

# Art

By JOHN RUSSELL

"Inaugural Exhibition of Six Sculptors" (Bette Stoler Gallery, 13 White Street): The new Bette Stoler Gallery in TriBeCa concentrates, above all, on new work, as it should, but for many visitors the surprise of the inaugural show will be a group of early (1965) assemblages by Nancy Grossman. Those who know Nancy Grossman primarily for her rather spooky sculptures of leatherbound heads will find that although leather and rubber have a role to play in these assemblages, they are related as much to Abstract Expressionist painting as to Neo-Surrealism. At once grand, hectic and ferocious, they make an impressive effect.

Among the other exhibitors, John Duff has two remarkable pieces — "Kite" and "Venus" — in the back room. Ursula van Rydingsvard is perhaps not shown at her best in five huge standing pieces in cedar wood that try altogether too hard for monumentality. In "Stanza for Genet" and "Waiting Pool," James Ford treads a middle ground between sculpture and the architectural model, with some sly jumps in scale to keep us alert. (His wall piece "Concrete Architect" also has a notable slyness.)

Christopher Sproat's free-floating chandelier in the back room suggests that marine breezes may blow from the Hudson River even in high summer, and this visitor took a particular pleasure in the enigmatic pieces by Steve Wood, some of which seem to have been put together high up on the wall by a particularly intelligent owl. Wood is by no means the only artist around who aims at a private archeology, but he is certainly one of the most inventive. (Through July 1.)