



## **Arts in society: arts in academe. Volume 12, Issue 3 Fall-Winter, 1975**

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# Arts in Academe

## Arts in Society

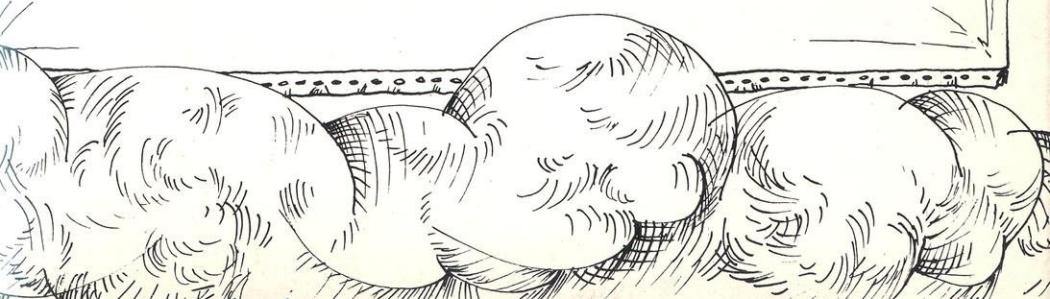
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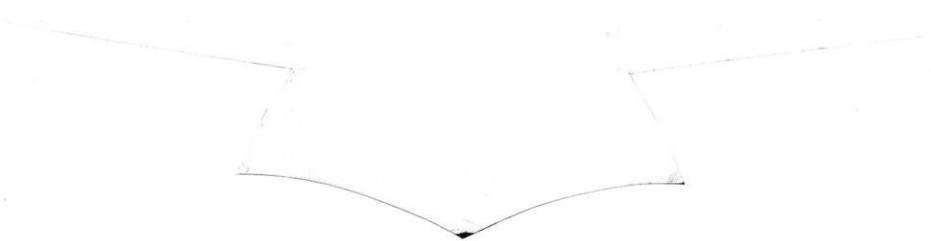


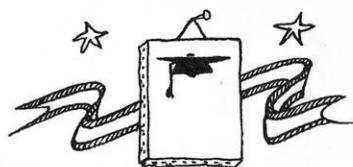
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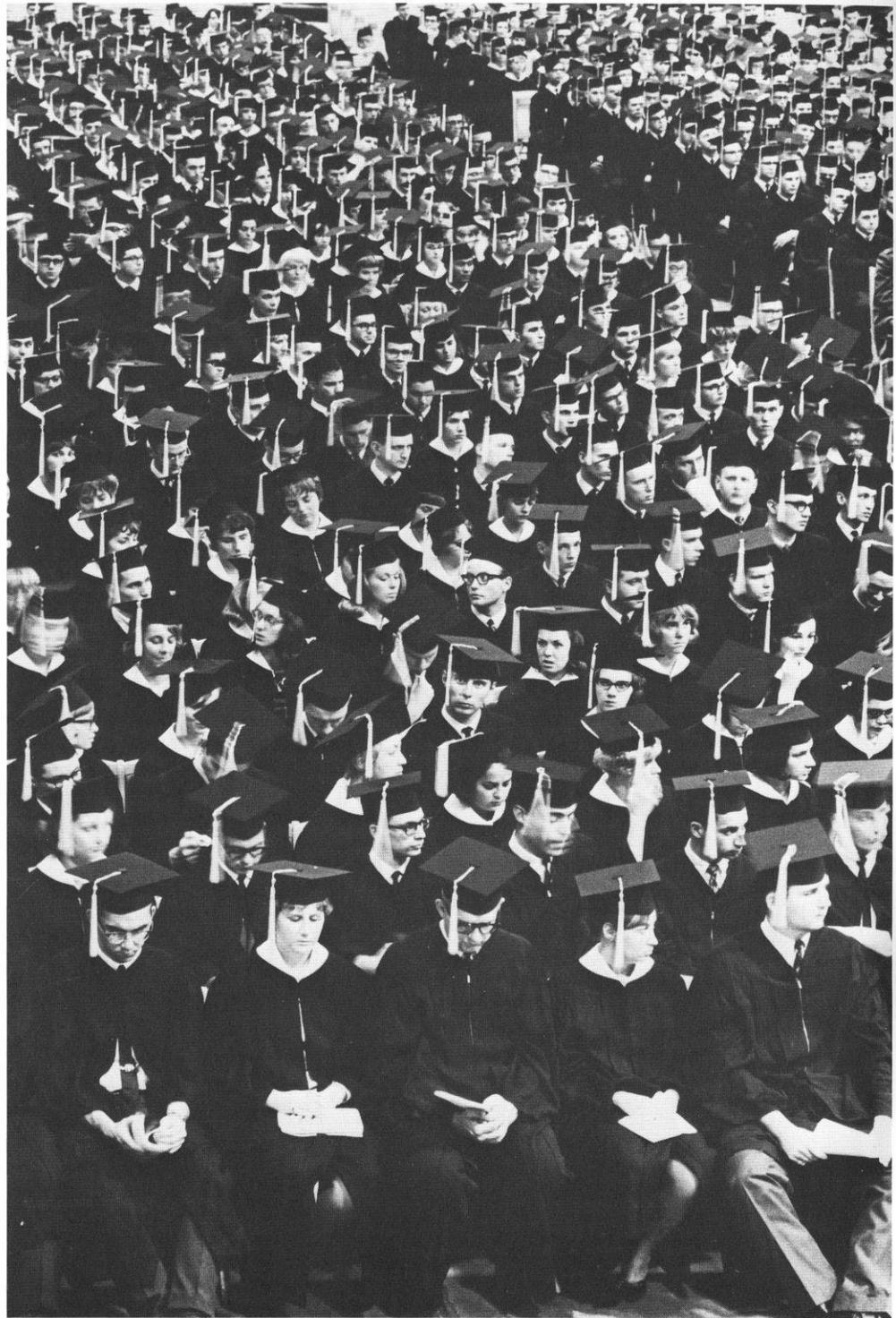
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# **Arts in Society**



## Arts in Society

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University of Wisconsin graduation ceremony. Courtesy: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin and *Milwaukee Journal*.

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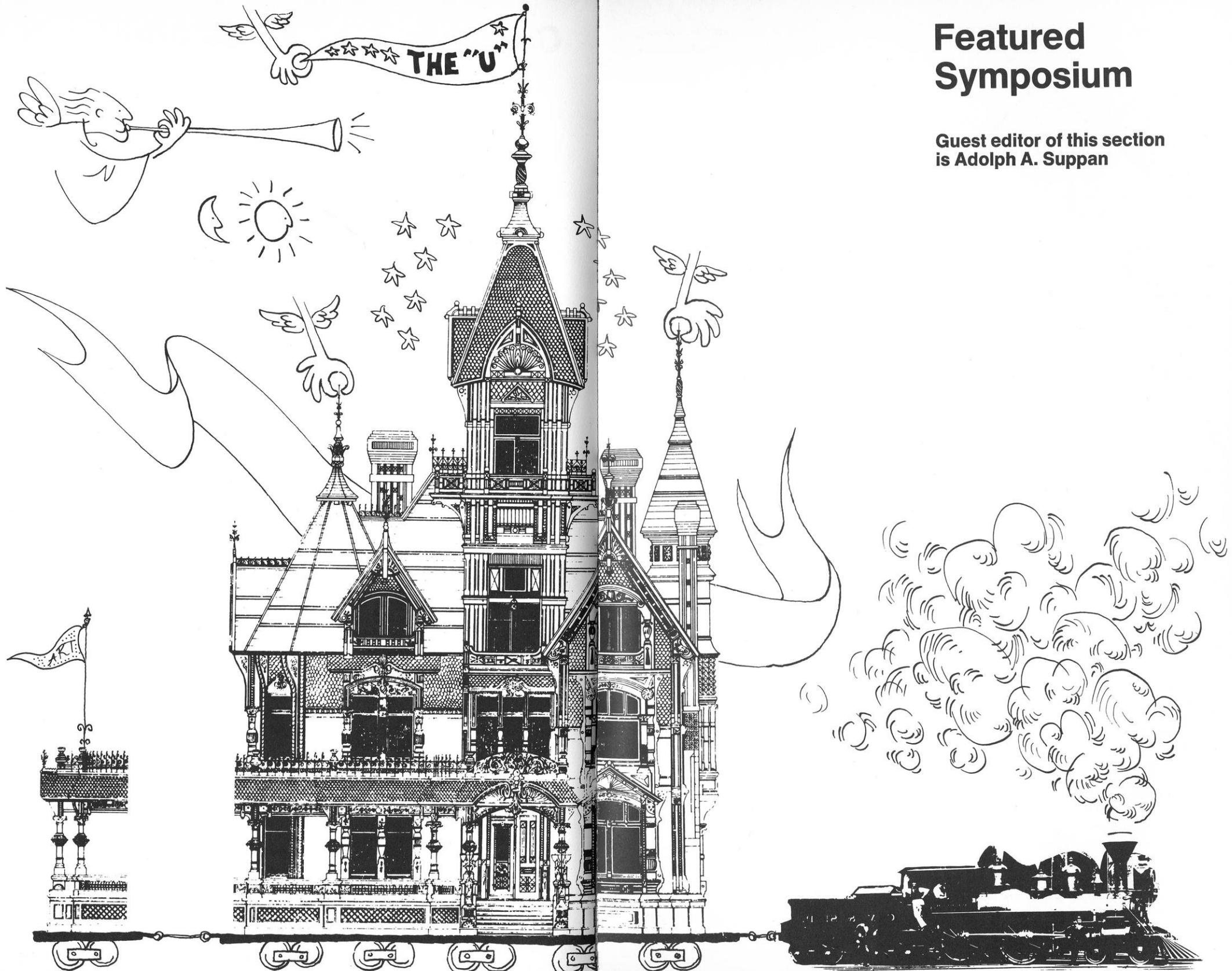
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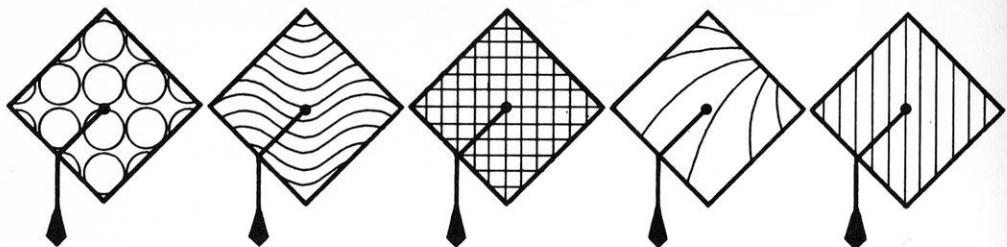
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# Featured Symposium

Guest editor of this section  
is Adolph A. Suppan





The dust of the "cultural explosion" of the Sixties has settled over the stone and concrete of new symphony halls, theatres and art centers, born then with hope, enthusiasm and also a donor's eye for marbled immortality. Now, in the Seventies, the arts organizations housed in those busy halls—civic or academic—face an economic *implosion*. In the cities, major symphony orchestras indulge in a permanent liaison with bankruptcy; ballet, opera and theatre—despite full houses and expensive seats—flirt yearly with financial disaster. On the campuses, despite increasing student interest, budget and personnel reductions affect the arts even more than other disciplines; costs of performances, productions and exhibitions go skyward, and scheduling therefore becomes limited.

Few people are more involved in and knowledgeable about these many problems than university arts deans. These deans, literally a new breed in the academic world, have toiled, suffered and progressed with an historically new structure in the university—the school of the arts. What do they have to say about the future of these schools, their mistakes, their successes and their missions? We have asked a number of them, representing various differing types of academic arts units, to respond to this question.\* To stimulate the discussion, we suggested a number of crucial issues upon which they were invited to comment or expand:

**The Other 92%.** A truism: the future of the arts—their growth, influence and support—hinges mainly upon their increasing acceptance and subsidy by the general public.

\*We have also asked Harold Taylor, former president of Sarah Lawrence College, who has written on the arts, to contribute.

Surely one strategic area where schools of the arts play a powerful role in expanding interest in the arts is the approximately 92% of the university and college student body which is comprised of non-arts majors. Even now, possibly because of their disillusionment with the political/industrial coloration of our society and the domination of the sciences in higher education, a greater number of them are electing courses in the arts. This other 92% includes those citizens who—in a decade—can double or triple arts attendance and patronage. What are we doing to really convert them to the value and joy of the arts?

**For Whom, What, Where, Are We Training the Young Artists?** Arts majors, like most other graduates these days, are being jolted by the rude fact that no jobs are available. Their education has usually included specialization in two areas—their specific arts field, and teaching. Are the departments in the arts scrutinizing traditional programs and requirements, with the possibility of including alternate training in related fields? Should a theatre major, for instance, be educated not only in the various aspects of theatre but also in film and the electronic media?

**How Sacrosanct is the Arts Curriculum?** For decades professional education in art, music, theatre and dance has, like most disciplines in the university, grown inflexible with hardening of its academic arteries. With, of course, some exceptions, average sculpture classes, piano sessions, art and music history classes, courses in acting, ceramics and ballet have changed little in their methods. What new approaches to the arts curriculum might be attempted—not only in professional courses but also related academic classes in the history, theory and criticism of the arts? Can the attractiveness of some of these

courses be increased for the general student and public as well as the arts major?

**The Economic Straight-jacket: How Are We Coping With It?** It is an unfortunate fact of life that the arts—because of their obvious need for small classes and one-to-one teaching methods—are being affected by "economics" even more than other disciplines. Despite welcome and unusual enrollment increases, arts school budgets are in peril. What steps should be taken to meet this threat?

**The Image of the Arts School in the Community.** No university academic unit can long exist without the support of its community. With national and local foundations decreasing and often cancelling their subsidies in the arts, and local professional (and semi-professional) arts groups going into bankruptcy—or at least financial starvation—how is the university arts school strengthening its role as arts patron in the community? How much is it respected and appreciated by other arts organizations as well as the general public? How is it augmenting its situation as an arts center? How is it assisting minority and non-establishment organizations as well as major professional groups? If there is a void in arts leadership, what is it doing to fill this void?

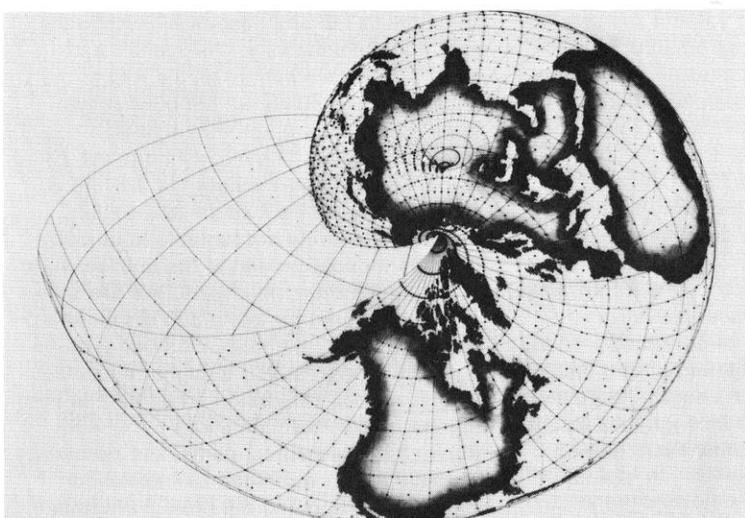
**Pre-university Training in the Arts.** Long before the arts student comes to the university, he or she has taken art and music

classes and participated in arts organizations. How involved should the university arts school become in this significant area of cooperation with public school arts education and the development of preparatory classes for pre-university students? What strategy can we envision for cooperative ventures with public-school educators for the re-evaluation, generally, of music and art classes, as well as any other related fields?

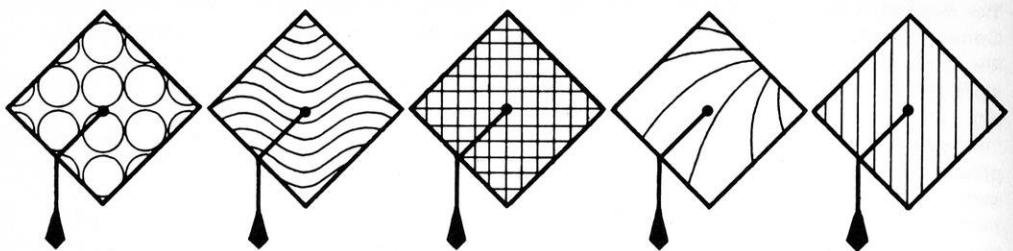
The seven following essays consider many of these questions and provide answers and new directions.

Adolph A. Suppan

*Dr. Suppan was the founding dean of the first university school of the arts in Wisconsin—The School of Fine Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which began operation in 1963. He became Dean Emeritus in August 1974 (succeeded by Robert W. Corrigan) and is now Professor of English and Philosophy. He was Chairman of the International Council of Fine Arts Deans, 1968-69; President of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1968-69; and was made a Benjamin Franklin Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts (Great Britain) in 1968. He was Chairman of the Governor's Study Committee on the Arts, 1972-74, which led to the legislative creation of Wisconsin's first arts agency.*



*Isometric Systems in Isotropic Space—Map Projections.* The Snail (helical toroid). © Copyright Agnes Denes, 1974, ink and charcoal on film and graphpaper.



by **Walter H. Walters**

*Dean, College of Arts and Architecture,  
Director, University Arts Services, The Pennsylvania State University.*

*There was so much handwriting on the wall  
That even the wall fell down.*

Christopher Morley  
*Around the Clock, 1943*

The image is appropriate for the times. The arts in higher education are now at the wall. What will it be, destiny or warning? The image is not without humor for some of us are sure to mistake the handwriting on the wall for trendy graffiti. We are a sanguine, likeable lot.

Looking back on our rapid rise, perhaps we have spent so much time introducing programs in the arts for the sake of the arts that we wrongly read what was educationally relevant for the arts in contemporary society. While we have more or less individually gone our ways, we've inadvertently created a communications barrier when it comes to being understood as a group with common cause. Meritorious though our desires to be distinctive and exceptional are and have been, it is difficult to consolidate our special assets with any show of consistency. It would make a fascinating study to trace derivative arts programs in the manner of ancestral lineage. If we could devise a rendering of this family tree, we would see a genealogical specimen of extreme contrasts and incongruities marked by sporadic growth patterns and a hint of incest.

By and large, there appears to have been an amazingly imitative approach by creative and

original minds in establishing arts programs in higher education, and it is incredible that they are not more alike. In comparing or measuring arts programs one against the other, one often has the feeling that someone's last successful arts experiences were plucked and transplanted to other localities without regard for appropriateness, but merely because they worked *before* somewhere else *for* someone else. Occasionally one can trace the emergence of an individualist who took his stubborn ideas or concepts which failed elsewhere and grafted them onto unwilling host programs and left his imprint. There are variations and there are notable exceptions, of course, but collectively this is essentially what we have at the present time. The care and nurturing of these programs in their own climates is now our challenge and major concern, for this is a matter of life and transfusion.

My theme is the arts' responsiveness to the need for accountability. The signals and alerts we've encountered on the way to the unprecedented status we are now momentarily enjoying have not always been recognized or heeded. The old insularity can no longer be tolerated because the arts are in the mainstream of education and society. We are collectively accountable to ourselves, to higher education, and to the outside world in new and more visible ways. We are somewhat unprepared for this group responsibility or role, but we must master it. Our expectation now is that the arts in higher education will be allowed to develop under normal conditions, and normal conditions bring with them all the pressures, perils, and possibilities we have envied our fellow disciplines for. Before confusion and diffusion overwhelm us, we need to establish our accountability, change attitudes, and show needs!

The democratization of higher education has obliged us to treat the arts as if they really are as important as history has shown, given man's reliance on them for knowledge and understanding. Opportunities in education for the many clearly require clarity and widely disseminated declarations of aims and goals. As the arts affect and influence large numbers of people, there should be no diminution of quality or excellence. On the contrary, emphasis on the discernment of quality and excellence within an appropriate context is an even more important requirement. Where it is possible, educational principles to which we can all adhere, and which are not inhibitory to the creative process, should be articulated to explain and promote the arts.

The culture public has also been enlarged and democratized so that large segments of our society are becoming accessible to the arts and the arts to them, and we are feeling the impact. In the arts, we find the public sector and the educational sector recognizing mutual benefits. Government, research, planning, and business offices take into account the likely cultural consequences of their actions in planning new towns, malls, industrial relocation, recreation, parks, etc. Whatever peripheral function we may have assumed about arts programs and their worth in the past, the arts are now central factors with which to reckon.

The role the arts in higher education will play in this new view of purpose and value is unspecified and unstructured, causing us to remain reactive in the face of so much excitement and challenge. The forces at work are such that some sector will eventually become dominantly influential. Because the arts in higher education enjoy unique advantages, I believe they must forcefully exploit these advantages to exercise the leadership role which would be natural for them in the next decade.

The arts have achieved, in higher education, that which they diversely and by different routes set out to do: get a foothold. That was a limited goal, but they are now established in a somewhat buckshot-like pattern. The next step is elementary and obvious.

The most basic kind of organizational structure, in a pattern common to all, is now in order to present and project a sense of proportion and unity. While conformity is the

enemy of the arts, a regard for a readily understood national structure with minimal common components is needed in order that we may relate effectively within and without the establishment. Arts programs can be compared to people. Fundamentally the human race has the same framework, but it's the differences among these similarities which make certain features outstanding or beautiful or notable. So it is in arts education that we need to operate from common guidelines, an organizational framework, and standards. Only this kind of recognizable framework will make us suitable for evaluation to gain the distinction, relevance, and excellence we seek.

For more than cosmetic reasons, we might adopt this framework for all arts in higher education in which there are three major emphases: career, general (aesthetic, historical, the creative experience), and societal/public. The coordinated strengths of this threesome should be plainly visible through purpose and organization if the programs are to be viable in society and education.

The term career suggests an ongoing process, and is descriptive of the process of education which is, after all, preparatory. Career programs, therefore, should be planned for people who want to specialize for career purposes. The term professional is usually self-proclaimed in educational circles where institutions tend to confuse the instruction with the ultimate goal. Nomenclature is important here since career programs quite properly should lead toward professional careers.

It does not take a crystal ball to see that career programs could profitably become smaller and more selective, bringing them new and more highly valued visibility and prestige. Artistic and economic pressures may demand that they become smaller and more selective. Standards of evaluation would become cleaner and could more easily be conveyed.

In time, the educational world will present to the professional world liberally educated artists, products of career programs which have stressed a balance of artistry, skill, and breadth of experience. The creative efforts of the liberally educated artists will, to be sure, have more meaningful acceptance and influence in this particular society. The characteristics and quality of the arts in the future



*The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower, Pennsylvania State University production. Photo courtesy of Vicki Steedle.*

are to some degree to be shaped by career programs of substance in higher education. The influence will be profound. This is a distinctively twentieth century phenomenon.

Small, productive career programs can be justified by corresponding general arts programs of considerable size and pertinence under a specialized identity as a major thrust in arts education. American institutions are melting pots of individuals who come from and will go into a variety of walks of life. They may not all be potential leaders, but they are certainly destined to be involved followers. They are the voters, lawmakers, government workers, civic leaders, and decision makers of tomorrow who will become the spine of the American system. Their collective attitudes will shape our culture. They are, or will be, the arts constituency. Their preparation in life would be seriously neglected in higher education without heavy influence from the arts. General arts programs are, in the finest and fullest sense, valid preparatory programs of increasingly timely significance.

Traditionalists in the arts tend to espouse values they feel are self-justifying, and the demand for accountability paralyzes them. General arts programs are often viewed with disdain as surface and shallow exposures to learning. A turn-around in thinking is imperative because our responsibilities to a wide and responsive public require new satisfactions and relationships. Specially designed programs of depth, intellectual and creative, for a new presentation of the arts on a level with other great general humanistic, scientific or social programs are overdue.

It is not because of numbers of students alone that the need for general arts programs emerges. While the humanities and the sciences are traditionally at the heart of higher education as the two great concepts of knowledge, we now find, partly due to the democratization of higher education, and partly to a growing and instinctive realization of a real need, that there is a third anxious to emerge. Do we now have the strength to recognize and emphasize the arts as a third great concept of knowledge? I believe the process has already begun in the democratization of higher education, but remains largely unformed, unexplained, and unpromoted. I hope its development does not follow the derivative patterns we have seen thus far in the arts.

The arts do constitute a branch of learning which is a blend of the aesthetic, historical, and creative experience. We must persuade others that this branch of learning is appropriate as an approach to enlightenment and knowledge through verbal and non-verbal communication unique to the arts and the needs of man. In a large country such as ours, the most progressive and revolutionary thing which can happen now is to place career programs within the grasp of the eligible and qualified few, and the new general arts programs within the grasp of the great body of individuals who will find their study and involvement useful and satisfying. Both approaches to training and learning would be well served. We would meet our obligations to the arts and to society through both career and general programs which would not only justify the expense but return the investment in kind to the full life and the good society.

We must welcome this accountability. This kind of contribution endures.

Public access to and public use of the resources of institutions of higher education have undergone positive changes. I am encouraged with this extension of service and the availability of programs. We need more demonstrative evidence and clarification that colleges and universities are recognizing their role and responsibility from passive to active patron. The real national theatres, national museums, national audiences are now dispersed geographically and numerically to the campuses. As impresarios beyond their expectations, colleges and universities represent a cultural focus of enormous national influence. The American campus is now the most effective patron of the arts, and history tells us that in all former civilizations the arts thrived according to the quality of their patronage. The responsibility in programming quality and excellence is awesome.

Though we are relatively naive about exploiting it, the arts command considerable financial clout. On touring groups alone, the Association of College, University and Community Arts Administrators has estimated that a staggering \$370 million is spent annually by colleges and universities. Without such support the entire structure of the professional arts in America would surely collapse. No one knows for sure the investment colleges and universities have made in museum, exhibition, and acquisition programs. Who knows the size of our audience?

No program with young career-bound students, and no comprehensive program for large numbers of students in general arts, can be successful without the availability of the finest exemplars in the fields in their midst. We need richer and fuller use of touring groups, exhibitions, and residencies to supplement and complement the excellent work and creative programs which originate on campuses and which, combined, make the campuses the centers for creative arts.

Other aspects of societal/public accountability are directly related to changing life styles and increased interest of the general public. Whether termed continuing education, extended degrees, universities without walls, or community action, the demand is there for more personal involvement as well as audi-

ence involvement. There seems to be a national hesitancy in responding.

To best serve the arts, the institutions of higher education would do well to organize their arts leadership to place the responsibility for the career, general, and societal/public programs under a central authority, well staffed with financial, managerial, and arts-oriented personnel. Only with this centralized arts administration can the appropriate decisions be made to assure quality, excellence, financial responsibility, and appropriate relations within and without the local scene.

Resources, faculty and student expertise, missions of particular colleges and universities, facilities and leadership may vary, but develop consistently they must, and the subsequent changes will be effective only if developed meaningfully and with clear common purpose and intent. The rate with which curriculums and programs have adjusted to the changes in society has been slow. Even the most established subjects have had to be fought for, and it is now our round.

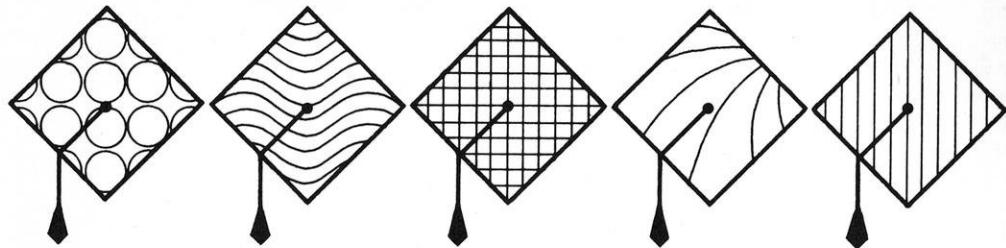
My thoughts here, as I mentioned earlier, are on the issue of responsive accountability in a world which is becoming increasingly inquisitive and insistent in its judgment of values and worth. In this world of analysis and measurement, we in the arts in higher education are placed in a period of tension and transition. It is my fear that this is not nationally recognized among our own.

The universities are the guardians of the past, present, and future. What then makes the arts so appropriate to higher education? Society now asks and waits for an answer in action. We are accountable. The handwriting on the wall before us is filled with challenge and doubt.

Don't let the wall fall down. □



# Crisis in the Fine Arts: Malaise in Blunderland



by Jules Heller

Professor of Fine Arts and Founding Dean,  
Faculty of Fine Arts, York University, Toronto,  
Canada.

