



## **Arts in society: the arts and the human environment. Volume 8, Issue 2 1971**

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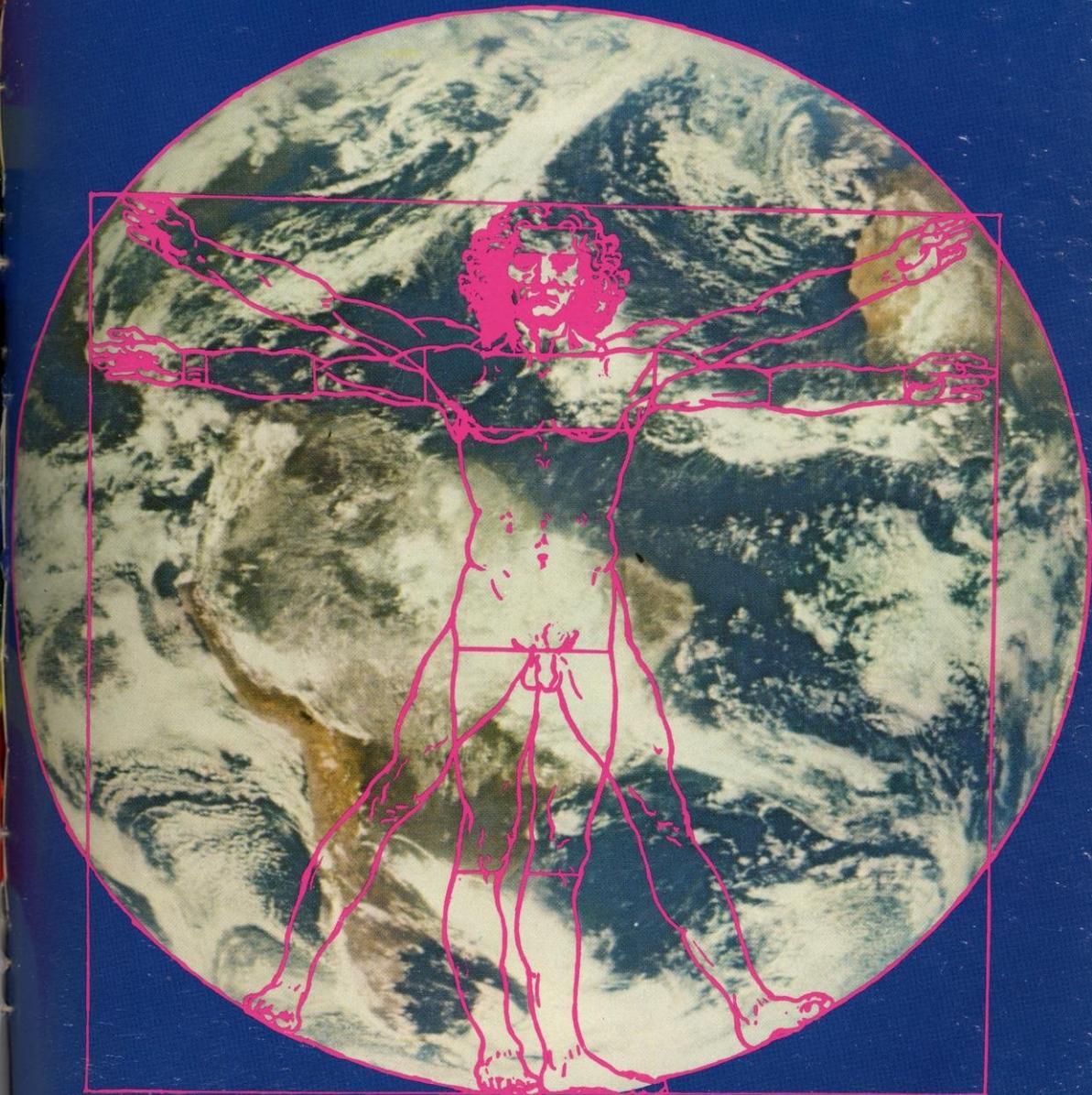
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arts in society

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ARTS IN SOCIETY is dedicated to the augmenting of the arts in society and to the advancement of education in the arts. These publications are to be of interest, therefore, both to professionals and the lay public. ARTS IN SOCIETY exists to discuss, interpret, and illustrate the various functions of the arts in contemporary civilization. Its purpose is to present the insights of experience, research and theory in support of educational and organizational efforts to enhance the position of the arts in America. In general, four areas are dealt with: the teaching and learning of the arts; aesthetics and philosophy; social analysis; and significant examples of creative expression in a medium which may be served by the printing process.

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The editors will welcome articles on any subjects which fall within the areas of interest of this journal. Readers both in the United States and abroad are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration for publication. Articles may be written in the contributor's native language. An honorarium will be paid for papers accepted for publication.

**Manuscripts** should be sent to: Edward Kamarck, Editor, ARTS IN SOCIETY, University Extension, The University of Wisconsin, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, Wisconsin, 53703. Address review copies of books, recordings, tapes and films to the same address.

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## JOTTINGS FROM THE DIARY OF A CONFERENCE HABITUE

**Conference:** The Arts and the Human Environment

**Where Held:** Pennsylvania State University

**When:** In bleak mid-November, 1970

### Random Comments?

- Plaudits to Dean Walters and staff for a well-run conference on the arts. Would that more arts educators were similarly challenged to a responsive leadership role in society!
- The youth panel was a terrific idea. While they didn't quite run away with the meeting, as some of the enthusiasts claimed, they did offer a remarkably clear-eyed view. Reminded us that the seemingly ingenuous, large questions are precisely the ones that needed to be asked.
- Seems apparent that every conference from now on will be challenged by the vexing problem of describing the social role of the artist. Definition inhibited here as elsewhere by scare labels. "Political art" was one. Everybody agrees that the artist must at all costs abjure *naive politization* — the subverting of creativity to the programmatic ends of dogma. Doesn't this very hazard imply the need for more rather than less immersion in the social realities of our time? In an important sense, shouldn't all good art be considered political?
- An issue which surfaced strongly is the concern to make art difficult again as a mode of vision, to affirm the value of parameters amidst the seeming chaos wrecked by the neo-dadaists. By all means let us now reconsider tradition, but without forgetting that revolutions are waged for a reason. The arts needed to be desanctified.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Conference?

- Word "environment" was Conference's chief strength and simultaneously its chief stumbling block. *Strength* because of the intensity of its current emotive power; *stumbling block* because its association with a pressing group of particular problem areas (pollution of our air, defilement of our waters, and the degradation of our cities) made some assume that what the meeting was about was problem-solving; namely, how the arts and artists could be redirected to effect what legions of ecologists, planners, and public officials have been unable to accomplish. As fatuous as that may sound when baldly stated, it nevertheless supplied generative heat for several oracular polemics.

## **Any Very Important Contributions?**

- Yes, the enlargement of the concept of *environment* to the concept of *human environment*. While the latter didn't quite "take" as far as many of the conferees were concerned (new definitions require a long time to jell), I feel an excellent beginning has been made in asserting its sense. As the Conference brochure states, in the meeting's context *human environment* included ". . . all the inter-dependent factors — physical, social, cultural — which constitute the fabric of today's life." Important to note that this offers a far more valid vision of environment than the usual technological one, which would have us focus only on fragmented crises, ignoring not only the pertinent interlinkages but their larger human dimension.
- The human dimension of the environmental crisis is total, of one piece, deeply penetrative into all areas of life. It encompasses not only the dramatic examples of despoilment of our physical universe, but also war, social revolution, political betrayal, racism, community disorganization, crime, poverty, drugs, corruption, blunted hope, despair. And all of these are the matrix of the arts.

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## **Any Large Rhetorical Questions That Should Be Recorded**

### **(Along with Answers)?**

- *Do the arts offer the possibility of furnishing a quick ready-made solution to the environmental problems?* Heavens, no!!
- *What do they offer, then?* Very little as regards the act of problem-solving. They do, however, most notably have the capacity of ultimately affecting the *quality* of the thinking itself — as an eloquent counter-challenge to the one dimensional certitudes of technological ego. And that's a great deal.

## **Premise, if Any, of the Conference Planners?**

- That it is imperative that the arts function well today, because how else but through the arts can we ever envisage the possibility of molding whole men, of asserting pervasively in society those values of humanism, from which all problem-solving must proceed.

## **The Conference Mission?**

- To state as eloquently as possible the case for moving the arts to a position of centrality in society—not simply for their own ends, but also for man's ends.

## **Was It, then, Worth All the Effort?**

- Definitely! One of the prime problems of America's culture is the isolation of art from the major intellectual and social realities of our time. We urgently require conferences of all sorts, and the more ambitious the charge the better!

# editorial comment

## WHY, WHERE, WHAT, AND AGAIN

The obvious is frequently the most difficult to attain. The most visible can often be the most difficult to see. We often don't hear what we *always* hear. We are engulfed by an arts-environment, but what is our awareness of it? What will we do about the reality of it when we are so taken with its parts?

