



DISNER'S "CYNTHIA"

Unsuspected creative powers

Images and atoms

A small coloured boy, armed with a lump of modelling-clay, wandered one day into a general-store on the Cape Flats. The dealer was curious about the child's plaything, and borrowed it. In his hands the shapeless mass assumed the form of a human head, and, fascinated by this unsuspected power of creation, he bought the material from the child—who promptly splurged his windfall on sweets. And the stocky, bespectacled dealer, who had grown up in Lithuania, toughened himself in street-brawls, subsequently knocked about Southafrica, and never given a thought to art, was set off, at the age of 31, on the road to becoming a sculptor. A romantic story, apocryphal perhaps, but Capetown's Solly Disner, who tells it about himself, is an incurable spinner of tales. He is also a sculptor.

Development. Disner, whose second exhibition opened in Johannesburg last week, is concerned with beginnings — of life, form and matter. During the 1940s he made his starting-point the mother-image, woman. Later he dispensed with the human image entirely, and gradually moved closer to the fundamental facts of life through total abstraction. His passage can be traced through his titles: 1945—*Torso*, 1950—*Womanhood*, 1951—*Mother and Child*, 1955—*Atom*, 1957—*Fertilization*, 1959—*Nucleus*.

Unexplored avenues. His mind is filled with unexpressed conceptions—

in new materials, and methods yet unexplored—that will occupy his creative energies for years to come. Intense and articulate, the 53-year-old artist has plenty more to say. His statements are worth waiting for.

Rogue's gallery

The satirist holds up a mirror to society's frailties and foibles, its false pretensions and irrational practices. By underlining the reflection with wit, he makes his castigations acceptable to all. Popular satirical art, in the form of the press cartoon, serves to relieve the tensions of political issues by persuading people to laugh, at themselves and at their leaders.

Other peoples' aberrations. But one's fellows are always the best butt for mockery, and Johannesburg's Giuseppe Cattaneo has recently been diverting himself by assembling his own rogue's gallery. While he lacks the rapier-wit of the master-satirist, he is nevertheless a master-draughtsman, and his crisp drawings, with one or two obscure exceptions, present a startling image of the human oddities who make up the social scene. They are not pretty, but they are true to type: puffy, middle-aged "Romeos"; baby-faced "Receptives", with thirsty mouths seemingly drinking everything in; grim-faced "Tolerants", and mechanical "Patriots". But the most repugnant "portrait" by far depicts the "Inferiority Complex". It offers a succinct warning to the small personality not to hide behind a braying mouth—Cattaneo may be watching.



Other people's aberrations
"INFERIORITY COMPLEX"