

April 10, 1969

The subject is the artist, the object is to make art/
free/.

The art world stinks; it is made of people who collectively dig the shit; now seems to be the time to get the collective shit out of the system.

Where does the cycle begin? Let's begin with the individual painter or sculptor ensconces 'high' in his loft world, making his pile of shit (perhaps is he really shitting, in his mind's eye, on the world) having engested art information and raw material from the shared world, pissing his time away, the labor of his love perhaps to be redeemed, to be realized at some other time

The stuff is transformed when it is transposed into imposed 'higher' values. First, a gallery, then, perhaps a museum, and further extended by translation into the data of art information when reproduced in an art magazine; at which point the artist, seeing the transposition, is pissed off. As time is transposed money is transposed into private worth for the artist and a 'high'/quality/for the collector and art critic in this business society. The art world is a collection of people who dig the dirt, or pay the artist to dig it for him, to get a 'piece' of the action - the games people play - for personal fun and profit ("a profitable experience"). Everybody has their private part (parts) to contribute - for the media it's just another slice of life/ entertainment.

It's time it seems to leave all this shit behind; the art world is poisoned; get out to the country or take a radical stance. (According to the dictionary, "root", the root of radical and the root of root are the same - does dirt or evil really have roots?).

Should art be a lever against the Establishment? Make art dangerous? but art is only one item among the dangerous commodities being circulated in this society and, unattractive as it may be, one of the less lethal. Withhold? - a closed system dies of suffocation.

The writer in the past has been presented with an analogous problem. All magazines in order to survive are forced to present a well-known point of view to identify readers with advertisements just as in the past the structure of the book as object functioned to re-press the author's private, interior perspective or vision of life to the private reader who has bought the unique illusion as he reads through the narrative - linear, progressive, continuous from beginning to vanishing end point - his perspective as supposed to be altered by a novel insight into the world; he is changed; in Marx, Zola and Brecht's time he hopefully motivated to change affect into effecting changes back in the outside world. Magazines - art magazines - continue this fiction of assuming private points - of - view whose sum they must assume to be the collective view of its readership and advertisers. They depend exclusively for their economic existence on selling ads to galleries for the most part. For what it's worth to the readers who will buy it, the critic who must sell it, quality in art is all that counts (time is money which counts/ man is the measure of

all things). For the writer and recently, some so-called conceptual artists, there is a simple solution: buy the ads himself - the cycle thus feeds back on itself: invest in oneself - it's a free society.

Actually, it's not the artists, the galleries, the collectors, the critics or the art magazines who support the structure at all - but the United States Government = you and me - geared to corporate needs - which, through the tax structure make it profitable to run a non-profitable art "business" to by and donate "works" to museums (in the process serving the soul purpose of feeding artists and Madison Avenue types in the over-all process of making a lot of money for yourself), etc., etc..

The conceptual artist conceives of a pure art without material base, conceived simply by giving birth to new ideas - an art that ideally mean and not be of baseball or Monopoly in the den bath without ball, bat, gravity, dice or money. But it's free and like sex, with a minimum of two people (subject/object; inside/outside; ying/yang; receiver/sender; people who take pictures of each other just to prove that they really existed) anyone can play, making their rules as they go along.

The artist laboured under the myth of trying to define himself (and his time) in terms of his work - his unique contribution - his raison d'etre; rather than be defined by society in their image.

But art is inevitable part of the larger order of society, its language and world shared and interdependent with the language, "vision" and stuff of its specific Time, Life, place and function.

All human brains perceive and think partially in symbols which have a relationship to external signs available to all which reduce to various interrelated language systems which relate to the larger social order at a given moment.

What does the artist have in common with his friends, his public, his society? Information about himself, themselves and all ourselves - which is not reduced to ideas or material but shares in both categories as it has a past, present and future time/spce. It is neither subjective or objective "truth"; it simply is - it is both a residue "object" and neutral "etherial" media transcribed - transcribed upon/ translation - translating the content of single and collective man's internal and external position, work, ideas, activities.

The artist is not a machine; the artist shares in mankind's various media of expression having no better 'secrets' or necessarily seeing more inside or outside of things than any other person; ~~often he is more calculating; he wants things to be as interesting as possible; to give and have return pleasure; to contribute to the life-enhancing social covenant.~~ Perhaps young artists, with their new naivete have replaced the old naivete of their fathers.

My opinion (more later); we must go back to the old notion of ~~socially: good works~~ as against the private, aesthetic notion of "good work" - i.e.: art to go public.

Submitted by DON BERNHOUSE FOR ARCHITECTS' RESISTANCE

44

ARCHITECTURE AND RACISM Position Paper No. 1 of The Architects' Resistance

One of the Architectural profession's most prestigious firms, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, is putting its skills, resources, and name behind the brutal racism of South Africa. For the sake of profit, the firm is building for a government which says: "We want South Africa White... Keeping it white can only mean one thing, namely White domination, not leadership, not guidance,

but control, supremacy." (Prime Minister Verwoerd 1963)

Written into the laws of the Republic of South Africa this policy has kept 3 million whites the slave-masters of 11 million black Africans. This is Apartheid and S O M is helping underwrite its furtherance.

