

Symmetry: Culture and Science

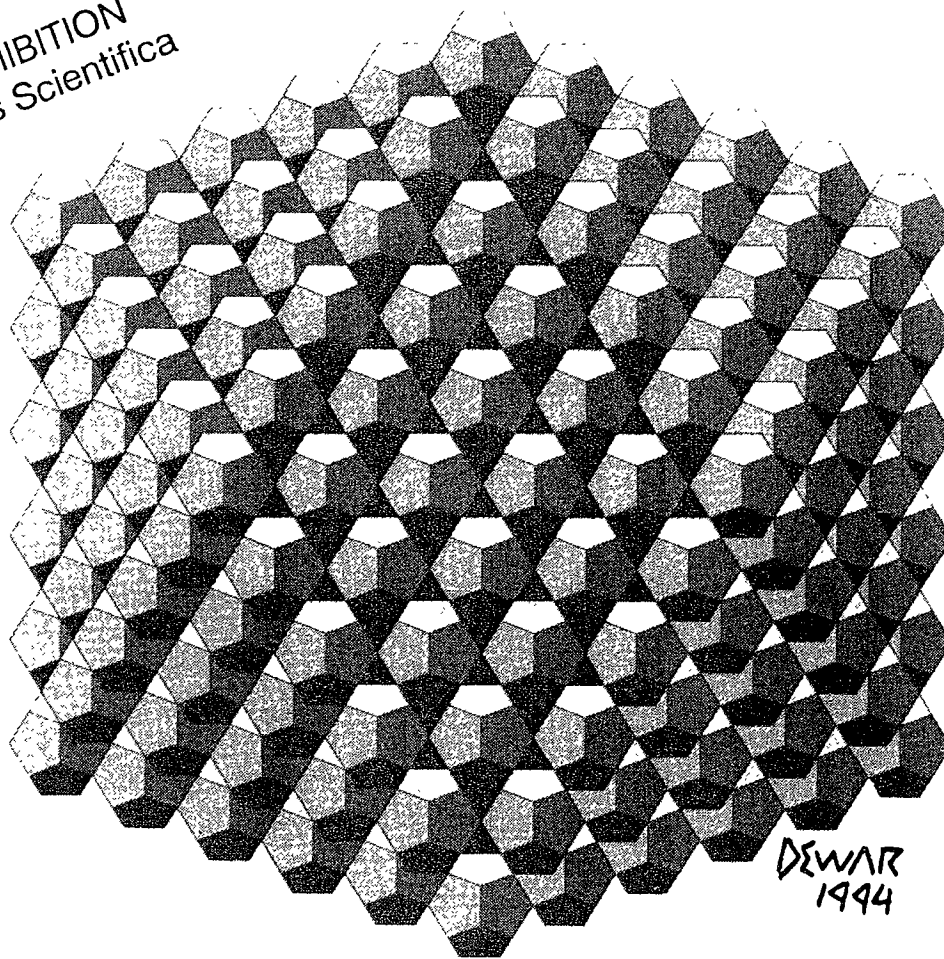
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SIGNS OF THE PLACE -- SIGNS OF THE TIME:
KOBE, JAPAN, ON THE MORNING OF 17 JANUARY 1995
IN MEMORY OF A TERRIBLE QUAKE IN THE EARTH

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When, on the morning of 17 January 1995 at 5:47 A.M. the clocks stood still in public buildings, banks, and offices in Kobe, no one could have immediately imagined that this signified for Japan the greatest catastrophe of the postwar period -- and that the toll in human lives would exceed 5,000.

This terrible shaking of the earth resulted not only in great destruction of extensive sections of the city of Kobe: it brought about unimaginable human suffering and scenes of horror. These impressions were felt by the author Emanuel Dion only considerably later.

But the impressions made on the author were so great that he felt compelled to create a very large group of sculptures within only a few days of highly intensive work, as his very personal reaction to the disaster.

The fundamental elements of these sculptures are three dihedral angles with legs of various lengths, which rise from a square base plate (Sketch No. 1, middle figure).

The complement to the first, basic figure is composed of those spatial elements which represent the interstices of this initial element; the second element also rises from a square base plate (Sketch No. 1, right figure).

These two complementary figures can be inserted onto each other to form a cube. The joints between the complementary angles reveal the angles of the original parts, now fitted together (Sketch 1, left figure).

This sculpture is varied by stepwise revolution of the dihedral angles (Sketch No. 2). In this manner, a total of 256 variations of sculptures originate, with 512 individual figures which can be symbolically fitted together to form cubes.

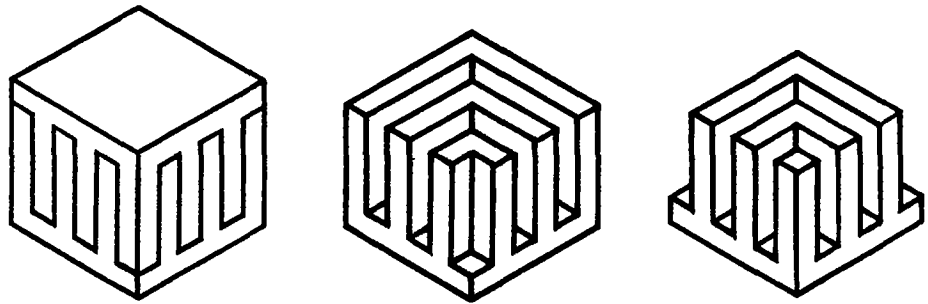
The manifold phenomena of symmetry as well as asymmetry of these figures symbolize the union of life and death, as well as of past and future.

