

## Statements 76

### Jack Weiss

To honor the American Bicentennial, the Society of Typographic Arts in Chicago organized the exhibition Statements 76 "to revitalize the words that inspired the American Revolution." Appropriate quotations from that historic period were the dominant element in a wide variety of media—from sculpture to a patchwork quilt.

During the nation's bicentennial year, activities, events and objects of all kinds were produced by multitudes of inspired individuals and organizations. Few, it seems, dealt specifically with aspects of visible language. One exception was Statements 76, an exhibition sponsored by the Society of Typographic Arts which opened in Chicago at the Ryder Gallery on July 1.

In honoring America's 200th birthday, the STA gave members of the graphic arts community an opportunity to contribute their particular talents to Illinois' bicentennial celebration. The purpose of Statements 76 was to revitalize the words that inspired the American Revolution. Letterforms—taken from any part of the spectrum: from type to calligraphy to handwriting—became the subject matter to make visible appropriate quotations from the historical period.

There were no limitations on media or method. Posters, lithographs, serigraphs, bas-reliefs, patchwork quilts, photographs, sculptures, and collages were suggested. Only two criteria were stated. First, the entry had to be hand-carried without assistance. Second, the basic quotation was to be the dominant element, with

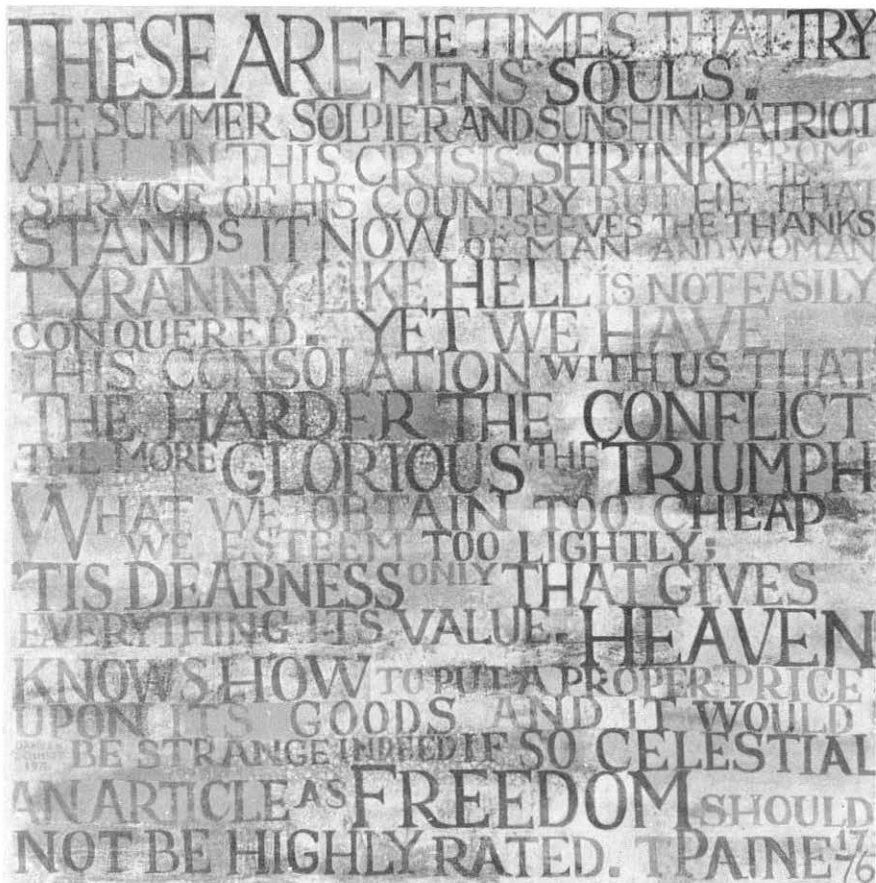
Opposite: Ed Panian, *Untitled*. Calligraphy, 19 x 24 inches.

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figurative or other visual support elements subordinate. The exhibition was open to STA members, other professionals and to any Illinois resident or student.