The idea was so old it is new. The simplest fact, historically and presently, is the most difficult to establish in the American consciousness today: The arts are essential in a good society. On this simple premise, planning began on a conference which would be one of discovery and inquiry involving the mix of all the arts into a combination that is virtually ignored, and we called it "A National Conference on the Arts and the Human Environment." It was held November 15-18, 1970, at The Pennsylvania State University under some prestigious sponsorship.\* The planning and the Conference itself represented only two thirds of the project. What you will read in this issue of *Arts in Society* is really the completion of the Conference, because we have now converted the material from the aural presentation for those who were here to the printed form for many, to provide further contemplation and inquiry into this serious issue of the arts and our human environment. We draw no conclusions. We present what we discovered.

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The main Conference sessions covered two days and two basic concepts. The first day dealt with the arts as perceivers and mirrors. The second day dealt with the arts as agents of action and change. Before the sessions began, Michael Straight presented a challenge for total concern, and following the last session, John Hightower presented a charge to regard the arts as environmental imperatives.

We attempted to combine the environmental, visual, and performing arts in a manner not hitherto attempted in such a Conference in an effort to build toward a point of view of the arts that might rise above one's own professional focus, or bias, as the case may be. It proved to be the most unique and troublesome feature, but since life consists of this mix, it was valid.

Individual sessions centered on pre-selected topics and issues and not on specific art forms themselves. Artists, laymen, government officials, critics, architects, city and regional planners, writers, educators, and others (see page 588 for a complete list of participants) were mixed in a format of speakers and panelists to provide a range of opinion. Each session involved a speaker who was asked to address himself to a specific issue. His prepared paper was mailed to the panelists who then prepared remarks based on the paper and concerning the issue. A student panel, using the same format, was selected for one session, but given no specific issue except the freedom to address themselves to youth/arts/environment. Registrants to the Conference were expected to provide an exchange with the speakers and panelists following each presentation, and a portion of the Conference consisted of dialogue sessions with interest groups of the registrants' choice.

\*Conducted by the College of Arts and Architecture of The Pennsylvania State University, it was co-sponsored by The National Endowment for the Arts; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; and the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies, The Pennsylvania State University.

If we learned anything from the Conference, we learned that discovery is not sufficient because it whets the appetite. Post Conference reaction from participants and others has betokened an assumption and a desire that there should be a follow-through in 1971. To this possible end, we regard the 1970 Conference as a firm base and as a point of departure. We hope it will come to be regarded with all its strengths and weaknesses as the point of initial reference, where a national concern began to emerge clearly. We feel the topic and the timing were right.

Will there be another conference? It is the most frequently asked question and request. With the publication of the Conference material, we will undertake a study of this matter of follow-through. The scale, with regard to the arts in environmental concerns, is so difficult to comprehend. We feel we should work toward some clarification, if not answers, and we are studying the possibility of a conference which may attempt to offer focus and direction.

Walter H. Walters, Dean  
College of Arts and Architecture  
The Pennsylvania State University



# the arts: the time for total environmental concern

**Michael Straight**

*Deputy Chairman,*

*The National Endowment for the Arts.*

Samuel Palmer, as a young man, was overcome by the immensity of the task he had set himself: the creation of a great work of art. In his anguish, he sought the advice of his friend and master, William Blake. And, for Blake, the answer was easy. "You have only to work up imagination to the state of vision, and the thing is done."

"Talent thinks, genius sees . . ." For the rest of us, "relating the arts to a comprehensive vision of environment and the quality of man's life" — the answer is not so easy. The setting is complex, our imaginations are limited. Given our disabilities, we can perhaps begin by agreeing on two points of departure: the meaningful vision is that which is attainable; the useful discussion is that which leads to action directed towards the attainable end.

We are familiar with, and need not belabor, the facts concerning the destruction of our rivers and lakes, our forests and swamps, our wildlife and our landmarks, our heritage. We accept, and need not reconsider the general conviction that, in our preoccupation with the residual conflicts of the Cold War, we are failing to come to grips with the central and critical issue of our age: the impact of an exploding population upon the world's limited resources. We remember that as a nation, we have ridiculed the religious fanatics who, from time to time, gather to pray on mountain tops, in the belief that the world is about to come to

an end. We note that as a nation we have acted in the same spirit if not with the same dignity, in squandering our limited and irreplaceable resources. Even the presidential commissions, charged with determining future policies, have assumed that our responsibilities to future generations come to an end in the year 1999.

Let me mention one more conviction which, I believe, can serve as a starting point. We see the heightened concern, particularly among young citizens for our deteriorating environment. We see the response, in industry, in agriculture, in local and state and national government, to that concern. The air in our cities is being polluted by certain manufacturers — other manufacturers promise to filter it out in their new air conditioners. Automobiles cause sixty percent of urban pollution; those responsible, the manufacturers of automobiles, promise under pressure to install better mufflers on their 1975 models. The manufacturers of D.D.T. have poisoned all forms of life with their product; they will switch from D.D.T. to parathion, and from parathion to some other formula, as the deadly effect of each new product is exposed. And — for the present — the silent majority is content. We listen to the arguments, and participate in them; we agree that each new threat to our environment must be countered with a precise and specific remedy. At the same time, we maintain that the argument is sterile, the cause lost, if we limit ourselves to specific rem-

edies for specific threats. We hold that, at heart, neither the problem nor the solution is technological. We maintain that technology alone will not resolve the problems which technology creates. We look instead to the emergence of a general will, which employs technology in the interests of its own defined purposes. We believe that the answer, if there is one, lies in the development of a new sensibility in man.

We must concern ourselves with many aspects of this sensibility. From where does it come, and how is it transmitted? How is it to be stimulated, as it gains in definition and in assertiveness? How is it to be sustained, in the presence of circumstances so overpowering in their assaults upon the senses? How is it to be given the organized, disciplined, continuous expression that our survival demands? What is the role of the arts in alerting us to our dangers; the place of the arts in learning, and in urban planning; the changing appeal of the arts to the young. What do we mean now, when we speak of "the arts?" If for example, a man throws a pail of green sand on a yellow rug, is that a work of art? If so, in what way does it contribute to the immense and urgent problems which we face? Our

critics, and many who think of themselves as artists, have carried the boundaries of art far out beyond the traditional boundaries set by discipline, by skill, and by conscious intent. Do definable boundaries exist now between art and non-art? If not, is there not a danger, that within the limitless expanse of all human action, art will lose its seriousness, its vitality, its capacity to fulfill the role of relating to the quality of life? I ask this in all humility, confessing my concern and confusion on this point. I have assumed, perhaps wrongly, that sensibility was related to beauty and beauty to order; that the purpose of art was to create order out of chaos. As one wholly committed to the service of the artist, I am baffled at times to know, when content is eliminated from the work of art and form itself is then erased, what of significance remains.

These are questions which I hope our critics may consider. I limit myself to the new sensibility which, I believe, we need and which is already so well implanted in young Americans. It means a heightened awareness of the senses, a sharpened perception, a conscious if intuitive knowledge of order and of scale, and in consequence of all these, a conviction as to what makes the beautiful beautiful, and

A drawing by A. V. Bunin  
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by Edmund N. Bacon, The Viking Press



the ugly, ugly. Every art form contributes to this sensibility. But, since our responses to the environment are primarily visual, we may find that it is in the visual arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, and landscape design, and in their relation to the environmental planning of the future, that our concern centers.

## II

The arts today stand at the margin of society. We seek to help them, as they work their way back. Since imagination is limited, we can, it seems to me, look for models in past centuries, when, because art was central, the arts and society flourished. One such model, for me, would be Siena, as it was six hundred years ago.

In 1308, the Chapter of the Siena Cathedral, commissioned Duccio to paint the Madonna in Maesta. The contract, a model, provided the painter with all that he required, so that, as it stated, he had "only to supply his presence and the labor of his hands."

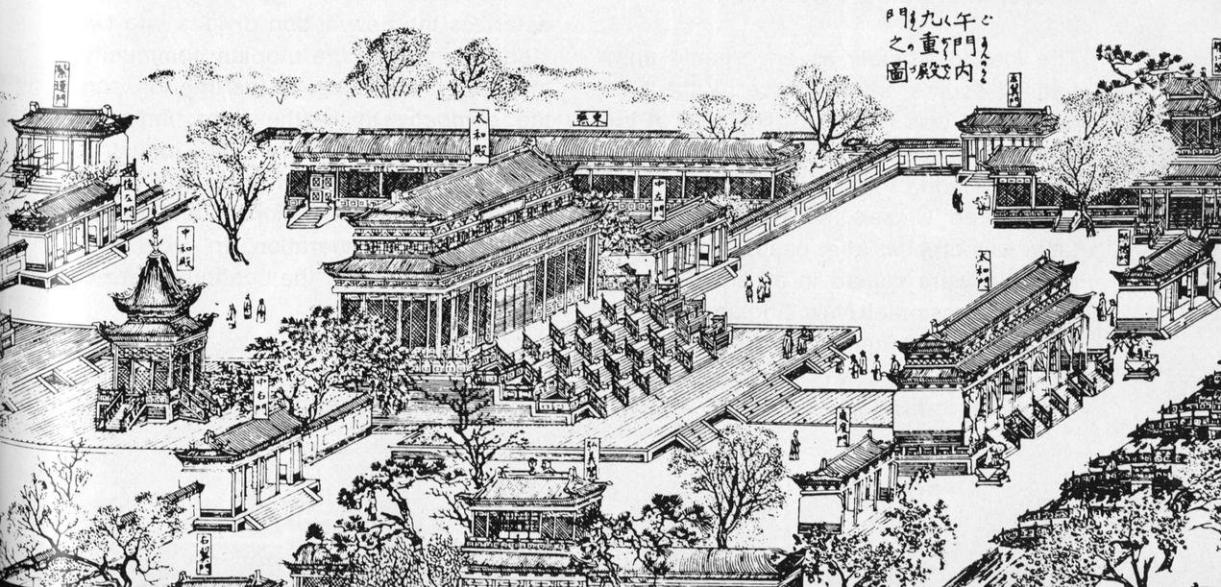
Three years later, the panels were completed. A contemporary document describes the day of celebration that was proclaimed.

