

# ARTS MAGAZINE

## MAY 1980

### ALAN SARET AT CHARLES COWLES

by Duane Stapp

The sculptures of Alan Saret are delicate tanglings of wire, bunched and twisted into free standing floor pieces and hanging webs. Their appearance varies, depending upon the color, thickness, and sheen of the materials used and how they are intermingled. The visual effect they produce is more important than their specific shape, which is impossible to exactly determine anyway, as loose wires jut out and mingle with the surrounding atmosphere. Instead of sculpted forms, they are more like accumulations of wires wrapped in a particular way, the result of a wrapping process that could have continued but was halted at its present stage.

The best works are the simplest, in which one kind of wire is used, and high gloss wire seems to work the best. "Annamalaxxy," for example, is a floor piece of shiny nickel wire, woven into a pyramidal stack, approximately two feet high. The wire is so thin and shiny that the entire sculpture dissolves into a twinkling of highlights, becoming a haze instead of a solid object. The shape is simple, but has a natural logic, as if it were a pile that happened to form as Saret wove his wire together and let it fall.

The works that are least successful are those in which one is most aware of the physicality of the wire itself. "Infinity Cluster With Light Green" is a hanging piece in which too many colors are indiscriminately mixed, causing the sculpture to be seen literally as a tangle of wire instead of transcending itself to become a visual pattern. The appearance is the important thing; Saret's best sculptures are not even seen as solid objects, but more as atmospheric effects that grow in grace and delicacy the more they dematerialize.