*This is a true story. It is, simultaneously, a series of lies. It is neither a "story," nor a clutch (or should I say—a pod) of lies. It is not autobiographical, not representative of any particular university in North America, Europe (including universities behind the so-called Iron Curtain), Africa, Australia, or South East Asia, and all references to people and places have been, willy-nilly, recycled in a verbal Waring blender for purposes of respecting privacy.*

As Alice observed, the world gets curioser and curioser: we piously mouth the words *ecology* and *environment*, as we continue to foul the planet and trash the solar system with expensive and wondrous garbage; governments, by and large, reveal little stability and many keep trying to prove that there is less honor among politicians than among thieves; inflation continues its mad, worldwide spiral and, contrary to the theories of economic pundits, more bankruptcies are declared these days than ever before; millions upon millions of people in so-called developing countries cry soundlessly for an extra measure of rice, flour, and sugar to sustain the tenuous thread of life, while "fat farms" flourish in developed societies; private and public foundations, using a quick-drying glue spelled m-o-n-e-y, shore up rickety projects advanced by science-oriented, statistics-brainwashed grantsmen representing non-scientific disciplines; in an age of zero-population, when there are no prophets to be seen or heard (except those created by

*Ananias—the creature of the media), the voice and gesture of even a jester is deemed scriptural; know-nothingness is honored as once were fathers and mothers, and persons of little talent and less ability rule areas of deep concern to vast numbers of people; universities, for the most part, are anemic, myopic, twitching, arteriosclerotic bodies searching for their separate missions in this goal-less society with Diogenes' barely-sputtering lamp; artists, in the main, have been and are being seduced (and loving it) by other artists' works of art, the documentation of other artists' works of art, other artists, dealers, and money; big-business, the media, local, provincial, and federal arts councils—all of whom mean well and wish no harm to befall a prospective grantee as they (the grantors and their consultants) individually and collectively whirl and dance to the strident or silent tunes of various, "low-profile" pipers.*

Viewed in this context, "our" problems in the universities are not really earth-shaking; I doubt they would register on the Richter scale. Yet, we have had serious problems, they haunt us now, and it takes no crystal ball to suggest that myriad problems will confront us in the future. So much for the "bad" news.

At the risk of seeming to ignore the singular and mounting pressures of ever-increasing enrollments in the Fine Arts, ever-diminishing financial support for people, space, equipment, supplies and materials, scholarships and fellowships, statistical analyses of this and that, curricular problems, new teaching methodologies, politicism of the arts on campus, the nature and purpose of the fine arts, etc., etc., I propose to express my own, admittedly biased, subjective, inconsistent, non-ordered,

ever-changing attitudes and feelings about what was, what is, and perhaps, what should be our concerns in the Fine Arts within the university.

About thirty years ago, when I first became acquainted with the North American world of the fine arts within the university, I was a TA. My "colleagues" in this never-never land of want appeared, from my vantage point, as super-persons: they, for the most part, were widely-known men and women respected for their scholarship and/or their creative and performing arts talents; they were mature, articulate persons, witty demi-gods and goddesses brimming with mind-blowing ideas, possessed of no mean amount of energy; they were keen intellectuals, well-read, representative of style, discipline, and professionalism—in the deepest and profoundest senses of these terms; they, to my hearsay knowledge, did not confuse or confound their professional and their private lives; they served us as superb models who taught by example; they upheld "standards;" they believed that the Fine Arts were an elitist area and defended this position by shrugging their shoulders and saying, "C'est la vie, mon petit."

Some years later, when my rose-colored spectacles were smashed, numbers of these same individuals seemed to be nasty, brutish, child-like, paranoid, little interested in teaching and less concerned about students. In short, they had delusions of adequacy. These artists and scholars remained isolated and aloof not only from each other but from colleagues and students in all other related fields of endeavor. They lived out their separate lives in the splendid isolation of divisions or departments within Colleges of Arts and Letters, wherein they were, in fact, the lowest members on the academic totem-pole.

Throughout the 50's, the "old-boy" syndrome reigned widely and secretly; appointments were made to staff in mysterious ways. There never was consultation, if memory serves, unless you include in the definition of that term a passing comment by an always-hurrying head of department. And, in those days, one never asked where it was he was moving in such great haste. On occasion, certain of our best teachers were fired summarily and most of us were too weak, too frightened, too

jellyfish-like to protest—in those days of McCarthy.

We rarely saw our Deans and never shared a positive moment with our President—save to respond to minor complaints or requests (demands?) for additional service without pay. Fear, rumor, the madness of crowds of students, overwork and niggardly remuneration were ubiquitous in academe.

We muddled through and served on dull undergraduate and graduate committees which met interminably and which, eventually, filed a majority report which was gratefully acknowledged and then filed in a dusty archive never again to see the eyes of man. I must confess that in thirty years of university life rarely, if ever, did we discuss the content of our curriculum, the nature and purpose of the department, our individual and/or group philosophy, the role of esthetics. I never recall exchanging ideas, attitudes, what have you? with other members of my department, my college, my university. These matters were always the bases of talks *outside*. We castigated all administrators and our various Boards of Trustees—but only in the seclusion of our homes. Presumably, while we fiddled with form, the content of higher education was chiseled on stone tablets—somewhere else.



Some of us became angry enough (or was it foolishness?) to state categorically what we believed intrinsically—that were we to head the departments and the colleges, everyone would be served and served properly. We believed that the effectiveness of administrators should be judged by one criterion only: how well did they solve *your* problems?

So, many classrooms and studios lost good to excellent teachers to administrative posts; I am not implying that *all* administrators during this period came from the classrooms and studios with earned degrees, university experience, and/or professional reputations.

Occasionally, heads of departments discovered congenial souls on their own campuses in other Fine Arts disciplines, but more interestingly, in the sciences. The adventurous few pressed for cooperation, friendship, and ease of passage between the several departments concerned. Sensitive administrators (admittedly, a minority) responded to this forcefully-expressed need, noted the unwieldy enrollments in what then were called Colleges of Letters, Arts, and Sciences (or equivalent) and were willing to break up these feudal, educational fiefdoms into, at least, three separate, human, manageable, and autonomous Colleges: Liberal Arts, Science, and Fine Arts—each to be headed by its own Dean. The millennium had arrived—or had it?

Various departmental groupings emerged from this new administrative arrangement under the umbrella of a College of Fine Arts, a College of Arts and Architecture, a College of the Creative and Performing Arts, etc. The majority of universities seem to have opted for the ambiguous title of College of Fine Arts, for reasons unrelated one to the other, which housed Art, Music, and Theatre. Certain brave beings attempted to wed physics, mathematics, and other sciences to the now-traditional triad of art, music, and theatre; others fixed upon the additions of Dance, Film, Creative Writing, and Interdisciplinary Studies. Some colleges couched their description of courses in fine 19th century ambiguity; a goodly number chose to be “with it,” and created their own jargon.

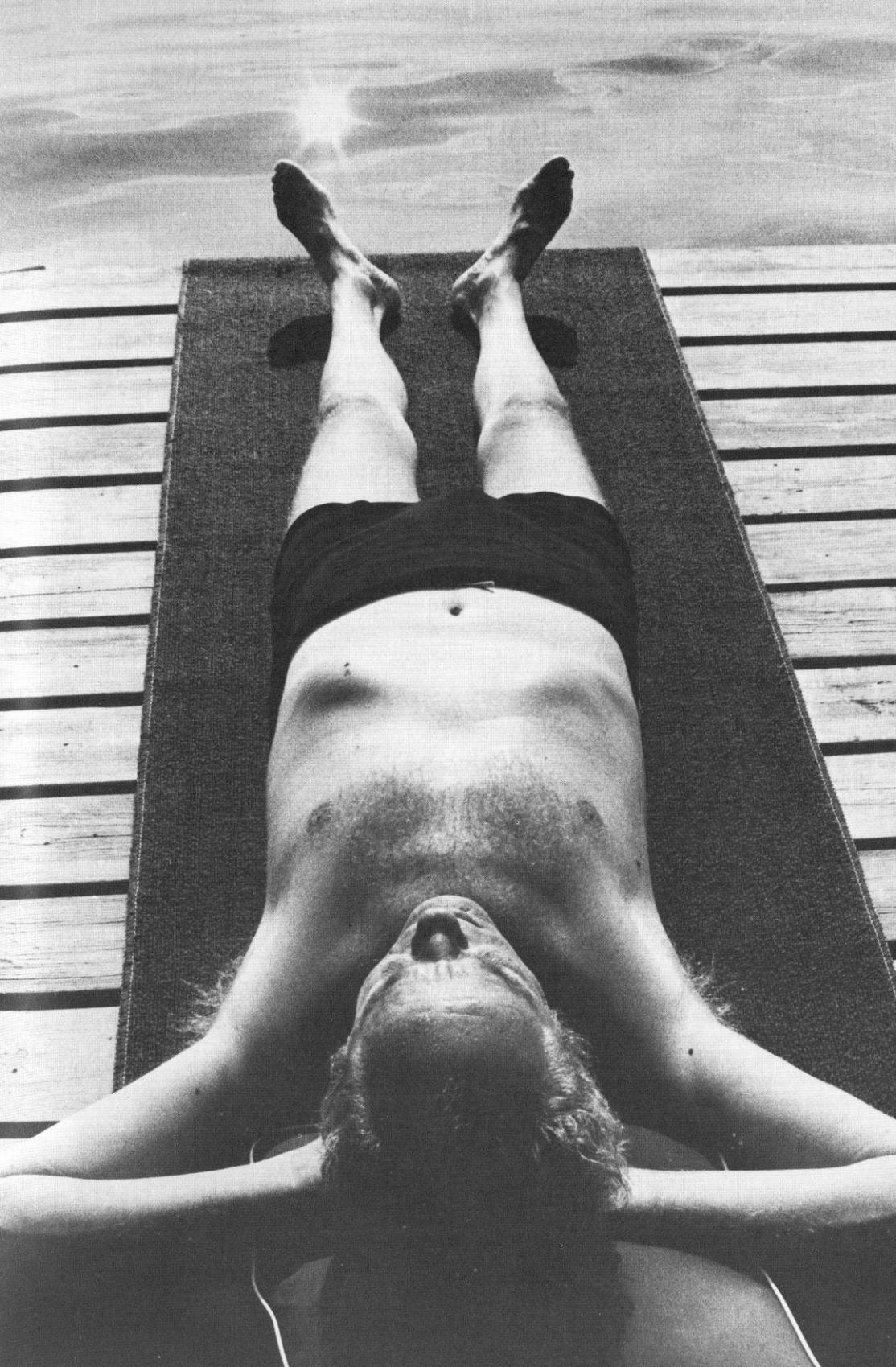
Practices, policies, and the quality of education varied from institution to institution; most Colleges of Fine Arts “inherited” their staff during the break-up of the old “monarchies.” They merely shucked their old titles and

departments for new ones in the “baby” Colleges of Fine Arts. Would visual artists talk to dancers, choreographers, theatre directors, actors, film makers, composers, musicians, arts historians? We, hopefully, assumed they would and that new and challenging structures, and truly exciting ideas would emerge.

Three institutions dedicated to the Fine Arts were privileged to start from scratch in the North America of the late 1960's: The California Institute of the Arts, The University of the State of New York at Purchase, and York University in Toronto, Canada. They were dedicated, more or less, to the same goals and purposes: high standards of performance for both faculty and students, to be as flexible as few other institutions were capable of being, to stress close relationships between professional colleagues in all fields and student-professionals (artists at a different stage in their development). One day, someone should investigate the successes and failures, similarities and differences that exist between the three schools located in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California, a wealthy suburb of New York City, and the burgeoning city of Toronto in Canada.

I am both appalled and heartened at what I see and have seen in the Fine Arts in universities in North America, in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and their equivalents in the USSR, Australia, New Zealand, England, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, East Germany, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa over the last decade or so. There appears to be a high correlation between aggressive mediocrity, tenure, and Deanships (fortunately, there always are exceptions). The master-apprentice relationship of the past has given way to the would-be *guru*, finger-snapping, go-go professor and his “groupies” (change the sex to fit the local situation). Graduate students are still being exploited as cheap labor in most institutions and are being blackmailed and manipulated by unprofessionally-oriented members of the graduate faculties who derive their unalloyed happiness from this “power” they appear to assert; some graduate students, on the other hand, cannot wait to be thus “administered” by their oracles. Few young professors truly

Photo by Diane Hulick, 1974. Courtesy of the artist.



seem to enjoy the process of teaching and many would sell their educational souls to the highest bidder for the proverbial thirty pieces of silver. Secrecy, especially with regard to budget decisions, still prevails to frustrate those who care. More and more second and third-level administrative appointments are being offered non-intellectuals with business experience who demonstrate stone-headed views about people's problems in the fine arts. Some local soothsayers who do not now and never have read anything in the field (assuming some know how to read) hold that "anything goes," "there are no standards," "process is more important than product," and any other slogan that rationalizes their anti-intellectualism; other politically-oriented, self-proclaimed Marxists unfamiliar with *Das Kapital* or anything written by the aforementioned gentleman, preach their nihilistic doctrines and exhort the young to follow their lead; student participation in all decision-making processes in departments occasionally lends a sort of pseudo-sophistication to some meetings, at worst, thus improving certain situations; at best, intelligent dialogue emerges from committee meetings where formerly majority decisions were required before one was allowed to visit a toilet. So-called senior persons in departments tend to splinter their disciplines into more and more sub-units in their seeming greed for "power" over a hoped-for budget for their very own esoteric sub-section. Morale has become a funny word; there are no universal heroes or heroines. There is little joy and less love in the halls of academe.

Today, my nicked and scarred crystal ball, after being stared at for hours, conjured up the following *visions*:

- Annually, in each of our institutions, we decide what it is we are doing, why we are doing it and not our colleagues across town, and how we intend to realize our goals. (If we describe this exercise in our various catalogues in high-blown rhetoric, vague generalities, or the latest jargon, we should agree to be jailed for misleading the public).
- We are holding conferences on the validity of the Colleges of Fine Arts; we are considering whether or not to abolish all depart-

ments within the college. Those who argue strongly for tearing down the false walls between the several arts believe that even the faculty may further its growth and development.

- Recalling that all faculties deserve the persons they select as administrators, we are electing leaders and encouraging them to lead our several colleges if they do not (within a term, say, of five years), we promise to remove them from office.
- Believing in the unity of theory and practice, we do not allow militant staff members to "sweet-talk" us into accepting and voting for the removal of arts histories from the practices of the arts—without careful evaluation of motives.
- I see myself opposing "watered-down" fine arts courses for engineers, humanists, social scientists, etc. in order to build better audiences for the fine arts, or for whatever reasons. Aside from insulting students in these areas, I do not wish to be a party to their being made esthetic cripples.
- Should faculty members tired of teaching, bored with students, inevitably late to or absent from too many classes, rarely prepared for lecture or studio courses, or still using the lecture notes *they* took in graduate school from *their* tired professors be allowed to remain on staff?
- We argue the rights, responsibilities, duties, and prerequisites of graduate students who are paid to assist in teaching and/or in research. Do we really listen?
- The picture is cloudier than some of the others, but we argue the same things with regard to equal pay for graduate students and faculty members who are women or who are members of minority groups.
- Do we respond only when we are pressured, only when the human condition has erupted? Or, are we individually and collectively the makers and the shakers of society? Perhaps, we see ourselves as servants of the *status quo*?

- When, in God's name, do we concern ourselves with the quality of life both within and without the university? Or, are we surer of self when we discuss "objective" things like FTE's and other abortion-like statistics?
- When we presume to be THE community arts centers and commission works, who sits on what committees to make which judgments? And on the basis of what values?
- I see us abolishing the committee system in the Fine Arts. If, truly, we wish to get things done, let us hold one person liable. Let us give that one person the authority and the responsibility to do that which we would like to see done. If it isn't accomplished in a reasonable amount of time, we can fix blame and do something about it.
- Inflation and depression notwithstanding, we appear to attract more and more students to our ranks. Are they *all* talented (whatever that word means), seized with the passion to express that which demands expression? Do they come to our institutions to find creative fulfillment? Are they seeking "escape," prolonging the confron-

Illustration for Hans My Hedgehog. Reproduced with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. from *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales From Grimm*, selected by Lore Segal and Maurice Sendak, translated by Lore Segal with four tales translated by Randall Jarrell, illustrated by Maurice Sendak, pictures copyright © 1973 by Maurice Sendak.



tation with society—out there? Do they recognize us as fellow-neurotics and seek our company—indefinitely?

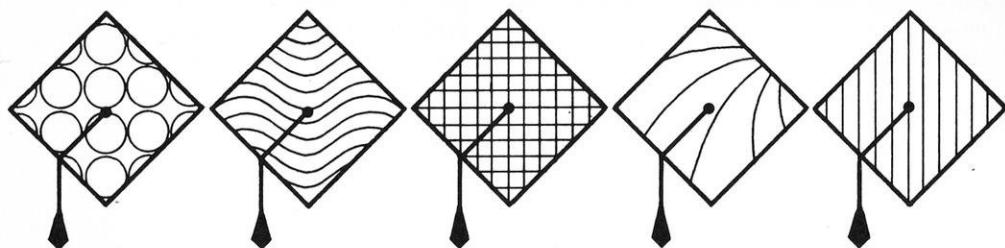
- Recognizing that we represent but *one* road to the heaven or hell that passes for the Fine Arts, do we warn away the weak? What is weakness? Strength? Do we point up the *many* paths open—*excluding* the universities?

I had hoped, earlier on, that someplace, somewhere we would create a small, informal body wherein we would exchange ideas and information on an international level—truly representing our various constituencies—thus avoiding the re-invention of the wheel. (This was the original intent of the International Council of Fine Arts Deans). But then, progress is once more confused and thwarted by bigness.

All I am certain of, at this juncture, is that we are living, learning, and teaching in a world in the midst of a wild, transitional period, heading at a breakneck pace for an unknown destination in an obsolescent machine with little or no braking power.

Hang on, friends. Happy landings! □

# "Come, My Friends, 'Tis Not Too Late to Seek a Newer World"\*



by Frances Bartlett Kinne

*Dean, College of Fine Arts, Jacksonville University. She is currently chairman of the International Council of Fine Arts Deans.*

In great aspiration for her son, Thetis rejected a long life of boredom for him in favor of a shorter life of excitement and fulfillment. Had there been Fine Arts Deans in the days of Homer, it might have been Achilles' chosen fate to be "one of us." After all, with stout heart he seemed to have an instinctive penchant for catapulting himself headlong into one adventure after the other. And he did play the harp! The minimal requirement for one who wishes to enter our field is a thorough knowledge of one or more arts, harp or not, as well as a stout heart. It is hoped our critics will be more sympathetic than those of our Homeric hero, for we too have our Achilles' Heel.

When on that azalea-flowered Florida day in 1961 I was asked to accept an opportunity to create a College of Fine Arts, I unwittingly wedded myself to a period of unprecedented changes in the total arts environment—changes that were to be both superficial and essential. I hadn't heard of Alvin Toffler, but I was caught up in what Emerson referred to as "billows or ripples (they are) of the stream of tendency." For inherent in this profession seems to be the Thetis-hope for creation, stimulation, productivity, and fulfillment; where the past and present merge and the future gives tantalizing promise of new dimensions. The vehicle for this promise has been the structure within academic institutions

where tradition and innovation join hands—the Fine Arts College.

Who, what and where are we? The Fine Arts Colleges, I mean. We seem to be combinations of many things—no Platonic Vision of perfection, to be sure, as there seems to be no "perfect" model to follow, though we do have a common denominator of service to the Muses. Perhaps it is safe to say we are a new hybrid, developed from this and that and detasseled along the way. Grudgingly accepted on campuses and eyed with suspicion by those outside the world of academe, the Fine Arts Colleges have energized growth and supported the winds of change. We are now standing on tiptoe, with attempted Janus-like vision, with a charge of gargantuan scope.

A retrospective review reveals arts growth and development of significant scope on campuses, and, in many instances, of such a nature that it would very likely not have transpired in any other location. But unfortunately the same review reveals weaknesses and unstructured growth, where fragmentation is a built-in weakness. Certainly separation does not lend itself to a climate of cooperative endeavor. When each of music, visual arts, theatre, dance, architecture, etc. is in a far-separated area of the campus, the problem of coordination becomes almost insurmountable. Students have little opportunity to cross disciplinary lines in exchange of ideas. Seldom do they learn to know and work with the similarities and dissimilarities of the arts, and too often the separate departments are involved in cut-throat budgetary competition.

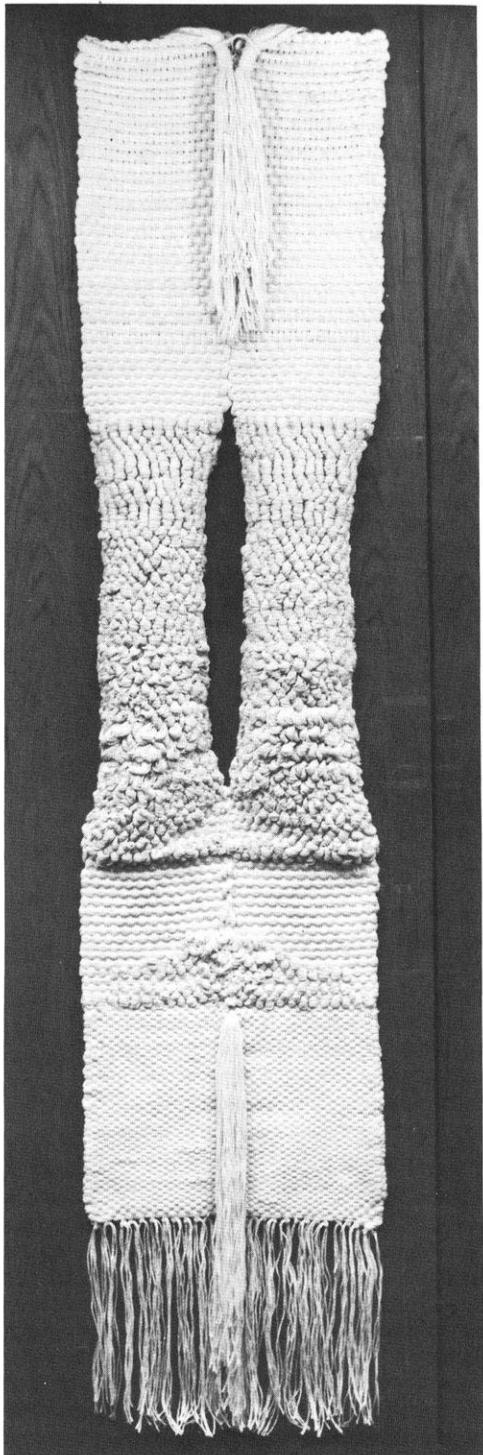
Fortunately, and none too soon, a new chapter seems to be in the writing, and, if the volume of my mail this past year is any barometer,

\*Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Ulysses

unprecedented numbers of colleges are moving toward an amalgamation of the arts. I have responded to dozens of committees and deans, representing geographical areas from all sections of the continent, in their inquiries for information and requests for assistance in the creation of a fine arts amalgamation on campus. Unfortunately, the Fine Arts Colleges already in existence have been so pressed in meeting their own accelerating demands, there has been little opportunity to give guidance to the hundreds of developing community and junior colleges. It is encouraging that several bodies, including the International Council of Fine Arts Deans, are beginning to address themselves to these problems.

The amazing (and inspiring) reports of the interest of campus and community citizens in the arts presents an unexampled picture of expansion and burgeoning growth. While other student enrollments decline, the arts enrollments (both major and non-major) continue to climb. As we rejoice in the latter, there is also present an undercurrent of uneasiness, as we face a rather obvious caveat. Are we ready for the arts bloom, and will the non-arts faculties awaken to what has happened. Perhaps the new concern of the non-arts students will take care of the latter problem, and it is a problem. It is these professors who have often advised students not to enroll in arts classes, and at the same time have influenced curriculum committees. There still remains on some campuses a mistrust of certain arts faculties by non-arts faculties; still a lingering suspicion that the fine arts do not quite belong; still campuses where there is an unwillingness to evaluate the arts as a vital part of the academic curriculum; still campuses where a student who achieves an outstanding academic record in the arts is not entitled to the same academic privileges as the non-arts students. But traditional campuses and their faculties will be compelled to re-evaluate their positions, and, in a strange turn of events, the arts growth on campuses may provide justification for retention of non-arts faculty involved in core curriculum offerings, as the role of the campus arts programs becomes clarified.

The inflexibility of some non-arts faculty may in some cases be matched by rigidity of arts faculties toward the new arts developments



*Untitled* by Joan Levey, woven twine, 1974. Photo by Jeanne McTeague.

both on and off campuses. Amazing is the fact that some elitist arts faculties still support the idea that only highly gifted students should be allowed within the Arts programs. It is maintained that the societal changes taking place are outside the perimetric scheme of things, and, it is not their responsibility either to educate the non-arts student, or to provide guidance in assistance to the non-collegiate community. But these faculty too are beginning to recognize the need to be more like the wise bamboo, or be blown away in the temper of the typhoon. The "real world" has taken on new significance.

With all of these new challenges, what then must we envision as our responsibilities? Certainly we must move far beyond the traditional guidelines of our present curricula, and many will see my concept as too all-encompassing for practical development. However, I believe that anything less is a compromise. My reason? The arts are experiencing the miracle of spring. There is a sense of urgency that recognizes the people-interest—almost a demand for action. So with the idea that the arts can mean something to everyone, and personally exposing my Achilles' Heel, I strongly urge a reexamination of the traditional arts structures of the campuses, in an effort to study ways of developing more effective programs in the arts, both on and off campus.

We must rethink our curricula in light of the changing patterns of socio-economic developments. We must see ourselves, not only as the protector of the "golden thread," but as the explorers of the new frontiers so vitally important to the artists of any age, providing a climate in which new art forms may be created and experienced. We cannot abandon the idea that the campus is a productive, positive place for the artist to create, and high standards of quality must also be maintained for the student who is highly gifted. These students must be encouraged in every possible manner, allowing for an environment of study and creation. Likewise, we must explore the vast sources of human resources available in the talents and abilities of these students. Though this is already an accepted part of the education in some Fine Arts Colleges, it is totally foreign in others. It can be done. I have observed both faculty and arts majors, now oriented to think of themselves as part of a much larger commu-

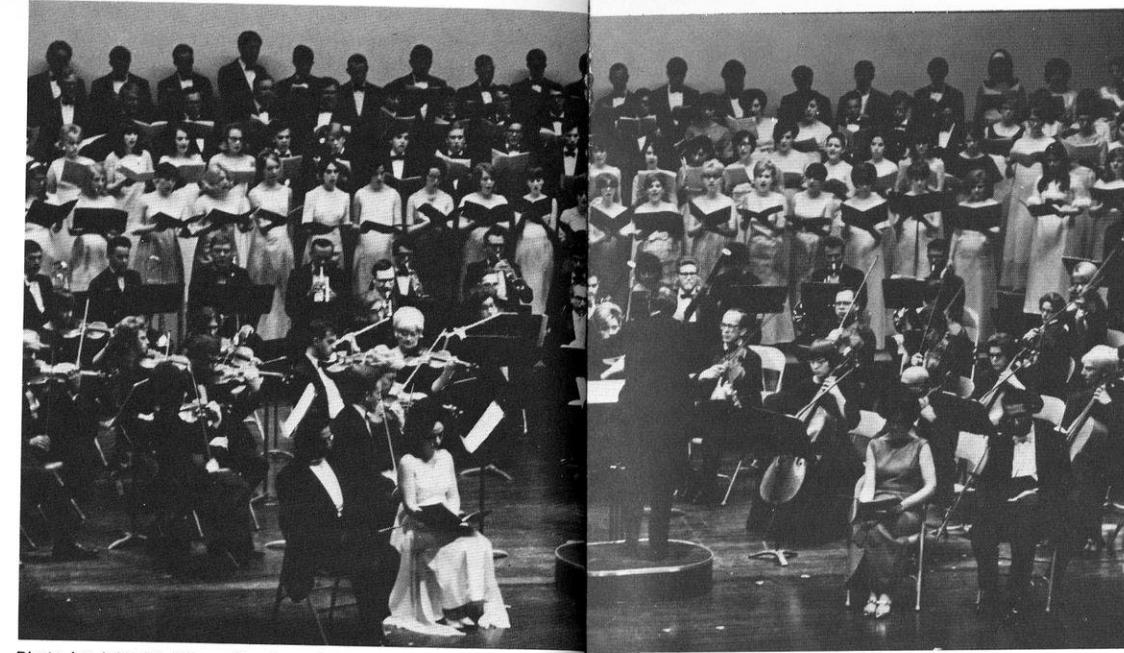


Photo by John W. Alley. Courtesy: Adolph Suppan.

nity, effectively producing and inspiring others: in public schools, retirement and neighborhood centers, lower income areas, service organizations, etc. At the same time these faculty and students are receiving "in-kind" gratification and recognizing themselves as valued members of society, not in exploitation but in development of talents.

If close coordination and cooperation is present, both curricular and extra-curricular arts offerings of fine arts majors will be tied in with the other disciplines on campus, and, with the new interest of students in these other disciplines the possibilities are fertile. This is an obvious opportunity to narrow the gap between the arts and non-arts areas, but frequent visits to a number of campuses indicate it is all too seldom a reality. We must undertake a study of arts offerings! This must include the curricula of all arts majors, as well as course offerings for non-arts majors, multi-disciplinary courses, ethnic and regional arts, popular arts, etc. Inherent in this must be the exploration of means of bridging the gap between the humanities and the arts, with a deeper understanding of the dimensions of the aesthetic world. (Perhaps we must con-

vince our own government of the need for doing away with the dichotomy created by them in separating the Arts and Humanities). Where universities have not coordinated their arts disciplines, there must be encouragement for them to restructure their programs in an effort to open up new avenues for their students.

The educators who nobly developed and guided the present programs on campuses are largely nearing retirement age, and very few schools have made available graduate arts administration courses for developing future leadership. The past emphasis has been on the community arts leader program, and consideration must certainly be given to the development of leadership training for the arts in higher education. A program now being instituted at one institution is doing just this, and I am confident they will address themselves to the "new look" in collegiate challenges.