Although entries were initially slow in coming in, they did in fact arrive in quantity: an array of shapes, sizes, colors, and materials. It was apparent then why the work was delayed. Unlike a professional show where designers, art directors, and printers could easily pull samples from their past year's work, this show required personal commitment. It necessitated the development and execution of a one-of-a-kind idea, and very likely a not-for-profit idea; only one piece had been produced commercially. Of the others, the hand-sewn quilt by Louise Scire Tessing epitomized the high degree of personal commitment called for. Louise, current

James K. Schmidt, *Bicentennial Offering*. Oil and acrylic, 50 x 50 inches.



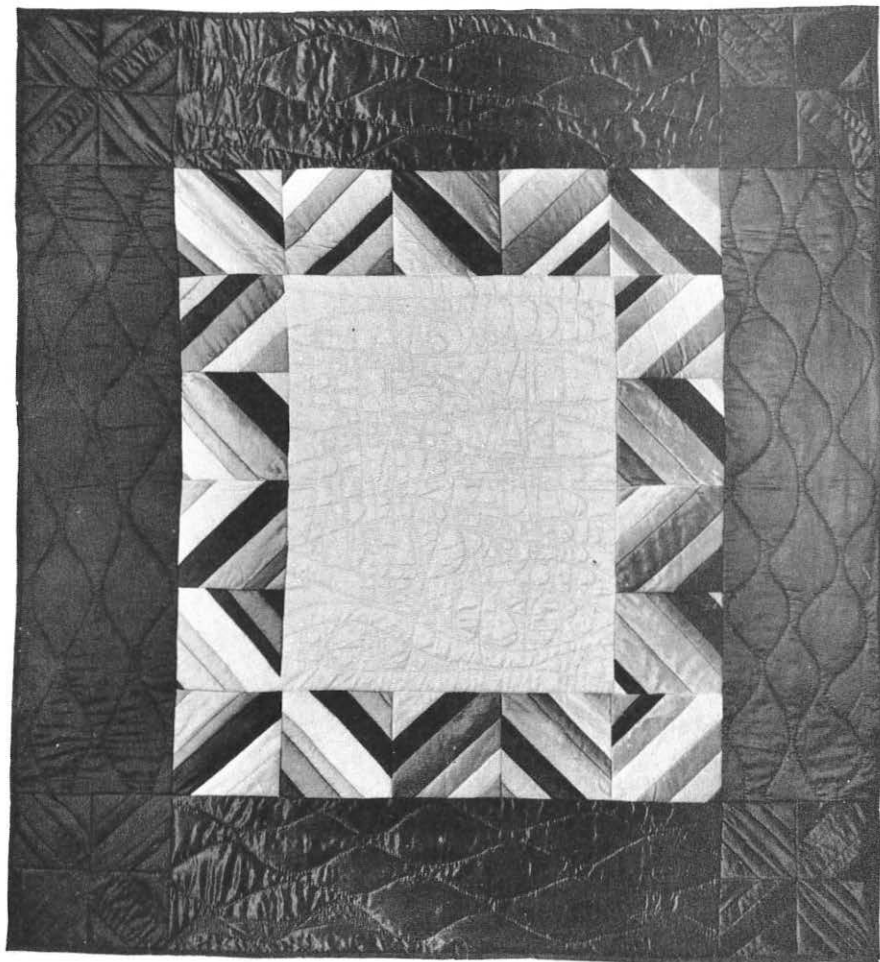
president of the STA, spent 500 hours completing her entry which features a white-on-white, stitched quotation by Abigail Adams.

Over fifty-seven students and professionals submitted work which was juried by Robert Amft, Rhodes Patterson, and Arthur Paul. Forty-six were selected for the exhibit.

The accompanying examples were selected to illustrate the great variety of letterform interpretations which appeared in the exhibit. The work speaks (literally) for itself, but the accompanying credits disclose the broad range of media and scale which resulted from the open framework of the exhibit's entry criteria.

Catalogs are available to interested persons by writing to the Society of Typographic Arts, 228 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Please include \$1.00 for postage and handling.

Louise Scire Tessing, *Quote Quilt 1976*. Quilt, 90 x 100 inches.





Gloria Jean Ammons, *Freedom of the Press*.  
Poster, 16-1/2 x 24 inches.

Mary Gehr, *E Pluribus Unum*. Batik, 37 x 36 inches.



Hayward R. Blake, *No Right Turn*. Assemblage, 2 x 9 feet.