*On the day, June 9, 1311, when the Maesta was brought to the Duomo, all shops were closed, and the Bishop ordained that there should be a great procession in which a goodly number of priests and holy brothers were to join, accompanied by the Nine, the notables of the Commune, and the people of Siena. And, sure enough, all the townsfolk flocked together to the Maesta, and, lining up, marched in good order around the Campo, as the custom is. The bells rang out a festal peal to welcome this most notable altar-piece, made by Duccio di Niccolo, painter, plying his trade in the house of Muciatti . . .*

No one of course will suggest that we revert to the fourteenth century. But, there are elements in the model which serve as useful examples of the city of the future in which we might choose to live.

First, in Siena, in Duccio's time, art, architecture and urban design are unified in a single concept of what a city can and should be.

Second, in the city of his creation, the



artist is an accepted part of the social fabric. He is not an eccentric, kept by the state, or quarantined by society. In terms that would apply equally to a butcher, a tailor, a mason, he is identified as 'Duccio, painter, plying his trade.'

Third, in the days of the Commune, the city is a true community, one in which the Nine and the notables, the priests and the poor, march together in the procession. And, lastly, the event which brings them together is the commemoration of a work of art. In Duccio's city, the arts are not preserved in a small, peripheral, self-contained compartment. They are the principal means by which great men convey the great truths of their time, to the great majority of the people. And these truths, for all the overarching authority of the Church, are not to be measured solely in terms of doctrine. Duccio's panels, from the intimacy of the Nativity to the mystery of the Three Marys at the empty tomb, cover the great span of human emotion and experience. With good reason, Berenson calls Duccio, 'the Christian Sophocles.'

### III

Today, in contrast, our cities are formless; our artists are fragmented; our sense of community is eroded; art itself is no longer the means of conveying great truths to the great majority. If these are losses, where did we go wrong?

The idea of society as an organic unity had, of course, lost its force by the time our nation was founded. The role of the arts had diminished. But if, in Puritan New England, theatre and dance were held to be wicked, style was honored, taste was emphasized, beauty and craftsmanship were valued in all small things. The quintessential New Englander, John Adams, in his letter to his wife, set forth the ultimate objectives of the revolution in cultural terms.

The conscious will which formed the United States was formed in towns which were, in every sense, communities. The belief that these towns should be harmonious in form, should themselves be works of art, was as Carl Feis has noted, very much a part of the American tradition when this nation was founded. The French and Spanish settlers in Louisiana and Florida brought with them the convictions that had helped to shape Siena. In Savannah, General Oglethorpe established the Trustees Gardens as part of the planned settlements laid out in 1784. Virginia and Maryland selected seventy-seven sites for their prospective towns under their New Towne Acts, towns which in turn were to be built in accordance with well prepared designs. William Penn laid out, not only the city of Philadelphia, but the roads, the villages and settlements that were to surround it. New England towns were developed in obedience to a unifying style; so were the frontier settlements which New Englanders founded.

The 19th Century, in contrast, saw the forced separation of commerce and art. The man of the enlightenment, deriving pleasure from beauty in all its forms, gives way to the entrepreneur, shorn of aesthetic concerns. The artist moves to the margin of society, painting the beautiful portrait, designing the beautiful building, but playing little or no part in shaping the emerging patterns of city life. The planned, harmonious community that characterizes the new nation divides into two sterile extremes; the utopian community, made up of the exiles of the interior; and, the company town, the grim, impoverished expression of the new industrial slavery. In the hundred years that follow the Civil War, the nation is shaped by unplanned agglomeration, in what Feis justly describes as "the continuing era of nondesign."

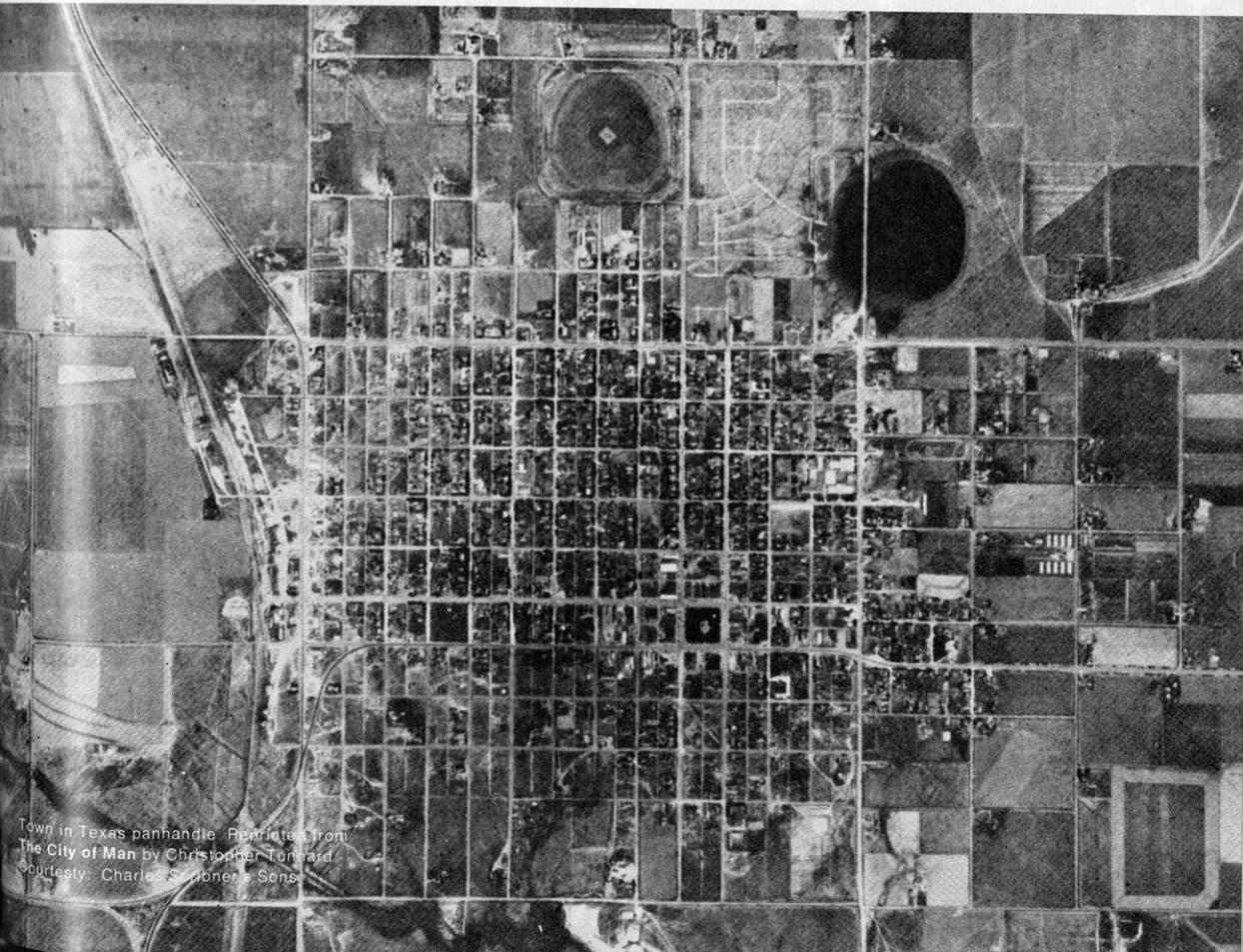
In this continuing era, the design which we follow dictates only that we must

make both ends meet. There is no space for social cost in the equations of private enterprise, and, since the sense of community is lacking, little assertion of the general interest. In our schools, generation after generation of Americans enter the first grade and emerge from our universities without once being called upon to make an aesthetic judgement. For aesthetic appreciation is no part of the consensus as to what constitutes preparation for American life.