In addition to the curricular changes, the "new look" must include an expansion of the college fine arts program into the community. Any school, no matter what its location, will have qualified personnel whose very profes-

sions give them a unique opportunity to make contributions to the community cultural scene. The campuses have a fount of experience and expertise very likely unavailable from any other source. Obviously the degree of involvement must not be one that serves as a detriment to the faculty member or student, but few schools have reached the saturation point.

Eighty-nine percent of the nation's adult population believe that the quality of life in their communities is directly related to the arts, and sixty-five percent indicate they are unable to get all the culture and entertainment they need in their own homes.\* Tremendous obstacles must be overcome in order to meet the arts needs, now being recognized by citizens as a natural and vital part of living. So-called "second-hand experiences" will fulfill in part those needs as audience opportunities become available, but the "first-hand experience" is one every student and community citizen should have the opportunity of personally encountering. The neighborhood thrust by educational institutions, city government, social agencies, etc., must provide opportunities for the actual act of creation and performance for all of its citizens.

Perhaps at the heart of the entire problem is the need for developing guidelines for new and extended arts opportunities in the public schools. In the same study previously mentioned, fifty-three percent of the people surveyed indicated there was not sufficient creative activity taking place in the schools, and a majority felt the arts should be offered for credit and equal to math, science and English. In order to accomplish this the attitudes of citizens must provide budgetary backing; teacher education courses must demand quality standards; State Departments of Education must be more supportive of the Arts K-12. No one group may bring all of this action to pass, but institutions of higher learning may be the pacesetters with the immediate goal of providing daily arts experiences for all school children during the years when each child is developing an innate aesthetic sensibility. (Is it even possible to

\*Arts and the People, A Survey of Public Attitudes and Participation in the Arts and Culture in New York State, Conducted for the American Council for the Arts in Education, Inc.

dream what a civilization could be if beauty touched each life each day—even if it were but a fleeting experience!).

There is an additional dimension in the whole new field of geriatrics, as the arts are in a position to provide creative experiences for the increasing army of senior citizens. As the life span increases we must keep pace with the medical profession in answering the demands for meaningful living. If the participation in creative activities actually does delay the chronic brain syndrome, as an Iowa physician and I have discussed for many years, are we prepared for the dramatic increase in demands for the arts? The few music therapy programs in colleges are but a scratch in the surface of what we shall be challenged to do. Studies indicate arteriosclerosis is not peculiar to advanced age, and medical developments may provide us with new demands we are unprepared to meet.

And so we observe that the traditional role of the Fine Arts on and off campus is changing. We shall need more than a stout heart as we

attempt to meet the academic challenges and societal summons, both of which are formidable. In an age of planned obsolescence, the answer we find in the arts may provide us with the tie to the past, present and future.

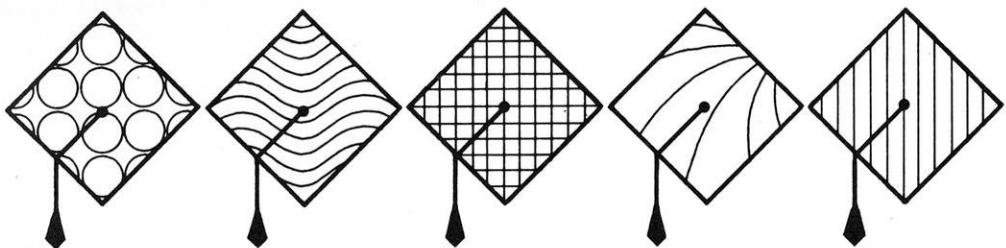
Tennyson's quote in my title seems now to invite us "to strive" for strengthening of curricula, with built-in flexibility. This must allow quality education for the arts majors, with in-depth pursuit of the great experience within the selected discipline, and it must include positive offerings to non-art majors in arts disciplines, with active and passive participation available. And "to seek," we must find new means of providing leadership, facilities, instruction and guidance to make possible life's fulfillment for the great proportion of Humanity who has been unable to share this dream.

The final challenge seems to be "to find" new answers to the changing patterns of arts needs, keeping step with contemporary life, and "not to yield" to the cocoon of contentment. "Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world." □



Madame Nora Kiss instructs students in Pas de Deux at Summer Session in Dance offered by York University.  
Photo courtesy of Doug Tomlinson.

## A Profusion of Choices



by Norman Rice

Professor of Art, and Dean Emeritus, College of Fine Arts, Carnegie-Mellon University.

The Academy, the Art Establishment, Official Art—by whatever name and under whatever auspices “accepted” arts have flourished—has always nurtured within itself seeds of rebellion, out of which have sometimes emerged new academic precepts, new ranges of acceptance. In these accelerated times it is difficult for the Avantgarde to stay avant very long. Many things conspire against it, particularly the communicative expertise developed by our diligent scientists and engineers which has been embraced by creative people as a means of grace and for the hope of glory, and which includes the transmission of ideas through space at speeds that out-distance the winds aloft, shaping the thoughts of all who can see, or hear, or comprehend. Simultaneously has come the disruption of historical principle as a measure of man’s progression toward creative goals. The effect of these and other pressures it seems to me has been to inhibit rather than release the creative spirit by blurring the line between what is current and what is good, by implying that sophisticated means are in themselves worthy of meriting the world’s attention, by encouraging works that are imitative or self-consciously different, by attempting to match in intellectual reach the expanding world of science, and by fostering the notion that to think about art is as consequential as making it.

Where do the schools stand in this era of turbulent change? Anyone who has looked around for a bit is bound to admit that there

is some confusion within the academic groves. There being no clear unanimity among the artists (by which I mean, of course, creative people in all the arts) the place of artists among the humanities and sciences, whose practitioners *think* that they are making methodical progress toward definable goals, is sometimes uncomfortable. The conservatories and independent schools, managed as they are apt to be by more sympathetic types, fare generally (not always) better.

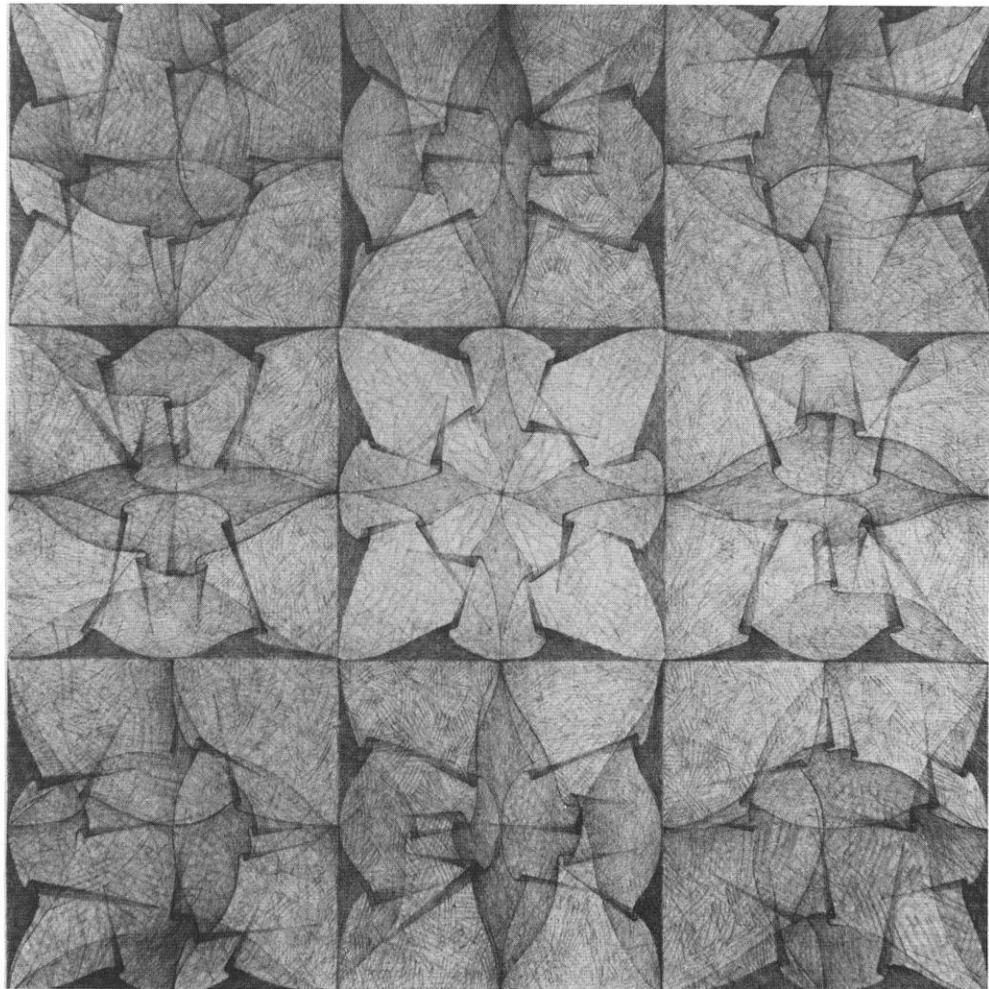
The general aspect of the arts in education is variegated, their mission diffuse. Each school, surveying its circumstances, adopts its official position, sometimes with the concurrence, or even the full support of the agency that supports it. Sometimes even its close campus neighbors or its governors are not altogether sure of what’s going on over there. Students, you may be sure, rapidly learn the ground rules in a particular place and either accept the constraints—or lack of them—or find more congenial surroundings elsewhere. They are aware of cleavages and faculty rivalries. They choose faculty leaders or reject tutelage of any kind. They believe in the importance of technical mastery, or they are confident in the power of their personal gifts—of logic, or emotional drive, or mystical insight. And yet, I must confess the passions that once activated rebellion seem strangely lacking.

In any case the straightforward battles against the accepted forms and conditions of art, the progression of dissidents toward acceptance—many of the causes and counter causes that seemingly made for clear historical analysis in an earlier day are now lost in the tangled skeins of doubts about what is new, what is beautiful, what is enduring, what merits lie in the ephemeral, or the precise, or

in the dramatic overthrow of what was recently dominant. But of course art is not produced for the convenience of historians. Artists swear no oath of allegiance to consistency, nor should they.

In addition to the solution of problems bearing on the diversity of approaches to art in its present state, education in the arts is trapped by other conditions that have to do with the facts of academic life. For example, the arts, having established themselves like alpine plants, clinging with fragile roots to the rocks of a hostile environment (but of course adorning that environment) must often compete with each other for sustenance, withstanding as well as they can the gusts of academic

change, the perennial budget droughts, the crushing boots of the unaware. Again, because they differ in kind from long established academic studies, the academic processes applied to their unorthodox procedures are frequently out of harmony within the faculty consortia. "Professional" outcomes in the arts being as variegated as they are, the image presented by artist educators to other professional groups, including those that are in some degree arbiters of their fate, is one of capriciousness, irreverence toward the system within which they exist, internal dissent or mysterious confusion. I have known protagonists of "respectable" disciplines—long established ones, that is—even when admitting the right of the arts and the artists



*Multiple Veil I/Blue* by Marcia Morse, lithograph, 1974. Photo by Peter Morse. Courtesy of the artist.

to exist, still to regard the arts in higher education in about the same position vis-à-vis their particular specialties as phrenology is to brain surgery, or astrology to astronomy. This is not altogether a matter of seeing arts education (excepting architecture) as "training," though there is some element of that. It is more likely to be residual belief in the romantic images of the nineteenth century, fostered in song and story. Some doubts probably have their roots in the parental attitudes of an earlier generation.

In the matter of vocational outcomes, it should be fairly clear by now that a "pure" state of anything academic is hard to justify, much less achieve. Mathematicians, research scientists, English and history buffs, psychologists and all the rest must eat. Hence their vocational goals are important, though obscured by academic mythology. Perhaps the artists—excepting those who plan to teach and, again, the architects—who persist in an investigation that promises little in the way of security are the ones most entitled to the mantle of purity reserved for altruists and saints. Perhaps.

But what about this education that is presented to those pure souls who come hoping to discover the secret ways to bring form out of chaotic void? The range of influences brought to bear on them range from complete laissez-faire (an extreme that is losing ground, or going out of fashion) to complete indoctrination (which must still exist in a few embattled outposts). The demands of society for recognizable outcomes leads to an inclination toward systematized educational processes—conformity in scheduling, curriculum presentation, regulation by committee, measurable outcomes. No matter if none of these and other considerations have little to do with the arts themselves, which concern the struggles within individuals to solve largely insoluble problems and to meet standards that are at once private and universal. Painters are constantly confronted with the excellences of Goya and Klee. Architects ruminate on the impeccable design judgments of Mies or the virtuosity of Wright (as well as on other design challenges, not often admitted, from just about every place and period). Composers know that if they are diligent and lucky they may some day be on a program shared by Mozart or Bartok.

On the broad scale from "hands off" to "follow the leader" there are, as everybody knows, permutations without end. There is no acknowledged "best" way. Best way for a particular student, perhaps, or best for an institution, or best for reasons of expediency or utility, or best because of a particular faculty's aptitudes, or best for any number of other reasons, including the one that if a faculty were to attempt anything else it could not survive the vicissitudes of institutional life. In this profusion of choices the only sure way to a happy outcome is clear; find the artists who can make an environment in which the arts can be given a chance to survive, those who are able to transmit ideas through technical knowledge, conviction and example. Do not expect them to teach the unteachable or abandon their beliefs, even if these do not correspond with majority opinion. For the quality of persons is about the only significant index to the quality of an artistic enterprise—not what is currently in fashion, not what is acceptable to majority opinion, not pedestrian standards of conformity or convenience. And not the exaltation of avantgardism, either.

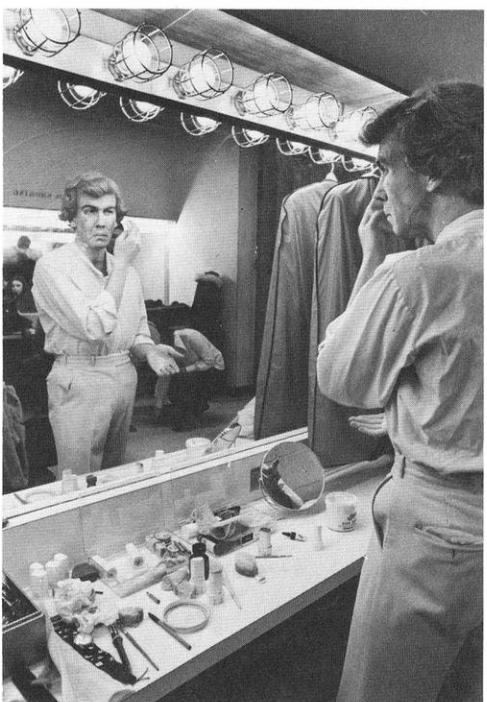
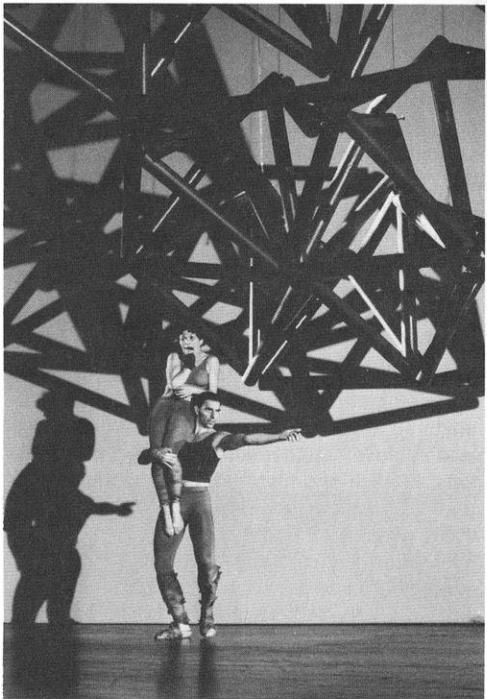
In an ideal sense, the way to proceed with the education of the artist begins farther back than the matriculation of a student into a program. With parents, for example, and the hostile society they often represent. Begin with instilling some awareness of what the arts are, or what they can be. Begin with recognition of the sterility of a world without artists, and hence a world without art. Begin with reasonable enhancement of opportunity for the artist to survive.

Within the school, worry about measures that are not aligned with the purposes of art, for example, tests that are designed to determine shortcomings rather than aptitudes. Consider grading systems and suspect them as being more useful for parents and statistics and files than for the arts they are intended to serve. Weigh course and judge critically any curriculum path that can be neatly presented in a catalog. My own tastes in this matter run toward broad exposure to the means available to creative people plus firm technical discipline in the areas most attractive to a particular student. Tightness at the outset (under the best guides available, not the least expensive), openness at the end. Art is to a considerable extent a matter of confidence in

one's power to create; this will grow best if the postulant has certain knowledge that he is capable of handling with ease the basic components of his craft—color or sound or space or movement or words or any form-producing elements. Beyond this there are infinite refinements of craftsmanship and expressive means. But the main purpose is to establish freedom, the freedom born of confidence, freedom to express any idea without fumbling through a mass of incompetencies and doubts. In the end the purpose of a school dealing with the arts is to make a student independent of the school. Independence rather than diplomas are the real goal.

The times we live in permit considerable latitude, even slackness, in the development of technical means. But in the end deficiencies of manner begin to degrade matter to the point of disintegration of meaning. Of those who believe with the poet that heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter, or that Idea is a sufficient artifact I can only conclude that they need no school to impede their flow of esoteric meanings, and I would wish them well and a happy landing.

As for institutional administrations that have decided, however enthusiastically or reluctantly, that the arts are a legitimate part of the enterprise they represent (there are a good many more of them now than there were in 1930 when I first wandered into the maze of institutional and administrative attitudes) they must agree that for one thing artists must be permitted to survive, not just as an adornment to the environs but as an asset—a reasonably well fed asset—to the enterprise that contains them. They should be aware of the fact that though artists may not always know the proper forms of educational procedure they are, in the mass (barring hopeless entanglement with ego problems) better able than any one else to determine what should be taught, how it should be taught, in what kinds of space, with what equipment. The bounds of art are limitless, a college's resources (usually) not. Thus on their side faculties must be responsible. It is incumbent on them to select areas of concentration with more than empire-building considerations. They must understand the differences between primary and supportive roles, between the committed student artist and a less dedicated though equally serious prober of art's func-



Photos by John W. Alley. Courtesy: Adolph Suppan.

tions. They must engender respect for all kinds of learning, for nothing an artist learns is superfluous to his purpose. Students may seek entry into the arts from any direction—through curiosity, or as respite from care, or through some romantic urge to share the artist's world, or because there is a convenient opening on a schedule card. However haphazard the introduction, there should be no abiding doubt about the difference between acquaintance with the arts and deep involvement—they both require effort and thought, but one may be the effort of play, the other of driving will. If any student crosses the line that divides curiosity from purposeful action—either way—he should promptly be aligned with his peers.

It is a temptation to advise schools when no advice is wanted or will be heeded. But if I were to be so bold as to suggest something to those few schools that are not yet fully satisfied with the present degree of their perfection, I would say this: know what kind of a school you are or can be; do not attempt to be a universal answer to all the problems art can engender; recruit and maintain a faculty that is fully capable of supporting your purpose; deal honestly with students, even to the point of sending them on to places that can give them full exercise of their best gifts; assess the value of all mandated matters that appear to be extraneous to the artist's purpose; rely on the wisdom of artists rather than on institutional rite; be astute in handling financial responsibilities, for they may in the end mean the difference between withering and sturdy growth.

One can only hazard a guess as to the ultimate outcome of educational institutions that deal with the arts. At the moment they flourish—their futures seem to be comfortably assured. But great pressures lie ahead: as the arts gain in strength and absorb more attention from both administrators and students, they will attract more rivalries, too, and choices will be made. Head counts will be used to sustain arguments that should have their basis in value. Tenure with its threat to change will grow as a problem. Economic differences will force irrelevant decisions based on funds rather than talent. The generation of artist teachers who have followed one pattern of teaching may find their teaching incomprehensible to a new constituency, or powerless to persuade because of new social

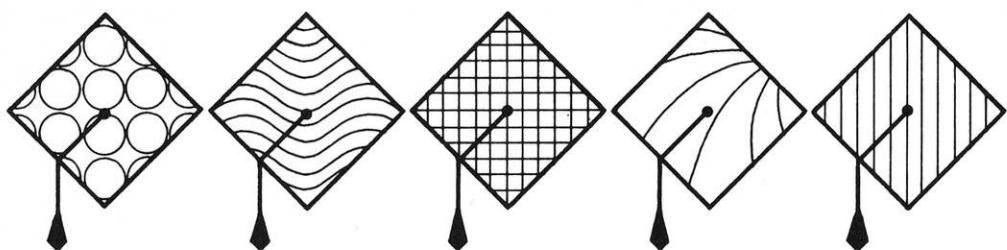
conditions. All of these things have happened before and will no doubt come again.

In the end, the arts will survive any teaching, any procedural hex. But a school with the capacity for engendering sensitivity, for encouraging technical proficiency, for seeing the importance of its single product—students—will in the end accomplish a great mission of usefulness. □



Photo by Lois Siegel. Courtesy of the artist.

## Back to the Drawing Board



by Clinton Adams

Dean, College of Fine Arts, University of New Mexico.

Few academic fields are so vulnerable to shifts in attitude and life-style as are the visual arts. In the hard sciences and mathematics there are facts to be dealt with; in the historical disciplines there is a body of knowledge to be assimilated; in music and theater there is a built-in structure provided by the nature of a recreative art. Shakespeare remains Shakespeare, Mozart remains Mozart, even in the relaxed ambience now prevailing in our schools and universities.

During the past twenty years a series of only partially connected events, ideas and influences have combined to bring much of what is called art education in both our high schools and our colleges to a sorry state. Among all the arts painting has suffered most. Sculpture, printmaking, photography and the crafts have been at least partially preserved by the technical requirements of these media, and creative writing, to a degree, by the structure of the language.

It is fashionable to blame Duchamp for the present state of things, although Humpty-Dumpty got there first. Duchamp's subversive acts with bicycle wheel and bottle rack certainly opened the way for conceptual art, but that is only part of the problem.

Whatever the disvalues of academic painting—I mean *real* academic painting, the art of Gérôme and Bouguereau—it demanded discipline. Even the least talented student found it necessary to learn how to draw, first from casts, then from the model; and to use the

complex techniques of traditional oil painting in a sound, correct manner.

The post-impressionist painters and the cubists who followed them, while rejecting the aesthetic values and artificial constraints of academic painting, replaced the old disciplines with new ones. The formal structure of Cézanne and Seurat, the color theories of Signac and Delaunay, and the decorative rhythms of Gauguin's *cloisonisme* provided theoretical bases for new forms of art education.

Later, abstract art gave birth to the Bauhaus and to the courses in "basic design" which during the 1930's and 40's replaced cast drawing, anatomy and perspective as keystones in the artist's training. Rapidly, in the hands of designers rather than artists, the innovations of the Bauhaus became no more than a new academy, a series of empty rituals.

Thus it was that in the second modern revolution, the American revolution of the abstract-expressionists, it became fashionable to discard all academies, old and new, and to proclaim the era of the self-taught artist. No longer was it thought necessary (or even desirable) to acquire specific disciplines in order to make art. Emphasis was placed upon innovation and originality, not upon the accumulation of skills and knowledge. The winning phrase, "do your own thing," had not yet been coined, but the sentiment was there.

To return for a moment to Bouguereau and Cézanne. A distinction may be made in terms of transparency and opacity. Bouguereau's paintings are transparent in that the viewer is encouraged to look beyond or through the canvas at the event or scene depicted; Cézanne's are relatively opaque in that the

form and structure insist that we see them, we cannot look past them at *Mont Sainte-Victoire*. With Mondrian, the opacity becomes complete. We are asked to respond to his paintings on their own merits; nothing outside the paintings is relevant to our judgement.

But in the 1940's, Rosenberg tells us, "the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act—rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze or 'express' an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."

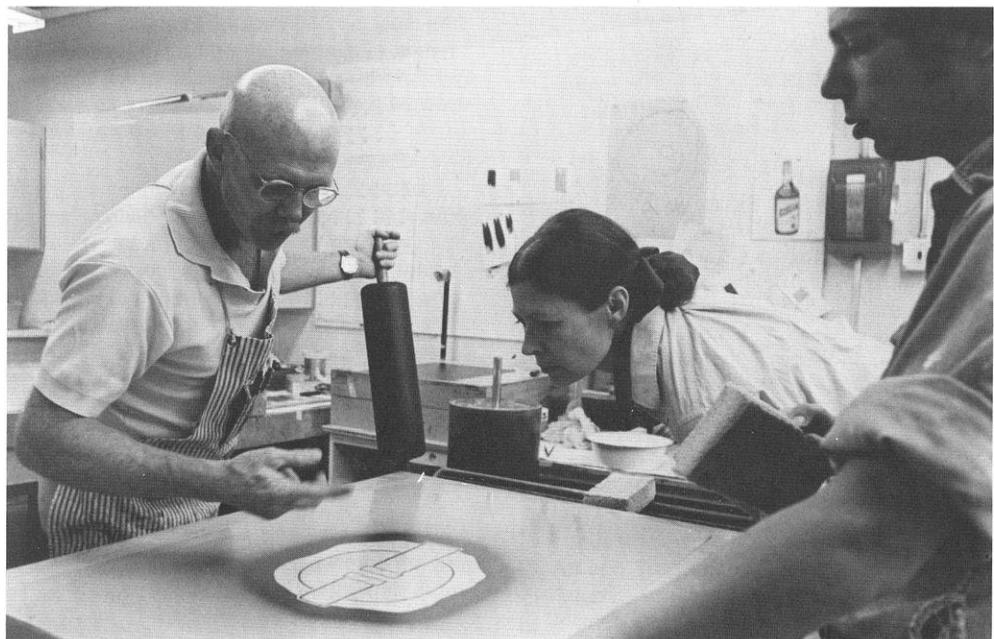
A new kind of transparency is introduced. We are now asked not to look beyond the canvas to the object depicted, but rather through the canvas to the artist's act in making it: to the *process* of painting, not to the artifact. The significance of Duchamp's bicycle wheel lies in the artist's act in placing it there; the decision becomes the work of art. *Così è (se vi pare)*. It is so (if you think it's so). Or is it?

So long as values in art can be related to the form and content of tangible works of art,

they are susceptible to judgement, and the judgements of different observers can be compared in terms of the perceived qualities of their stimuli. When action and process are substituted for the visible qualities of the aesthetic object, evaluation becomes, in Robert Frost's phrase, like playing tennis without a net.

Those who advocate this game speak of *human* values. An object-centered art appears to them elitist; a process-centered art recognizes the values of human participation. But what then, pedagogically, is to replace the disciplines of the academy and the Bauhaus in the education of the artist, specifically the painter? Is the core of instruction to be an involvement in process rather than in acquisition of skills and understandings? Is effort rather than artistic accomplishment to become the measure of success? Is art now to become inconsequential theater (the happening) or shallow philosophy (conceptual art), or does there remain a place in human experience for the structured work of art?

My bias is evident. I find the art of the masters, from Piero to Cézanne, from Picasso to Motherwell, to be the *most human* art: the



Tamarind Master Printer John Sommers collaborates with artist Deborah Remington in the Tamarind pressroom.  
Photo by Kent Thomas Rush. Courtesy: Clinton Adams.

ultimate embodiment of profound intellectual and emotional values. Pollock may well have found the canvas to be "an arena in which to act," but for us the value of his act resides in its result—in the picture, not the event.

A generation of pseudo-Pollocks was quick to demonstrate that a repetition of his act (in the absence of his perception and commitment) could produce not meaningful works of art, but mere yards of splattered canvas.

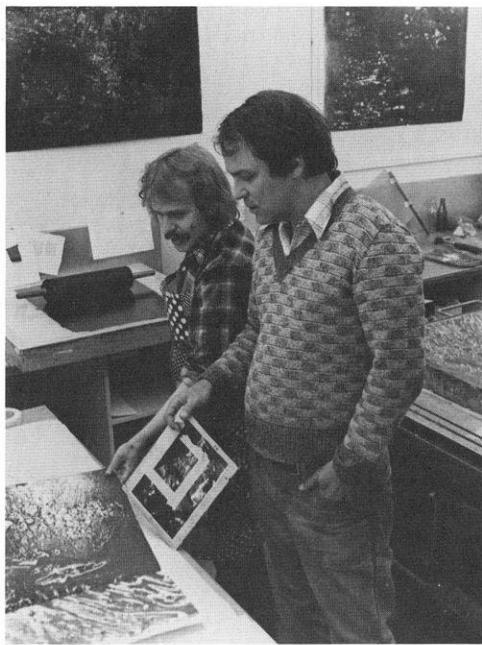
If high art be elitist, the solution lies not in the abandonment of its formal and expressive values nor in a false democratization of art in the name of consciousness-raising; it lies in a form of education which will enable greater numbers to perceive the values that exist, and which will permit new generations of artists to embody new ideas in new creative forms.

Given the imperative need to reintroduce solid technical and aesthetic disciplines into the education of the artist, what should these disciplines be?

Much of the teaching that derived from academic art and later from post-impressionism had its value in its essential neutrality.