THIS IS APARTHEID	WHITE (Europeans)	BLACK (Africans)
Population (millions)	3	11
Per capita income (1959)	\$1,819	\$109
Average wage in mining (1962)	\$3,587	\$216
Ages subject to tax	21-60	18-65
Income exempt from tax	\$840	None
Education expenditure per pupil	\$182	\$18
Infant mortality per 1,000 births	27	200+
Persons in registered trade unions	340,000	None
Persons convicted of pass offenses	None	384,000

On March 21, 1960, in Sharpeville, South African police fired on a crowd of peacefully demonstrating black Africans killing 67 and wounding hundreds more. They were protesting the laws which required them to carry pass books—dog tags which label their bondage.

In the following year South Africa's economy almost collapsed after a flight of capital from the country which resulted from fear that the Sharpeville massacre might lead to bloody revolution; fear that South Africa's expulsion from the British Commonwealth might reduce profits and that the economic boycott by small nations might snowball. But the U.S. corporations rescued the economy by pouring in \$223 million additional investment so that by 1963 South African gold and

foreign exchange reserve had tripled to a record high—and the Apartheid regime was secured. Since then business has boomed and the strength of the white oppressors has multiplied.

And indication of the current state of the economy is the Carlton Center complex designed by S O M. It will occupy a super-block formed by five city blocks, includes the world's tallest concrete building (for offices), a 400-bedroom hotel with 90 additional apartment suites, two department stores and parking for 3,000 cars. There will be gardens, fountains, side-walk cafes and a skating rink. The estimated cost of the project is between \$50 and \$100 Million and is the largest commercial development in Africa.

AND SOMEWHERE AN SOM ARCHITECT IS DRAWING TWO SETS OF BATHROOMS—WHITE AND BLACK.

This project is financed by Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, whose Director is the infamous New Jersey profiteer and multi-millionaire Charles W. Engelhard. Through various holding companies he is said to control 23 South African firms with total assets of more than \$2.57 billion. Engelhard, along with David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan Bank, Dillon, Read & Co. and over two hundred other American Companies, have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in industrial development in South Africa.

The Carlton Center has been made possible because U.S. business continues to be attracted to South Africa by a modern, developed, industrial society with 3 million

prosperous white customers and a labour force of 11 million black Africans prohibited by law from organizing unions, collective bargaining, striking, moving without permission, and voting. The Apartheid policy keeps the average black miner earning less than \$1 a day, while in 1962 for example, the American companies in South Africa earned \$72 million. This was easily double the 11.8 percent average profit reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce on U.S. investments in all foreign countries.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill has climbed aboard this gravy train—a train fueled by the blood and misery of 11 million black Africans.

(10)

44

We, The Architects' Resistance, say that Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's support of Apartheid reveals them for what they, and most of the architectural profession, are: unprincipled practitioners of an art for its own sake and, mainly, for the sake of profit. The pursuit of profit and fame have led SOM and most of the rest of the profession to build their monuments in reflection of their own egos—at the expense of those whose labour builds them and with small regard for those who must live with them.

SOM's other "social" works, such as their involvement in Baltimore's highway program, incriminate them. To present themselves as advocates of black American communities, no matter how up-to-date their techniques, is after South Africa, sheer, unprincipled

hypocrisy. To build for corporations whose profits come from the exploitation of oppressed masses—be they South African Blacks, Peruvian copper miners, or American Blacks; to build for Governments who maintain themselves at the price of brutal oppression and genocide—be it South Africa at Sharpeville or the U.S. in Vietnam; and to build for profiteering middlemen whose only concern with social order and for the masses' use of what is built is the profit that can be wrung: *this* is cynical, evil and dangerous. The urban crisis, the Vietnam war, the violence of a Chicago are all born of the shallow moralism typified by our profession.

We, as architects, must see ourselves as servants of the social order whose environments we form.

TO BUILD FOR OPPRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS IS TO SUPPORT THOSE INSTITUTIONS.

We are socially responsible for our actions.

We ask architects and architectural students who cannot tolerate the role they have been asked to play to join the Architects' Resistance in our efforts to change architecture from irrelevant and oppressive profit-making to an art truly in the service of a society based on fundamental human values.

The architectural profession designs a mere 10% of buildings constructed in this country. This 10% is mostly monuments built for the business world to symbolize its power and wealth and to attract more profit. It is museums to house Government and its oppressive agencies. It is schools where creativity is treated as a discipline problem, and cultural differences as delinquency. It is inhuman housing built for profit, or to house those whose real neighborhoods, have fallen

before highways. It is prisons. And because we continue to see ourselves as an elite group of "artists" we keep ourselves from soiling our hands with the remaining 90% of construction that forms the grey desert out of which our sparkling monuments rise. By the creed of the AIA we must sit in our carpeted offices waiting for those who can pay our fees or who want "art" to come and accept our sculptural vision.

We live in a country where power lies in the hands of the few, and we serve those few—as the Master Builders of history served their kings. The people do not have power over the formation of their environment but must accept whatever is forced on them. We, as architects, are not taught, or even permitted, to go out to the user and apply our skills to put physical form to *his* vision. We serve only to put "aesthetic" form to the avarice and power of rulers—even those who have openly enslaved millions under Apartheid.

THE ARCHITECTS' RESISTANCE

The Architects' Resistance has been formed so that this prostitution of the profession may be stopped and so that we may move towards a society where the power lies with the people, and where architecture is a tool of that power. We wish to find means to assist the rehumanization of society by restructuring the architectural profession to deal with living people on human terms.

Architecture is a tool for mobilizing people, for making them more aware of themselves and their human dignity. Architecture must not be the hand-maiden to the dehumanization of object-oriented capitalism. Architects must not respond to the industrialists, the financiers, the politicians, nor to the acclaim of the professional journals.