Faced with this rejection, our artists in turn have tended to reject our society. We have bred a long line of distinguished exiles, from Henry James to James Baldwin. We have bred another line of rebels from Theodore Dreiser and William DuBois to LeRoi Jones and the artists of the New Left. Far more important, we have bred generations of poets, painters and musicians whose rejection of society is reflected not so much in content as in

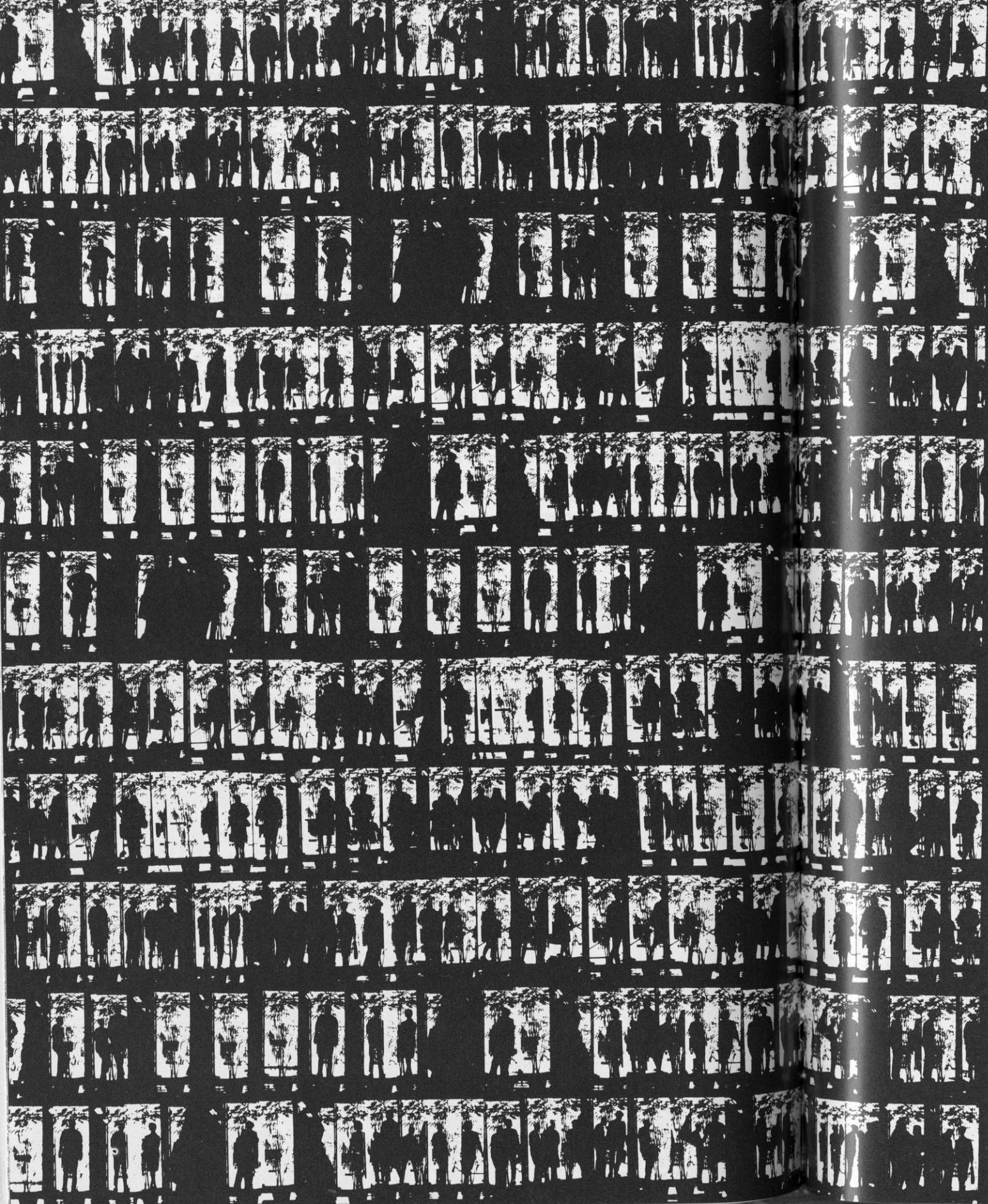
style. They have rejected the possibilities of communication in a nation in which art is equated with entertainment, and the entertainment of the majority is held in contempt.

The era of "nondesign," of alienation, has of course, produced enduring masterworks by a few great artists. They stand as isolated monuments in an age whose underlying premises have little to offer for the future. Those premises are summarized by T. S. Eliot in his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. He argues that education cannot be a means of transmitting culture, and that the majority is incapable of appreciating or sustaining high standards of art. He concludes that culture cannot survive in an egalitarian society, and, since culture is necessary, that society itself is doomed to fail. He calls for a "healthily stratified society" in which the privileged classes guard the culture and govern the country, and the



Town in Texas panhandle. Reprinted from  
The City of Man by Christopher Tunnard.

Courtesy: Charles Scribner's Sons



lower classes do not interfere. He concludes with a word to those of us who hold a simple, sentimental faith in equalitarianism. If the reader, Eliot writes, "finds it shocking that culture and equalitarianism should conflict, . . . I do not ask him to change his faith. I merely ask him to stop paying lip service to culture."

An Eighteenth Century gesture — and the essay is Eighteenth Century at best. It is unduly pessimistic in its dismissal of the role of education; it is wildly optimistic in its assumption that artists can subsist from now on, on the patronage of the "privileged classes." It is socially destructive in its divorce of the fine arts from those, such as architecture, which directly shape our environment. And it is barren within its own aesthetic boundaries, because young artists will not be motivated to create for the privileged segment of the nation to which Mr. Eliot pins his hopes.

Eliot's essay is surely one of the most preposterous statements written in the mid-Twentieth Century by an intelligent man. And yet its underlying viewpoint — that the arts are the province of a small minority and cannot be extended to the majority — this viewpoint endures. It is held by the editors of small art journals who swathe the simplest of opinions in the most obscure phrases. It is shared by the editors of great newspapers who report all cultural events on the society page. It dominates the attitudes of some board members of our performing arts organizations; it dominates equally the attitudes of many union officials who control employment practices. It is held by Black separatists who draw color lines across our common heritage; and by blue collar workers who take it for granted that live arts are not for them. It is held, worst of all, by the artists themselves. It stands as a barrier to those who believe that the arts have a potentially urgent role to play in transforming our total environment. And, the barrier must come down.

In place of this barren belief in a declining elite, we can, I hope, work from the central concept of a democratic culture.

It implies that, when we speak of a new sensibility in man, we mean in all men.

There are, I think, three reasons why we have no choice:

First, we are committed to an economy of mass production and mass consumption. In this economy, the mass consumer is the arbiter of style. Save perhaps in fashion, there is no substantial area in which style is set by the acquired or inherited sensibilities of an elite. Within limits, through advertising, manufacturers may mold the tastes of the public, and also its desires. But, in a competitive economy, the limits are sharply defined. The sensibility of the majority, trained or untrained, governs in the market place.

Second, we are wholly committed in politics, to government by the people. And this is decisive at a time when substantial government support is vital to the survival of museums, of symphony orchestras, of opera companies and dance companies, of resident repertory theatres, of the small, independent institutions in which our musicians, our actors, our artists are trained. I cannot conceive of a proposition more sterile, more self-defeating, than one which asserts that the taxpayers must support the arts although the arts are not for them.

A third reason why our concern is for the development of a new sensibility in all men, is that the urban environment, which threatens us, is one in which the great majority of Americans live, and choose to live.

One hundred and forty million Americans, three out of four of us, are living in cities today. They have been, they are still, centers of intellectual excitement, of cultural creativity, of ethnic tradition. But,

to use the President's term, they are suffering decay. The downtown core, in most cities, is an area of aging buildings and empty spaces. Once prosperous department stores are symbols, feeding off the income generated by branches in suburban shopping centers. Once elegant homes are overcrowded with urban immigrants. Transportation is poor, streets are choked, schools are guarded. The middle class has left, the tax base is shrinking, activity halts with the onset of darkness. Movie houses, the theatre, the symphony, the restaurants, struggle against the curfew imposed by fear and the unwillingness of the suburbanite to linger, let alone to return, when the day is done. The force that created the central cities is failing; they are, in the President's words, "the most conspicuous area of failure in American life," yet for all their failings, our metropolitan areas will gain 40 million residents in the next fifteen years. Within these areas, the polarization feared by the President's Commission on Civil Disorders will increase. The central cities will lose 2.4 million whites, if present trends continue; the suburbs will gain 54 million, over their 1960 levels. The central cities, in the same twenty five years will gain 10 million non-whites, the suburbs 4 million. By 1985, 70 percent of metropolitan whites will be living in suburbs; 75 percent of metropolitan non-whites in the central cities, creating what the Commission refers to as an apartheid society.

Beyond the cities, lie the suburbs; the regions Lewis Mumford called "asylums for the preservation of illusion." If the blacks who migrated to the cities in the fifties suffered a loss of identity and of community, it may be that the whites who migrated to the suburbs in the sixties will undergo the same disillusionment; for if the typical central city is decaying, the typical suburb lacks all the elements of health. It contains no center; it offers no sense of community; it has few if any parks; less and less access to open

space; it caters to a wide variety of commercial activities, all fighting for maximum visibility, easy access to automobiles, and minimum overhead costs. The pattern is one that leads to physical danger; economic waste, political confusion, social disintegration, and aesthetic squalor. Yet these suburban areas are the most dynamic in the nation, in terms of growth. Three quarters of the increase in our population will attach itself to our suburbs if present trends continue; one third to seven metropolitan centers which will take on three million new residents apiece in this decade.