Each of these 512 three-dimensional figures may also represent the spirit of hope for life in peace and happiness: approximately one figure for ten of those who died in the Kobe earthquake. Taken together, may they communicate the courage and confidence required to rebuild Kobe as a safer and more beautiful city, and to allow new life to develop there.

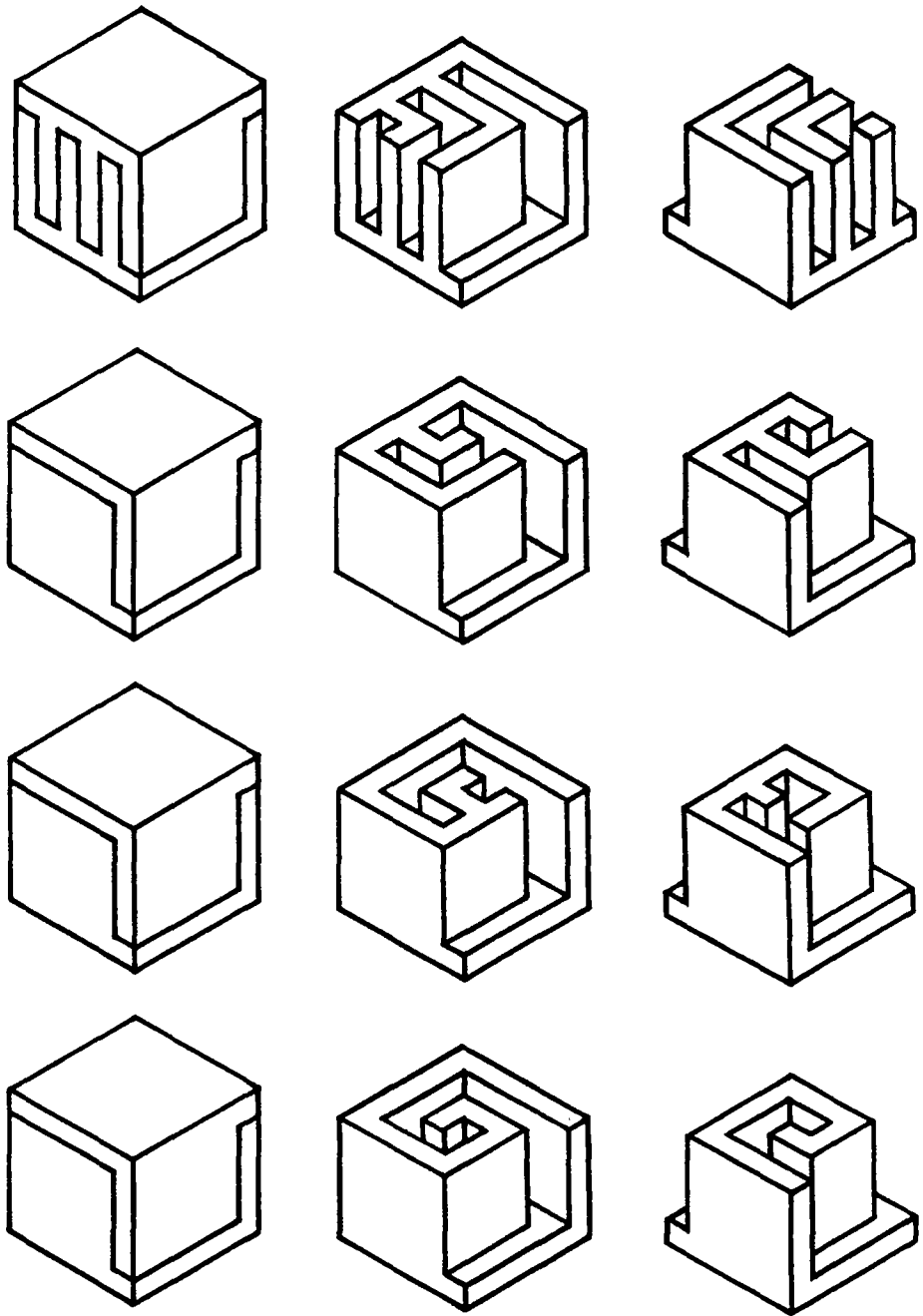
These sculpture projects are presented here in the form of isometric drawings shown in the enclosed sketches. Sixteen of these figures will unite on each of a number of unrolled paper strips hung from the ceiling into the exhibition room. Four of these

paper strips go to form each of four groups of strips: together, they will delineate a space of square floor area in the exhibition area.

English: David Bean



Sketch 1: The basic figures for the Kobe Project.



Sketch 2: Four of 256 variations of the basic figures for the Kobe Project.