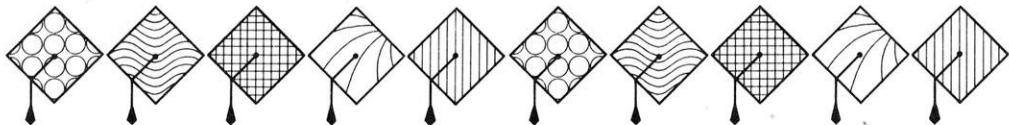
If, as Malraux suggests, "every artist's career begins with the pastiche," then the best model is one in which fundamental values far exceed personal mannerisms. Precisely for this reason, an art of attitude, such as Pop or Funk, provides the worst of all possible starting points. The teaching of the Barnes Foundation, rooted in Cézanne; of Josef Albers, derived from the Bauhaus; and of Hans Hofmann, based in the central concepts of modern art: all these provided young artists with firm foundations upon which to build. The same cannot be said for much of what today masquerades as instruction in the arts. Gimmicky derivations from the latest issue of *Artforum* give birth only to further derivations.

A wealth of evidence demonstrates the need to get back to the drawing board. □



Artist Joseph Raffael discusses a trial proof with Tamarind Master Printer Stephen Britko. Photo by Kent Thomas Rush. Courtesy: Clinton Adams.

# Challenge to the Artist-Teacher In Academe Or Let's See the Color of Your Money, Buster



by Jack Morrison

Associate Director, Arts in Education Program, the JDR 3rd Fund, New York. He is the author of *The Rise of the Arts on the American Campus*, and was formerly Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Ohio University.

The arts have established themselves in academe after some 250 years, an effort started at least 50 years before the Declaration of Independence was written. Two years ago the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education discovered that there is now (in addition to the original four: the professions, the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities) a fifth mainstream in higher education, that of "the creative arts."\* There it is for all to see, billed clearly by a respected establishment body.

But, just as this heady recognition came along, implying a good measure of independence for the arts in their own right, the economic blight hit the colleges and universities, accompanied by drops in enrollment and general reluctance on the part of the public to fund higher education. The freshly won recognition is threatened. But, simultaneously with these difficulties, a phenomenon appeared: a marked jump in enrollment in the arts running counter to the general trend. Intuitively, apparently, students, the youth of today, and particularly those students in other majors than the arts, found that this was the time, the very moment, to pursue the arts. How to meet this challenge of growing enroll-

ments with shrinking budgets, cut and bleeding, as well as overall retrenchments?

If Alley Oop's Time Machine could transport us back twenty years to 1955, I'd recommend it without reservation. But, as usual, the trouble with the present is that it is here—and now. In light of this inescapable existential position, I find it instructive to realize that the Renaissance picked a lousy time to get started. Who in his right mind would have chosen the corrupt and bestial Dark Ages to launch the Renaissance?

Apparently, corruption and bestiality did not include everyone. Certainly not all the artists. They moved in and took over, giving their times and ours expressions of the Enlightenment as it dawned. It turns out that commitment and talent do have a way of winning over almost impossible odds. What will it take on the part of artist-teachers, their leaders and their colleagues in the other disciplines in the other four mainstreams of higher education to achieve a balanced, viable position in the ecology of academe?

"Men [and women] are still swung on the slender thread of an idea," T. E. Lawrence wrote in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. It is this thought, I'm convinced, that compels me to believe in the durability of the arts, their creators and their audiences. The arts in higher education provide hope that the talent which exists equally in time and space everywhere will have an opportunity to grow throughout our country. That talent can be nurtured and challenged in every quarter of the nation by strong, vigorous, stimulating, and celebrative faculties in the arts. Talented artists and talented audiences are there, ripe for the picking. Quite an idea. The slender thread is the institution from which this idea

\*Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *The Purposes and Performance of Higher Education in the United States*, McGraw-Hill, 1973

swings—the educational system from nursery school on. What are the points of resistance to a continuing and prevailing surge in the arts and what are the points of vitality in the arts on campus?

## POINTS OF RESISTANCE

- **Faculty apathy or lack of awareness of the current conditions.** Many faculty, quite understandably, faced with rising enrollments in class size and student contact hours, reductions in funds for materials and time for studio (lab) work plus the demand from the non-majors, teacher training, and community participation, retire to the citadels in anguish to do their thing. As far as he is concerned, the department chairman, the Dean, the President, the state arts council can deal with these extraneous problems of survival in today's flux of events. Many see their own survival in defiant bitching in the halls, upholding standards, and, one way or another, building a carapace to protect themselves against change. The most damaging are the faculty members who do not produce new works.
- **Administrative doubts and cold feet.** Some administrative leaders in the office of academic affairs, budget and curriculum committees and their chairmen, boards of trustees and faculty senates see the growth in the arts as a flash in the pan, a pan holding dangerously volatile faculty and students unconcerned with, even barbarically opposed to the cognitive, the message of rational thought and study. Rather than reallocate shrinking funds to bet on artist-teachers and the arts, they strengthen their citadels, the traditionally established, scholarly, cognitive world limited to words and numbers. They do not see research as discovery, including discovery in the arts.
- **The fear that "mass education" will drown excellence.** It might. The problem of scale, sheer scale, perhaps, is the lurking monster in all of society's difficulties today. Certainly colleges and universities can be swamped by sheer numbers of students, undifferentiated, and demands on time which could not even be met by an eight-day week. Too many try to face this world-wide problem in higher education by turning their backs upon it.
- **Lack of collegiality departmentally and campus-wide.** With reallocation of funds cur-

rently the most realistic source for additional money, understanding and respect within the department and the campus are vital. The lack of collegiality can be extremely damaging. While reallocation of funds means tough budget fights right down to the wire and past it, a completely adversary position is suicidal. If members of committees and boards do not respect their colleagues and see their cooperative views as well as their vested interests, chances for support are minimized.\*

- **Lack of concern with teacher education and the conditions of pre-collegiate education in the arts.** The arts are in a fluid position, from kindergarten through high school, with positive and negative forces at work. Those faculties who do not take appropriate means to enter this struggle hurt themselves, the university and society at large.
- **Money.** More money *is* needed. But it won't be raised by simply complaining that it *ought* to be there. Academic personnel often avoid considering what new, more efficient ways can be used to employ the current funds available and avoid any efforts to raise money in any systematic way.

Now, on the other hand, let's look at the vital points which can make a difference in bringing the arts to full flower.

## POINTS OF VITALITY

- **Zest for discovery in producing new works and teaching.** Faculty who find excitement in seeking these twin goals, production of new works and good teaching, take the problems in stride. They face the difficult and promising realities and deal with them. Those who don't should not be in a university setting. They are frustrating their own lives as well as their own work and are a drag on their departments' efforts to meet the problems of the day as well as the future with imagination and drive. Short of early retirement, little can be done about faculty in this limbo. It's an individual problem demanding that each indi-

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\* Elsewhere I have given criteria for self-study of departmental effectiveness as a viable educational component of the university. See Chapter 5 in Morrison, *The Rise of the Arts on the American Campus*, McGraw-Hill, 1973

vidual faculty member reassess himself and determine how best to actualize his own career. If his needs and the university needs don't fit, he has the responsibility to find a setting more suitable for himself. This, perhaps, is the main reason for the questioning of tenure in higher education today.

In any case, from either the individual or the institutional point-of-view, it is in the interest of neither to consider the college a safe harbor. If the faculty member does, the result is deleterious for himself, as well as for the students, and the college.

**• Support of administrators who support the arts.** Deans and department chairmen can reinforce and encourage presidents and vice presidents of academic affairs as well as university committees by giving them lean, accurate reports on the current state of their schools of fine arts and their departments, making realistic requests for increasing support for additional staff, space, materials, and equipment. This is a time when good house-keeping and stewardship pay off. Imaginative and effective use of current support begets more and reduces the proportion of all-campus cuts and retrenchment. A valuable assist is the appointment of at least one mem-

ber of the board of trustees who is concerned with the arts. All such reinforcement can be accomplished without fresh money.

**• Broadening the base of the arts on the campus to include the non-major on campus and the community on- and off-campus.**

Campuses must broaden the base of the arts for majors and non-majors alike or their programs will go under. Democratizing the arts is a current force at all levels of education and meets head-on the problems of mass-education and its challenges. It is not a situation of mass education or excellence. The problem is to deliver education to all and increase excellence. The elitist approach in times like the Ming Dynasty, the Court theater, or amidst the largess of the "Robber Barons" in America at the turn of the century served its day. That era is over. New approaches must be invented or the worst of egalitarian, populist taste will prevail. These conditions are not without precedent and need not lead to corruption in the arts on campus or off. Look what came of Luther's vulgarizing the Bible, of making it plain to the people in the vulgar tongues of the people: the King James version of the Bible is as fine and poetic use of English as we

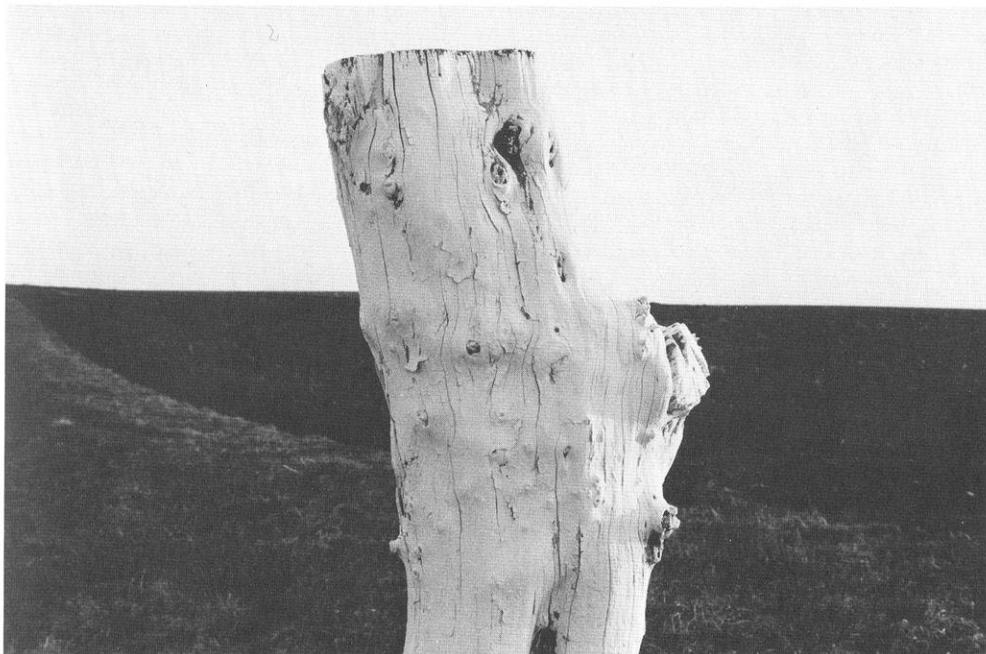
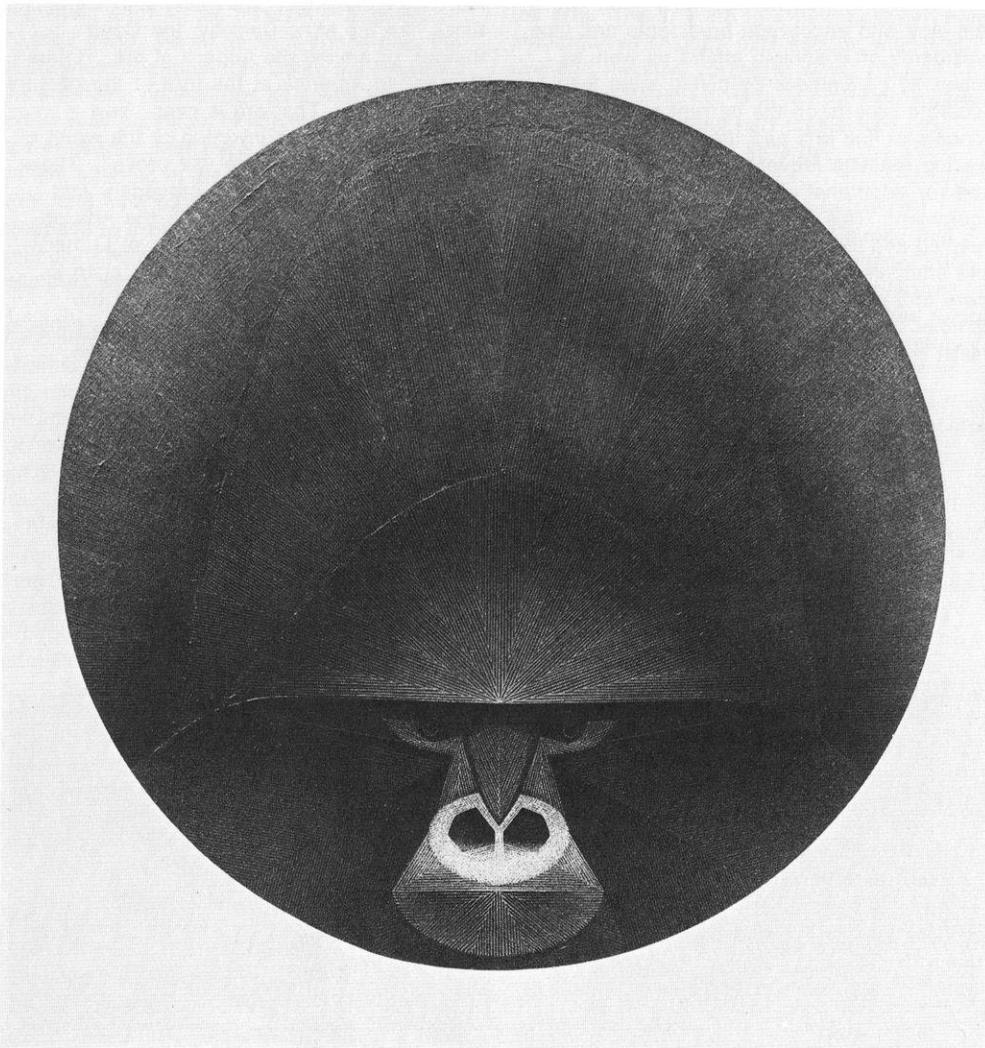


Photo of Illinois landscape by Bob Flick. Courtesy of the artist.

have seen and heard.

But such outcomes are not assured. They won't happen by chance but by people. The basic problem, as I see it, is one of attitude and point-of-view. If faculty see the music department or the art department as existing for majors only, no changes will be made and the departments will wither away. Let me offer a specific example. Students—most undergraduates—want to know more about photography, how to make better pictures. Serious artists-teachers, most of them, say, "Our labs, our studios, our shops and rehearsal rooms, are not big enough for our own

majors! How could we possibly take on more majors let alone non-majors from the rest of the campus? And, in any case, we will not teach a Mickey Mouse course just to play the numbers game!" If the faculty's mental set is like this, nothing will happen. Yet ten years ago Bartlett Hayes at Phillips Andover demonstrated that a demanding course in still photography could be developed using cheap cameras and commercial processing by concentrating on the student's eye, his vision of what he could get on film, rather than on equipment and processing. Offering two lectures a week with plenty of visuals and one



*Great Ape* by Matt Kahn, acrylic on canvas, 1975. Courtesy of the artist.

quiz section a week with TA's providing a tutorial relationship with each of his twelve students and their efforts, the students learned the essentials of photography, the "seeing eye." They were made appreciative of good work, and became a better audience, a member of the lay public with discriminating taste and sensitivity to photographic works. This example, with imagination and careful planning, can be used by any of the arts without destroying the integrity or the depth of the work of the majors or their faculty. It should be noted that not all of the faculty could or should teach such courses or take on democratizing functions of the department. A division of labor is needed so that faculty members who respect such work will offer that type of course—often they are the most distinguished members of the department who like to share their profession with a wider audience. If such a course is offered just to throw the hoi-poloi a fish, it won't work.

Community interests can be attended to as well. Dance companies like Bella Lewitsky's and the Ririe-Woodbury take residencies at elementary schools as seriously and as joyously as on a campus or an arts center. An audience for the original UCLA Theatre Group was created by scores of theater seminars in living rooms of homes in the West Los Angeles area organized by the University of California Extension prior to the founding of the Theater Group. Ohio University music faculty played in combos with public school teachers and administrators to encourage their string programs. Community colleges bring events to the campus their communities would otherwise have no opportunity to see and hear. All of this has to be in balance with departmental programs and prove to be a true two-way street or it will be ersatz and fail. The point is that the base of the arts is broadened and the public returns the campus contribution with their support for the campus.

But these examples are offered only to illustrate the challenge of broadening the base of the arts on campus and in the community. Each campus, to be effective, must work in its own cultural context, its own living cell, and invent wider relationships that are indigenous to each particular setting.

Another way to merge interests in the arts on campus and off is in the professional world. By developing a kind of "research and devel-

opment center" to develop new works on the campus with both professional artists and faculty artists working on a project by project basis, a focus of time, place and talent could be achieved providing that total immersion artists need. I've developed this further elsewhere\*, but the point of mentioning it here is that the idea, tried in many different ways, has never been carried out in a way to fulfill its promise.

- **Collegiality is infectious.** A department can be a snakepit or develop an environment with a stimulating, artistic force. True collegiality, a mutual concern and genuine interest in each other's professional work and personal well-being, can be one of the truly great rewards to college and university teaching. When it exists, it is infectious among students as well as the faculty campus wide. For all the times and places collegiality has been honored in the breach, there are some times and places when it flowers. And it can be developed with sensitivity and hard work. Practically, it is simply a fact—especially today—that healthy departments get administrative support and sick ones don't. Since studio work, the act of creating new works, exists in the present rather than the historical past, collegiality is particularly vital to the arts as a means of informing each other of what's happening. The arts have a way of sparking one another towards productivity. Poets, for example, have always inspired composers, painters, playwrights, and choreographers. They stimulate each other. All this is a function of collegiality.

- **Any human endeavor, any section of society, reinforces itself by nurturing its youth.** From this point-of-view, teacher education in the arts along with the sound development of curriculum is only enlightened self-interest, not a drag. Recently, in Toronto at York University, the Dean of Fine Arts in collaboration with the Dean of Education sat down with twelve chief administrators of twelve public school districts to critique a new plan for teacher education. More than that, the schools and the university will be partners in developing the program, with the schools used more in the manner medicine uses teaching hospitals. This is in sharp contrast to most current practices of perfunctory "practice teaching." Seminars will be held in the school building rather than on

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\*Morrison, *Ibid.*

the campus. And the whole program will reflect a change in the public schools' approach to the arts. They will, in short, become central to the curriculum at all levels instead of on the edge. In turn this can mean not only more but better students in the arts over the next ten to fifteen years.

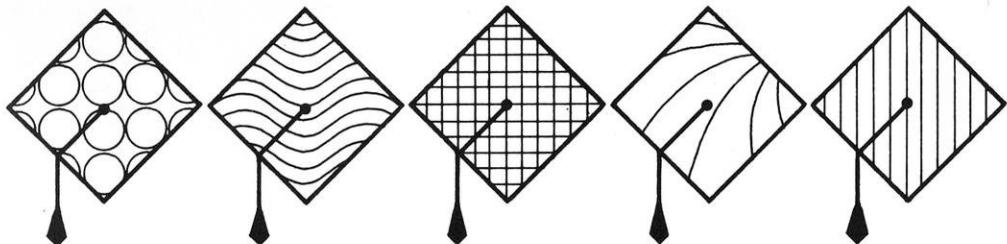
• **Money goes to the viable.** Actually, the most effective force for getting more money has been the subject of the previous five points above. Lively departments concerned with both the major and the non-major on- and off-campus *do* get more support. True, there has to be a systematic way of getting this news to the administration. That's what chairmen and deans are for. See that they deliver. And see that a systematic way to raise "outside money" through a Friends of the Arts or other such group is created. This won't develop through spontaneous combustion. Such efforts must be carefully planned and on a long term basis. In fund-raising, the minimum unit of time is two years. Good pursuit supported by sound proposals will pay off.

Of all the suggestions given above, the one that has always tantalized me most is the fact that what the university is in the best position to offer the artist is the joy of collegiality. A vision of this was given to me by Jacques Lipshitz in an autobiographical note in *Harpers* some years ago. He told of Sunday morning breakfasts in Paris in his early youth. Braque, Picasso and a few others would gather at one of their places to prepare a proper breakfast. First, there was a ritual played out in a terrible fight as to who was to be the chef of the morning. Each, of course, knew he was the finest chef in Paris. After this warmup was over, the dialogue would begin. They would talk about the poetry reading of the night before or the concert, the gallery opening, the show or the ballet, their own work, the news of the day—everything. Now *that* was a seminar! How seldom we do it in academe—and it's exactly the place for it. Not just at Sunday breakfasts, although that's a fine time, but, if we would really carry a vision of the spirit of those breakfasts into our daily lives, what a place for the arts academe would be! Can we settle for less? □



Professor Mun Tuan, artist-in-residence at Jacksonville University, Florida. Courtesy: Frances Kinne.

## A Note on the Professional Training of Artists and Athletes



by Harold Taylor

*A writer, educator, philosopher, and lecturer on the arts; he is a former President of Sarah Lawrence College.*

I have always thought that schools and colleges should be arts centers in the full sense of the word. That is, they should be places where the arts are practiced in the middle of the curriculum as a central part of the education of young people. They should be centers for the cultural life of the community, places where the citizens, young and old, can find living theatre, music, dance and the visual arts, and where they can share in the creation of new works and the appreciation of those already in the repertory of exhibits and performances. The spirit of art should infuse the entire educational system.

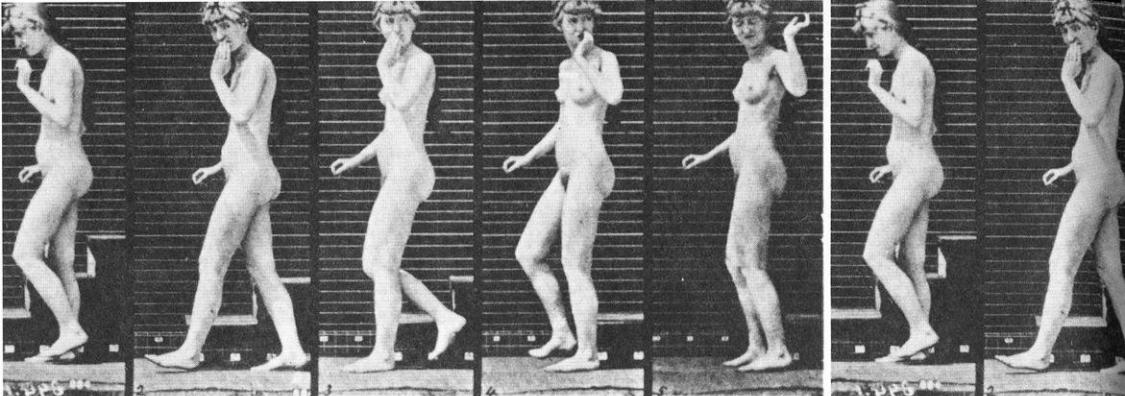
There has been more progress toward that ideal than is generally recognized and an increasing number of schools, colleges and universities do exert a serious influence on the aesthetic life of their students, their communities and on the country at large. But the educational system as a whole has made its major cultural contribution not in arts centers but in sports centers which provide professional training and athletic entertainment for the whole country. Most of the arts centers have developed outside the educational institutions.

One result is that the most successful professional training the schools and colleges now provide for performers of all kinds is in the development of professional athletes. The training is successful because it is carried on within the regular life of the school and college by having the athletes perform con-

tinually in the field of their choice, with the most talented among them launched into professional careers by agents and talent-spotters who recruit them at an early age for future performances with established companies. The fact that nearly all the greatest hockey-players in the professional game in the United States are Canadians, for example, is not due to something innate in the character of the Canadian people but because the game is played so much, in school and out of school, by so many Canadian children and adolescents.

We are reaching a point at which the flood of young talent in the arts in America, released in part by the influence of the mass media and the extraordinary combination of economic and cultural success of the popular arts and the rock culture, is beginning to shift the interest of youth to the arts as a substitute for the festivals of sport. Most of the young American artists and performers have developed their interest in music, theatre, dance, film-making, poetry and the visual arts through influences outside the educational system, and most of the performers have learned their professional skills without regular professional instruction. Like the athletes, they have simply performed with each other before audiences.

The analogy between artists and athletes is quite direct. The difference between a non-professional and a professional musician or tennis player is simply that the professional makes his living by playing and the non-professional doesn't. The standards of playing are the same, and each is judged by how well he plays, not by his source of income or where he learned to perform. He becomes a professional through the circumstances of his life, the intensity of his interest, the



*The Human Figure in Motion* by Eadweard Muybridge. Courtesy: Dover Publications, Inc.

quality of his talent, the amount of direct experience he has had in the art form he has chosen, the opportunities available for work in his profession, the initiative he takes in seeking them out.

When you ask a serious actor what he thinks about the best preparation for his profession he says, get on the stage before an audience, or work before cameras. Duke Ellington learned to write music by playing the piano and writing for his band, and his genius showed itself as it went along in composition without benefit of formal training. All that a professional school of theatre, music, dance or the visual arts can do in the development of talent is to put the student to work in the art form he has chosen with the help of performers and artists whose own talents and standards are clearly professional.

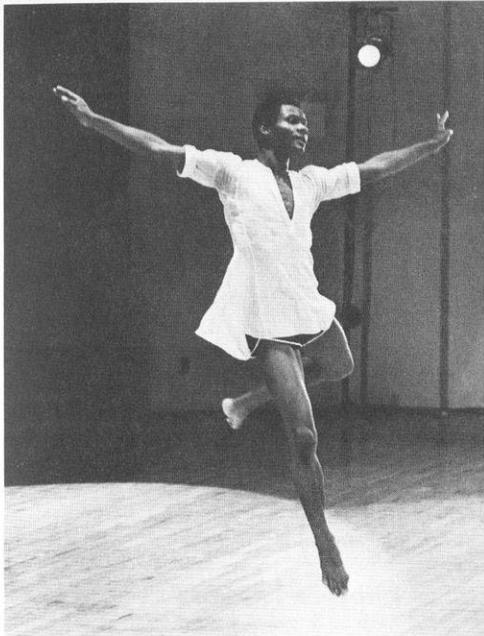
I have therefore never been able to agree with those who make a sharp distinction between professional schools for the arts and the liberal arts colleges which teach the arts by having the students practice them. My own experience at Sarah Lawrence College, where students work directly in the arts of their choice, has convinced me that the separation of professional training from non-professional is not only unnecessary but to a large extent damaging to the education of the artist. The College simply provides the environment in which the young artist can flourish. There is of course a wide range of difference in the talents of individual students, some of whom come to the College from high school with experience as concert pianists, singers, actors, painters, and for whom attendance at Sarah Lawrence is an alternative to Juilliard, or to the Rhode Island School of Design or to professional arts schools in the universities. Others come with

an interest in one of the arts but without a developed talent, others develop such interests after they arrive.

But there is room for all of them in the same program. Some of the graduates enter professional dance or theatre companies or orchestras soon after graduation, or continue to work in film-making, sculpture or poetry as a major part of their lives. For the rest, they may at some point become professionals, and in the meantime their education in the arts has given them a range of knowledge and experience which enriches the possibilities of future enjoyment and of continuing aesthetic development. Nobody knows where it will take them.

Their teachers, for students with professional interests as well as the others, are for the most part practicing artists, writers, composers, actors, painters, just as the teachers of science are practicing scientists, many of whom carry on research projects in which their students are involved. The standards of the teachers for all their students are "professional," although not all students are expected to reach the same standard of achievement. That depends on the particular gifts and talents each student brings to the College.

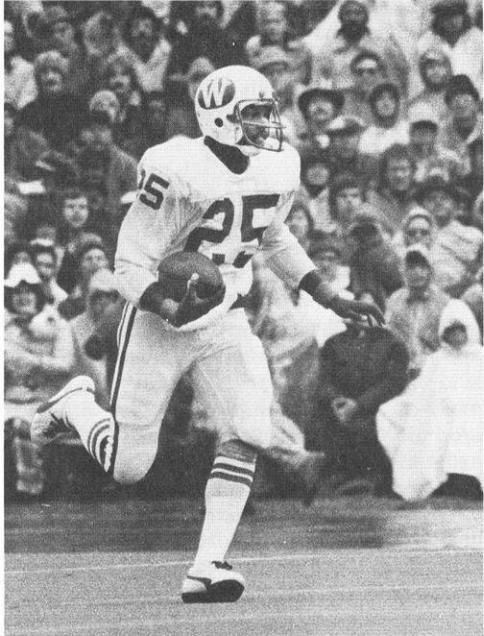
Most people do not consider colleges as arts centers, and most educators stiffen up and reject the idea that the arts should be given a place in the curriculum at least equal to that given to physics or psychology. The undergraduate program in the arts, they say, must be a prelude or introduction to real work, the kind that can only be done in graduate school. One of the major proponents of this view is Robert Brustein, who, in a speech at Sarah Lawrence, of all places,



Greg Reynolds performing in Sarah Lawrence College's Dance Workshop Theatre, (detail). Photo courtesy of Suzanne Arkin.

stated the case for segregating artists into enclaves of the graduate schools:

*The problem is not so much that our institutions of higher learning have encouraged dabbling in the arts—part-time painting, acting or orchestra work. Such activities are not only an important adjunct to liberal education (emphasis added), but also a necessary prelude to practice and appreciation. The problem, rather, is that the university has accepted amateur standards as the measure of creative achievement, and in so doing, has reduced the distance between early effort and the goals towards which would-be artists strive . . . Colleges are equipped neither by inclination nor charter to be professional training centers or vocational schools, nor should they attempt to do a half-hearted job in an effort to please their artistically-inclined students, but they can provide a valuable pre-professional service by arousing curiosity in a student's mind, an appetite for the arts, and most difficult and most necessary of all, a respect for excellence and a sense of humility.*



Ira Matthews of the University of Wisconsin football team. Courtesy: *The Wisconsin State Journal*.