This transformation of the face of America, which in many ways is threatening, has been shaped as the National Commission on Urban Growth Policy notes, by the uncontrolled workings of the marketplace. It corresponds to what the great majority of Americans have felt to be their needs. We cannot ignore it, hoping that the beautiful can be preserved in isolated enclaves. And, we cannot impose upon city and suburban dwellers, the patterns of land use, the styles of architecture, the means to cultural enrichment which we think they need. Planners such as Edward Logue, designers such as Lawrence Halprin, have shown that the way to start in urban redevelopment is to bring urban dwellers together to determine what they want. The answers, however, are rarely cohesive and clear. The tragedy of the past thirty years is that Americans have settled for so little. Only through a heightened sensibility will they seek and get more.

If we center our hopes in the heightened sensibility of the majority, how is that sensibility to be raised? Eliot asserted flatly that culture could not be transmitted through education. We can, I think, answer with equal emphasis, that he is wrong; we can say this because the evidence is in. In Evanston, in St. Louis, in Atlanta, in Providence, in many other towns and cities, our musicians, our poets,

our artists, our actors, our dancers, our sculptors, have been at work in the classrooms. They have made the arts live experiences for our children, and they have shown that in each child there is a painter, a dancer, musician, a poet, an actor, imprisoned and needing only to be released. They have so far engaged only a fraction of our schools; they have not yet cracked the junior high schools in which, in the interest of a rigidly structured syllabus, imagination is stunted, and creativity curbed. But, a start has been made, and the participating artists themselves are excited about it. In *Wishes, Lies and Dreams*, an account of his experiences in working with school children in culturally deprived areas, Kenneth Koch makes two points which, I believe bear closely and hopefully on our discussions:

First:

*of the children I taught, every one had the capability to write poetry well enough to enjoy it himself and usually well enough to give pleasure to others, whether it was entire poems or surprising and beautiful images, lines or combinations of words . . .*

and second:

*Writing poetry makes children feel happy, capable and creative. It makes them feel more open to understanding and appreciating what others have done (literature). It even makes them want to know how to spell and say things correctly (grammar). Once (the) students were excited about words, they were dying to know how to spell them. Learning becomes part of an activity they enjoy.*

The development of a heightened sensibility is being achieved in our schools, through the intervention of artists. It leads to the awareness of self, the identification of self, the assertion of self, which, later on gives to the individual the con-

fidence and the capability to perceive his environment, and to reshape it according to his conscious needs.

The question is raised: what is the place of government in a democratic culture; what contribution can the government make in support of the arts, and of a better environment?

In the urbanization of America, according to the National Commission on Urban Growth Policy, "The marketplace determined where development would take place, public investment followed." Yet, public investment is critically important in determining land value and land use. Fifty billion dollars have gone into federal support of highways that have made commuting possible. Twenty two billion dollars are set aside in this year's federal budget for aid to the states and localities in growth-related expenditures. City, county and state authorities adopt and enforce the zoning regulations, the building codes, the tax benefits and penalties that shape urban growth; the federal government underwrote the mortgages that built the suburbs, it supports the construction of the roads, the sewer and water lines, on which private development rests. Aesthetic concerns have played little or no part in determining policy; on social issues, one department of government may endorse the polarization which another department deplores. "Systematic racial exclusion was part of the system which created Megalopolis," according to the National Commission. "In the post war era, it had the full backing of the government mortgage insurance agencies."

"By and large," as Daniel Moynihan wrote, "the Federal Government set the conditions which have determined the disastrous designs of the past two decades."

The President of the United States has committed the government to improve

the environment and to strengthen the arts. The government is not yet able to place all of its activities in the service of these aims. One fifth of the nation is held by the government today, but to take one example, there is in the agency of government responsible for operating its properties, no department of architecture or of design. The reason, I believe, lies in all that I have said about our inheritance in which the artist finds himself on the margin of society. It seems clear to me that now, as in the Thirties, the question is not what can government do for the arts, but what can the arts do for government? I believe that with government backing, teams of artists, sculptors, architects and landscape designers can go into our cities, and, acting in accordance with the expressed desires of city dwellers, help to create within them, communities which have their physical demarcations, their cultural centers, as well as their social and ethnic characteristics. I believe that, in its current endeavor, of placing thirty million of the next one hundred million Americans in new communities, the government can, by adding to the plans of commercial developers, the vital, non-commercial aspects of life by which a community comes into being, help our artists to make an immense contribution to the shape of our nation in the future. I know, from the actions of the National Endowment for the Arts, that the government is doing what it can to bring artists into our schools. But, these activities will gain momentum only if the artists, who have learned over many generations to see democratic government as alien and democratic politics as corrupting, see in public patronage, opportunities to be grasped.

So I come, in conclusion, to the question which I raised and ducked: the demands which a receptive nation may make upon the arts.

We hold that the artist, by his nature and his calling has a heightened sensitivity, a

deeper perception, a sounder sense of values than some other men. We feel that the artist should play a greater role in our national life. But, in our competitive society, nothing is given, everything is earned.

There are, in the artistic community, many men who have not touched the public in their work, but who maintain nonetheless that because of their special insights, their views on the management of the state should be given exceptional weight. They seem to me to be misguided. "Politics among artists," Harold Rosenberg has argued, "has consisted of accepting a package of ready-made issues—peace, civil rights—while renouncing the ability to contribute to an imaginative grasp of the epoch . . . ." "The separation of art

from social realities" he adds, "threatens the survival of painting as a serious activity." He concludes: "Abstract expressionism liberated painting from the social-consciousness dogma of the Thirties; it is time now to liberate it from the ban on social consciousness." To these words, I can, as a public servant, only add my silent amen.

We believe, I am sure, that the arts can enrich the majority. We believe also, I hope, that in reaching toward the majority the arts themselves will be enriched. Through that effort, the time will come again, when the completion of a great work of art will be an occasion for a national holiday, a time for joining in celebration, as it was in Siena six hundred years ago.



## MOON BONES

Memories of green  
touches in moonlight  
darken snow.

Will dreams of old love  
drown me, dragging me down  
seaweed choked, eyes swallowing  
oceanic wonders?

Is she the moon in the birches  
or a birch or shadow?

Shall I marry a tree  
like the Roman Frazer described:  
“He embraced it  
he kissed it  
he lay under its shadow  
he poured wine on its trunk.  
Apparently he took  
the tree for the goddess.”

When I embrace her my lips  
freeze to bark and tear.  
I dance round the bloody birch  
wailing to turn it green.  
I climb up to kiss the moon.  
Icy fingers of light  
close my lids.  
“Moon!—to fool with the moon:  
Moon-fool!”

The moon is only a moon.  
I creep but no one comes.  
I leap but no love comes.  
I howl in circles, I push  
over dead trees to keep warm  
and heroic. But first  
I bow to their shadows  
groaning in moonlight: “Pardon  
me,” I ask. They fall  
in shrouds of snow. I’m tired  
of seeming heroic.

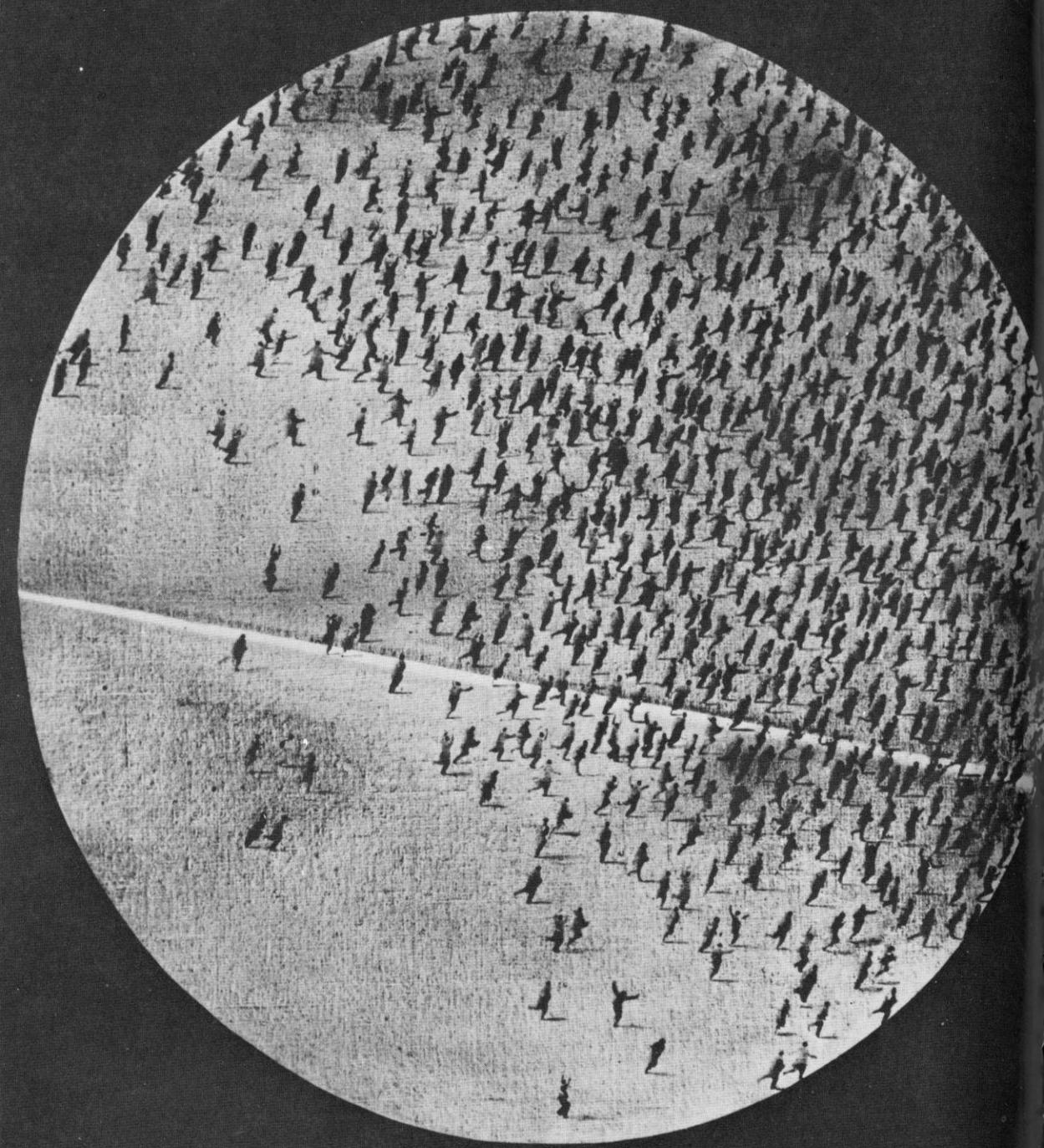
Cracking branches I try  
to kindle a companion.  
Smoke feathers the moon  
and my throat. I cough.  
No love-death comes for me.

