

The beginning was 1959, and the word was happening. Happenings Are Happening



Nude on the Round. Nothing better demonstrates how far happenings have wandered—and how badly they have fallen off—than Salvador Dalí's, held last week in Manhattan. It was billed as a "Super-Gelatinous Melting, Silly-Putty Happening," and staged at the new Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center. But the best Dalí could do was to cavort onstage inside a huge ASATI plastic bubble as he painted its transparent surface with a roller, here with a giant cross, there with a black angel. To inspire him, Sarah Lawrence girls danced ponderously; a blind, spear-carrying beggar named Moondog was brought in to survey the scene; a singer sang soundlessly into a dead mike.

The only thing that kept the audience from departing was Stripper Silva from Paris' Crazy Horse Saloon. On a revolving platform on center stage, she cast off her shirt and string, rotated in the raw for five minutes. When the Dalíance was over, one lady in mink got up, proudly announced: "Well, at last I have seen my first happening!" Shrugged Innovator Kaprow, who took the whole thing in: "It had nothing to do with a happening". But then he did not patent the word, and while the fun lasts, there is nothing he can do to stop it.