I disagree with nearly everything Mr. Brustein has to say in this passage, and object most of all to the notion of the arts as an adjunct to liberal education when in fact they are at the heart of the whole matter. Few of the people I know who are teaching the practice of the arts in schools and colleges are doing a "halfhearted job in an effort to please their artistically-inclined students." They love the art they are practicing and they love teaching it to others. For the most part, the curiosity, the appetite for the arts, the respect for excellence and a sense of humility are already there in their students. That is why the young want to work in the arts in the first place, and if those qualities aren't there, the quickest way to induce them is to involve the students in work that is not halfhearted but serious.

This is not to say that there is anything wrong with organizing professional companies as residents in the universities, bringing first-rate professionals as performers and teachers into the schools, colleges and universities or doing anything else to raise the level of quality in the arts wherever they are practised. That is a fairly obvious thing to do and Mr. Brustein has done a lot of it at Yale. It is to say that if the schools and colleges

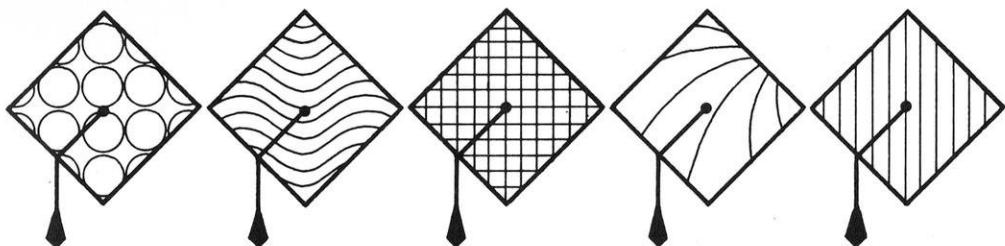
are to be considered merely as places for "pre-professional service" to the arts, there is little chance that they will ever be able to meet their responsibility for bringing the live arts into the main stream of life in the American community.

Why on earth do we have to wait until only the elect among young artists are admitted to graduate and professional schools for training before we are allowed to take them seriously? I have been astonished by too many high school-age musicians, writers, dancers, actors, and film-makers to believe that with the kind of talent they possess, aside from so many of the others who haven't yet discovered they are talented, they should be set aside to develop humility etc. until they have been through ten to twelve years of life without art in halfhearted schools and colleges.

The time to start in the arts is right away, wherever you are, with whoever is around. That is the way we make athletes in the schools and colleges, and it is as good a way as any for making artists and people who love art. □



*Man and Mountain Spirit* by Barry Eitel, serigraph, 1975. Courtesy of the artist.



The seven contributors to our discussion of the future of university schools of the arts have, predictably, brought widely different approaches to the subject. Yet there seems to be considerable agreement on the issues, divergent as some of the solutions might be.

There is almost unanimous agreement on the need for a new look at programs and curriculums in the various disciplines, in the light of changes in the arts themselves and in our society. There are comments upon faculty apathy and isolation (Heller, Kinne, Morrison, Rice, Taylor); the need for community outreach (Kinne, Morrison, Taylor, Walters); the challenge of the non-arts student (Morrison, Walters); revision of teacher education (Kinne, Morrison, Rice); and strong concern about professional studio/conservatory training (Adams, Heller, Rice).

I add these final comments, induced by reflections upon the seven essays.

A glance at the nature of artistic achievement in our century, and its relation to arts education, evokes an ironic fact.

The creative artists of our time—painters, sculptors, composers, playwrights, *et. al.*—have been as innovative, original and revolutionary as our scientists. The sculptors, composers and film-makers have adapted the newest discoveries in electronics and engineering to their own visions, and shaken and changed traditions. The playwrights—Beckett, Ionesco, O'Neill, Pinter (to name only a few)—have broken old forms and probed into the alienation, lovelessness and emptiness of the modern world. Everywhere in our age, many of our creative artists have shown an eagerness to perceive forms, styles, and content anew.

Why should not this same invention and imagination be applied by the artist/teachers—and their administrators—to present courses and curriculums? As a matter of fact, the performance functions of the arts colleges show such new approaches—in faculty and student art exhibitions, in the performing arts, in film-making. In these same activities, a symbiosis of art fields—light/sound/motion sculpture, multi-media productions—is evident. But in most academic programs,\* the traditional courses—introductory, general and professional—still reign supreme. For example: required inter-disciplinary courses are rare; team-teaching (admittedly costly) is minimal; experience-in-depth between departments is still a novelty.

Even more significant, the artist and the art schools—pioneers, probers, experimenters, creators *par excellence*—should be the vanguard for the normally tradition-bound college faculty. A daring and innovative arts faculty should exemplify to the university the continuing need (rightly expressed by the student upheavals in the Sixties) for extensive review and change in Acadême.

Recent surveys indicate that most university arts schools still include only the traditional departments—art, music, theatre.

\**There have, of course, been interesting exceptions. To mention some (indicated also by Dean Heller): S.U.N.Y., at Purchase, which, not yet completed, has severe budgetary problems; York University (Toronto), and the California Institute of Arts. At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee we introduced, in 1963, two required inter-disciplinary courses (freshman and senior years)—"The Arts and Mankind" and "The Arts: Theory and Criticism;" these are now dormant because of budgetary and other problems. We also created a BFA program in Inter-Arts, allowing students to choose two or three "mini-majors."*

Dance is slowly being accepted, as is film. But other disciplines should be considered also: creative writing, art history (with music and theatre history), aesthetics, art theory and criticism, arts therapy, cultural history, and possibly the artistic (rather than technical) phases of television. These disciplines are already closely related to production and research in the traditional departments; why not welcome them into the fold?

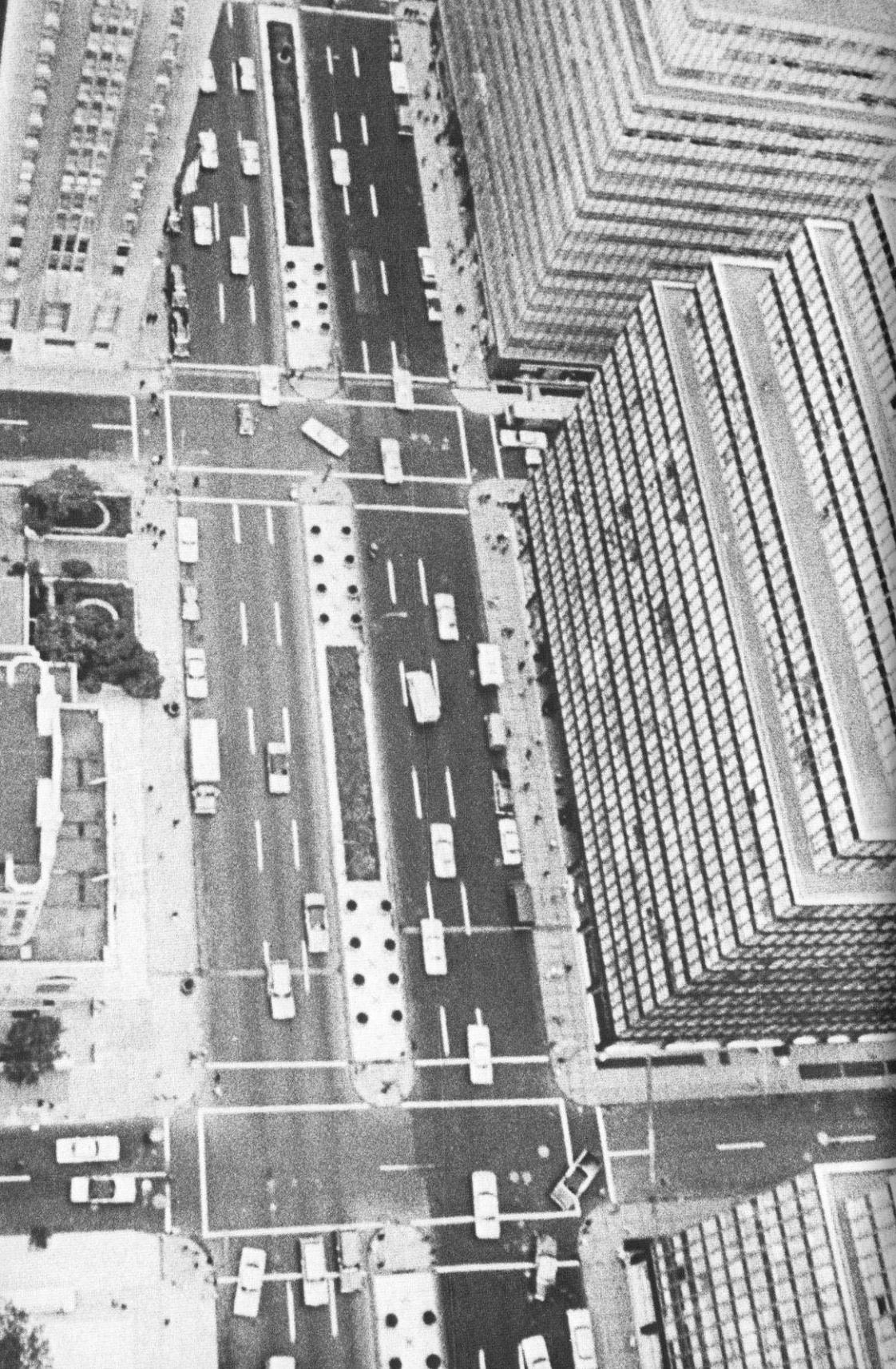
Also, the school of the arts as merely an umbrella-like structure housing departments retaining their separate (and sometimes narrow) ways falls short of reflecting this interrelation of the arts. Art, music, theatre and dance students who merely pass each other on the way to classes do not constitute an arts school student body. The music student, for instance, should at least be introduced

to other arts fields and their historic, aesthetic, and performance relationships. The art student who is ignorant of the cultural ties of Delacroix/Byron/Berlioz, Monet/Debussy/Mallarmé, and Cage/Rauschenberg/Albee, is seeing both the history of art and the practice of painting in a restricted light.

The truth is that the many art forms—traditional, avant-garde, “lively” or popular, folk and, yes, even rock (already in a mixed bag today, in performance) should have a correlative relationship in the arts curriculum. As Dean Walters points out, the two major divisions in higher education—the humanities and the sciences—should move over to make room for a third—the arts. I would like to ask, in closing: when will these Big Three begin to show “collegiality” towards each other? □

Ansei Uchima discusses print work with student at Sarah Lawrence College. Photo courtesy of Suzanne Arkin.





# De-architecturization

by James Wines

*Founder and currently President of SITE, Inc. An artist-architect whose work has appeared in numerous one-man and group exhibitions, he has received Pulitzer and Rome Prizes, Guggenheim Fellowships, and a Ford Foundation grant. He lectures and writes extensively, and is currently on the faculty of the New Jersey School of Architecture.*

Public art since the nineteenth century has seldom functioned as anything more than peripheral embellishment for urban spaces. This limitation has been a result, in part, from the treatment of areas and objects adjacent to architecture as minor accessories for the main event and, in part, from a pervasive formalist tradition determining the relationship between art and buildings. In private (gallery) art there has been a demanding precedent for innovation and a built-in responsibility to discredit outworn traditions. Public art, on the other hand, has continued to function as a subsidiary (or "branch-office") specialization of real art—without sufficient status to exert a seminal influence on new ideas. Also, it has never been implicit that public art should ever be anything more than a reinforcement of some compositional totality. For example, the parochial view that works of art can be "placed" on a site is an acknowledgement

that: 1) they already exist, in plan or fact, independent of context, and 2) they are relative to site only by default or by the act of "installation." Successful public art is not private art transplanted.

The problem is further compounded by the absence of a critical dialogue sensitive to public meaning. Rather than recognize the differences between public and private sensibilities, most critics develop rationales to perpetuate the objectified, portable, monument in one form or another. In this respect criticism has been remiss in its obligations to elevate standards and to provide an expanded frame of reference. This contention is well illustrated by a 1970 essay for *ARTS* entitled *Monumental Art in Cincinnati* by Lawrence Alloway. He states: "However a work can 'go public' without ostensible public content, just as a work of art acquires meanings and values in addition to those that may have been part of the artist's original intention. The monumental art reaches its public by a different route than earlier public art. Such works acquire a social meaning from acquisition for civic display. Instead of a work beginning with a pre-arranged public meaning, it takes on its public role experimentally, after installation." Although Mr. Alloway was specifically discussing an assembly of large scale sculptures displayed in a metropolitan setting, his attribution of some unintended osmotic dimension to result from this juxtaposition avoids the real issue of whether this dimension should be "acquired" or inherent from the outset. His observations are useful only to the extent to which the value systems of private art may be superimposed on a public situation. Mr. Alloway's assertions may be conditionally true, and yet his premises are myopic. Earlier in the essay he offers a limited reference to another dimension of public meaning by conceding a traditional "commemorative function" for public art; whereas the illustration of a popular iconography is only one of innumerable alternatives for meaning. The monument and its totemic purposes is clearly dead. The potential for a new art responsive to urban environment is significantly alive.

During the past one hundred years the syntactic cohesion of an art language applicable to painting, sculpture and architecture has been considerably reduced, if not eliminated altogether. The evolution of a medieval city

Fig. 1. Aerial View of Park Avenue, New York City. All photos in this article by Michelle Stone. Courtesy: James Wines.

center obviously required an inclusionist vocabulary—a common terminology essential to the integration of complex spatial, structural, and iconographic elements. With the obsessive objectification of art in the late nineteenth century, this language polarized art and architecture into separate entities. Their relationships to each other became increasingly awkward, so that now the very appearance of public art has become a self-conscious intrusion, an accessory to architecture—ultimately more at home in a museum. This reliance on a circumscribed and portable testimony to the fact of art is a critical limitation which precludes any really valid understanding of public and/or environmental art. In a sense the problem recalls Joe Kosuth's response to the formalist criticism of the late 1960's. "Being an artist now means to question the nature of art. If one is questioning the nature of painting, one cannot be questioning the nature of art. If an artist accepts painting (or sculpture) he is accepting the tradition that goes with it. That's because the word *art* is general and the word *painting* specific. Painting is a kind of art." Similarly, if one insists upon art as an object, one cannot accept art as periphery. Art *in space* is not art as space. It is also instructive to note that Kosuth's concept of *art* retained the "exhibition context" as a perimeter around his definition. Successful public and environmental art cannot rely on the assumptions of a structured containment. It follows, therefore, that exclusionist language of private art (whether formalist or anti-formalist) is not interchangeable with the inclusionist language appropriate to the public experience.

The comparable deficiencies in architecture are also the result of an exclusionist vocabulary and a formalist tradition. Indeed, architecture during the past sixty years has been restrained at every turn by Bauhaus maxims-cum-economy and reconciled to a level of innovation that is more technical than fundamental (fig. 1). Unlike the visual arts of the twentieth century, architecture has not undergone a total inversion or destruction of its aesthetic convictions; but, instead, has continued to thrive on those modest inventions which generally serve to confirm propriety. For example, architecture cannot claim a revolutionary figure of the stature of Duchamp. Even its most respected creative forces—Wright, Corbusier, Mies, Kahn—are appreciated primarily for their uncanny ability to

manipulate form and process as extensions of tradition and not as purveyors of some cataclysmic change. There is no one personality who, like Duchamp, questioned every premise, every assumption, and who finally rejected historical precedent in order to establish an entirely new set of definitions. It is rationalized that architecture is essentially a problem solving art and does not lend itself to the dramatic conceptual breakthroughs associated with visual art. There is truth in the axiom, but a prejudicial restraint as well. One of the unqualified doctrines of modern architecture is the "form follows function" ethic, wherein every juxtaposition of shape, every spatial transition, every element of structure must be rationalized in terms of a preconceived set of practical motivations. Even though function itself is often the product of some specious rationale, it is always considered to be the unequivocal hypothesis by which all buildings and the spaces around them may be evaluated. Function is supposed to be absolute and the only manipulative ingredient in architecture is form. Unfortunately, these formalist guidelines have often become a convenient absolution from responsibility for the pithy matters of concept and change.

"De-architecturization" represents an alternative to the formalist relationship between public art and architecture. Superficially the term seems to suggest a subversive destruction of habitat or a blanket rejection of architecture's system of values. Actually, what is being suggested is a difference in attitude toward urban art, space, and facade. Urban art should be a semaphore of information (however ambiguous) and not an accessory to a building or the reinforcement of some compositional totality. If art uses circumstances and space as media, a new level of communication is established between urban environment and urban dweller. If the city itself is the media—the raw material (or the ultimate "found object")—then art becomes a condition of inversion, or de-architecturization.

De-architecturization is an umbrella term applicable to a number of subdivided concepts. These ideas may apply to both environmental art and architecture, or a hybrid fusion of both. The categorical distinctions are irrelevant since most of the really interesting examples defy classification—except in-so-far as they comment on traditional frames of

reference to establish a point of departure. Briefly described these concepts are:

*Inclusion* describes an integration of plastic elements when it becomes necessary to incorporate some existing structure into a new work of art or architecture. A more interesting dimension to this idea (and the one that concerns us here) is to reject the elements which physically exist in favor of "thoughts about things" which are implied to exist.

*Inversion* has many interpretations. Its basic premise in this context is to utilize the rhetorical language of form to subvert its original meaning. The work of Duchamp, which commented on both art and life without a conditional commitment to where one began and the other left off, is a supreme example of art as inversion. It has been said of Duchamp's work that it cannot be comprehended without an acute awareness of art history. But this assessment refers to his art as the negation of this legacy, rather than its confirmation.

*Indeterminacy and chance* have been seldom allowed to influence the design of the city environment. As we have observed, the formalist achievement is a condition of working from the relatively unknown toward the absolute. Theories of chance suggest that the process be reversed and that art is conclusive only at that moment when it has reached its highest level of indecision.

*Entropy*, as a measure of phenomenology, may bring to mind the unpleasant specter of disaster. In science entropy concerns the irreversible degradation of matter and energy in the universe. With respect to art, the psychological and cultural intensity of this natural catastrophe suggests an "aesthetic of chance" approaching heroic and ritual dimensions. The artist's conventional response to nature has usually been attracted to those stable and inert manifestations which offer reassurance of an objectified, rational, world—evidence of the importance of man's own physicality. As science has substituted its theories of relativity, infinity, dematerialization, implosion, etc., the artist and architect have been gradually forced to accept a less orderly view of their environment. For some, this realization has been a signal to oppose chaos with an even more formalized aesthetic; or, as in the case of many urban pragmatists, to resist by the recycling of energy into ever more useful purpose. For others, entropy has been an inspiring contradiction to the mechanistic view of the world. It has always been assumed that architecture and urban development should be the product of some resolute preconception. The alternative to this hypothesis was proposed by the late sculptor Robert Smithson who concluded that, "Architects tend to be idealists, not dialecticians. I propose a dialectics of entropic change."



Fig. 2. Sculpture by Bernard. Cooper Square, New York City.

In the discussion of examples of de-architecturization, the standard separations (fig. 2) between the visual arts and architecture must be forfeited in order to address the central issues more effectively. For example, the concept may be applied to situations where the only tangible evidence is energy-electronic resources or informational interchange. It may state itself metaphorically, metaphysically, or metamorphically. The methods include performance, social statement, political action, as well as construction process, psychological inversion, and phenomenological change. If the work of Duchamp may be considered pivotal to the art of our time, then surely the attitudes and ideas of de-architecturization owe a considerable debt to this legacy. His work successfully established that intellectual equivocation becomes a heightened level of aesthetic response when all of the crafted and emotionalized baggage is removed from art. By forfeiting the mythology of the artist's "hand" (fig. 3) and the specific nature of objects he seemed to imply that these objects were never meant to be looked at or contain an intrinsic message in themselves; but rather, to function as semaphores in space which changed the spectator's attitudes toward the immediate surroundings. The objects, in other words, are without value beyond their existence as the vortexes of certain environments. These environments (for him, interior exhibition spaces) represented psychological perimeters full of commonplace reassurances which could be inverted. The periphery became the art and the object only a shadow. There is confirmation of this view in a statement by Duchamp concerning the development of the *Large Glass* (fig. 4). "Simply I thought of the idea of a projection of an invisible fourth dimension, something you couldn't see with your eyes. Since I found that one could make a cast shadow from a three dimensional thing, any object what-so-ever—just as the projecting of the sun on the earth makes two dimensions—I thought that, by simple intellectual analogy, the fourth dimension could project an object of three dimensions, or to put it another way, any three dimensional object which we see dispassionately is a projection of something four dimensional, something we're not familiar with." An ultimate dimension of this rationale (and a prophetic comment on the nature of indeterminacy) occurred when the *Large Glass* was broken en route to an exhibition. "It's



Fig. 3. *Bicycle Wheel*. Readymade by Marcel Duchamp.



Fig. 4. *The Large Glass* by Marcel Duchamp, 1915-73.

better with the breaks, a hundred times better. It's the destiny of things," was Duchamp's response to this alteration-by-chance. By incorporating the unforeseen contingency, by systematically destroying the hallowed techniques of art, by subverting the formalist ideals, and by assaulting the valued object, Duchamp evolved an idea art of negatives and inversions approximating de-architecturization.

By definition, the term *de-architecturization* refers to an act of reversing and/or removing some quality or element from architecture. The character and effect of this process may be perceived only because ARCHITECTURE exists as an unqualified hypothesis in the mind of the viewer. By way of parallel, Duchamp's inversions of art were successful to the degree that his audience maintained preconceptions of exactly what constitutes genuine ART and his work was predicated upon sabotaging these spectator habits. Accordingly, to examine *de-architecturization*, we must establish a frame of reference, a static view of architecture as a point of departure. In recent history the Bauhaus heritage has provided the most consistent and influential criteria for architecture (in the popular notion of the word) and the form-function equations have become the most acceptable measure for all designed structures and the spaces around them. The Bauhaus represents impeccable taste and a spartan economy—virtues of comparison by which the excesses and ornamentation of the past may be condemned and the blandness of the present justified. It is, therefore, this architecture-as-formalism, architecture-as-unassailable-idealism that exists as the raw material for *de-architecturization*.

Although our concern here is the state of contemporary urban art, it is interesting to examine a selection of historical precedents for *de-architecturization*—particularly in the light of an anti-formalist legacy which is seldom acknowledged by recent criticism. A casual chronology will be maintained for idea transition.

*Inclusion* has persisted in urban structuring and visual art throughout the centuries. In architecture it usually refers to the adjustment of a design concept to accommodate existing (and often intractable) physical elements. In painting and sculpture the process is often

manifested in the accumulation of random and disparate media ingredients which may be regarded by the artist as plastic or informational resources, (i.e.: collage, decollage, assemblage, etc.). Michelangelo's incorporation of the ruins of the Thermae Diocletian into the Church of Santa Maria Degli Angeli is an extraordinary example of inclusion (fig. 5). Although the Renaissance was noted for its respectful treatment of antiquities and the preservation of cultural heritage, there is little precedent for this creative adjustment of a new structure to a deteriorating ruin. Commissioned by Pope Pius IV to transform the Thermae into a Carthusian church in Rome, the artist broke the line of the original wall of the baths, but totally preserved the concave vault as an integral part of the facade—demonstrating a great sensitivity to the combination of erosion and indeterminacy in tension with carefully designed structure.

The Trevi Fountain, growing organically out of the base of the Palazzo Poli in Rome is another unique contribution to the history of *de-architecturization* (fig. 6). As an informational resource the Trevi is exceptional. It is not an object, it is a place; and, as a place, it informs us about a still larger place (and hence the entire city). It is inseparable from its environs and the metamorphic transformation of the Poli facade into rock formations is a bold inversion of architecture. Indeed, the fountain contains no units of sculpture to be judged in isolation from context, no "masterpieces" to be extracted and preserved. The Trevi is a composite of details roughly contained within architectural perimeters. There is an implication that an evolutionary process has been temporarily arrested and that the "edge" of art in this case is an expanding and undefined periphery.

The breakdown of the edge of art (in fact and implication) is part of an historical continuum. Juan Downey, in a 1973 essay entitled "Invisible Architecture" has traced the reduction of volume in architecture from ancient Egypt through the present, and into the future. The chronology begins with the Pyramids (maximum volume—minimum interior) and proceeds steadily toward a minimum of structure in favor of a maximum of space enclosure. His examples, in progression are the column-beam technology of Greece, the Roman arch, the Florentine palazzo around a courtyard, the Crystal Palace

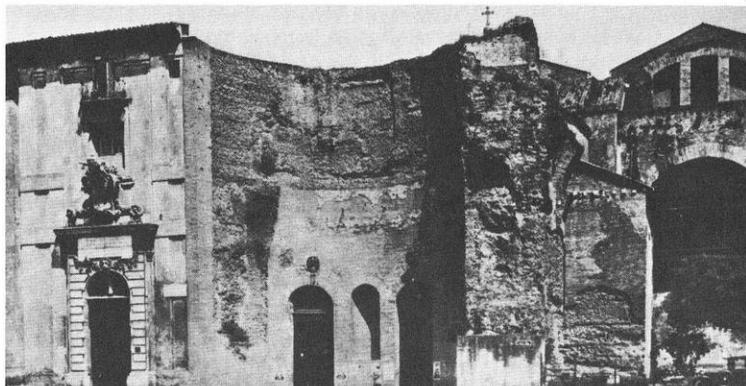


Fig. 5. The Church of Santa Maria Degli Angeli (Ruins of Thermae Diocletian) by Michaelangelo, 1580.



Fig. 6. The Trevi Fountain. Rome, Italy.

Exposition Hall, the curtain-wall tower, the geodesic dome, the inflatable, and on into speculations about energy architecture. In art, Lucy Lippard's book *The Dematerialization of the Art Object* summarized; "During the 1960's the anti-intellectual, emotional/intuitive processes of art making characteristic of the last two decades began to give way to the ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes thinking process almost exclusively." Whereas Mr. Downey's observations dwell on structure and evolution, Ms. Lippard's essays deal primarily with a series of cerebral events or art as philosophy/criticism. With respect to public/urban/environmental art, the dialogue is more about situation, attitude, periphery, and the nature of space. Perhaps the dialectic differences are comparable to the scientific community's efforts to interpret the "edge of the universe." The Pragmatists insist on a mathematical definition of the phenomenon; The Analysts are resigned that the determinant mind cannot embrace the indeterminate uni-

verse and value speculations over solutions; and the Philosophers maintain that the issue is inaccessible since man is a microcosm of the universe and hence the embodiment of the forces he is trying to explain. In any event the "edge" remains elusive and the questions are still more interesting than the answers. In part, this may parallel the current widespread disenchantment with the art object.

The past twenty years have witnessed a de-materialization in art to a point where most conventional definitions are no longer relevant or necessary. Although the once significant pioneering of Smith, Giacometti, Calder, Caro, and others contributed to the destruction of the monolith, their work preserved the fundamental objectivity of formalist sculpture. The shift of art to cerebralization has served to destroy this qualification as requisite—except in-so-far as the physical evidence (models) of conceptual ideas must be tailored for exhibition in an art gallery where the

sanction of *context* pre-determines the reaction of the spectator to *content*. Dealing with open spaces and the cityscape is quite a different matter. Distractions abound, perimeters are non-existent except by implication, visual access is uncontrolled, and the focality of the exhibition sanctuary is unavailable. The genuine pioneering of earth art (usually interpreted as a concurrent by-product of conceptualism) is most directly responsible for the new dimensions in environmental art. Artists like Heizer, Oppenheim, and Smithson enlarged the scope of the visual field to include those far points of infinity formerly assumed to be the province of urban planning and architecture (fig. 7). Also Heizer's trenches and Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown* forecast ideas of negation and the inversion of circumstances which, although dealing with the physical properties of land surface, are important to de-architecturization. The prevailing aspect of recent urban structure is the antithesis of negation. Cities are a composite of relentless density and mass with virtually no sense of land occupancy beyond the cost per square foot. Inversion, under these conditions, refers to an art which can change the pedestrian-motorist's attitudes toward this prevailing oppression.



Fig. 7. *Circumflex* by Michael Heizer. Massacre Creek Dry Lake, 1968.

An urban environment responsive only to the demands of construction costs, land values, and services seems destined to conform to predictable standards well into the foreseeable future. Art effecting changes of attitude toward public spaces and city facade can be achieved by means that are more gestural than emphatic. The procedure might be compared to the confrontations between emerging "idea" artists of the early 1960's and the impenetrable fortress of abstract expressionism, (then water-logged in its third generation). The "Erased DeKooning" of Rauschenberg became an affront to the sacrosanct object d'art; but also an inversion of its own revered methodology. By that time DeKooning had become a venerable capital stock and Rauschenberg's deliberate elimination-of-art-as-art was significant in the chronology of art as information versus art as form and symbol. This gesture of cancellation was not directed at DeKooning; rather, at the rituals of cultural fetishism, at DeKooning as an institution. Similarly, art as the inversion of architecture is best achieved through a commentary on an institutionalized value system.