Footsteps lead  
out of the grove into summers  
before one war or another.  
I fall on them to trap  
whatever memory made them.  
Snow flies up like frightened  
gulls, beating my face, I run.

Bones scattered in snow.  
Are they my bones or hers?  
I climb a dune storm-hollowed  
bone-picking into a bush.  
In it a rusty skull  
trembles, waiting for birth.  
Snow-eyed I ease it out  
and lay it on bones to see  
if I can love them alive.  
I light a fire. They grow  
flesh of smoke, become  
her voice of swirling snow.

Eyes swallowing oceanic  
wonders, I tumble in her snow.  
Light cascades around us  
warm tides sway us, we  
swim in ancient summer  
snowyholly.

MORGAN GIBSON  
*Poet, Critic and Professor of poetry.*



**Exceeding the Limit** by Juan Genovés  
from **Art and Photography** by Aaron Scharf, 1968, Penguin Books Ltd.  
Courtesy: Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., London, England.

# the arts as early warning signals

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Perhaps an alternate title for my presentation, one reflecting a safety procedure in the mines of earlier times, might be: The Artist as Canary. This simile would suggest that instead of the artwork being wrought in the service of the artist's ego, it would be in the service of society. His would be the beautiful sacrifice made to save the noble people. It does give one pause to think.

By giving over the artist to instrumental use by society, would we simply be destroying him? We might—but not necessarily. Actually, I believe, we are beginning consciously, in the very nick of time, to develop a new sense of the importance of art itself within the society. There is now a growing awareness of the non-cognitive, the non-discursive symbol, the feelings, what Latin-Americans call the spirit—what Susanne Langer calls the unspeakable aspects of being. We may be opening up access to all of our senses by deliberately bringing the aesthetic component back into our daily lives.

Robert S. Morison, a biologist at Cornell, thinks so. Discussing policy making in the university, he wrote in an article in *Daedalus*:

*In any event, there is an increasing need for what might be called applied aesthetics, just as there is a continuing need for applied science. Indeed, the application of science will become increasingly counterproduc-*

*tive if it is not carefully guided by aesthetic considerations. As nearly everyone knows by now, one of the most critical items on the agenda for the remainder of the century is the preservation of our natural environment and the improvement of the design of our cities. Neither of these developments can be satisfactorily guided by reference to conventional criteria of health and general utility. Man's ultimate reasons for being are largely aesthetic and emotional, a fact that a primarily technological society has found too easy to overlook. Indeed, the puritan conscience has put positive barriers in the way of aesthetic arguments in the conduct of public affairs, and as a result we have very nearly succeeded in making life too ugly to be worth living.*

And Rollo May, in *Love and Will*, has systematically stated of what uses the artist may be to society as a predictor:

*We find artists expressing the conflicts in the society before these conflicts emerge consciously in the society as a whole. The artist—who is the “antennae of the race,” to use Ezra Pound's phrase—is living art, in forms that only he can create, out of the depths of consciousness which he experiences in his own being as he struggles with and molds his world.*

*But in the very grasping of our world by art there is also our protection from the dehumanizing effects of technology. The schizoid character lies in both the confronting of the depersonalizing world and the refusing to be depersonalized by it. . . .*

*The artist presents the broken image of man but transcends it in the very act of transmuting it into art. It is his creative act which gives meaning to the nihilism, alienation, and other elements of modern man's condition.*

Whatever the interpretation, whether it be Jung's "collective unconscious," Rollo May's "unconscious of the race," or something like the early cultural experiences Erik Erikson describes which are stored in an individual's unconscious or subconscious, the artist, it seems to me, does have a more ready access to his unconscious, a more active intuitive life. He also has more means than most people for expressing what he sees, feels, and hears. Perhaps a simpler way of describing this phenomenon is the way a friend of mine expresses it. He is a hard-headed experimental psychologist who helped establish the effective new field of Psychonomics, which is oriented toward the human organism as a physical-chemical mechanism, and I've heard him say privately, "The poets are always there first."

And there is considerable evidence they are. Looking at the field of theatre, simply because I am better acquainted with it than the other arts, I offer you some personal testimony supporting the idea that, indeed, the artists are there first.

Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, and Euripides are, of course, well-known examples, and Oedipus' query, "Who will untangle these dark words?" is now consciously with us in each contemporary generation, thanks to Freud. Freud gave

us some ways to interpret ourselves to ourselves and to others as well as help in the untangling of the parental-child conflicts. While it is abundantly clear that Sophocles was simply perfecting a myth as an art form for the whole community of his day to experience, he was also, quite unwittingly, sensing and expressing basic human forces that a Viennese physician found useful in an instrumental way in his scientific research some two and a half millenia later. I suppose we could rest the case for the artist as a herald of early warning signals on this example alone, but let us look at others a little closer to us and our moment in history.

It was just ninety years ago, as the robber barons mounted the major attack on the North American environment, that Chekhov brought down the last act curtain of *The Cherry Orchard* to the sound of axes biting their way into the trunks of trees. The "practical" men had won the day. The ineffective, sensitive, completely baffled and corrupt upper class were not so much defeated as lost. The "practical men," products of a down-trodden society, must surely take over to correct the social inequities. But was the cutting of the cherry trees actually in the service of the people? Here, ninety years ago, was outlined the dilemma we face: how serve the people without destroying nature itself? But please note—Chekhov did not supply the answer. In a very moving, penetrating way, he certainly did ask the pertinent question. Who was listening?

Some critics see Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as representing the playwright's poetic sense of the full-fabric of life. Caliban, the curiously sensitive but abhorrent and revolutionary savage, is not usually given much critical attention. The late Lily Bess Campbell, a teacher of mine whose formidable scholarly studies of the Elizabethan period produced *Scenes and Machines of the Elizabethan Stage*, took the view that *The Tempest* was really a depiction of the European facing the New

Photo by Ann Derby



World, particularly in the person of Caliban, the savage. Caliban is attractive and loathsome, obsequious and rebellious, obedient and revolutionary. Egging on the prospective murderer of his master, Prospero, Caliban says "Then thou mayst brain him, Having first seized his books. Or with a log batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake. Or cut out his wesson with thy knife." What to do about Caliban? He could be destroyed or educated, become slave or free man. It seems to me that this is a remarkable forecast of how the white man, the plantation owner, the explorer-adventurer who indiscriminately killed off "the natives" and later took their lands to virtually destroy their cultures, came to regard the American Indian and later the Black. But, finally, Prospero says, "This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine." Prospero is not speaking of Caliban as chattel but as a part of his being, a part of mankind.

The Calibans of today are acting in much the same manner, and despite Shakespeare's red alert, they are evoking little understanding from either the establishment or the untutored red-neck. It seems to me further that Shakespeare suggests the emergence of the Third World—although Caliban's future is not forecast at the end of the play. Caliban at length discovers at least three truths: Don't accept false leaders; murder and rape don't work; and—freedom is priceless. He can do something about his life. These warnings about confrontation (the so-called civilized world versus the savage) were clearly given to us 360 years ago, but, again, without the answers. Why have we not responded to these early warnings? Are we merely,

—such stuff

As dreams are made on; and our little life  
is rounded with a sleep?

In his play, *The Hairy Ape*, Eugene O'Neill had much to say to us about the haves

and have-nots. The wild, violent drives of the stoker protagonist aboard a luxury liner contrast sharply with the attitudes of the aloof, mindless, elite passengers who can only mouth self-righteous put-downs. Like Caliban, the Hairy Ape is wild with fury, but unlike Caliban whose freedom Prospero recognized, the Hairy Ape is finally left defeated—crushed against the bars of the cage of a true ape in a zoo, not able to distinguish whether his madness lies inside or outside the cage or inside or outside himself.