Architecture is not an abstract art existing in a social vacuum.

It is an integral part of the totality of forces molding our society: political, economic, social. It cannot continue to operate in a moral void.

The Architects' Resistance hopes to fill that void by bringing ethical and political conscience to the practice of architecture.

TAR is an action group, a communications network, a research organization. We will issue and mobilize behind future position papers on broad topics within the profession—registration, the awarding of commissions, etc. and specific instances of the misuse of our professional skills.

4

AS A PRE-CONDITION TO THE RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE WE
DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE COLLUSION BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND
RACISM. WE DEMAND:

- that SOM and Paul Weidinger Assoc. (Engineers) immediately dissociate themselves from the Carlton Project in Johannesburg and remit all profits accrued to Black organizations in South Africa.
- that the AIA publicly and immediately censor SOM and any other firms building in South Africa and that they drop these firms from membership if they refuse to halt their operations in South Africa.
- That the AIA refuse to hold its national convention in Chicago and publicly condemn the police state tactics of Mayor Daley.

WE URGE:

- that all architects of conscience examine closely the nature of the work they and their firms are engaged in and resign immediately from those organizations they can no longer morally support.
- that all architecture and planning students examine their future associations very critically before entering the brotherhood.

For further information please contact:
The Architects' Resistance
c/o Renaissance
338 E. 6th St.
New York, New York

In 1947 the Museum of Modern Art agreed to sell all "classical" works to the Metropolitan Museum and concentrate on those that were "still significant in the modern movement". 28 works were sold at the time. The proceeds were "to be used for the purchase of more 'modern' works." The Board of Trustees reversed this enlightened policy in 1963 and decided to establish a permanent collection of "masterworks", a species of works that is impossible to define. We are witnessing the consequences of this decision today, a decision worthy of a stamp collector's mind. The Museum of Modern Art has become an art-historical mausoleum. Most of the space is taken by classical works and the majority of special exhibitions are historical exhibitions. The "masterwork" approach has resulted in timidity, conservatism, arrogance and a systematic mythologization of modern art. Consequently at the rare occasions, when contemporary works are shown, these works receive more attention, prestige and ensuing commercial value than they would have accumulated and deserved, if large contemporary exhibitions were being held continuously. Certain galleries and collectors naturally have an interest in influencing the choice of works, since such rare chances for exposure can yield sizable profits.

If the Museum of Modern Art and for that matter all museums concerned with the art of this century were seriously committed to their stated objectives they would have to do a lot of soulsearching, and ^{an} adjustment of the traditional list of priorities. This would lead to a type of museum that has little resemblance to what we know today. Artists would participate in the decision making process and be represented on the Board of Trustees. And such an institution could certainly not fulfill its job in a high-rise structure in Midtown-Manhattan, a plan the Museum is considering at present. The very idea of a skyscraper for art shows how much museum officials have lost touch with the present. A radical

(X)

In our society artists have no power. They have no power because they are divided against themselves and fail to organise as a group. Because they have no power, they are exploited and manipulated by those who have it. In most cases, instead of objecting to or even being aware of this exploitation, they take pride in the reason for it. We are individuals, they say, we neither want nor need organisation. If you are good, you will make it in spite of the disadvantages; if you do not, you can console yourself with the thought that making it is not the artist's true objective anyway.

We do not realize that we are encouraged in this rationalisation by those who exploit and manipulate us. Like women, like the black people, we are fed with a careful fiction as to the nature of our wishes and our goals. How many times have the black people in the South been told that they are happier and more contented than those in the North? How many times have women been told that to do something well or even seriously will preclude a happy relationship with a man? Anything, that is, that falls outside the conventional role of women.

For artists, if not for the public, *la vie bohème*, the romantic garret, the purity of poverty, the love affair with starvation may be perhaps romantic popcorn. Still overlaying it is a more serious myth. You cannot really expect to make a living from art; artists get their satisfaction from doing their work and showing it; they don't really need to be paid for it, they are already so lucky to be creative and gifted and so on.

Yet, as we all know, there is money in art; a great deal of it in fact; huge sums change hands yet somehow scarcely ever finish up in the pocket of the artist. Why should this be so?

The crux of the problem is twofold: the legal concept of art as an investment object; the social concept of art as a luxury object. Many artists have fought against this latter definition for years by changing the nature of their work; by making it too large or too ugly or too dirty or too important for galleries and smart apartments. Their work has usually been demonstrated in the end, however, and their protest has failed to make art a less esoteric commodity.

They should have realized that without an attack on the legal and financial structure of the art world, no democratization of the art object is possible. Without a change in these areas, art will remain a luxury and the artist a superfluous.

What changes then can be made to diminish the value of art as investment and at the same time give an economic and legal power to the artist proportionate to his role of creator? I have four proposals to make:

Firstly: the greatest financial gains from art are realized by those who buy work cheap in the artist's youth and sell it dear when he is old or dead. Our objective should be to change the law so that one half of all such gains revert to the artist, and after his death partly to ~~grant~~ his descendants and partly to a central fund created for the benefit of all artists. Such a fund would provide work grants, old age and sickness benefits, help for dependents of deceased artists, legal advice service and other social benefits. In cases where gains are realized through tax losses obtained by collectors who donate work to museums, one half of such gains should also be passed on to the artist or his descendants and the fund.

