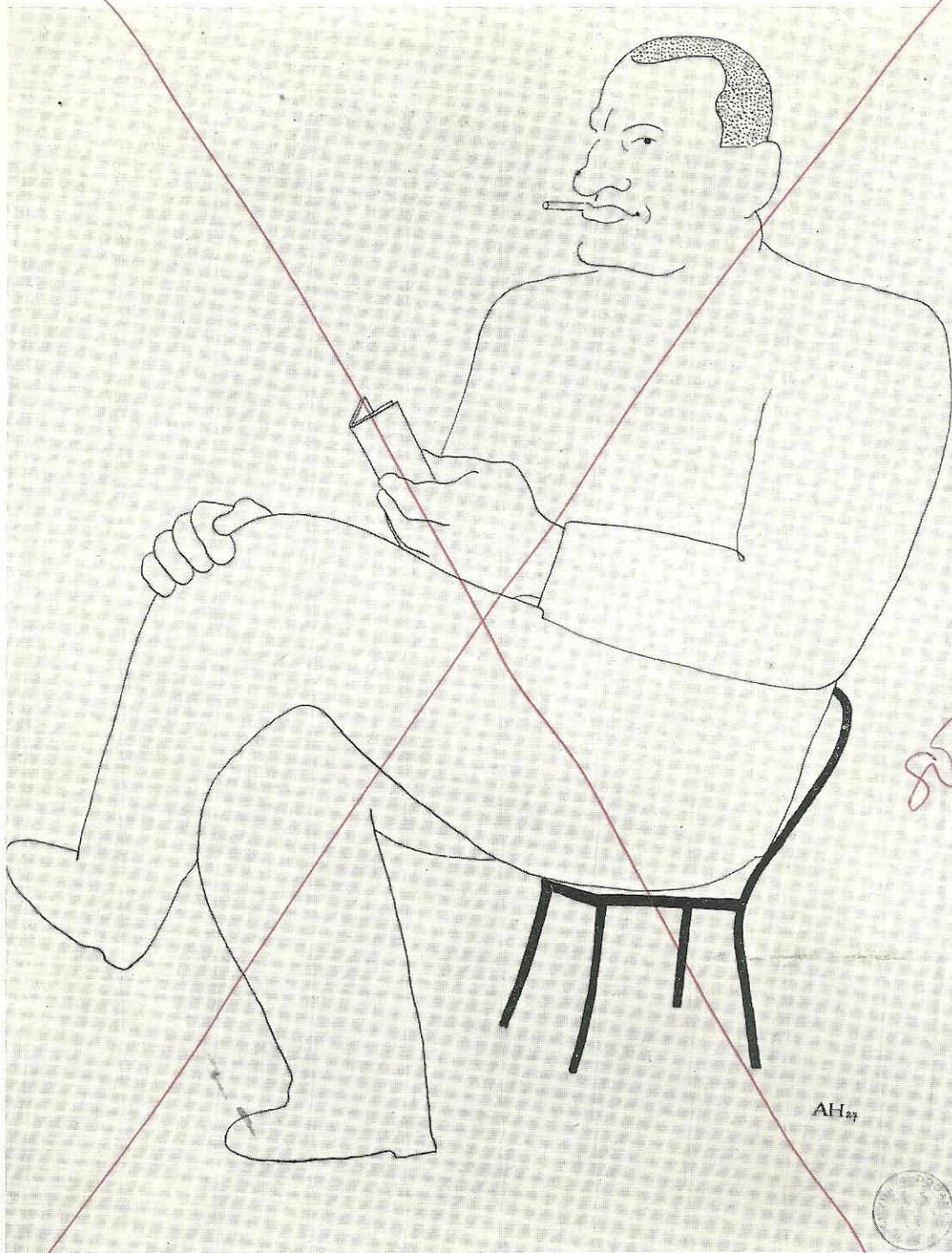
44 Vive le ... 1963 collage  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  ins

X



37 Tram Habit (the poet Nezval) 1960 collage  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  ins

*[Handwritten signature]*



1 Vladimir Mayakovsky 1927 ink drawing  $20\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$  ins





ord.

27 John Werich as Ubu Roy 1960 collage 24×16 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins

**PERMANENTLY:**

Archipenko

Ayrton

Baj

Calder

Campigli

Cascella

Chagall

Clough

Favorsky

Feiler

Gontcharova

Gruber

Hoskin

Janecek

Kaplan

Kandinsky

Koenig

Konfar

Larionov

Lissitski

Magritte

Malevich

Moore

Morandi

Mucha

Schener

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