In his first play, *Platonov*, Chekhov draws the character of Ossip, who is not unlike Caliban. A brute of a serf in rural Russia, Ossip sensed his potential, knew his "low position," and coveted a beautiful, corrupt lady of the upper class. The poets have been telling us about this confrontation with the have-nots for a long time, and we could go on and on. Has anyone in charge been listening?

When I hear some of the "crazies" on campus today—and I mean the "crazies," not the marvelous, healthy young rebels among our youth—and those other leaders who espouse violence as quite necessary, I think of Albert Camus' *Caligula*. At the end of the play, Caligula, in his long speech to his mistress, Caesonia, whom he is slowly throttling, says:

*Then there must be two kinds of happiness, and I've chosen the murderous kind. For I am happy. There was a time when I thought I'd reached the extremity of pain. But, no, one can go farther yet. Beyond the frontier of pain lies a splendid, sterile happiness. . . love isn't enough for me. . . I know that nothing, nothing lasts. Think what that knowledge means! There have been just two or three of us in history who really achieved this freedom, this crazy happiness. Well, Caesonia, you have seen a most*

*unusual drama. It's time the curtain fell for you.*

*Caesonia: How can you call this terrifying freedom happiness?*

*Caligula: (tightening his grip on her throat). . . I live, I kill, I exercise the rapturous power of a destroyer, compared with which the power of a creator is merest child's play. And this, this is happiness. This and nothing else—this intolerable release, devastating scorn, blood, hatred all around me; the glorious isolation of a man who all his life long muses and gloats over the ineffable joy of the unpunished murderer, the ruthless logic that crushes out human lives.*

Subsequently, Scipio, a poet who loves life rather than murder attacks Caligula, along with others, and they stab him to death. But as the curtain falls, you hear Caligula's voice above the rest:

"I am still alive."

In *Les Justes*, Camus again pursues the problem of murder, this time through the dilemma of the poet, Janek, who reveres life but faces the necessity of taking a human life to achieve justifiable ends in the abortive Russian Revolution of 1907. Janek sees the necessity for this murder, although he neither hates nor scorns the victim, and therefore he puts as the price for taking a life, the sacrificing of his own. Given the opportunity to escape, he rejects it and dies on the scaffold fulfilling his self-imposed contract for murder. This time an answer is suggested.

If those who endeavor to justify murder intellectually were to pay Janek's price for taking a life in his own hands, the arguments of a Caligula would have little effect, and the carnage-rate around the world would drop off precipitously. But who is listening?

There is not time to explore the import of the fact that Hitler publicly made specific note that he burned, among other plays and books, Arthur Schnitzler's play, *Professor Bernhardi*. Without concerning ourselves with the play's content, let us dwell on the further fact that after World War II the new Schiller Theatre in West Berlin opened in 1951 with a performance of *Professor Bernhardi* directed by Arthur Schnitzler's son, Heinrich. Does this information stir you to any degree? Are you moved to plumb its meaning? The play had something to do with respect and tolerance. Another answer?

Perhaps what is central to this whole question of early warning is the thesis that the arts are the natural enemies of embedded thinking. But who is listening?

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Now what about more personal, even tender and gentle, encounters? Think of Martha Graham's *Letter to the World*, presented in the context of Emily Dickinson's lyrical poetry. That presentation has about as many meanings as people who have seen it. Love and death are dealt with, to be sure, but the intensely personal response is for each to shape. The point is that artworks like *Letter to the World* leave individuals with a richer—dare we say—soul? It seems to me that this might be described as the kind of normal group-psychotherapy the theatre has always provided. Each member of the audience takes what he needs or can accept from the experience.

I could go on as you could with many examples—Lorca, Ionesco, Genet, and Beckett; Ed Bullins, Ted Shine and Lonne Elder, but I give you as my remaining example a quotation from Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*:

— the separation of the black and white people in America along the color line had the effect, in terms of social imagery, of separating the Mind from the Body . . .

*The bargain which seems to have been struck is that the whites have had to turn to the blacks for a clue on how to swing with the Body, while the blacks have had to turn to the whites for the secret of the Mind. It was Chubby Checker's mission, bearing the Twist as good news, to teach the whites, who history had taught to forget, how to shake their asses again. It is a skill they surely must once have possessed but which they abandoned for puritanical dreams of escaping the corruption of the flesh, by leaving the terrors of the Body to the blacks . . . .*

*Then, as the verbal revolt of the black masses soared to a cacophonous peak—the Body, the Black Amazons and Supermasculine Menials, becoming conscious, shouting, in a thousand different ways, 'I've got a Mind of my own!'*

*. . . . as if a signal had been given, as if the Mind had shouted to the Body, 'I'm ready!'—the Twist, superseding the Hula Hoop, bursts upon the scene like a nuclear explosion, sending its fallout of rhythm into the Minds and Bodies of the people. The fallout: the Hully Gully, the Mashed Potato, the Dog, the Smashed Banana, the Watusi, the Frug, the Swim. The Twist was a guided missile, launched from the ghetto into the very heart of suburbia. The Twist succeeded, as politics, religion, and law could never do, in writing in the heart and soul what the Supreme Court could only write on the books. The Twist was a form of therapy for a convalescing nation. The Omnipotent Administrator and the Ultrafeminine responded so dramatically, in stampede fashion, to the Twist precisely because it afforded them the possibility of reclaiming their*

**The Beanery** by Edward Kienholz Courtesy: Dwan Gallery, New York



*Bodies again after generations of alienated and disembodied existence.*

Now look what Chubby Checkers, a hooper in Manhattan's Peppermint Lounge on 45th Street, brought off—without benefit of university courses or even a textbook in political science, sociology or the dance. He touched off, as Cleaver has brilliantly described, a great yearning for the liberation of the body through dance. Social barriers were smashed. But Chubby Checkers was pure artist. He had not been programmed to deliver the Twist; it was not a project for the disadvantaged white. He simply tapped his feelings—and there was the Twist! Just what so many people had always wanted.

I make particular note of this fallout from 45th Street to compare it to the programmed "Social Realism" of Stalin and

Hitler. The artists took off from those two bad scenes of totalitarianism—or disappeared like Meyerhold in Moscow in 1938. Artists are still in trouble in Russia. I am dead set against commissioning the feelings of artists, because then you don't get their feelings expressed, just the party-line. Rather it has to be the other way around.

As Camus said, the artist will have to leave his splendid isolation. His intuition cannot work in a vacuum, although some of our artists try it. I will give you a for-instance. In October, one of my last acts as Dean of a College of Fine Arts at Ohio University was to invite the President to speak to my student body and the faculty about his efforts, in cooperation with students, faculty, and administrators, to keep the university open as a viable educational institution, deeply respecting civil rights but meeting violence directly and lawfully. He spoke and then invited



questions for the major portion of the meeting. He was well received. At the end of the meeting, a tall, well-designed, willowy blonde girl rushed up to me and said, "Why did you call me here? I was busy in the studio. Why did you invite me here to be insulted?" I thought, "Kent, Jackson State, the State Legislature, your studio." I said, "Don't you think you have anything to learn first-hand from your University President? Don't you care about the conditions under which your studio may be opened or closed?" She said, "That has nothing to do with me," smiled with great scorn, and joined her friends.

From some of her faculty, I got the same response, but they were less candid and, it seemed to me, horribly smug. They said the meeting was a mistake (not that I made a mistake calling the meeting, although they well knew the whole idea and initiative was mine). These faculty members wanted to know why the President didn't talk about the College of Fine Arts — something that was meaningful to them! Again I thought, "Kent, Jackson State, Grand Jury, FBI, Black, White, Bill of Rights. What *did* it have to do with them?" "Oh," a couple of the faculty told me, "I could have asked the President some very embarrassing questions, but I didn't want to make him uncomfortable." Weasels, they were weasels, not men or artists, and, in this case, sadly alienated children. I walked out with the President who said he would like a follow-up meeting; he said he enjoyed the exchange and the response. When I told him of the covert response of the alienated, he was shocked and insulted. "Who are they," he said in effect, "to save me for the Junior Prom?"

I offer this true anecdote to suggest that I don't believe the artist can hide. He has a clearcut responsibility for expanding his understanding of the world about him. If there is anything to this "collective unconscious" jazz, and I think there is,

the artist must open himself up to the world enough to get it together. *Especially* those in a university have a responsibility, I would say even a mandate, to be citizens of the world, rather than precious solipsistic paranoids who "feel things more deeply than anybody" and make a great show of being so god-damned artsy that it would embarrass Oscar Wilde. I'm talking about an attitude—not hair, dress, or private life.

Orozco was in a revolution and didn't pass it up. In his drawings and paintings, he expressed the horror of the revolution after the killing was over. But he didn't miss it. Maybe it was easier, obviously it was somewhat easier to recognize the Mexican revolution than our current one. In any case he didn't miss it. Have you seen his huge drawing of a naked Indian impaled on a huge, impersonal European lance? He didn't miss his revolution as a human being or as an artist. Here I submit, the artist today, especially if he elects to work in a university, has the responsibility of being a complete man. If he does that, then he is welcome to any subject or mode of expression he chooses. But some of our people in the arts today do not appear to live in this world. Their observations of it should emphatically be their own—as long as they open themselves to all the truth possible.