We should strive to promote
Secondly: the concept of renting art. Scales of minimum rental fees should be established, and all institutions charging admission to exhibitions should be legally obliged to pay fees to the participating artists. In the case of dead artists, fees would be paid to the fund. Public exhibitions of private collections should also return a royalty to the artist or to the fund.

Thirdly: Maximum commission rates chargeable by galleries should be established by law.

Fourthly: The reproduction of artists' work in books, magazines, on television or in films should return a royalty fee to the artist or the fund.

Some of these suggestions exist as fact in one form or another in the fields of literature and music. And although it can be objected that art is different since it is intrinsically valuable as a unique object whereas music and literature have value only in their idea and not in their physical form - yet, one can maintain that the sale of an art work conveys only the right to private and personal enjoyment thereof and not the right to financial gain, personal publicity or public acclaim. Or at least not to these advantages without paying extra for them.

I have concentrated on economic proposals because I feel that all the frustrations met in relationships with galleries and landlords, museums and collectors, all the slights and inequities to which we are subjected are a direct result of our having no financial power either individually or through a representative organization. Improve our legal and economic rights and the other relationships will also

also change. ~~anyone can sit on every museum committee in~~ But sit on every museum committee in the world and without financial backing we will always be overruled.

I have no doubt we can bring about change, even change as drastic or even more drastic than what I am proposing here. But to do so, we must stop being brain-washed into the belief that things are for the best as they are; we must be prepared to spend time building an organization to represent us; we must be able to define our demands and research the means to carry them through to law. It ~~must~~^{mustn't} be quick or easy and it cannot be done only in New York City or even perhaps not only in the U.S. for the art world is international and if our reforms are to be effective, they must be applied on a global scale. It's a big job, but we can start it moving...

I feel that the forming of the Art Workers Coalition is an important step forward and if pursued correctly will result in considerable reforms within and without the museums and other art institutions. It is particularly important that for the first time artists, writers, choreographers, filmmakers, etc. are working together towards common goals, irregardless of their individual styles or aesthetic outlooks. As one of the original supporters of Takis I have seen this movement expand and grow within a very ~~short~~ short time. The rapid growth I take to ^{be} an indication that the movement offers the very real possibility of fulfilling certain long-felt needs within the art community. I offer it my continuing support.

After this Hearing, the most important task is the formulation and adoption of a new set of demands. These new demands should then be presented to MOMA in the most dramatic way possible. Petitions must be drawn up and signed and ~~and~~ ads taken in the newspapers. A large list of signatures is crucial.

I would like the new demands to include:

1. one free day (to be financed by keeping the Museum open in the evening).
2. The appointment of a responsible person to handle any grievances arising from the Museum's dealings with artists.
3. The wishes of a living artist in regard to the display of his work owned by the Museum in any group show other than the permanent collection ^{and} be respected.
4. The payment of rental fees for works of art borrowed by the Museum for special shows.
5. A large, yearly show (possibly in one of the Armories), unjuried and open to all who wish to display their work.

It is unlikely that MOMA will accept any of our new demands. If, however, they do, AWC will end as an organization unless it is understood from the beginning that AWC fills a need much larger than mere museum reform. If the Museum accepts our demands there is the danger that AWC will become an establishment "labor union" of artists. This must be avoided. AWC must draw up a list of policies that go beyond mere museum reform.

Since it is more likely that MOMA will reject our demands again, new ways of exerting pressure must be developed. We cannot merely follow the techniques of the New Left or the students. These may offer inspiration, but as artists we are in a position to provide new examples for other groups by developing more effective methods of protest.

It must be made clear that the museums now need the artists more than the artists need them. How can we make this clear? If none of the new demands are met, I suggest we consider a boycott of the museum. The effect of this, however, is contingent upon the membership strength of AWC. Artists with works on loan to the Museum can be encouraged to withdraw their works. We can also get artists to sign statements that they will refuse to loan works without rental fees.

~~It might be~~ It might be advantageous to begin developing our own alternative structures. AWC should consider sponsoring a yearly, unjuried, show on its own.

John Perreault

(121)

V. I. Lenin is supposed to have said "ethics is the esthetics of the future."

IN our discussions about moving things around I suggested it would be useful to define art simply as skill which is based on knowledge and practice and to say that bad art is non-art, that is, what happens when one doesn't know what one is doing. In our revolution both slaves and money will be abolished.

ARTIST workers are losers in the class-money system. In other words, as workers we are supposed to be poor. In the past our choices have been, first, to advance ourselves within the entrepreneur class by making more money thru increased and cheaper production. And second, by the surrender of a certain amount of license regarding the choice of what we do, to obtain glory from the dispensers of glory, that is, by seeking patrons from among the rich and powerful.

In society as it is now structured, in this object-oriented, industrialized, and socialized society, the problems of individual and independent art workers may phrased in this way: The problem now is one's inability to exchange a sufficient amount of objects for money sufficient to obtain the living and working conditions one desires. In other words the immediate problem of contemporary art is selling it and the foremost question is WHO WANTS IT?

Lee - 2

The apparent answer is several thousand rather rich people known as art collectors. They are a species of the genre which includes stamp collectors, coin collectors, and gun collectors. They have in common a perverted materialism in which the abstract and objective value, monetary worth, falsely proclaims itself to be the supposedly ancient and subjective value, beauty. Selling, even of art, is per se a social act. Where money is the source of social power, society will value all things, even art, accordingly.

