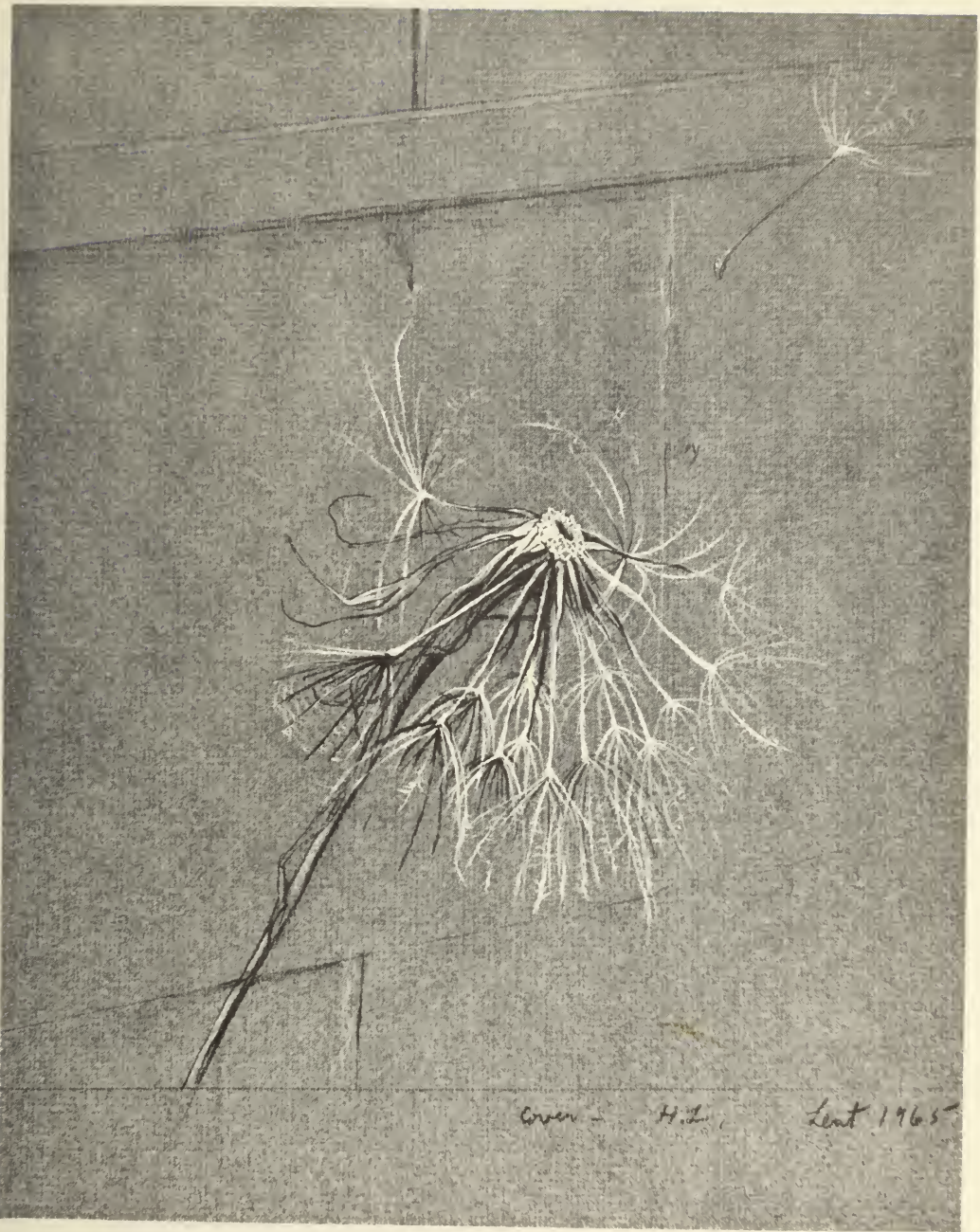


DONALD LENT



BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

DONALD LENT

Paintings, Drawings, Etchings

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

1967

Cover: Globe of Down (No. 8)