*Inversion* is both informational and procedural and, when applied to the architectural (or public) environment, may seem to subvert certain rational prerogatives. A superb turn-of-the-century example is the Gaudi viaduct and retaining wall in the Parc Guell supported by its row of leaning columns (fig. 8). It must be remembered that Gaudi's motivations were the approximation of nature in architecture and the development of structural systems to arrive at these equations. His work was the product of a Mediaevalist sensibility and the commentary level was more often the result of a religious ideology, rather than architectural theory. There was never a perverse endeavor to arrive at conclusions which would threaten the spectator's sense of equilibrium or destroy a formalist aesthetic. The results of the casual masonry and precarious articulation of Guell Viaduct did, however, achieve an extraordinary composite of implied organic growth and impending collapse.

An urban art project currently being developed by SITE, Inc. for a courtyard space in the new Intermediate School 25 in lower Manhattan, is another illustration of the inversion process (fig. 9). The proposal suggests a transformation of situation by reversing the evolutionary development of a struc-



Fig. 8. Viaduct structure. Parc Guell. Barcelona, Spain. Antoni Gaudí.

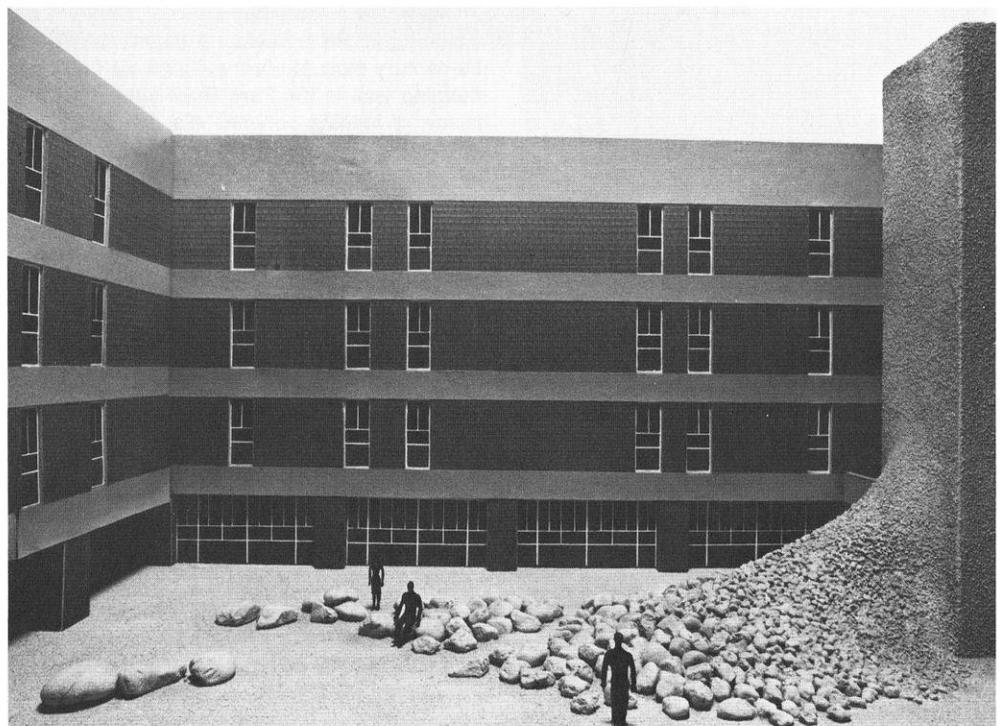


Fig. 9. Courtyard Project by Site, Inc. Intermediate School 25, New York City. J. Wines, Project Director, 1973.



Fig. 10. *Yard Environment* by Allan Kaprow, 1961. Courtyard with Automobile Tires.

tured space. The volume of the imposing stairwell is to be physically reduced and fragmented by gradually enlarging the size of the aggregate in the cement mix until the outward flow of the adhesive mass disintegrates into a casual distribution of stones and boulders at the far end of the courtyard. The I.S. 25 project is not intended to evoke a ritual place or propose a materiality aesthetic. It is a hybrid catalyst breaking down the habitual focus on art and architecture as separate entities. The reduction of the stair tower seems to arrest an action which would normally result in either the restoration or the removal of the building. This implied suspension of forces requires the spectator to reconcile his intuitions concerning the security of the structure against what appears to be tentative and/or subversive. The project is the result of speculations about art as periphery and architecture as information.

Theories of *indeterminacy and chance* have attracted disciples in most of the arts—painting, multi-media, performance, poetry—but seldom in architecture and urban design. The reasons for this may be attributed to the pragmatic responsibilities of space planning and the widely-held conviction that these

obligations include a pre-ordained structuring of the behavior patterns of the pedestrians. Directional walkways, benches, potted trees, and public sculptures are the standard devices used to insure a conditioned response. Cityscape surprises are rare and usually discouraged by the architecture profession and particularly by their corporate and government clients who are anxious to maintain regulatory rituals for society. Although visual art has been ostensibly free of such control factors, the trappings of recognition—galleries, museums, frames, pedestals, spot-lights, etc.—are still very much in evidence. The happenings and event structures of Allan Kaprow in the 1960's became an influential attack on the traditional role of the audience-participant and the apparatus of recognition. "The work of art (dematerialized art)," Kaprow stated in 1965, "must now receive its meaning and qualities from the unique expectant (and often anxious) focus of the observer, listener, or intellectual participant. But in greater number of cases the responsibilities have at least been reapportioned to include certain outsiders who may or may not be told beforehand exactly what their duties are. The artist and his artist-public are expected to carry on a dialogue on a mutual plane, through



Fig. 11. *Protection Piece* by D. Oppenheim, 1971. Battery Park, New York City.

a medium which is insufficient alone and in some instances is nonexistent before this dialogue, but which is given life by the parties involved." This cerebralized participation was earlier defined by Duchamp, but never carried to the magnified scale of Kaprow's work, (except perhaps in his designs for the Surrealist Exhibitions in Paris in 1938 and New York in 1942, which were essentially gallery spaces). It is important to remember that Duchamp's ideas affected context—but the controlled and antiseptic context of the museum, gallery, and private collection. His inversions and destructions have to be evaluated in terms of an object heredity and, although relevant to undefined space, must be addressed within carefully bounded perimeters. His was a French vision and intellect, and epicurean love of the particular. The American sensibility (especially Kaprow's) is comfortable with broad and epic dimensions and it is only fitting that if Duchamp's conceptual estate is to be considered a healthy influence it must be re-evaluated within this expanded frame of measure. Kaprow's *Yard Environment* of 1961, an architectural space filled to overflowing with automobile tires, exemplifies this change of scale reference (fig. 10). Participants in the event were

expected to both view and navigate the area, each according to his own perceptual and physical capacity. By comparison, Duchamp's objects were intellectual icons which made the periphery seem indeterminate. Kaprow's assemblages involve corporeal and material congestions which make the periphery seem more rational.

Another aspect of the indeterminate sensibility is a quality of impending threat. This need not be considered a negative force—particularly in art. Kaprow has further defined the element of chance as a "dramatic affair involving both our need for security and our need for discovery and risk." The precariously balanced lead and steel structures of Richard Serra which might topple at the slightest touch and the repellent materiality of Robert Morris' distribution pieces composed of dirt and refuse are examples which come to mind (and yet, each is conditionally associated with the gallery-museum enclosure). Some recent works by Dennis Oppenheim are more particularly involved with urban space and ideas commensurate with de-architecturization. His 1971 *Protection Piece* was located in the rigidly formalist space of Battery Park



Fig. 12. Partially Buried Woodshed by Robert Smithson, 1970. Kent State, Ohio.

in New York City (fig. 11). He stationed twelve chained police dogs on a plot of park land to keep people off of a space that they would normally occupy, creating a sphere of inaccessibility. Oppenheim describes the piece as . . . "infecting the land with an air of preciousness, yet there was nothing there . . . . The piece is really about pure concentration, protection, making by keeping away."

Entropy, applied to art activity, is most directly associated with the work of the late Robert Smithson. As noted earlier, entropy may be interpreted as an inevitable deteriorating force to be resisted, or a pleasant relief from an over-structured view of natural phenomena. Smithson admitted to a fascination with disaster, a feeling that this attraction constituted a basic human need. "There is a desire for spectacle," he observed, "I know when I was a kid I used to love to watch the hurricanes come and blow trees down and rip up sidewalks. There is a kind of pleasure one receives on that level." As a result, his interests centered on catastrophe, mining regions, and plundered topography. He was suspicious of the idealism of architecture, comparing the evolution of the cityscape to economics. "It seems as if architects build in an isolated,

self-contained, a-historical way. They never seem to allow for any kind of relationships outside of their grand plan. And this seems to be true in economics too. Economics seem to be isolated and self-contained and conceived of as cycles, so as to exclude the whole entropic process." As an alternative to this attitude he preferred the example of a park in Anchorage, Alaska created by inhabitants from the consequences of an earthquake, or the recent eruptions in the Vestmann Island outside of Iceland when an entire community of buildings was submerged in black ashes—comparable to his *Partially Buried Woodshed* project in Kent State, Ohio (fig. 12) where he piled twenty cartloads of dirt on this fragile structure until the central beam cracked. Aside from the obvious references to natural calamity on a physical level, Smithson equated his earthworks to the erosions of mental process. In an essay for *Art Forum* entitled "Sedimentation of the Mind" he wrote of his works as a kind of "abstract geology." Slump, debris, slides, avalanches, all take place within cracking limits of the brain. The entire body is pulled into the cerebral sediment, where particles and fragments make themselves as solid consciousness."



Fig. 13. Wall Graffiti. New York City.

Smithson's work is central to an art dialectic of entropy; however, some of the most remarkable examples of degradation-as-urban-aesthetic are provided by graffiti covered walls and subway trains (fig. 13). Although these clandestine inscriptions and the more recent mural-scale calligraphy are considered by many citizens to be pernicious attacks on public property, they have become intrinsic to the vitality of metropolitan life. Sociologically motivated by the desire for identity in an oppressively determinate environment, the graffiti art has proliferated to a degree where it no longer represents a pattern of destruction; but rather, an inevitable acceptance of the tension between the forces of authoritarian design control and the irreversible desire of certain members of the community to humanize this tyranny. All efforts by an establishment law system have failed to thwart these indigenous artists and, in the meantime, pedestrians have gradually learned to accept the spontaneously scribbled epigraph as readily as the official directives of traffic control and public advertising. In fact, a more liberalized public taste now prefers the casual crudeness of graffiti to the sterile elegance of Helvetica.

A more amusing example of entropy versus the structured system has been demonstrated by the various adversaries involved in the cause and prevention of graffiti. During a certain period in 1970 the New York journals offered daily reports on each new development in the conflict. On one hand, an outraged mayor and his task force declared war on the vandals—with claims from law enforcement that the culprits would be dealt with severely and from science that a new paint remover had been perfected to obliterate every vestige of urban scrawl. The spray paint manufacturers were subsequently interviewed to reveal the surprising information that their pigments now contained an indelible component guaranteed to resist any known solvent. And finally, the graffitiists themselves were questioned only to discover that they had organized into militant phalanxes and were determined to paint on at any risk. The collision course of these three obdurate combatants has never been favorably mediated or resolved, as evidence of a continuing entropic process and greatly to the benefit of a more diverse city environment.

*Thus, for us now, the idea of a "perfect work of art" is not only irrelevant because we do not know what are the conditions for such a phantasm, but it is, if desired, presumptuous and unreal.*

—Allan Kaprow

At the core of a formalist architecture and urban design lies an abiding belief in the integrity of some superior plan—an aspiration toward the "final solution"—and the assumption that by sufficient effort the goal may be attainable. The history of final solutions (whether sociological, military, or aesthetic) has been characterized more by repression than by liberation. Also, in view of a pervasive technology, automation, and the alienation of the individual, formalism only succeeds in compounding the problems. Every detail of contemporary life is a confirmation of the industrial autocracy and it becomes redundant in the extreme for urban facade and public space to function as persistent reminders. Ambiguity, although usually considered anathema to architecture, is indeed the only quality which makes city life tolerable. The combination of practical expedience, rapid mobility, and depersonalization has forced the individual to withdraw increasingly into the privacy of the mind. As a result, the old art and architecture of form and symbol has become less relevant than an art and architecture of information and thought.

The concept of de-architecturization is open to innumerable interpretations—inclusionism, inversion, indeterminacy, entropy, destruction, biomorphic change, etc.—and represents an interesting alternative to the familiar translation of a gallery object to outsized scale for use in the public environment. The age of monuments (whether art, architecture, or urban spaces) is finished and most attempts to perpetuate the tradition are pretentious and extraneous no matter how well conceived. We presently lack the cultural estate and the unifying ideology necessary to lend any significance to these heroic icons. As architecture accumulates greater height and mass, art continues to suffer as a superfluous vehicle of decoration, (a competitive role that is doomed from the outset in terms of scale and plastic relationships). Art cannot compete with the size and urgency of architecture, nor should it try. De-architecturization is a catalyst suggesting that public art does not have to respond to formalist doctrine; but rather, may evolve from the informational reservoirs of the city environment, where phenomenology and structure become the fabric of its existence. Perhaps the only requisite ingredient is a reaction to the complacent state of architecture. A large proportion of the art produced in this century has been art about art. De-architecturization is art about architecture. □



**Cohen:** Then why don't you live here longer instead of just visit?

**Auden:** I adore my family, but I don't want to live with them.

**Cohen:** Why do you prefer New York to London?

**Auden:** London is too provincial.

**Cohen:** I'm surprised to hear you say that. Can you elaborate?

**Auden:** New York is the only city I know that's not provincial.

**Cohen:** But how is London provincial? What do you mean by provincial?

**Auden:** Don't trap me into semantics. Beginning with "insularity," do you want a declension and derivation fest?

**Cohen:** What do you think of the state of England today?

**Auden:** England has become the center of vulgarity.

**Cohen:** But surely isn't the United States more vulgar?

**Auden:** The United States is nowhere close. No other country in the world compares with England's vulgarity. There's nothing to compare with going up and down the tube escalator and seeing such unadulteratedly vulgar ads. The obscenity isn't even explained, it just hits you in the eye, it's there before you. New York advertisers wouldn't dare be so blatant.

**Cohen:** In what other way is England vulgar?

**Auden:** Those brash little miniskirts. There's no attempt to justify them by aesthetic proportion in fashioning. The dresses aren't made to be beautiful, but to reveal barely. The celebrated old Roman decadence may have had time to become more notorious than ours—but it didn't exceed ours.

**Cohen:** You're down on England?

**Auden:** I'm down on aspects of today's England—aspects which, unchecked, have been

## An Interview with W. H. Auden

by Marvin Cohen

*A novelist, he has published The Self-Devoted Friend (1968), The Monday Rhetoric of the Love Club and Other Parables (1973), and Baseball the Beautiful (1974). Forthcoming this year are Fables at Life's Expense, and Others, Including Morstive Sternbump.*

Mr. Auden's familiar craggy-flabby face was labyrinthinely lined with webs and mats of wrinkled flesh. He wore a frayed tweed-plaid jacket with a pipe stem sticking up from the chest pocket. His shoes and pants were strictly for comfort, and durability. He was slightly high on drink, and his disposition was professional-amiable: he owed a friendly duty to the public to occasionally submit to interviews when trapped in London. Location: penthouse garden atop Arts Council building on Piccadilly overlooking Green Park, London, 1970.

**Cohen:** Why are you in London?

**Auden:** For the poetry festival. (He was to read from his poetry at Queen Elizabeth Hall the following night.)

**Cohen:** Where do you spend your year?

**Auden:** Five months in New York, five months in Austria, and about one month in England.

**Cohen:** What do you do when you're in England?

**Auden:** My friends and family are here. I see them.

W. H. Auden.

allowed to grow dominant. The vulgarity of magazines, both the Sundays and the glossies. The loud, impossible noises of fad music. Shallowness made into a goddess, the surface into a cult. The fashion mania. The tastelessness, the senselessness, which alas has become so prevalent in England. I just don't belong to it—I can't.

**Cohen:** What of today's youth?

**Auden:** I feel sorry for them. I pity them.

**Cohen:** How do you mean?

**Auden:** When I was young, I was never bored. No one was, then. One always was interested in something—in cricket, in nature, in books, in travel. Today, the young do seem bored. And rootless. They're not connected with the past. And not being connected with the past, they seem terribly devoid of a future. They have no confidence in what, if anything, is to come. That's why they act out of desperation, for the immediate. They stamp right out into violence, into sensation. There's such a vacuum, they've got to fill it—loudly, pleasurable, for its own sake, hedonistically; they act not out of what will be, or from what was, but into an aimless and desperate pleasure that dies out quickly and bears no fruit. These wild fits are sterile. I can only pity the young who are like that.

**Cohen:** But why must living necessarily relate to the past? Can't it have its own spontaneous reason for being?

**Auden:** You can't lead a human life without communication with the dead.

**Cohen:** That's a memorable statement. And what do you think of man's imminence on the moon?

**Auden:** A load of balls. What does it all matter, this space exploration, and just what does it prove? Man can't exceed his own measure, which is himself. Going to the moon has no philosophical or theological value. Man must be concerned with understanding things close to home, and no outward planet can furnish a clue to the problems immemorial to man's soul.

**Cohen:** You're essentially a conservatist?

**Auden:** But I'm really freer than those uniformed "rebels" you see all over today, those hippies or beatniks all uniformed in their conformity of revolt, in their mindless, directionless rebellion. They're as much uniformed as their accountant and barrister fathers.

**Cohen:** They're in despair, and there's no solution?

**Auden:** Their despair is more apathy. I don't know of a solution.

**Cohen:** When you were young, weren't you dissatisfied?

**Auden:** When I was young, I lacked for nothing. I accepted my parents' values implicitly. Not that there wasn't an occasional point or fact that I didn't dispute. But in general, I didn't question their values. I had everything I needed.

**Cohen:** Your family was well off?

**Auden:** No, they weren't, and I don't mean it that way. They had to work hard, but they sacrificed for me, and I had every advantage. I had everything I wanted, and needed: a very good education, enough books, enough leisure, good friends, the opportunity to travel. I was given warmth and love by my family. I didn't feel misplaced. All my interests followed from a secure root. My numerous diversifications as I grew older and acquired more interests were all the branchings out from something well based.

**Cohen:** You have so much to be grateful for—

**Auden:** —And not the least of my good fortune was a solid classical education. I was steeped in Greek and Latin. It taught me to use words carefully, with the exact shade of meaning, when I came to write poetry. They were invaluable, irreplaceable lessons for what was to become my profession of letters.

**Cohen:** Language today is abused?

**Auden:** Horribly. The young rebels often use language so loosely and inadequately that I can sense the disrespect they have for it. And not they only, but politicians as well. It's alarming. I recently heard a politician, in praising a colleague, use the phrase "integrity-ridden!"

**Cohen:** And he meant it favorably?

**Auden:** Yes! Can you believe it?

**Cohen:** Can you make a living by your poetry?

**Auden:** No, no one can. The occasional stray novelist can—usually if he's bad. Poetry earns me dribs and drabs, but the bulk of my living is through other writing, and editing.

**Cohen:** Are you writing a lot of poetry now?

**Auden:** Yes, I think so.

**Cohen:** Do you like it?

**Auden:** I have to, otherwise I wouldn't be writing it. A poet doesn't write for money, he writes for joy.

**Cohen:** Do you alter your styles from time to time?

**Auden:** I must. When a writer finds himself having gotten into the habit of a verbal technique, he must break it—or he rapidly becomes sterile in it. He must make fresh use of language, if it's to lead him to strange delight—which, after all, is the “purpose” of it all.

Illustration for *The Three Feathers*. Reproduced with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. from *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales From Grimm*, selected by Lore Segal and Maurice Sendak, translated by Lore Segal with four tales translated by Randall Jarrell, illustrated by Maurice Sendak, pictures copyright © 1973 by Maurice Sendak.

**Cohen:** You thoroughly studied Greek and Latin, that's known. But did you ever take any courses in creative writing?

**Auden:** That would have been balls! It's impossible to teach “creative writing.” And it can be harmful, it can mislead.

**Cohen:** How do you feel about Vietnam?

**Auden:** Let's not discuss it, please.

**Cohen:** You find the world immeasurably changed?

**Auden:** I cling to what I've known and accepted, though I must remain realistic about what's happening now. If there are names in poems, poets have to explain them now. Any mythological or classical reference, there's probably got to be a footnote for: today's reader can't be trusted to know the references. Our backgrounds and education and reading are so varied, that it's hit or miss, very chancy, whether one person has read the same book as another. In Homer's day, Homer could afford to use a lot of proper names in his epics, he was able to assume that all his readers were familiar with them. That was an ideal advantage for a poet to have. But through the ages it's become less and less like that, though never so drastically impossible as today's situation. We must have communication with the past, with the dead. Otherwise our mental life-line is broken. □





# Visual World: A New Program in Art Education

by Kenneth Lash

*Writer, teacher, educational consultant. He was formerly Chairman of Humanities at the San Francisco Art Institute and is currently Head of the Department of Art at the University of Northern Iowa.*

Let me describe briefly the philosophical basis of the Visual World program, its educational approach, and some of its results.

The original impetus for creating the program came from what I considered a national need created in part by a mistaken notion of what a university art department ought to do, and a consequent neglect. I do not conceive of the university as being in the business of producing "serious" artists. Almost without exception it is too distractively in its demands, inadequately staffed with master artists, and representative of a different level of intensity and structure. To produce, as it does, a few esthetes is a reasonable university function. To give all the rest some art history, crafts, a studio course or two . . . in hopes of creating that vague and unexamined state called "art appreciation" is largely wasteful, snobbish, and misdirected. If it were in fact productive we would not after these many years still have art so widely considered by educated people as somehow distinct from real life, the realm of the few, an "exhibit" . . . nor I think would we suffer the undiminished level of visual pollution in our country. Neither artist nor consumer has benefited enough from art education.

The root of the failure seems to lie in both order and emphasis: We teach art before we

Girl with Stereoscope, photograph. Courtesy: Minnesota Historical Society.

investigate seeing; we emphasize art product over art process. Art is visual communication. It has to do with the eyes and what they see, or can be made to see. Verbal concepts will accrete because the human is a talker, but the primary input, the unshifting referent, the essential vocabulary is visual. Isn't it sensible to suppose, then, that one arrives at a substantial relationship to art by means of amassing a vocabulary and developing a syntax of seeing?

Once this would have been unnecessary because the human being saw marvelously well (as the child still does). But we have become visual illiterates both by reason of the ever-diminishing need to see actively outside a narrow focus (road, sidewalk, aisle), and by exposure to an early and relentless conceptualizing of visual experience (e.g., the elementary teacher saying, "That's no way to draw a tree!"); the filmmaker categorizing visual experience and reducing it to "mood"). Thus we are largely blind to our environment, confusing visual experience with the spectacular . . . and thus relegating art itself to the spectacle, the "show."

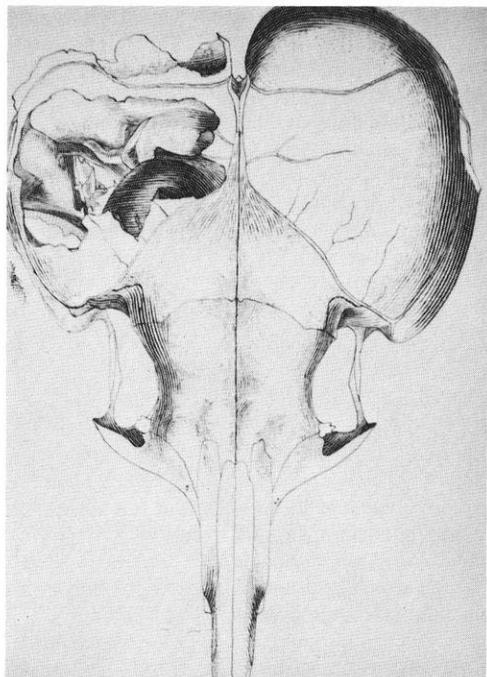
Scientists, psychologists, and some educators currently engaged in investigations of perception are beginning to discover what has been lost . . . and what may be reclaimed. It is becoming clear that the widely accepted view of science as cognitive, art as emotive, is in an absolute way inaccurate. As the Renaissance artists insisted, visual experience is cognitive. One can see the laws of nature, and in seeing experience them (versus "learning" them).

Seeing is a marvelous manner of becoming aware. And awareness is the first order of knowing; awareness precedes creativity.

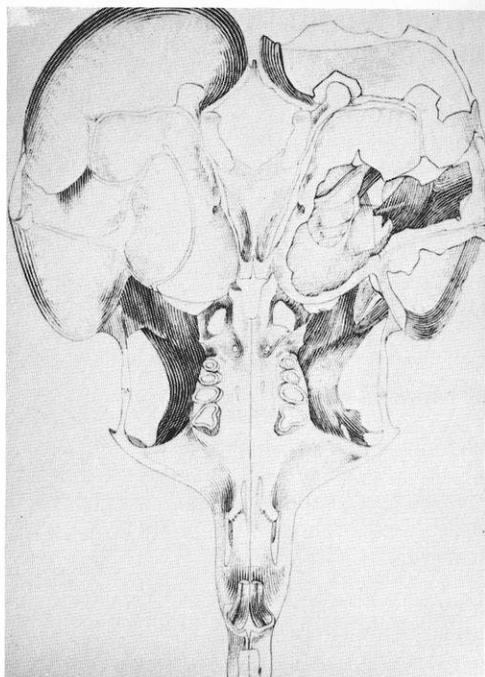
We decided, at the University of Northern Iowa, to attempt education in seeing. That is something a university art department ought to be able to do.

It's a lot harder than we supposed, but now, three years later, we know we have learned some ways.

What we did was to create the Visual World program and make it the only portal into our field—require it of majors and minors, offer it



*Mouse Skull I* by Janice Warner, pen and ink, 1961.  
Courtesy of the artist.



*Mouse Skull II* by Janice Warner, pen and ink, 1961.  
Courtesy of the artist.

as the *only* art department course in general education.

We divided the program into sections of twenty students (not so many as to preclude dialogue; not so few as to be "groupy" and over-expensive). They meet six hours a week, preferably in two-hour segments—and each section has two staff members assigned—not as team-teachers, though they may wish to share certain class meetings, but rather to swap off at mid-semester. Reason: to enrich the fare and to work against the authority and consistency of one teacher (i.e., viewpoint). Further, the student is required to enroll concurrently in a two-hour course in contemporary art, wherein exposure to the intense variety, visual experimentation, and limit-stretching of the current art scene is provided.

The essential aim of activities in the Visual World sections is three-fold: 1) to see things at once both more acutely (structure) and more broadly (context); 2) to develop accurate and alternative means for communicating one's particular visual awareness; 3) by doing #1 and #2, to discover processes involved, make them part of one's consciousness, and apply them to "daily" situations, i.e., living.

For example, we may show slides illustrating branching and layering as basic structural modes of nature (a leaf, a tree fungus) observed and adapted as structural method by man (a parachute, a hardware store). Later, a student may turn up with slides of his own (new or further examples of branching and layering), may bring to class a diagram of city government and discuss it in terms of the branching principle, may glue together the random throw of a deck of cards to show arrested motion layering, and so forth. At this point input from other courses often appears (and, we are told, output by Visual World goes into other courses). The student begins to initiate class problems, contribute to a "fund" of answers.

Or we may do the lemon experiment . . . wherein each student on Monday takes a lemon from a shopping bag, and is asked to keep the lemon with him day and night . . . looking, touching, smelling it. On Wednesday all the lemons are put back into the bag. Then each student, one by one, is asked to find "his" lemon. Rarely is there much hesitation or doubt, though no marking of the lemons is involved nor are the students warned of the task. I walked into a section one day where

the students had just completed it and were sitting around for a moment considering what had happened. One student began slowly shaking his head: "I don't know *anybody* the way I know that lemon," he said. The others looked at him . . . and gradually started to talk about what *action* is involved in "knowing."

Or a student may be asked, what is "ugly?" Is it in fact a visual term? If not, is "beautiful?" Why are eyes forever playing tricks? Is color anything more than a function of contrast? How is it used in nature? What if there were no visual differentiation? One instructor developed a successful ploy by which, after a session investigating structure, he asked the class to de-structure things and reassemble them in "unnatural" yet meaningful ways. (Consider the effect on young students: fresh minds, highly structured histories.)

These are small indications of what is going on in Visual World. There are also dead spaces, silly tricks, great squalling complaints about nobody knows what to do, this isn't the kind of education I'm paying for, when do we get to *Art*—I wanna make something! And a few of the teachers find the uncertainty of it wearying; a few disavow it (as being either old or new); but the majority believe in it, assess achievement in a broader spectrum, see the approach as becoming more and more central to every aspect of the

art department—leading into studio work, into art history, into educational method. And more and more I hear in the halls the vocabulary of Visual World—even from those who neither teach nor take it.

An extension and sharpening of visual experience is occurring for a number of both teachers and students. And with it another dimension of education. (The program is attracting a large number of general education students.)

And this new dimension of education is, we believe, transferable. Both to other art programs and to education generally. Ken Dewey's group, in a planning report for the New York State Council on the Arts, wrote of the Visual World approach to teaching art, "Although his (Kenneth Lash) proposed curriculum is addressed to the college level, it provides, in the judgment of the Committee, the basis on which to build a teaching approach to all levels of education."\* We hope this is so. Time, and analogous attempts, will tell. Analogous is the operative word, because the Visual World program is at its very center an investigative approach, not a system. □

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\*"Notes Toward a New Curriculum in Art"—published as part of report of New York State Council on the Arts, August, 1971.