The things which we make, if they are to be sold, must generally conform to international standards for currency. This means that art objects which can be ~~xxxxxx~~ easily counterfeited are no good to a collector. It means further that art objects must be preservable, that is to say, insurable, and they must be transferable or negotiable. ~~Thatxxxxxxprimxxxi~~ That the prime utility of collectable objects is currency means that these things which we make and indeed we ourselves are subject to financial manipulations which have nothing to do with art and which are not necessarily of any value to ourselves.

Art as currency is institutionalized through the policies of museums. This is inevitable. Museums are started by collectors. They are maintained by annual contributions from collectors. All objects in their permanent collections, excepting those donated by ~~xxxxxxx~~ art workers, are given by collectors or purchased from funds donated by collectors.

(30) In return museums provide a number of services which are

Lee - 3

valuable to collectors. Foremost among these services is that of certifying the authenticity and historical merit of particular art objects, namely those collectors own. In this sense each museum functions as a semi-autonomous branch bank in a world-wide system to guarantee the value of collected art. Second, museums with the collusion of the government provide collectors with a device to avoid paying taxes by treating contributions as tax deductible like a business expense. The rationale is that museums are educational institutions and the government's presumption is that any education is per se in the public interest. The fact that the educators are by and large simply our richest citizens is in no way discouraging to the government.

Third, museums, by opening themselves to the public, are able to educate non-collectors as to what their personal attitude should be vis-à-vis the private property of the rich. Namely, DO NOT TOUCH. Also, don't smoke and keep moving.

Finally, museums publicize collectors by way of admiring their collections and praising their generosity. This publicity is ~~so~~ valuable to collectors and their wives both in their own milieu and in liberal circles.

THE problem of revolutionary art workers is our inability to obtain the living conditions which we desire. In the official syntax, we lack money. I do not believe that art collectors or their museums will, even under our pressure, make any substantial contribution to the solution of this. At best they will attempt to buy off a couple of hundred art workers whose art 39 may or may not interest them.

Lee - 4

Nor will the galleries be much help toward a solution. With few exceptions, they would rather sell one thing to a rich collector for a high price than than ^{SEVERAL} ~~three~~ to the public at any price.

The solution will rather be found partly through our art, that is esthetically, and partly through political action. To the extent to which one may wish to sell what one makes, art workers will have to make an art which is appropriate to the living conditions of a vastly greater number of people than those who currently buy it. The ultimate dignity of art, as all art workers ought to know, is in making ~~it~~ art, not in owning it. What is the dignity in owning an object which is so valuable that it is worth your life to defend your possession of it? To these ends art workers ought to prohibit museums from displaying our art in such a way as to discourage ordinary people from wishing to have it. Indeed, what art workers ought to require from museums is complete license regarding the terms under which their own art is shown. That would include whether and to what extent the police should be allowed to guard it and it would include whether the public had to pay to see it and if they did who got the proceeds.

As for political action, I urge the Art Workers Coalition to support anything which tends to increase the wealth of the relatively poor, that is, which undermines the utility of money. As the motherfuckers write, "the hip revolution~~ism~~ is a product of history and exists in this time and space: It is not a replaying of 'bohemianism'; it is not an artistic 'drop-out' class open only to the bourgeoisie; it is

(10)

FAITH RINGGOLD

25

STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
A RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF THE MUSEUM IN ITS DEFAULT OF CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY TO ITSELF AND THE ART COMMUNITY OF THIS CITY, THE NATION AND THE WORLD

INFORMATION

This form consists of Parts I and II. Part I is for you to fill in and mail to the address indicated at the bottom of the form. Part II consists of a series of questions addressed to the Museum and its staff and is to be mailed to the Museum if you believe these questions ought to be answered. Thank you for your support. Thank you for joining us in an effort to end cultural genocide practiced against blacks and Puerto Ricans at the Museum of Modern Art. Thank you for joining our fight to establish a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art at the Museum of Modern Art.

MR. TOM LLOYD
150-02 107th Avenue
Jamaica, New York
657-6433

MRS. FAITH RINGGOLD
345 West 145th Street
New York, New York
862-5876

PART I

- Does the regular attendance at the Museum today suggest that blacks and Puerto Ricans use, enjoy and understand the Museum's collection?
YES _____ NO _____ UNCERTAIN _____
- Do any exhibitions in the galleries relate to black and Puerto Rican experience as to subject matter, means of expression, or personal identification?
YES _____ NO _____ UNCERTAIN _____
- If your answer to (2) is YES, which ones?
- Are there any publications (1st floor), films (Auditorium), or other visual aids that relate to the black or Puerto Rican experience? YES _____ NO _____ UNCERTAIN _____
- If so, how many films _____, publications _____, other _____?
- Do you believe, after touring the Museum, or on the basis of your knowledge of the Museum and its programs, that a MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART would serve the purpose of genuine cultural freedom and portrayal of the culture of black and Puerto Rican people at the MUSEUM OF MODERN ART? YES _____ NO _____ UNCERTAIN _____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PLEASE MAIL YOUR FILLED OUT QUESTIONNAIRE TO ONE OF THE PERSONS LISTED ABOVE. WE WILL NOT DISCLOSE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION

THANK YOU.