1,000 COPIES

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INTRODUCTION

DONALD LENT was born in Marblehead, Massachusetts in 1933. After graduating from high school in Marblehead in 1951, Lent served in the Army for three years from 1952-54, the last two of these as a Russian translator in Germany. He subsequently attended the University of California at Santa Barbara, and upon graduating in 1959 received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for the study of art at Yale University. Lent earned a B.F.A. (1960) and an M.F.A. (1963) at Yale, where he studied with a number of leading American artists, including Josef Albers, James Brooks, and Nicholas Carone. He began his teaching career as an Instructor at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1961, and currently is an Assistant Professor on the faculty there. During the academic year 1966-67, Lent has been a Visiting Lecturer in the Art Department at Bowdoin College. Lent's work has been exhibited in more than two dozen group shows, more than half of which were invitational, and has had two one-man shows at the Esther Bear Gallery in Santa Barbara.

The present exhibition of some forty-six items—paintings in oil and water color, drawings in pen and charcoal, and etchings—consists mainly of works done during the past year and a half, most of them since Lent has been at Bowdoin.

A large number of the pictures in the exhibition are studies of nature. Lent's transcriptions of these images is so simple and direct that it hardly seems that the artist has come between the motif and the viewer. Indeed, one feels that instead of imposing his will upon these subjects, Lent has chosen to allow them to speak with their own true voices. With a sensitive eye and a gentle hand, he has captured not only the appearances of things but their essences as well. This is particularly true of such drawings as *Globe of Down* (no. 8, cover) and *Tree Trunk* (no. 17, fig. 4), and the oil *Unfinished Summer Afternoon* (no. 15).

Among his more recent works is a series of seven etchings (nos. 27-33, fig. 7) made to illustrate Alan Stephens' poem *Heat Lightning*, which Lent admires for its "clear, straightforward, and ingenuous observation


of nature." The poem, together with original impressions of the etchings, is being published by the Bowdoin College Museum of Art in a volume limited to thirty copies.

Also recent are portrait drawings of three American artists, two of the nineteenth century—*Winslow Homer* (no. 42) and *Thomas Eakins* (no. 43, *fig. 12*)—and one from our own time—*Edward Hopper* (no. 44)—whose work Lent greatly admires.

The style of such drawings as *Seated Torso* (no. 41, *fig. 11*) and *Subway Fragments* (no. 37, *fig. 9*) add another dimension to Lent's art. These powerfully expressionistic renderings of the human figure owe something to the work of Howard Warshaw, with whom Lent is associated on the faculty at Santa Barbara, and the late Rico Lebrun, who also taught there and whom Lent knew. The latter of these two drawings belongs to a series of works Lent has lately done which deals with his impressions of the subway. Another drawing from this series is *Subway Interior* (no. 38, *fig. 10*), in which the artist has skillfully captured a fleeting moment on a swiftly moving subway, as if through a window, as it passes the stationary observer on the subway platform. This drawing reveals still another facet of Lent's art—his interest in certain aspects of Cubism, a style which he finds fruitful in a number of different ways. If Lent only rarely suggests actual movement, as in *Subway Interior*, he frequently is concerned with creating a sense of the sequence of time within a single frame. This is especially true of such works as his water color *Stairway* (no. 14), where the artist records his passage through a portion of his house into his studio. By the subtle combination of a variety of still recognizable elements not seen in a single moment in time, Lent not only has evoked a sense of his memory of such an experience, but has created as well a composition which in terms of its shapes and colors is in itself powerfully compelling. He has done somewhat the same thing in his series of *Dream Sequence* oils (nos. 9-12). Here are many often unrelated elements, both animate and inanimate—finely painted anatomical fragments and a small cluster of childrens' balloons almost surreal in their appearance, as in *Dream Sequence IV*, no. 11, *fig. 3*—from the world of the artist's own memory, affecting us as they did him with their own peculiar magic.

One of Lent's most beautiful achievements is his water color *Worktable* (no. 2, *fig. 1*), for manifest in it at one and the same time is the artist's skill in dealing with the colors and shapes of his subjects in a compositionally absorbing way, as well as his enormously sensitive way of evoking the subtle and direct sense of nature itself. Indeed, something of the whole character of Lent's artistic temperament is revealed in a remark he made about this work, in which he observed, "In this water color, I wish to convey the idea of a moment of morning light upon the throne of my religion."