## Summer Theater

by Albert Bermel

*A playwright and translator, he teaches theater history and criticism at Lehman College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.*

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of summer theater: with and without air-conditioning. In the first, so long as the cooling system holds up you doze comfortably enough. In the second, you lay curses on body heat and proximity; you revile your very blood. The best natural playhouses would be situated in Alaska or afloat on Lake Superior. Until some summer Shubert opens these refuges, the enterprise at Jones Beach will have a lot going for it on a muggy evening—the breeze, the moon's soothing, poetic reflections on the Sound, and the lapping noises of the surf, which add up to a modest substitute for a 100,000-B.T.U. unit.

There are two kinds of summer theater producers: those whose wives play the feminine leads, interpreting the ingenue parts with especial vigor and maturity; and those whose husbands direct the plays. The producers' wives know the professional theater world intimately from the days when they auditioned in midtown. They refer to famous actors and actresses they met, or saw in another casting room, by their first names—Henry, Morris, Colleen, Ingrid—and pity them for not having chosen their recent roles with more care. Producers' wives will tell you how these stars have "gotten themselves typed," and how their promising careers have run downhill since they acquired agents and stopped taking their friends' advice.

*Zapatera*, musical adaptation of Lorca's *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*. University of New Mexico production, directed by Peter Prouse, (detail). Photo by Bob Lawrence.

Producers' husbands know every trick in the director's book. As a matter of fact, each of them is writing a book. It will contain suggestions that are strictly practical, such as how you keep a show *moving*, or how you keep the energy level high. Whether you are a beginner or a veteran, the book will set you straight on blocking a play from scratch in six days while you have a second show in rehearsal and a third on the boards. Since you are employing "time-tested techniques," it makes little difference whether the play is a shorter text like a Neil Simon or Murray Schisgal just released for summer stock options, or a longer thing like *King Lear*, or a truly complicated work of art like *Carousel*. In spite of the limited time at their disposal, these producers' wives and husbands invite you to compare their summer results with the winter results of any theater people you can think of who have big—that is, inflated—reputations.

Summer producers have inexpressible contempt, which they express colorfully, for "package operations," in other words, trucking a single show and two stars (with inflated reputations) to eight separate playhouses. This practice is killing summer stock, they say, and has been doing so for the past forty years.

There are two kinds of summer actors. The first is the apprentice whose experience includes participating in the tech crew and chorus line of a high school production of *Carousel*, performing as a maid or butler in a Noël Coward comedy, and understudying a gnome in a children's fantasy put on in Wyoming by the community Thespians or Mountebanks. Young people of this caliber are eager to work, eager to learn, willing to do both without salary, or ready to pay a summer fee for the privilege. They paint flats, scrub floors, hammer chair legs together with four-inch nails, assistant-stage-manage, brew unlimited quantities of coffee for the producer's wife and husband, entice a sports commentator from the nearest newspaper to review every show, beamingly hand out programs, and take on most of the nonspeaking parts. In the course of a season, your average apprentice grows adept at ducking into a fresh make-up and costume in under five seconds. Next year he/she hopes to play Hamlet/Antigone.

The second kind of summer actor is the celebrity from commercials. Thanks to television's persistence, this face encounters the viewing public every fifteen minutes as it proclaims how clean it smells or why its hair remains doggedly in place during gales and cookouts. Enjoying national recognition, if not downright familiarity in every household, it draws tremendously larger crowds than a face that has confined itself to theater stages where recognition comes more haltingly. The commercial face gives customers value for their ticket prices. It means to demonstrate that, in addition to passively submitting to TV cameras and mouthing ecstatic reassurances, it can act; it can tease plentiful chuckles from the audience's throats, tears from contact lenses, and hearts from their moorings. The commercial face insists on tackling the demanding role from Broadway's hit of two seasons back, and caps its summer appearance by doing more than justice to the heavy play of this summer, the one selected for the edification of serious theatergoers and fund-giving foundations, say *Our Town* or *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Summer plays are generally of two kinds: Broadway revivals and Broadway tryouts. Producers, their wives, and husbands have never understood the conservatism of their patrons who stubbornly decline to give new writing a fair shake. If the tryout is the fifth of six plays on the roster, box-office takings drop off appallingly during the fifth week. What particularly galls the producer is that the tryout is identical in every respect to the five revivals. Like them, it features a kooky young heroine who will eventually be played by Sandy Dennis and is trying to find herself in today's baffling and depersonalized world. She joins religious sects, political clubhouses, a health food co-op, and a nudist colony, where she meets an assortment of funky young men, each of whom her parents dislike. Just as in the revivals, the tryout script ends with a heartrending reconciliation between the funkiest young man and the heroine's father, who is modeled on Archie Bunker. The producer guarantees that everyone will have a sensational time at this new attraction. Its characters, says the publicity, are exactly as homespun, uproarious, and electrifying as in the revivals; they utter exactly the same number of one-liners per act. Yet audiences stay away, and the producer

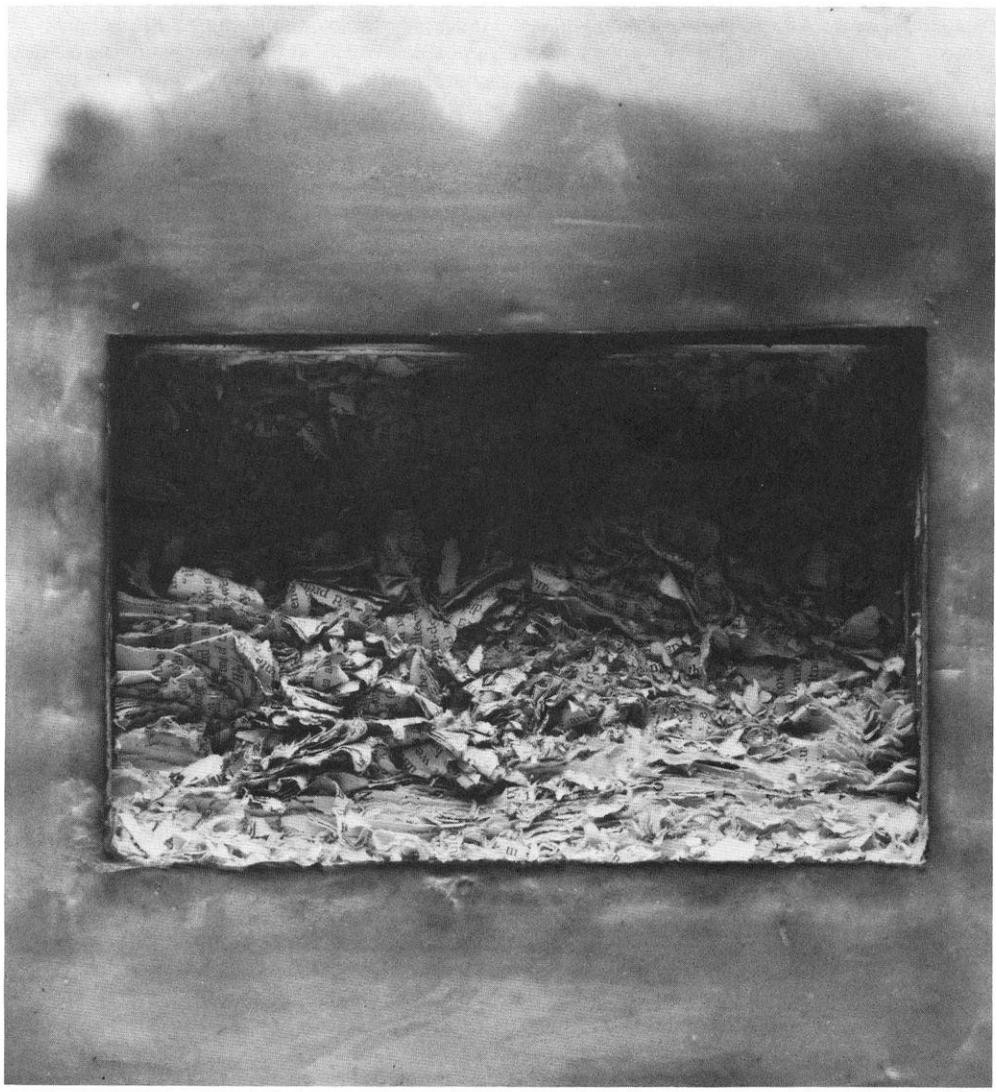


*The Beeple*, Pennsylvania State University production, (detail). Photo courtesy of Vicki Steedle.

sadly concludes that summertime America is not ready for artistic experiment.

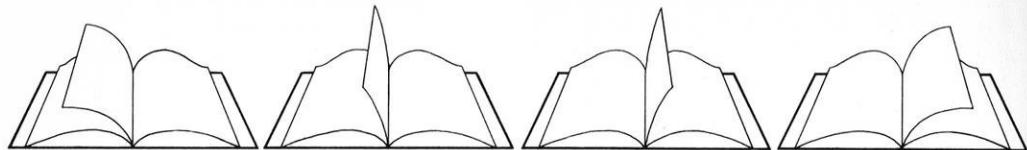
Summer spectators break down into two kinds: people who saw the show on Broadway and people who missed it. The ones who saw it, out-of-towners all, remember the punch lines aloud just before the actors get to them; they also anticipate bits of suspenseful business, warning their neighbors in adjoining seats and rows to watch out. The people who missed the Broadway version are sourpusses. They winter in Manhattan, and suspected from the start, as they read between the lines of the original reviews, that this was a clunker. Sitting on their hands, they shake their heads wearily and fiercely ask one another what they are doing in this hotbox when they could have chaise-lounged on the screened-in porch of their rented cottage and caught up with their warm-weather reading. For them summer theater is an abomination, middlebrow culture's last gasp; they attend it only to scourge themselves. They cannot wait for the heat to break so that they can flee back to Manhattan and miss next season on Broadway. □

# Book Reviews



*Untitled* by Stella Waitzkin, paper and rubber, (detail).  
Courtesy of the artist.

# Taking Popular Culture Somewhat Seriously



by Paul J. DiMaggio

Department of Sociology, Harvard University

Gans, Herbert J., **Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste.** New York: Basic Books, 1974.  
\$10.00.

Writing in 1869, with one eye to the literary hacks of London's Grubb Street and the other to democratic rabble-rousers and their working-class following, Matthew Arnold sought to describe the role of culture in human affairs. True culture, unlike cheap literature or political doctrine

In *Popular Culture and High Culture*, Columbia University sociologist Herbert J. Gans takes a position which, at first glance, contrasts sharply with that of Arnold and his intellectual descendants. Gans begins with two value judgments: "popular culture reflects and expresses the aesthetic and other wants of many people . . ."; and, "all people have a right to the culture they prefer, regardless of whether it is high or popular." He characterizes his volume as "an argument for cultural democracy and an argument against the idea that only the cultural expert knows what is good for people and for policy." (p.viii)

Yet by the book's conclusion, the reader is less certain where the author stands. *Popular Culture and High Culture* is clearly written, often insightful and frequently provocative. At the same time it is so ambivalent, so unfinished, a work that one is compelled to wonder why it was published in its present form.

The book has three sections. In the first Gans challenges the arguments of critics who have attacked popular media as worthless, damaging, narcotizing and inherently inferior to high culture. In the second he proposes a taxonomy of taste cultures (aggregates of cultural artifacts bearing similar themes and values) and taste publics (groups of people with similar taste). In the last section he argues (a bit equivocally) for a national cultural policy to insure that all Americans have access to media reflecting their values and concerns, and advocates something called "subcultural programming" to achieve this end. We will follow his argument one step at a time, with special attention to the two final sections.

Arnold's appeal for an undefiled culture, a culture based on absolutes, was an early and important statement in a debate that has continued to the present day. Is popular culture, the melange of symbols and images communicated through the commercial media, a degraded and degrading form of high culture? Or is popular culture valid on its own terms? In other words, if Mick Jagger enters a room, must Stravinsky rise?

Gans defends popular culture against charges that it is commercial while high culture is pure, that it steals its substance from high culture, that it devitalizes and vulgarizes high culture, and that it cripples its audiences' sensibilities and panders to their basest desires. This mass society critique of popular culture, which has come with equal force from the left and the right, has been debunked before, but it dies hard and Gans performs a useful service in flaying its remains. His defense of popular culture is cogent and convincing and he takes the offensive, noting that high culture has frequently been used to grant status to individuals rich and powerful enough to enjoy it.

After defending popular culture, Gans lays out his own description of the structure of cultural choice. He rejects the high culture/pop culture dichotomy in favor of a system which includes five major "taste cultures" and related "taste publics": high, upper-middle, lower-middle, low and quasi-folk low. Each of these five taste cultures and publics is subdivided by age, ethnicity or race, and region.

Taste cultures, Gans tells us,

*consist of values, the cultural forms which express these values: music, art, design, literature, drama, comedy, poetry, criticism, news and the media in which these are expressed—books, magazines, newspapers, records, films and television programs, paintings and sculpture, architecture, and, insofar as ordinary consumer goods also express aesthetic values or functions, furnishings, clothes, appliances, and automobiles as well . . . (pp. 10-11)*

Despite the inclusion of consumer goods, most of the book, particularly the part that deals with policy, is concerned with the content of entertainment and communications media.

Taste publics consist of "users who make similar choices of values and taste culture content." (p.11) The taste public to which an individual belongs is determined by his or her social class, age, religion, ethnic and racial background, regional origin, place of residence and personality type. Of these determinants, education is most important. Gans describes the five major taste publics and taste cultures, providing mini-ethnographies of each one. Members of the upper-middle taste

public, for instance, read *Time*, listen to Beethoven and watch public television, while members of the lower-middle public subscribe to *Reader's Digest* and enjoy the paintings of Norman Rockwell and the novels of Jacqueline Susann. (pp. 81-89).

In the book's final section, Gans discusses the policy implications of earlier chapters. He argues that a desirable taste culture is one which responds to the needs of its users, rewards its creators and harms no one. While he maintains that higher cultures are objectively "more comprehensive and more informative than lower ones" (p. 125), he asserts that cultures can only be evaluated in relation to the needs and backgrounds of their users:

*. . . a person from a high culture public may choose abstract expressionist paintings while one from a low culture public selects calendar art, but both choose from content related to their standards and educational level . . . both derive emotional and intellectual rewards from their choices and both may add new ideas, feelings and insights to their lives as a result . . . The evaluation of people's choices cannot depend only on the content they choose but must compare what might be called the incremental aesthetic reward that results from their choices.*

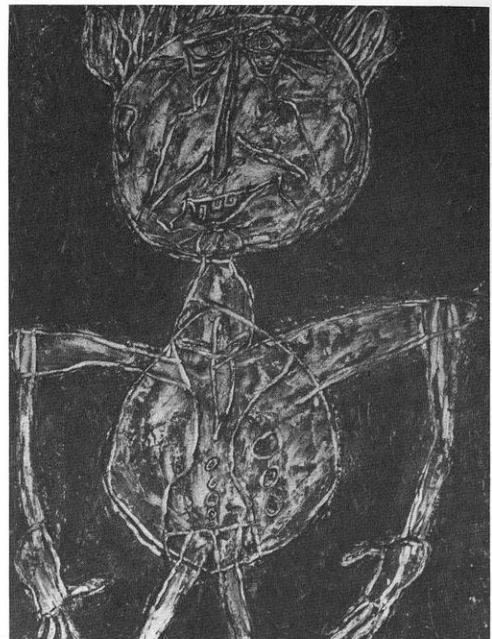
Hence, all taste cultures are of equal worth to their taste publics, because each takes the user "beyond his or her past experience." (p. 127)

To insure that every citizen can receive the rewards of culture, "society" must either give everyone the educational background to appreciate all culture, or else "permit the creation of cultural content which will meet the needs and standards of the existing taste publics." (p. 129) Since the former option would be too expensive, Gans recommends the latter, which he calls "subcultural programming," and he advocates the establishment of an autonomous government-financed agency to fund media for "publics too small or too poor to be served by the commercial media." (p. 154) Such an agency could be governed by a policy board consisting of representatives from different taste publics. Eventually broadcasting networks would arise, national newsmagazines would begin publica-

tion, and critics would develop aesthetic standards for all taste publics.

Gans' argument is delivered in a reasoned tone and seems plausible at first reading. Unfortunately, however, the analysis is unsound at its base, the delineation of the "taste structure." Gans' taste structure (upper, upper-middle, etc.) appears to follow Warner's model of social stratification. That model, developed by the pioneer social anthropologist Warner and his colleagues in studies of American communities, makes a certain amount of sense as a way to describe the location of individuals in a social structure. One can, after all, have more or less money, education or occupational prestige than one's neighbor. It is less evident that two people can have differing amounts of culture. The superimposition of the Warner model onto "taste structure" is appropriate to the extent that individuals' cultural choices tend to cluster along class lines—e.g. to the extent that knowing someone's social class helps us predict his or her favorite television shows or pieces of music. To the extent that individuals' cultural choices are randomly distributed, or cluster in a manner unrelated to education or income, the analogy does not make sense. In fact we have little data about people's cultural choices, but what we have indicates that the relationship between social class and cultural choice is complicated indeed. Comparatively few poor people go to the ballet and comparatively few Ph.D.'s attend roller derbies, but between these extremes, audiences are frequently heterogeneous.

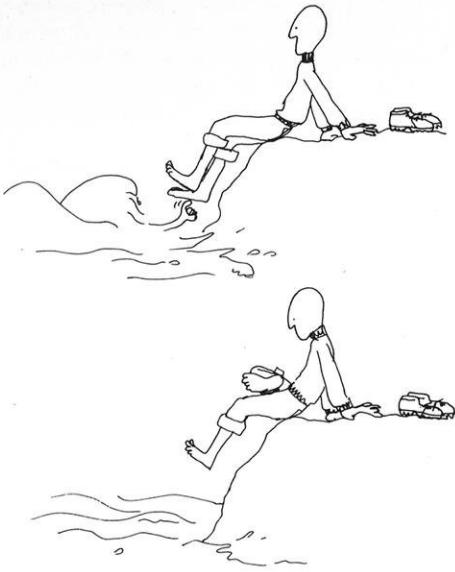
As more and more people receive at least a high school education, and as continuing education programs continue to grow, an increasing number of individuals choose from a wide range of commercially produced and distributed cultural items. What is more, the same cultural choices mean different things to different people. We should attend more seriously than ever David Reisman's observation that "the same popular culture materials are used by audiences in radically different ways and for radically different purposes, which further complicate the process of matching culture and class."<sup>12</sup> These two realities—the diversity of materials from which most people choose, and the resourcefulness of most people in using diverse cultural materials to suit their own ends—make talking



*Limbour as a Crustacean* by Jean Dubuffet, oil on canvas, 1946. Courtesy: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.

about culture and class a risky business. What people do in their spare time is probably related most directly to what their friends do and to what options are available, and only indirectly to their education, income, or ethnic background. At any rate it is an open question.

Even without reference to the real world, the implications of Gans' typology have been given insufficient thought. We have five taste publics, four if we forget, for the moment, the rather mysterious "quasi-folk low." In each of these four taste publics Gans notes at least three important subdivisions—age, ethnicity or race, and region. Let us assume that there are four age groups, four major ethnic groups and four regional types. Taking these differences into account, the four-class typology crumbles into more than three hundred sub-publics. Such diversity would lead us to predict stormy weather for the planners of "sub-cultural programming" and we are not disappointed. By page 133, Gans is advocating "specific programming" for "avant-garde low-culture preadolescents" (whoever these may be) and a kind of otherworldly haze has settled over his argument, like a mist over Oz.



In fact, Gans is not unaware of the conceptual muddiness of his analysis. His first line of defense is to call his typology an analytic one; but one does not create analytic categories and then propose to subject their members to public policy, unless one suspects that they are empirically real as well. How, for instance, could members of sub-publics be appointed to government councils, if such sub-publics were merely ideal types?

In the course of describing the "taste structure" Gans offers no fewer than ten separate qualifications to his argument. These caveats serve to assure the reader that the author has his wits about him, but they do not explain why he chose to propound a hierarchical model of cultural difference in the first place.

The answer would seem to be that the Gans of *Popular Culture and High Culture* is closer to the Matthew Arnold of *Culture and Anarchy* than he may realize. Unlike Arnold, who sought the same sweetness and light for everyone in one lifetime, Gans lives in a less optimistic era—he is willing to settle for progress by inches. But it is the idea that there is progress to be made—that cultural differences can be ranked vertically with high

culture on the top—that has characterized the elitist position. Gans, as much as Arnold, Eliot or Dwight MacDonald, holds that view. In one of the book's more revealing passages he writes:

*Both the high school graduate and the college graduate should be expected to choose content that fits their educational levels and aesthetic standards; and both should be judged negatively only if they consistently choose below these levels. A college graduate should not read mainly detective stories, nor should a high school graduate devote himself or herself to comic books. And while both deserve praise if they read Proust, they should not be expected to do so, at least not in evaluations that result in public policy. (p. 127)*

Gans prescribes criteria for cultural policy decisions; but the question he fails to ask is this: By what right does public policy, that is, the state and its agencies, have expectations about, or judge or praise, the cultural choices of any citizen? Cultural elitism is no crime, if one does not try to inflict one's values on others; we all have our preferences and prefer them to the preferences of others. But when one seeks to foist an implicit metric of cultural quality onto public policy, one steps beyond the bounds of propriety.

Matthew Arnold, like Gans, looked to the state to provide the engine of culture. But the ideal of the State looked better in the mid-nineteenth century than its reality does today. Gans' policy recommendations are stated in such general terms that they nearly defy specific criticism. We can, however, make two observations. First, everything we know about the workings of government programs would lead us to expect that funding arts councils consisting of representatives of different taste publics (assuming such publics could be identified) would result primarily in political infighting and only incidentally in cultural growth. Second, the system Gans suggests—different programming for members of different interest groups—is the natural outcome of the demographic marketing practices that characterize the great bulk of American media today. (The one exception is television, to which much of the policy discussion seems to be implicitly directed.) If the author is concerned about the lack of material for such economically disenfranchised groups as the

poor, minorities or the aged, he would do well to continue arguing for a more equitable distribution of income. If he is concerned about television, it seems odd that he did not deal explicitly with the large and growing literature on television policy and the FCC.

None of this is to say that the market system is ideally suited to the production and distribution of culture. Rather, I would argue that we understand very little about how culture is produced, how the market system affects it, and what the likely outcomes of modifications in the system would be. Given these conditions, it would seem appropriate for social scientists to, on the one hand, use what knowledge they have to treat specific cultural policy issues at the most local level possible and, on the other, to mine some of the promising veins of theory and research that have developed in the last ten years. At this point, abstract descriptive theory and general policy recommendations are rather premature.

*Popular Culture and High Culture* is not without value. The first section is a cogent and useful summary of the high culture/popular culture debate. Gans says nearly everything worth saying about popular culture at least once (usually, unfortunately, in the context of qualifying something he has just said). Moreover, the book may encourage social scientists to give further thought to a subject too often neglected. Nonetheless it is a disappointment, in many ways inferior to anything else Gans has written.

The problem may be that Gans himself does not take popular culture all that seriously. As he says in his introduction

*I am inclined to think that popular culture, or at least that part of it transmitted by the mass media, tends to go in one eye and out the other. (p. ix)*

Certainly he holds little hope for the implementation of his own proposals, nor does he seem sure that it matters:

*... although the poor and near-poor need subcultural programming the most, they are least likely to get it. These groups are by now used to being deprived, even if they are not happy about it, and besides, better jobs and higher incomes are of more urgent*

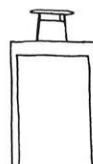
*priority than culture. As for the rest of the population, it has the commercial and political power to demand more subcultural programming, but only time will tell whether culture is of sufficient importance to bring such programming into existence. (p. 139)*

If *Popular Culture and High Culture* does not take us very far along the road to understanding culture and what public policy might do about it, perhaps that is because the author was never really convinced that the trip was worthwhile. □

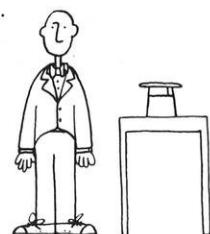
<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1971. Pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> David Riesman, "Listening to Popular Music," in *Individualism Reconsidered*. New York: The Free Press, 1954. P. 184.

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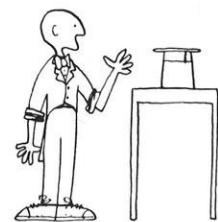
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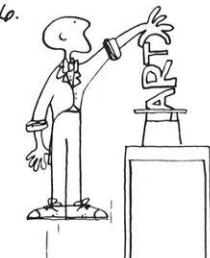
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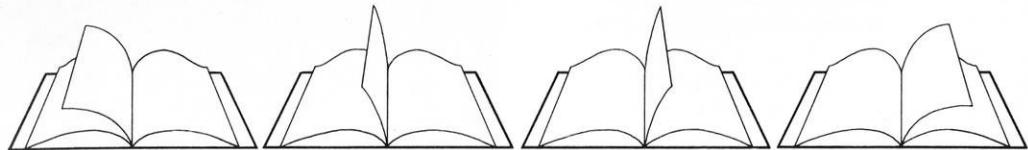
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# What Controversy?



by George W. Hartung

*A poet and essayist, he is Professor and Chairman of the English Department, University of Wisconsin-Extension.*

Rist, Ray C., **The Pornography Controversy.**

Edison, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1975. \$3.95

*But Love has pitched his mansion in  
The place of excrement . . . .*

Yeats' Crazy Jane

*I basically like clean sex. Nothing turns me off more than dirt and the smell of shit, urine, a sharp body odor or bad breath . . . .*

Xaviera Hollander's Xaviera

Essays on pornography can become as dull as some pornography. Clichés recur monotonously and the limited views of humanity are depressing. There are compensations, though, one of them the interesting disclosures that slip through. All sorts of hangups appear. Not sexual hangups, of course. Who cares these days? Snobbery, ignorance, illusions—all appear when one tries to say what should be done about pornography. Will I walk as naked as others? Probably.

Ray C. Rist, a "senior policy analyst" of the National Institute of Education has put together (and made contributions to) a useful collection of attempts to look at various aspects of the controversy. Some of the pieces have appeared in other collections, but here they are brought together in a form that gives a perspective upon the whole matter.

What it adds up to, briefly, is that some admit to enjoying pornography, some are indifferent,

some deplore it, some want it suppressed, some are merely amused by the controversy. One, Walter Berns, seems nostalgic for the good old days: "No doubt the law used to err on occasion; but democracy can live without 'Mrs. Warren's Profession,' if it must, as well as without *Fanny Hill*—or, to speak more precisely, it can live with the error that consigns 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' to under-the-counter custom, along with *Fanny Hill*." Of course it can live with the error, but only as a cripple, as Shaw pointed out so well.

Berns asserts that if the "distinction between the justified and unjustified employment of obscenity" is not maintained by law "not only will we no longer be able to teach the distinction between the proper and the improper, but we will no longer be able to teach—and therefore come to forget—the distinction between art and trash." Evidently we need legislators with courage who will tell our artists, critics, and teachers what art is.

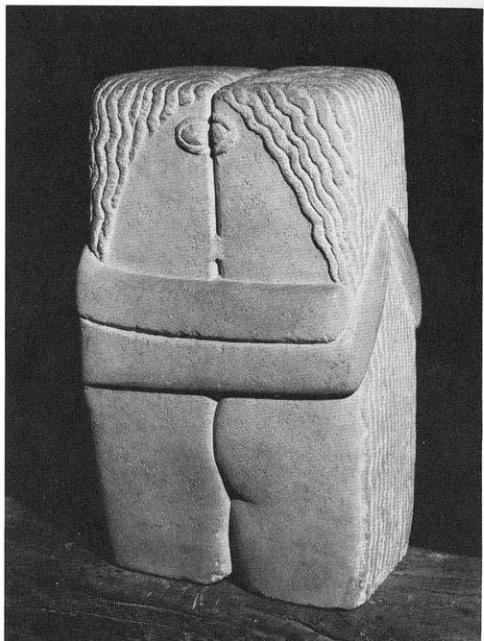
Others besides Berns make very clear that the controversy is esthetic as well as (or rather than) moral: pornography is dehumanizing; it is bad art. This opinion is most eloquently maintained by George Steiner, whose widely read "Night Words" is reprinted. To Steiner, "censorship is stupid and repugnant." However, he attacks "new pornographers" who "do our imagining for us." Without taboos, without "night words," we lose our sensitivity to the most profound and intimate relationships. Perhaps. The argument skirts class bias, however. Do the language and lack of privacy of impoverished people make them less human than the well fed and well educated? Do taboos exist for other, perhaps less valid reasons? Is Steiner saying no more than that writing by insensitive, greedy writers is bad art? His argument that

pornography using the four-letter words and explicit anatomical detail is bad because it denies us the use of our imagination can be extended to all bad art. Art that appeals to neither the intellect nor the imagination doesn't survive long, simply because it doesn't appeal to critics and teachers like Steiner who preserve the intrinsically worthwhile. Should we give much thought to trash?