STUDENTS AND ARTISTS UNITED FOR A
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WING FOR
BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN ART AT THE
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

66

FAITH RINGOLD

25

PART II

THIS CONSISTS OF (2) PAGES. DETACH AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN BELOW.
PLEASE BE SURE TO FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY AND STATE _____ ZIP _____

MR. BATES LOWRY, DIRECTOR
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
21 WEST FIFTY-THIRD STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Dear Mr. Lowry:

As a member of the interested public, I request that you forward to me at the address given above answers to the following questions at your earliest convenience:

1. Does the Museum recognize the existence of an authentic, distinct Black Art Movement?
2. If so, how has the Museum presented the body of work of this Movement in its permanent collection and national and international exhibitions?
3. Does the Museum's permanent collection of over 30,000 works of art include the works of black and Puerto Rican artists? If so, which, and how many?
4. Can the Museum claim in good faith to be a "private" institution when:
 - a. Its donated collection, endowments and deficit-erasing contributions are made possible through tax abatement on donors amounting to almost the full dollar value of such support?
 - b. It receives sizeable additional income in the form of direct public funds for so-called "free admission" and services for public school children and teachers, federal commissioning of exhibits at international exhibitions, construction of models for urban development programs, and other such schemes, as well as for sundry other publicly commissioned projects?
 - c. It invites and solicits public subscription and attendance at which admission fees are charged?
5. Does the Museum recognize this form of public financial support as imposing any obligations upon it toward the public?
6. How does the Museum provide for adequate safeguards that race plays no part in the selection of works for inclusion in its permanent collections and circulating exhibitions?
7. In view of the support of racist policies in South Africa by the investments of several corporations of prominent trustees of the Museum--David Rockefeller and the Chase Manhattan Bank, to name one--is not public credibility as to the effectiveness of these safeguards, assuming they exist, seriously weakened?
8. How does the Museum provide in its collections, exhibitions, programs, publications, and services, cultural identification for black and Puerto Rican citizens?

(67)

9. How do such community activities as the Children's Art Carnival in Harlem provide for cultural identification for black and Puerto Rican children?
10. How does the Children's Art Carnival seriously arrive at its figure of 9000 children to be served annually in view of the average of 3000 in prior years?
11. How does the Museum decide, in a way which insures that considerations of race play no part, which works of art to accept as gifts and exhibit in its permanent collections?
12. How does the Museum define "quality" as a standard used in selecting works?
13. Would the Museum assemble a special collection for exhibition of works of black and Puerto Rican artists of "quality" lent to it for that purpose?
14. Does the Museum encourage--and if so, how--black and Puerto Rican artists in the early stages of their development in terms of providing for group presentation of their work?
15. What is the Museum's principal objection to the application of the criteria of "quality, historical significance and significance of the moment" to the selection of works by black and Puerto Rican artists?
16. Does the Museum presently have, either in operation or in advanced planning stages, a program of community workshops for black and Puerto Rican communities in order to create a liaison between the Black and Puerto Rican Art Community and the Museum in order to advance public knowledge of its development and to further acquaint the Museum with its force as an expression?
17. What are the objections to the Martin Luther King Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art which the Museum would suggest to be most valid?
18. In what way does the Museum feel threatened by the existence of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art?
19. Is it the position of the Museum of Modern Art that, in view of the Museum's cultural responsibilities to the public and the art community, that the people of the black and Puerto Rican communities should passively accept the denial to them of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for the exhibition of their cultural expression?
20. What is the Museum's alternative to the Martin Luther King Wing in order to satisfy the legitimate demand of black and Puerto Rican citizens for cultural expression and identification in the Museum of Modern Art?

LOZANO

APRIL 10, 1969

38

STATEMENT FOR OPEN PUBLIC HEARING,
ART WORKERS COALITION.

FOR ME THERE CAN BE NO ART REVOLUTION
THAT IS SEPARATE FROM A SCIENCE
REVOLUTION, A POLITICAL REVOLUTION,
AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION, A DRUG
REVOLUTION, A SEX REVOLUTION OR A
PERSONAL REVOLUTION. I CANNOT CONSIDER
A PROGRAM OF MUSEUM REFORMS WITHOUT
EQUAL ATTENTION TO GALLERY REFORMS
AND ART MAGAZINE REFORMS WHICH WOULD
AIM TO ELIMINATE STABLES OF ARTISTS
AND WRITERS. I WILL NOT CALL MYSELF
AN ART WORKER BUT RATHER AN ART
DREAMER AND I WILL PARTICIPATE ONLY
IN A TOTAL REVOLUTION SIMULTANEOUSLY
PERSONAL AND PUBLIC.

② LEE LOZANO
60 GRAND ST., N.Y.C.

We aestheticians can no longer contend with the social frown of isolation and alienation in an atelier existence. The milieu not only conflicts with the artists' way of living but also builds up a wall of resistance by the very nature of what the artist absorbs, reflects and symbolizes. The artist reveals and defines like a magnifying glass; defies dogma and dishonesty like a reducing glass, and ridicules the obscenity of misinformation and preconception. We are more than the media, the bridges, the catalysts: we, too, change our modes from impressions and abstraction and gray shadows into expression and concrete realism. With this plasticity we contribute toward the expanding "it" of consciousness. Each one of us has an art system of downtown and uptown, an underground; art and science, an inside and outside world in which an attempt is made to purify contamination and influence the environment.