MARVIN S. SADIK, *Director*



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CATALOGUE

- 1
VINE BOW, 1961
Pencil, 24 x 19
- 2
WORKTABLE, 1964
Water color, 15 x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$
- 3
MARY WAITING, 1964
Charcoal, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ (sight)
- 4
DOGS, 1964
(from Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*)
Pen, 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$
- 5
SAMUEL BECKETT, 1964
(from Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*)
Pen, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7
- 6
SAMUEL BECKETT, 1965
Etching, 8 x 9
- 7
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(from Alan Stephens' *Heat Lightning*)
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LASS, 1967
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TREES, 1967
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SEATED TORSO, 1967
Charcoal, $26\frac{1}{4}$ x $20\frac{1}{4}$

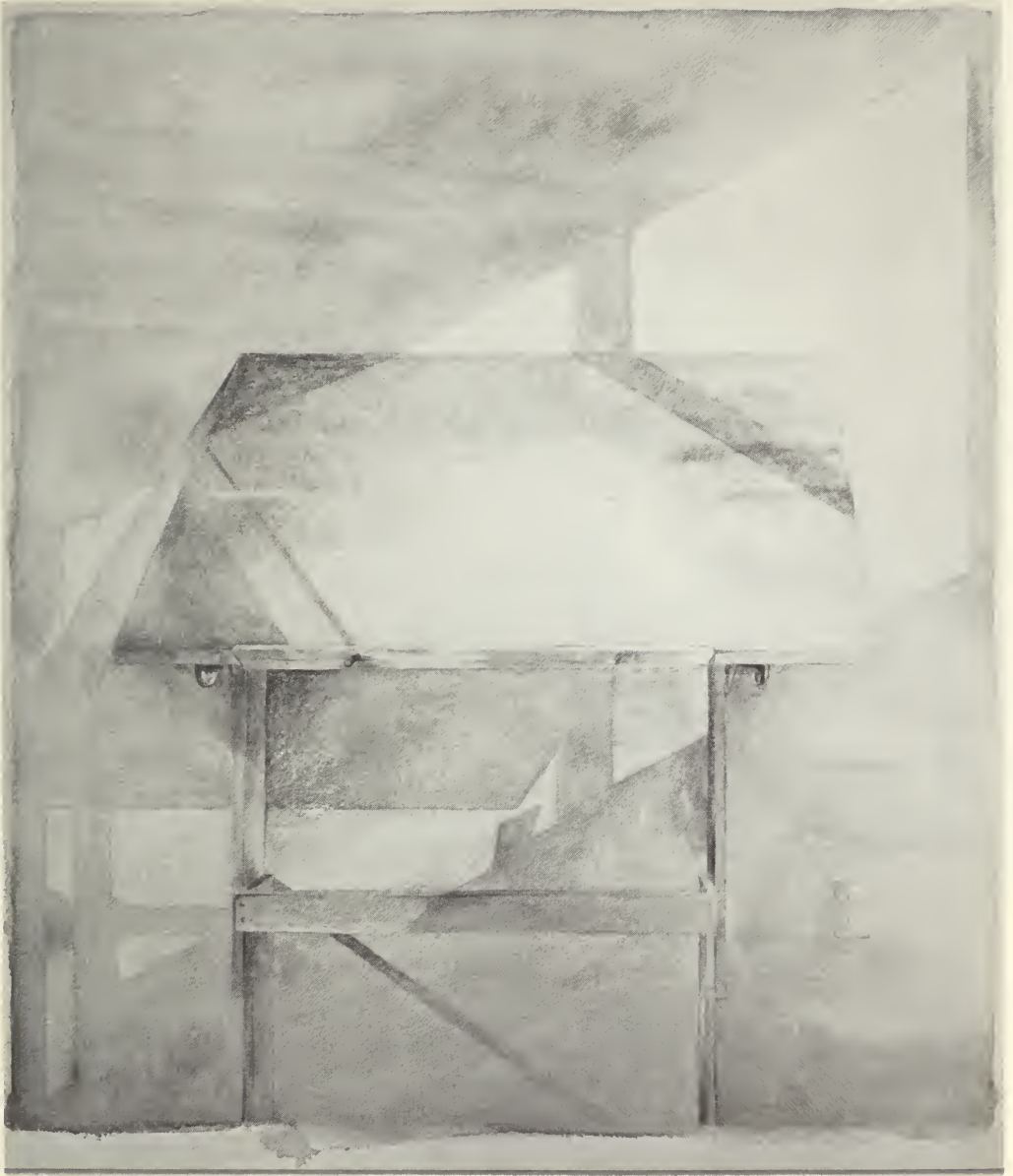
42
WINSLOW HOMER, 1967
Charcoal, 26 x 20