Abraham Kaplan agrees with Steiner that art must leave opportunity for the imagination: "All art is essentially ambiguous, in the sense that the interpretation it calls for is an imaginative one. The object cannot be so fully specified as to leave no room in its reading for our own creative activity." He appears to differ from Steiner on "the dual vocabulary for sexual subject matter." It is "a device to preserve the conventions." Advocates of censorship fear that the masses will lose control of their impulses if generally accepted standards of sexual behavior (apparently including the verbal taboos) are openly flouted. In a convincing analysis of obscenity into several types, Kaplan sees some as essential to art, for the artist is always, to some degree, at odds with the mores of society. But "the obscenity of the perverse" (e.g., de Sade) and "the pornography of violence" are excluded from art.

Social scientists have attempted to get definitive answers to questions about the effects of pornography, but their approaches and findings are dismissed effectively by Rist and James Q. Wilson. The reports of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence and the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (parts of these reports are included) are judged to be vague, inconclusive, and contradictory of each other. Wilson, one of the most respected writers on criminology, is very critical of the methods of sociologists. The experiments and data on the effects of "media" violence and pornography are too limited to have any validity. In a complex society there are too many variables to conduct studies of specific social influences.

Wilson recognizes that a moral problem exists and presents it as a personal dilemma: "I . . . do not want my children to be exposed to sex by way of easily available materials that portray what should be tender and private as base and brutal. I further confess to

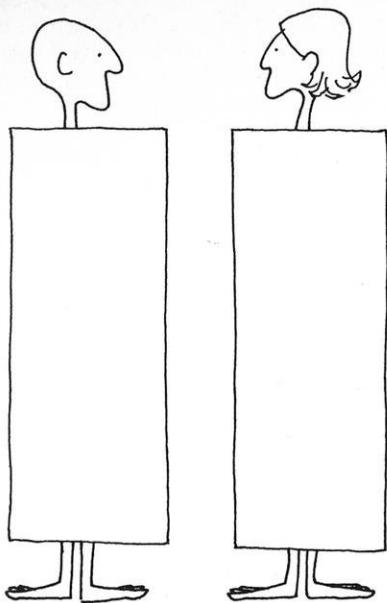


The Kiss by Constantin Brancusi, stone, 1908. Courtesy: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

being quite uncertain as to what forms of legal restraint, if any, this requires."

Kaplan and Wilson see "violence" as a closely related problem. Wilson doubts that there is a solution to this, and he's right. Even if some socially harmful effects of TV violence are demonstrable is this justification for censorship? We don't ban a number of activities that have obviously harmful effects, simply because there isn't enough public support for suppression of them.

The advocates of censorship of pornography and "violence" often exhibit strange values and inconsistencies. Being killed by a machine gun in an alley seems to some more violent than being done in with a musket. Some of the most realistic scenes of violence I have seen on TV are in "The Battle of Culloden," a highly praised BBC documentary. The killing was done with musket, smooth-bore cannon, bayonet, and claymore. The documentary lacked the "educational" value of police and detective series—the bad (arrogant, brutal) guys won. No one, to my knowledge, has condemned "The Battle of Culloden" for showing unnecessary violence.



Critics of pornography are often equally selective or narrow-visioned. Would-be censors of some films that "arouse lust" are not at all bothered by others that are erotic but exhibit neither breasts nor balls. Times have changed little since Shaw wrote in indignation that *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was banned for its honesty while erotic trash was performed without restriction.

In reality, the controversy is over. The word just hasn't gotten around yet. Wilson's children may have read "The Big Space Fuck" by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and other stories in Harlan Ellison's anthology *Again, Dangerous Visions*. (They can look up *fuck* in *The American Heritage Dictionary*.) Actually these stories are anti-pornography in spirit, despite some brutal sex and violence, but any censor basing his judgment on "community values" would be obligated to ban them, for in language and attitude they are openly in opposition to conventional standards. And any law that made a distinction between art and trash would have to depend for enforcement on incompetents who would be puzzled by Ellison's visions. Those most likely to have any competency would certainly deny having it.

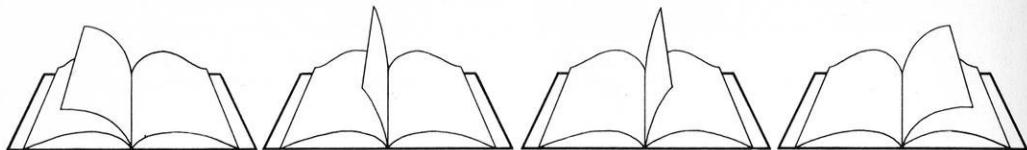
The most interesting question is barely touched: why is there controversy? Kaplan has something to say on this, but Yeats answered long ago in the *Crazy Jane* poems. Jane's adversary is the Bishop, who exhorts her to "Live in a heavenly mansion,/ Not in some foul sty." "Fair and foul are near of kin," answers Jane, and later adds the lines reprinted above.

Four-letter words and anatomical detail remind us where Love's mansion is. We want love/sex to be more than animal coupling; thus euphemisms. Hard-core pornography, with or without four-letter words, is offensive to both serious artists and critics on the one hand and the narrow-minded and ignorant on the other because it presents humans as if they were animals. The difference is that artists want to see the realities of life—and beyond them—and the fearful don't even want to see the realities. And when the fearful see reality in great art, they want to tear that down too.

It would be nice if we could make all bad art (and dirt, death, and disease) vanish by decree. But bad taste cannot be defined by law. Most of us, I suppose, agree with Xaviera about clean sex, but she didn't have to say it that way. We want life without the unpleasantness, but what is most pleasing is inextricably linked with the unpleasant, both in love and art.

The battle for frank treatment of sex begun by Joyce, Shaw, Lawrence, and others has been won, at least in most of this country. Should we complain if Ms. Hollander with her non-art profits from the victory? And there will remain the fearful who cannot admit defeat. Why can't we ignore them and recognize that the trash is no threat? Perhaps this book will help us do that. □

# The Suicide Trip or Survival of New Humanism



by Ruth Lisa Schechter

*Author of four collections of poetry; recently Offshore (1974). She is a 1975 prizewinner of the Cecil Hemley Award, Poetry Society of America. A consultant poetry therapist, she works on the staff of Odyssey House, N.Y.C., a rehabilitation agency for drug abuse.*

Schwartz, Barry, *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change*. New York: Praeger, 1974, paperback/\$6.95; hardcover/\$13.50.

A freshness of vision and awareness pervades this book by a profound observer, Barry Schwartz, who expands *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change* to a movement of no borderlines. The new Humanism reaches deeply into every discipline of the arts by probing our basic attitudes, values and acquired notions of seeing, believing and feeling. Schwartz raises unpopular and provocative questions about the higher incentives of men and women, similar to a prefatory note by Paul Tillich in Peter Selz's *New Images of Man*, published in the late fifties. Schwartz goes further for the seventies and ahead. Works of art counterpoint the text of *The New Humanism* to mirror our predicament.

Traditional painters claim to capture the "real" person, much as traditional photographers might do. At best, their schematic selections on canvas, remain the painter's decision relative to his truth, his talents and drives at a particular time. However, most modern artists seem to loathe living forms or forms of living things. Is this due to the artist's personal and unresolved conflicts or is it his rebellion with the exuberant forms of man, animal and plants that throb with life?

The need remains for that exquisite magical force which marks the difference between a minor or major work. This creative lightning may have something to do with the artist's ability to transcend a painting to dimensions of wider universality.

Budding scientists went to Holland, pitched their tents on the island of Texel. One was Julian Huxley, a world figure in biology; the other, Ashley Montague entering anthropology in a changing world. What has this to do with Schwartz's *The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change*? Almost everything. All share a pioneering "third eye" fixed on the behaviorism of the human arena, interpreting their particular territory in visions of change for the self and the other, open-ended and stripped of dogma. Schwartz comments honestly when he states, ". . . the absence of ideology in Humanist art does not imply any diminution of the demand for social change, and the validity of such art strives to be a cultural force."

The eighteenth century Keatsian myth of "truth is beauty/beauty is truth/that is all ye need on earth and need to know" continues to nourish and support our socially acceptable and comfortable concepts of art. The intellectual clinging to eighteenth-century romanticism has served to erect walls against social change in the arts. We tend to avoid what is ugly and real, since it is a truth we prefer not to confront, though acts of social barbarism are daily reminders in twentieth-century society. This ostrich pose buries us eventually. An escapist society needs its tranquilizers to support abstract philosophical crutches. We are pressured into priorities of entertainment, self-indulgence and the pleasure bond. We remain forever wistful children, flying in a Peter Pan world where "truth is

beauty/beauty is truth." In this way, the truth and beauty of old age, pain, loss need not be met and we are comforted with our perennial thumbs in the mouth, sucked by adults who remain addicted to the past. Where then is the validity or the aesthetics of Warhol's exaggerated can of tomato soup, now overflowing many current galleries and museums? Is this the suicide trip or survival of Humanism in the arts? Conspicuous by its absence, in some frightening and disturbing, forceful Humanist art is Miro's humor and gaiety, as well as Golub's heroic gestures and sensuous truth of fragmented forms. Yet, illusions, doubts, dreams, humor are an integral part of being human, its truth and reality. Perhaps this human essence (present even in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising) plus more aesthetics are the "missing links" in the new Humanism that Schwartz urges so energetically.

In Schwartz's fine chapter, "The Realization of the Humanist Intention," Fauerbach states, ". . . the subject of my work is a life style that gets worse as it gets better." This sounds like a familiar proverb, i.e., "it will get better because it can't get any worse," much like a rising thermometer registering fever. Fauerbach's environment is increasingly dehumanized as it becomes increasingly man-made. The figures of Tooker are bound in a conspiracy of silence in *The Ward*—portraying a hospital decorated with American flags. Tooker creates wax-like figures of the sick who are emotionless and lifeless. Tooker seems to provide that magical "missing link." His craft and sense of aesthetics adds power as it does to any form of art. Schwartz notes throughout his book the need for hopeful vision, the task of Humanist art to further transcend and create art that communicates life, its passions as well as death. Some artists in this book have been able to transcend their personal anger and alienation, such as Golub, Tooker, and Maryan. The talent and craft of the artist is still at stake, no matter how honorable and worthy the theme or message.

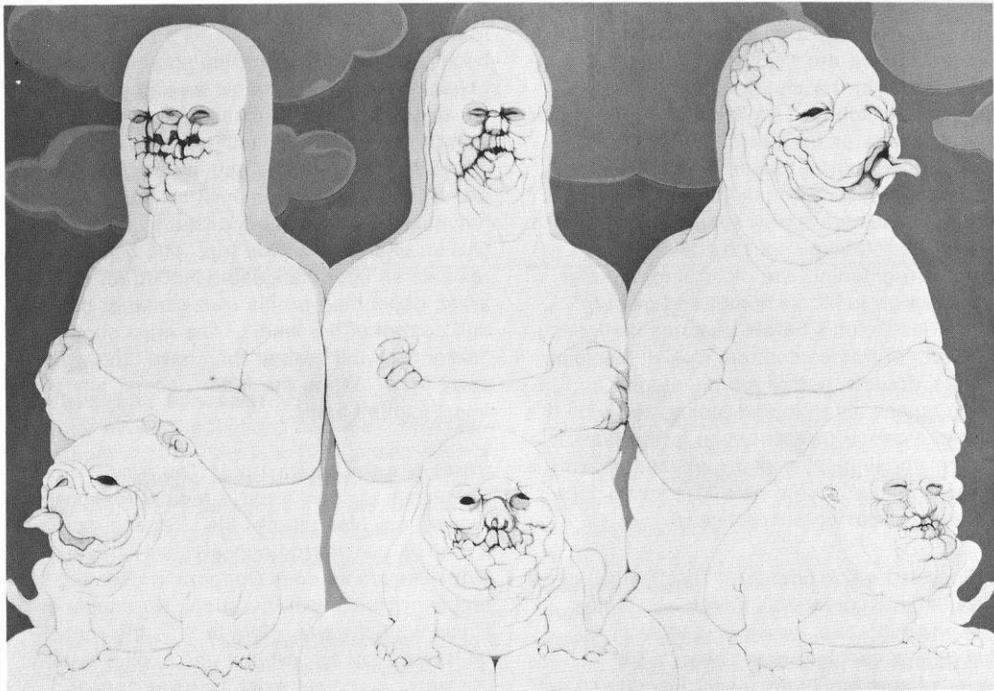
Shall art be a tranquilizer, a pleasing decoration, safe, comfortable, or shall it stir up our wildest disorders, daydreams and hopes? The choices remain, threatening but open in the universal cycle of each one's needs at a particular time and place of life and love, hopefully growing and changing. O'Neil's *Long Day's Journey into Night* still evokes

time "off the dial" in a heroic drama of truth in one family. It never fails as a major work because of its creative force and humanistic impact. Perhaps the magic emerges from a sense of compassion, combines with the artist's willingness to "tell" plus inventive talent that insures the lightning of enduring art. Such magic in Humanist art has always heightened survival as opposed to the disintegration of a solo suicide trip. The balance remains an interchangeable mobile for each artist, depending on his own sense of balance and control of the media. The artist should "carry the wind" rather than have "the wind carry him." When the latter occurs, any work of art can fall apart.

*Death of a Car* by Bayrak in *The New Humanism* is considered a radical response to present day slaughter of life. Yet one day it may be considered conservative. Bayrak strips illusion as does Gongora, presenting his reality or Humanism-in-Action. No doubts or illusions. Schwartz refers to ". . . the Humanist intention of art, evident and explicit within the work . . . colors exist, textures appeal, forms are vigorous and disturbing. . . ." It may be that because of our society's reverence for death, rather than its life and energy, we will require endless schools of postmortem experts, ad infinitum, similar to *Finnegan's Wake* for Joyce's *Ulysses*, to provide various keys for opening doors we have slammed against expanding knowledge and understanding to its highest potential.

Although we are the inheritors of a magnificent past in all art disciplines, the contemporary artist has a responsibility to express his century, rather than redo all that has been done so well. Obviously, neither Keats nor Rembrandt were able to witness today's debris and disaster in the southeast Bronx, nor the plight of people in Harlem, Vietnam or Appalachia. How does "truth is beauty/beauty is truth" apply to super jets, nuclear energy, bombs in Hiroshima, TV's instant message of seduction, the birth control pill revolution, the cardiac pacemaker and heart transplants—to name but a few changes. Have Orwell's prophesies come to pass? Hardly beautiful, but evident and true is that we are Hell bent to destroy whatever flies, walks or swims, including forests and rare species of animals.

Today's vital artists have no romantic view of living in an ivory tower. They are unafraid



*Metamorphosis* by May Stevens, acrylic on canvas, 1973. Courtesy of the artist.

to make a commitment about portraying the society, because they are in fact an integral part of this society. The province of art still remains the world, open for the artist to see and render as he wishes, with options to grow and develop personal awareness and talents further.

Pirendello's plays chart our backward and forward drives in repetitive patterns that see-saw, probing truth and aesthetics in the art of theater, not too different from the visual arts or our lives. No sugar icing sweetens Pirendello's themes, similar to Francis Bacon's journey of our screams and endless self-portraits, unconcerned with whether "truth is beauty/beauty is truth" (valid for Keats in his century). Is this still valid for us in a rapidly changing society? From what reference is each person seeing and hearing and for what group? Possibly we need to know more about where we choose to place ourselves and in what time, on or off the dial. Is Humanism getting across in the vital communication to be shared? Is the new Humanism the same as the old Humanism? What happened to aesthetics, humor, compassion, as well as 'shock, distortion and disturbance? Perhaps what we seek is even more encompassing

along the miles and miles of promises to keep, but it is important that one step or leap be taken, however risky and upsetting to the status-quo attitudes which prevail.

My view of Humanist art in some ways coincides with that of the contemporary American sculptor, Gardner Locke, whose work is in several permanent locations in New York City and in many current private collections. Upon reading *The New Humanism* by Schwartz, he comments:

*The bureaucrats and critics who promote "the contemporary art" and in particular the New York School will suffer by Schwartz's book, because he and the new Humanist artists show the significance and inevitable importance of the subjective and intuitive nature of art and its inherent human aesthetics. This consequently shadows the objective and intellectual art promoted by the artificial hierarchy of the critic-media game . . ."*

Humanistic art in Schwartz's brilliant and perceptive analysis is not endeavoring to "please or pacify." At most times, women are depicted as despiritualized and monstrous in



*Two Figures* by Richard Karwosky, oil, 1971. Courtesy of the artist.

the profuse photographs of paintings by Gil-lespie, Pearlstein, Conger, Segal, Sparaks, Gongora, Williams, Cortor, Borge, Sherrod, among others. In other paintings, man is distorted, fragmented and depleted. Sherrod's view of women is close to death and defeat. His women appear totally raped. Is this Sherrod's response to his own alienation and personal terror, or possibly what Western society does to men and women who yield to barbarism? Sherrod does not clarify his night-marish view. He gives us a limited glimpse, half the horror along the way. Where is Madame Curie? Where is Sojourner Truth? Where is Isadora Duncan? Where is Emily Dickinson? Where are today's spirited and creative women?

After one sees Marisol, it is difficult to slip back into routine thinking. In the school of absurdist, she accomplishes what is unmistakable. In *The Party*, a gathering of friends as Schwartz says well in Auden's terms, become "unknown citizens," clothes in boxes that hide their bodies, their faces are masks. A poem from my book, "Near the Wall of Lion Shadows," responds to her work as I felt it then:

#### THE COLLECTION

"... the people you dream are already in yourself."

—Marisol

*Are they out of me, out of you?*

*captured  
beyond ceilings of limited space  
these men and women  
wear the readymade things of  
our lives. Aware of their pearls  
and brocade, haunted, hoping  
for more. Siamese bodies, all  
with one face, not laughing, not  
trembling.*

*Do they know they are joined?*

*leaning toward us  
on crutches of papier mache  
like stuffed Eagles, dazed in  
barbiturate dreams. Mirror-  
positioned in world's place, no heart  
skips a beat playing  
charades.*

*Have they left names we do not know?*

*In night-rooms of flower pots  
anonymous hosts offer  
small canapés. Under switched on  
chandeliers, the unkissed mouths  
withdraw as secrets do  
in lines of the palm. Now,  
watchful, acting out some old  
atonement, one by one rise  
as from the embalmer's table  
plastic painted eyes brimming  
to startle what we thought  
we knew.*

Fair or not, contemporary artists are usually ignored until they are dead, a long time dead. Plaudits resound more usually for the artist after death—a kind of Kaddish. This applies to many disciplines of the arts and mirrors the response of a necrophiliac society. The Humanist values the live, energetic artist, showing us new visions in struggles for truth, free of manipulation. The cost is enormous to the artist who dares be inventive ahead of his time, rather than hold on to what is familiar and socially acceptable. This is the story of Cézanne and numerous others considered revolutionary in their time.

The existential dimensions in Schwartz's book are impossible to read as "instant message." It requires the reader to immerse totally and return frequently—to grow with it. *The New Humanism* explores our emotional anatomy and cerebral journeys towards possibility of change in a changing society. It speaks out to every discipline of the arts, including our basic values and attitudes towards living. Questions are raised to stir our beings, our humanness and search for becoming more human, in order to expand further energetic potential and awareness.

Over 150 photographs of works by contemporary artists, over 150 brief biographies of visual artists in our time, notes and bibliography, document this extremely well-written book.

*The New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change* by Barry Schwartz is a pioneering work for sure, as well as a sane and passionate feast into past, present and future ideas, guaranteed to keep us awake for all time. □

# Poetry

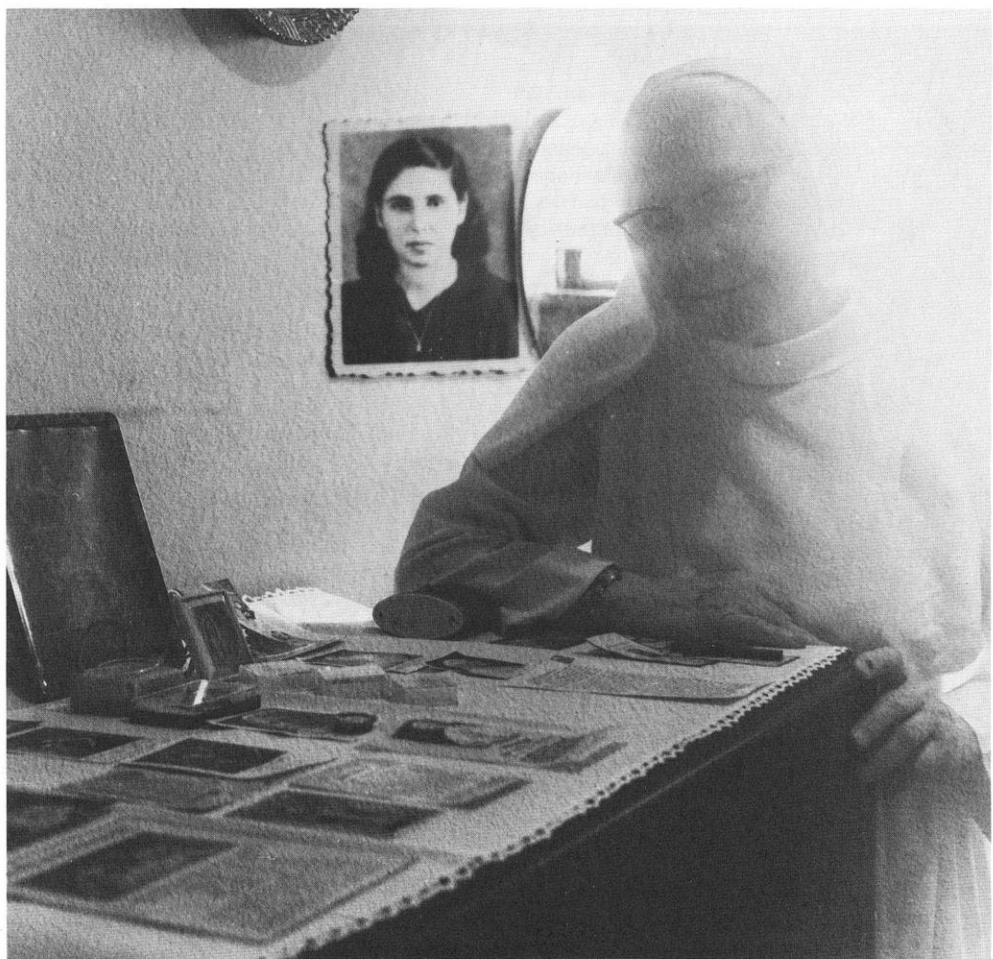
## Note to Readers:

*We regret to inform our readers that, due to the current economic situation and the need to curtail costs, we will be discontinuing the poetry section after this issue.*

*We would like to take this opportunity to thank Felix Pollak for his valuable services as poetry editor.*



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*Sr. Richilde Remembers* by Karlyn Cauley, photo, 1975. Courtesy of the artist.

### TEA LEAVES

In this time of the falling of leaves  
I have heard, sad-eyed, the stem  
breaking off from the tree —  
the quick snap  
and the short drop down.  
I have sat on my porch and heard this.  
I have thought of wars sprouting and  
men turning red like the leaves.  
I have pictured green forests where snakes  
lie in wait for my children,  
women at windows with spit in their eyes.

I make tea for myself,  
and I think of these things  
for I have been guilty of a grave mistake,  
obsessed not with leaves dying but me,  
watching them die.

And I cannot stop myself.

*Frances Kerr is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This is her first published poem.*

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

*After the portrait*  
by Armand Thibault de Navarre

Her gown today is chicory  
(there is no bluer blue)  
with moss feel,  
settled wing swish,  
teasing the after-  
noon's dusty honeylight,  
red garden roses,  
volumes of maybe Mather,  
Sterne, Voltaire, neighboring  
the small-scale figure  
with his prayerwheel,  
fine old wine contentment.  
She rests her hands beside them,  
moonflower pale,  
light as mussel shell.  
Laureate of the word,  
she is serene today,  
her smile a thinned remembrance,  
the fair high brow  
touching our dream alive:  
how the mind can wade,  
swim, surf, dive,  
deal with the day and night's fall,  
the twists and turns of man,  
his deep splits,  
and all our loving.  
Love is the word made  
flesh and blood in her world  
timed in ours.  
Under the silver hair  
those eyes are a forest dark  
with tricks and dodges,  
shielding, reflecting  
the fizz and flash of her mind:  
they take our dream onward,  
praise utter light  
on the fine edge of things.

*Father Roseliep is well known to our  
readers as a poet and reviewer.*

**IN THE PIT**

In the pit  
in the deep dark of the earth  
where there is no light  
where even the wind whispers  
and only the oldest stones  
dare to speak  
blind worms  
move slowly over the bones  
and create  
with their intricate embroidery  
a moving tapestry  
the model of a mind  
articulately arranged

*William Virgil Davis teaches Creative Writing at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. His poems have appeared in Poetry, Poetry Northwest, The Nation and other magazines, and he has recently begun to write fiction.*

**POETS**

Nothing is wasted.  
Like chefs in wartime  
we press the skin  
we strain the bones  
we hollow the marrow  
we conserve the juices.  
The dish  
if not delectable  
makes do.  
We urge survival.

*Eleanor Rackow of La Jolla, California,  
is primarily a novelist. This is her first  
published poem.*

THE BELLED CAT

The killdeer clears the pasture fence unkilled  
to feign a broken still unbroken wing  
tomorrow. So did the sparrow yesterday,  
so did the owl who lit too near the eaves.  
Watching the given moment going wrong,  
I am inclined to tell my clappered cat  
he hasn't really lost his lethal touch.  
The low threading through alfalfa and his high  
helix after all that made him fly  
were all good moves, extravagantly true.  
Still, he was too good at what he did and did  
too often. His trophic feathers on my porch  
were both my pride and my embarrassment,  
like letting loose some raw truth finely put  
at a party. So finally I hung  
a warning on his neck against his nature.  
I'm half sorry when I hear him coming,  
other times I want to borrow his bell.

*Charles D. Wright is a professor at Boise State University, Idaho. His poems have appeared in Harper's Magazine, Saturday Review, etc., and his first book was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1968.*

## HERITAGE

In dark tenements  
shone my icon;  
in mist and shadow  
I found my song.

Now another sky  
is bluing my window.  
I lost my voice  
on wide boulevards.

\*

Once I was a priest, a neighbor.  
Now my bowl is full  
and so is my wine-glass.  
I forgot how it was

to be one of many  
driven by dusty breath  
into a crossfire  
of rails and wires.

I forgot creaking stairs,  
the broken chair,  
the empty pantry, the silence  
of small shops.

\*

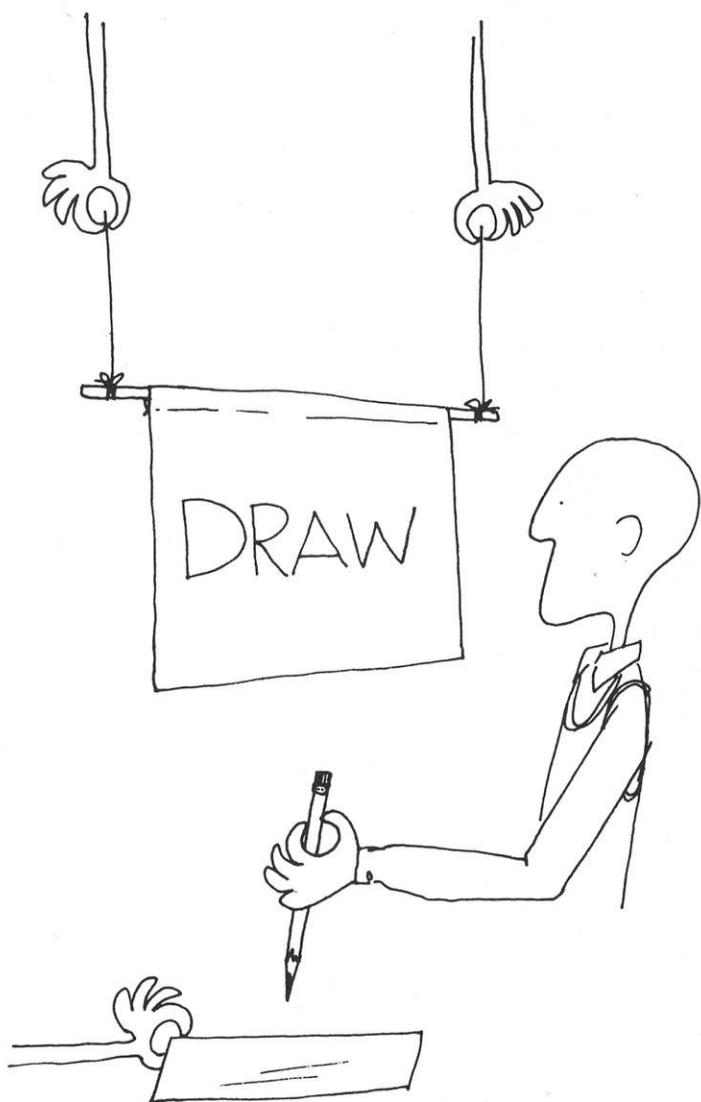
Now I'm not a neighbor  
and I'm not a priest.  
My house is large  
and my larder fat.

I want to return  
to my shining icon;  
but my head sprouts frost  
and my feet are anchors.

\*

The words I speak  
are pale sparks  
from the stone pit  
of a crumbling hearth.

*William Pillin's work was last seen by our readers in The Arts in a Post-Industrial Society issue. His name has become an integral part of American little-magazine history.*



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