New York City, the apex of the materialistic system, has become a desert. All of us must work for its reclamation. The American disease is affluency in a Walt Disney apparition of skyscrapers and illusionary skylarks. People struggle for summits of self in a cancer of object narcosis. The history of Western Civilization has been a mystique entertaining death, destruction and depression, counterpointed with attempts to enlighten and eliminate the causes of these negative forces. War and peace, crime and punishment is in all of us. At the end of the McLuhan age where efficiency is numbers on machines along an assembly line of axiomatic presumption, it is not necessary to repeat in series the Exodus, Plato, Sophocles, ^{FREUD} Dante or the caprichios of DeKooning anymore than we can return to cubism. The press, TV, and radio report to us murder, violence,

BRODY

assassination, funerals, poverty and human wreckage. Mere helpless protest is not enough. We must collectively seek positive solutions and take action to overcome this propulsion through the ages. Why not start within the structure of the art community and the people of New York to strive for a new dictionary of definitions. Power, sustenance, potential, education can have a different institutional meaning. Each of us is a changing museum and our exhibition buildings should mirror the artists as well as the people of New York and the world.

We need to list the grievances, resources and sources for this endeavor and work with the entire community. Separatism is not the solution. New York City is a world collage and a cultivating center. Generations go by with only a murmur of reform. Revolution, dissent, succession, civilian war is not the solution. The artists fight alienation as well as all other groups.

The sponsors of our institutions and the artists must get together. Art should not be restricted to the galleries, the studios, the museums or the homes of the wealthy: creativity is a spiritual need for everyone.

delete

The city buildings and streets need to be cleaned up and painted. The people have to do it themselves but they need guidance. Historical architecture should be purchased for studio space and community workshops. Children and students should be involved and given responsibilities such as the planting and caring of flowers in the parks and playgrounds. The Museum of Modern Art should have rooms of changing shows for children and young artists and folk art.

New York City has to become the environment with radiating centers of groups of people gathered for the purpose of positive activity. This takes nothing away from the individual but should only enhance his sense of belonging and

BRODY

3.

8

productivity. The issue is not just the artist and the Museum of Modern Art; we must establish a basis for survival that is not just repetitious cannibalism.

Selma Brody

19

^{friction}
 The basis of most ~~complaints~~ between artists and museums like the Modern seems to be the conflict between the permanent collection and the loan exhibitions. Artists are reluctant to cooperate in shows when their work is not being bought, and vice versa. It seems a system guaranteed to produce ill will; everybody knows of endless individual variations on ^{the} ~~these~~ theme. They are now being amplified to an unheard-of extent by the Museum's projected "New American Painting and Sculpture" show. This will ~~concentrate~~ ^{concentrate} on Abstract Expressionism in the 40's and 50's and will eventually occupy a new wing. It is not a loan show, but a Museum Collection show and the artists involved are being asked to donate major works to the collection so that they will show up well in future catalogues, dissertations, books. In other words, to maintain their so-called "historical" respectability, they must be well represented in the world's best ^{known} ~~best~~ collection of modern art, and to be well represented they must give their major works to the Museum (if they still own them; if they don't, they're out of luck). This kind of blackmail is in many cases being leveled at artists whose work the museum ignored during the 40's and most of the 50's when prices were low; now they are asked to forgive and forget and guarantee their own place in "history". It will take a lot of guts for any of these artists to refuse to have their own room in this show and in the permanent collection; at the same time it will take a lot of the opposite to go along with such a plan. It is difficult to see why the museum did not ~~comprise~~ ^{comprise} of this as a loan show rather than pretending to make an "historical" selection ^{of} ~~from~~ gift horses, but in any case it offers a perfect and timely example of the way artists are exploited.

There seems little hope for broad reform of the Museum of Modern Art. It has done a great deal in the past and now seems to have become so large and

unwisely that it has outgrown its usefulness. The conventional museum is by nature too big, too bulky, too slow to keep track of and keep up with the studios in a time of such rapid change. The present policy of throwing an occasional bone to recent art is insufficient. The recent sections of both the ^{the} Machine show and ^{the} Dada and ^{the} Surrealism ^{the} made this obvious. When ^{the} it attempts to rival the galleries and even the smaller museums, the result is inevitably disappointing.

What is really needed is not just an updated Monolith of Modern Art but a new and more flexible system that can adapt itself to the changes taking place today in the art itself. ^{Factions of art} All the ^{new} media have rejected traditional confines: room space, proscenium stage, academic symposia, literary readings. I would like to see the Museum of Modern Art retain its respected position as a study center for the history of modern art (and by modern art I mean art of the last 50 years or so; the older work belongs in the Metropolitan, as was originally ~~stipulated~~ stipulated by the Museum itself). The money ^{now} spent on exhibitions could be channeled into purchases, free admission for all artists, night film showings, etc. The exhibition function could be shifted to a series of smaller museums resembling branch libraries, in loft buildings or any large, simple space, each of which would naturally evolve an identity, style, and structure of its own. There is no reason why these branches should even be called Museums; they are needed more as vital community centers that would provide workshop space for experimental projects in all media, including performance, as well as space for showing art or organizing ^{art in} more open situations. The fact that this idea in one guise or another has come up several times in the last few months among poets, dancers and visual artists indicates its relevance. X