43
THOMAS EAKINS, 1967
Charcoal, 26 x 20

44
EDWARD HOPPER, 1967
Charcoal, 26 x 20

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I. WORKTABLE (NO. 2)



2. BIRDS (NO. 7)



3. DREAM SEQUENCE IV (NO. 12)



4. TREE TRUNK (NO. 17)



5. MARY READING (NO. 21)



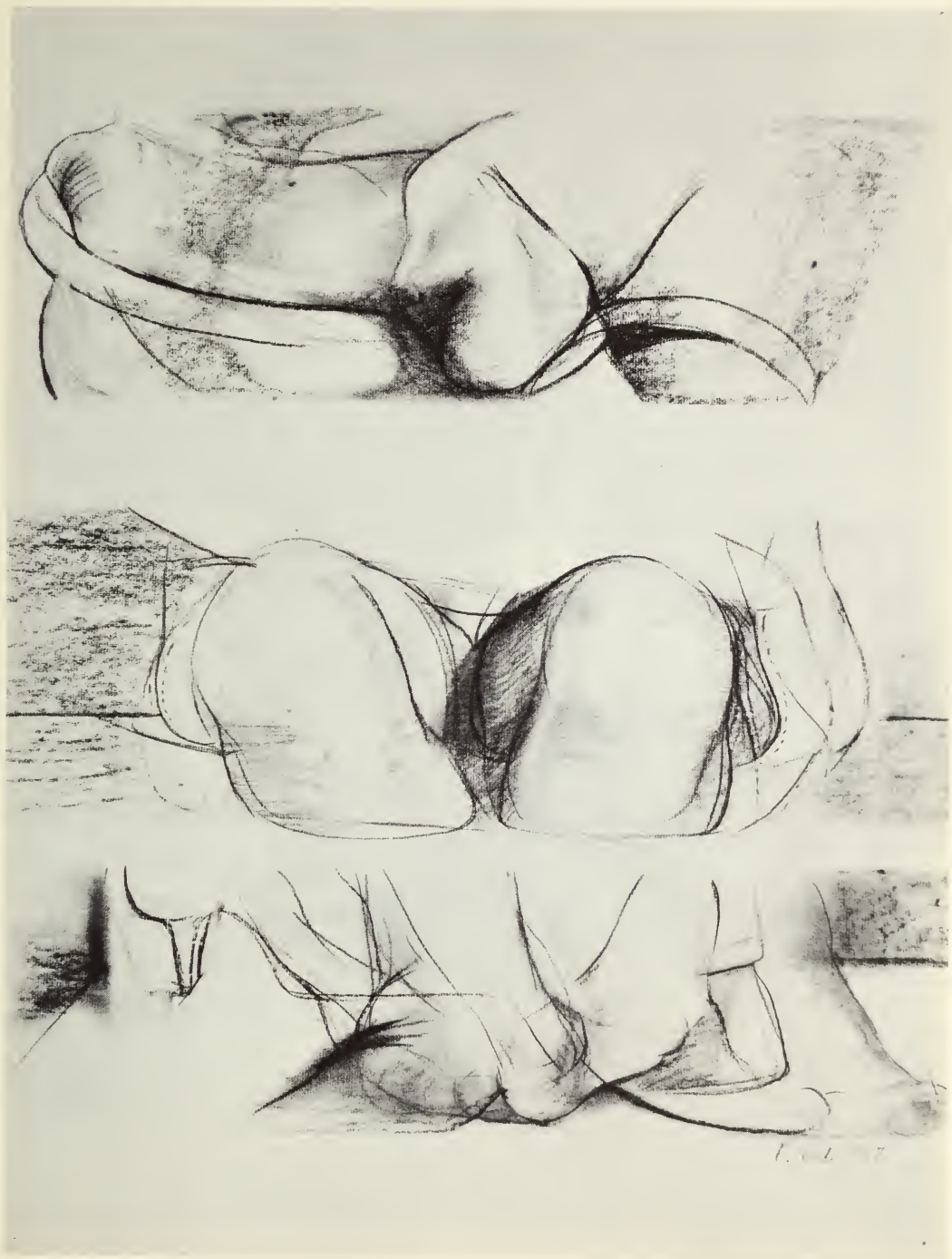
6. EDMUND WILSON (NO. 24)



7. THE ENDING (NO. 32)



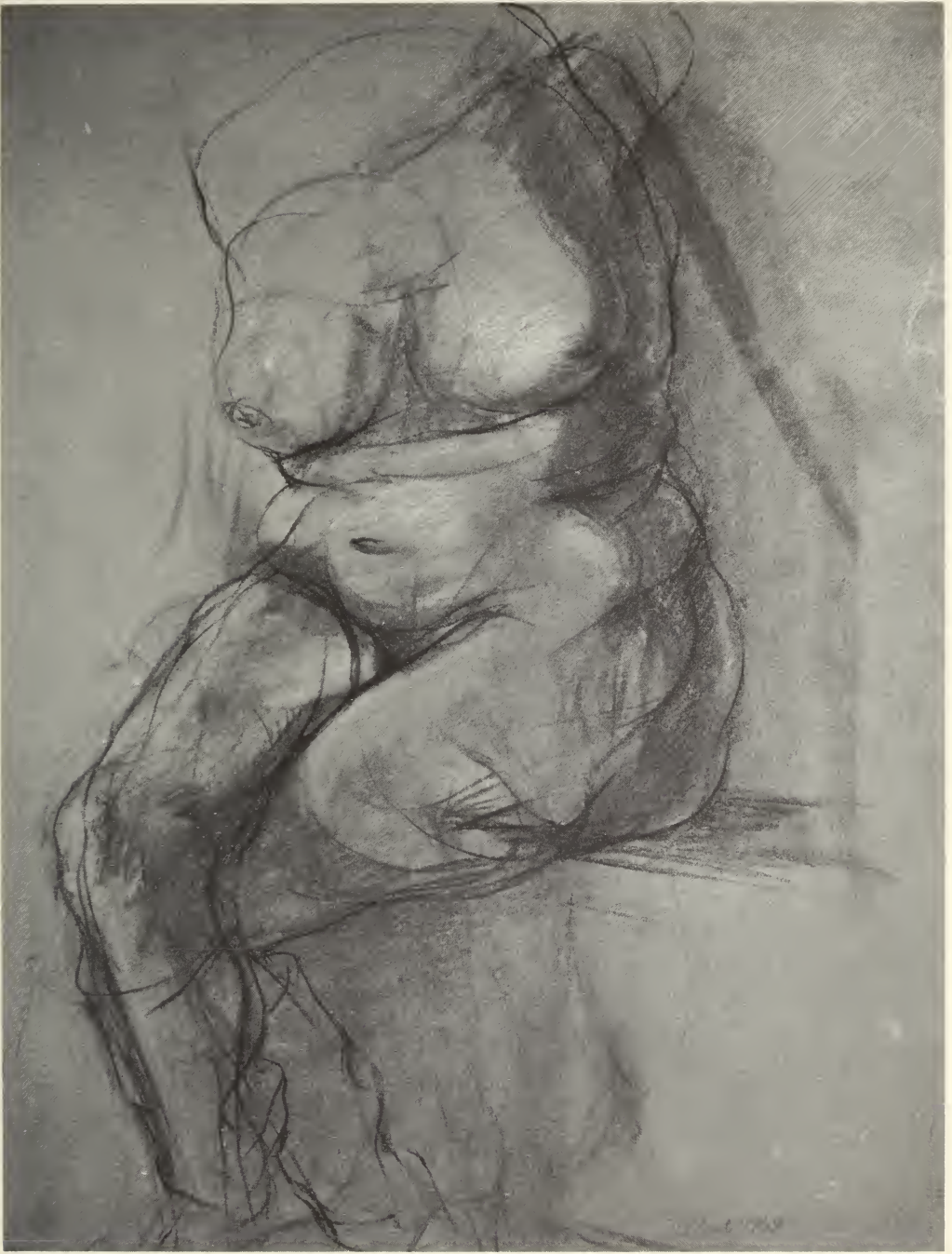
8. THE HELMET MAKER'S LASS (NO. 34)