Just propping up existing institutions won't do; imaginative planning is

~~far~~ called for. The very loosely knit and constantly changing group that
 for the time being calls itself the Art Workers' Coalition may or may not
 be the right instrument for advancing these changes. We're still in the
 discussion stages. The point of an open hearing at this time is to get
 people thinking about change instead of continuing the personal griping and
 backbiting that always goes on; to crystallize and analyze the broad dis-
 satisfaction and see where constructive energy can be directed. It has been
 exciting to see common ideas emerge from extraordinarily different and often
 conflicting esthetic positions. The reason for continuing ^{from} Takis' action,
 (aside from the fact that it brought up the very valid point of an artist's
 control over his work), was the fact ~~at~~ such trans-esthetic solidarity; the
 fact that there was support for further discussion despite basic disagreement
 with much of the first group's program. The present organization, if you can
 call it that, survives by its own flexibility, by its precarious ability
 to absorb opposing opinions. No two people involved think alike; few
 support all and some support none of the 13 demands drawn up by Takis and
 his six colleagues. No one can speak for anyone else. I for one don't think
 we can dictate esthetic choices to the Museum and I am against any more
 motley group shows as well as inclusions of any group on a separatist basis.
 Nevertheless the black artists and the artists without galleries have every
 right to speak for themselves. My own interest ^{lies in} ~~the~~ ^{the} projection of a const-
 ructive alternative to the present situation, in increased civil rights for
 artists in general.

Lucy R. Lippard

(58)

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900

Annual Pass

No.

Name

Good until

A.W.C.

Valid only when signed. Non-transferable.

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900

Annual Pass

No.

Name

Good until

A.W.C.

Valid only when signed. Non-transferable.

OPEN HEARING

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900

Annual Pass

No.

Name

Good until

A.W.C.

Valid only when signed. Non-transferable.

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900

Annual Pass

No.

Name

Good until

A.W.C.

N420
.061 nly when signed. Non-transferable.

1969

Oh beautiful world, oh world of so much sweetness that could be. As if it isn't enough that the laws of our archaic society bind us and prohibit joy and life. As if it isn't enough that our economic and political systems suffocate and submerge and wound all but the very, very strongest; now even those who survive and become creative artists are so bitter with envy, bitterness and aggression and "Well, let's see how I can best and only do for myself" syndrome. The rottenness is beginning to show in the creative arts too - as if all the rest isn't enough!

The spirit that existed ten to fifteen years ago in painting is fading - how people used to crowd together, even if they didn't like each other's work - they did. They tried to help each other. They came to each other's openings and shows. They became successful: the blood in them became very thin. The painter who wants to ... works things out is no longer "in". Instead of blood, it's ideas that flow in the artist's veins: it's much more profitable. "Painting" as such is said to be "dead". It's supposed to be happening, now, in film.

Well, it started to happen. About five years ago it started, every filmmaker helping the other, going to each other's shows, even helping to film. And a few still are involved with helping above and beyond anything they get paid for. Len Lye does not stand alone: there is Brakage, Mander, Breer, Gehr. These people do care and always try to help, but there are hundreds of others I know of who do not. There is not the exciting feeling of all of us being together as pioneers in a relatively new medium. We

Levi Levine 2

don't all get together and support each other by attending the shows. There is no allegiance to the art of filmmaking, but just to our silly selves. And it is a shame, with all the horror in our streets, our Vietnam, our racism, our economy that chokes and mutilates men's spirit, the man who is supposed to know - the Creative Artist - even he is dying. Very soon there will be no-one, no place, and no interest in film as an art, as a growing creative art.

I always believed that it was the artist who knew. But the showing of extreme self-centeredness and bitterness, this is not knowing. When the artist does completely disappear, there will be no hope left, because it is the artist, manifest in his being that expresses the joy and reality of being and feeling itself. And if those of us who are filmmakers and painters don't help each other, we will not survive. The creative artist will perish. Something must be done now.

I wish to speak extemporaneously about my feelings about what's going on here today, and what's been going on in the last few weeks. There seems to be a community of artists working throughout the world. There's a whole social fabric that rests very, very precariously on something we know as an art object, and art itself. I think if one wanted to describe this manifestation graphically, you would say that an art object would be a rock in a pool and ~~a~~ various functionary levels going out from this rock would be dealers, critics, the museums, the ^{mass} media, a whole fabric or system, all barricading it ^{anyone who's} as I am that little object. Well ~~you~~ would see that ~~it's~~ interested in my work to try and change the machinery or the context in which the art has been made and is being seen, would see that the greatest asset that artists have is their art. It would seem that for a social protest or any other type of action in withdrawing your work or setting tight controls over it, you could ~~achieve~~ achieve the goals that are being sought. I'm not in accordance with many of the goals, I'm not quite sure what some of the goals are, really, and it would seem that the Museum of Modern Art would be a very good point to focus ^{on} because..... it seems to be a very unyielding organization. Perhaps one way in which dealings with the Museum can be handled would be possibly by withholding work from exhibition, not necessarily from that museum, but countless museums around the world. It's a big question on this, to accede to the demands that are being

Seth Siegelaub 2

asked. It would seem that a lot of thought should be given as to what these demands are. I've heard a broad range of demands, and there seem to be some things that are very relevant. It would seem that all this has to do, in a certain sense, with the context in which art is being seen, and the rights which the artist has in having it seen in the proper fashion. And it would seem that the art is the one thing that you have and the artist always has and which picks you out from anyone else. There's a class of human beings who ~~taxi~~ make art and a class who don't, some of whom happen to be curators of museums, directors or museum trustees. This is the way your leverage lies. I would think that by using x that leverage you could achieve much greater goals than in any other ways. It's the one seemingly unique aspect of an artist, that he makes art and no-one else does.

60