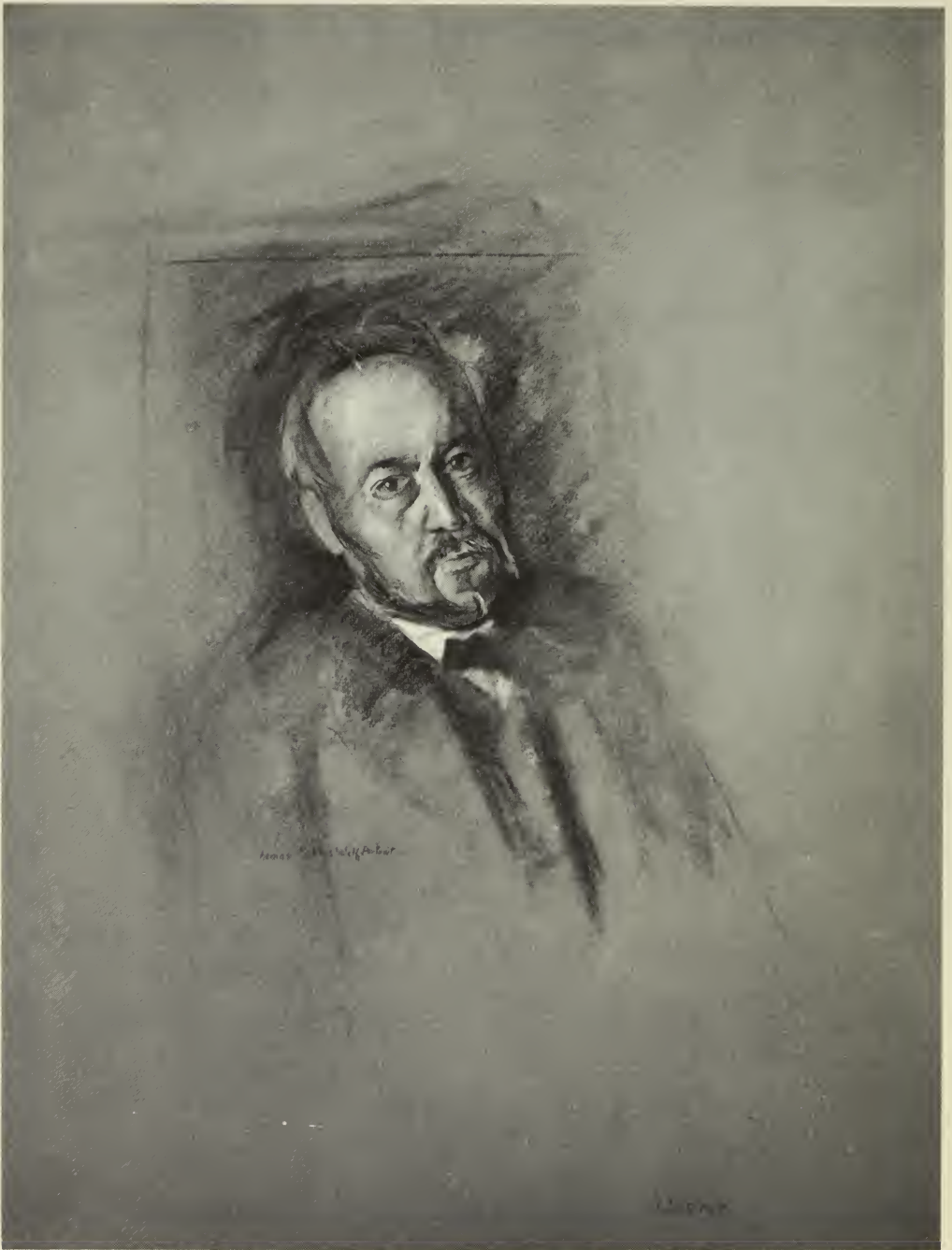
9. SUBWAY FRAGMENTS (NO. 37)



10. SUBWAY INTERIOR (NO. 38)



II. SEATED TORSO (NO. 41)



12. THOMAS EAKINS (NO. 43)