But if some of our artists wear blinders, most do not. The biggest problem has been with the society's attitude toward the arts. Our glaring weakness is the pervasive neglect of our aesthetic sensibilities. As has been said over and over again, our children graduate from high school illiterate in the arts, aesthetically deprived. As a society we have neglected training our children to enjoy the arts. Fortunately, however, there are indications in varying places that, as a society, we may have a chance for basic change. Marcuse believes the basic revolt of our young people today is essentially aes-

thetic rather than social or economic. Charles Silberman says, "What tomorrow needs is not masses of intellectuals, but masses of educated men—men educated to feel as well as to think," and he quotes Yeats' lines:

*God guard me from those thoughts  
men think  
In the mind alone;  
He that sings a lasting song  
Thinks in a marrow-bone. (Caligula?)*

Jerome Bruner has translated Yeats into prose when he says:

*The scientist and the artist do not live in antipodes. . . . The false dichotomy between the cognitive and the affective domain—can only cripple development and feeling.*

In a rare public address in St. Louis a year ago last April, Mr. John D. Rockefeller 3rd said:

*I am convinced that the quality of our individual lives and the quality of our society are directly related to the quality of artistic life. I cannot prove this to you mathematically or in a test tube, but I know it as an article of faith and I know it through experience—and I believe that you know it too.*

*If we think seriously about the quality of life, we are forced back to the fundamental questions, What is it all about? What are the end objectives of life? What does it profit us if we solve the great problems, but lose our humanism in the process?*

*If we really care about the dignity of the individual, about his potential for self-fulfillment, then we must have a deep and rich sense of the place of the arts in our individual lives. We need the arts if we are to be whole*

*human beings—fully alive and vital and in control of ourselves and our environment.*

Certainly the artist is a predictor of the future. But he makes no more sound than the tree that falls in the mountain vastness if no one listens—or, does not know how to listen. We in our society must be aware of the two basic essentials of art: the creative act, making the work; and encountering it. Man may or may not learn to use the arts or he may use them well or badly or he may simply neglect them. In any case, they will be around in some form or other, at some level or other, and contributing one way or another to society.

We are presently embarked on a venture to return the arts to the center of society. We have, it seems to me, ten years turnaround time to begin to expand each individual's aesthetic potential to serve his inner and outer world. Not only for his enjoyment, but, more important, for the preservation of his very existence.

#### **FREDERICK R. MATSON**

*Research Professor of Archaeology  
at the Pennsylvania State University.*

As an archaeologist I am concerned with the artistic expressions and the folk productions of the past insofar as they have been preserved. A backward look at some early warning signals could include the solidity and permanence of the pyramids, yet there is little remaining evidence of the temples and palaces built of ephemeral materials. One could discuss the evidence preserved in Chinese paintings—fat cheeks and double chins

in times of prosperity, but thin emaciated figures in periods of turmoil.

For 3,000 years before the beginning of the Early Dynastic Period in Mesopotamia people had painted their pottery in many styles. Such ware provided color in the homes, a bright contrast to the tan dusty clay surroundings. An abrupt change occurred early in the third millennium — pottery was no longer decorated, it was no longer a vehicle for color.

I have now spent four summers in Afghanistan talking with village potters, working in this traditional culture, and am impressed by the conformity of their products and by their lack of curiosity. This may say something about the ways of life and government of the country.

In Greece for the past fifteen years I have had the opportunity to visit the potters in Amaroussi, a suburb of Athens. They produce traditional ware that is most handsome in its simple decoration. In 1955 monochrome glazed flower pots were offered for sale, but progressively through the years the glazed decoration has become more flamboyant — plastic granules, rock fragments, and even bits of mirrors are cemented to much of the ware.

My last example is a small pottery sales shop in southern Greece, a shop that no longer exists. It displayed traditional Greek wares, and colored glazed pottery. But it also had aluminum vessels, and brightly colored plastic dish pans and buckets, technological products of the modern world, whose progressive acceptance has increasingly foreshadowed the death of the livelihood of the potters.

### PETER B. YATES

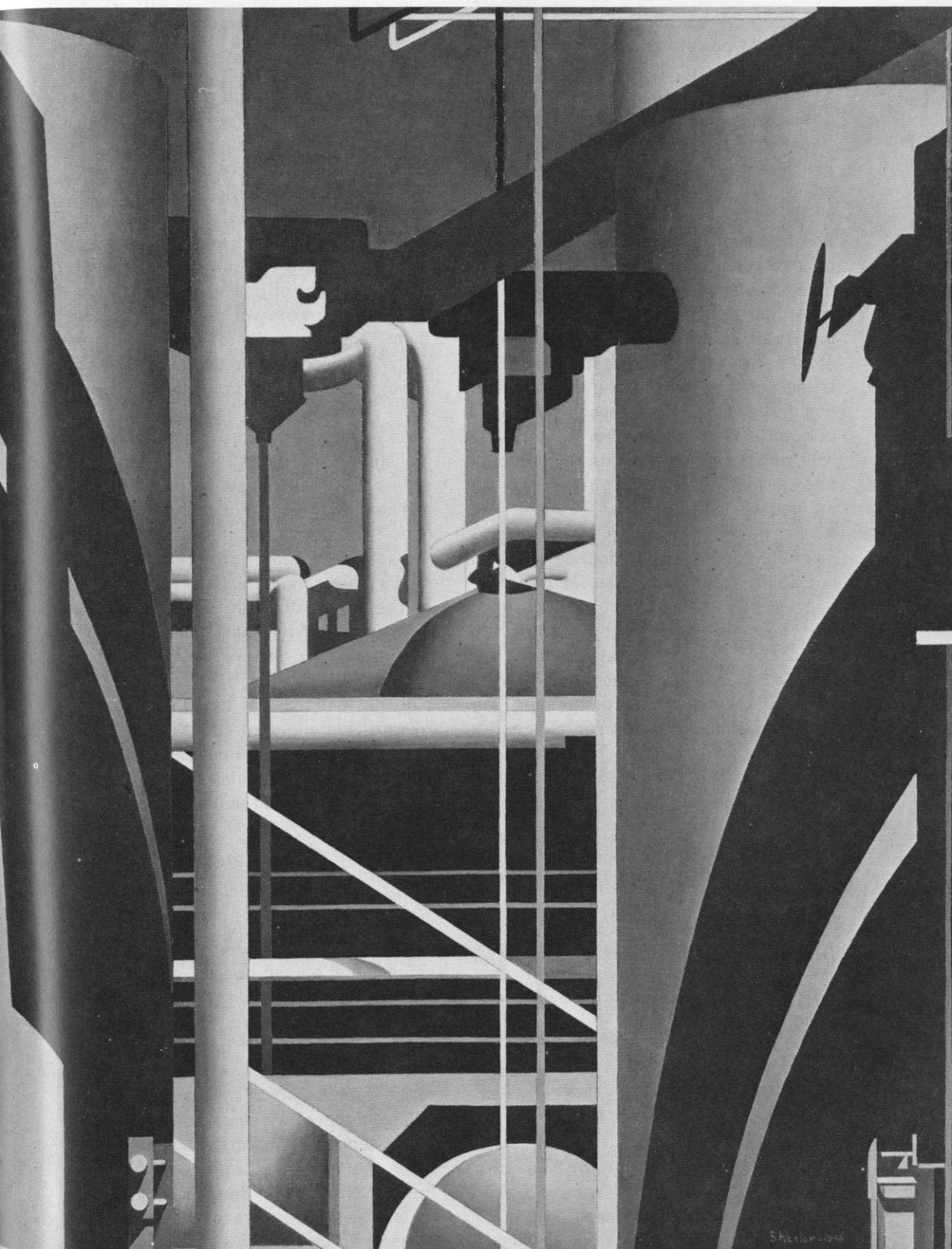
*Poet, Music Critic, and Chairman of the Music Department at the State University College at Buffalo.*

I shall reply by giving a warning against witchcraft.

Most of us have been habituated by education to a predetermined idea of order. We have believed that every fundamental addition to human knowledge would either link into or correct by contradiction something we knew already. Wars and other disasters will occur, but the calm evolutionary growth of human knowledge from the astrology of Sumerian Ur and the laws of Hammurabi to the American constitution and the cosmology of Einstein, in our belief, will go on and on. If the primordial chaos had not contained the principle of order, we could not be where we are today. In the early part of this century the American philosopher-scientist C. S. Peirce summarized this belief and entitled it "a neglected argument for the reality of God."

Peirce gave for an example the "comparative simplicity" of the chemical structure of the universe. Some of you have read, in that rather comic book, *The Double Helix*, how this comparative simplicity contributed to the almost accidental correct assemblage of the genetic structure DNA. "Yet no mathematics," Peirce wrote some 60 years ago, "but will confess to the present hopelessness of attempting to comprehend the constitution of the hydrogen atom." Approximately a half-century later a few men had learned enough about the constitution of the hydrogen atom to blow it up and to threaten by that knowledge to blow up our enemies, thus making possible the destruction of what Buckminster Fuller calls "our space-ship, Earth."

Witchcraft is the debasing of an object, a part of the body, a name, a belief, a



**Incantation** by Charles Sheeler, 1946

Courtesy: The Brooklyn Museum

betraying of spiritual confidence, as a shortcut to power. The witch Circe transformed the companions of Ulysses into swine: self-righteousness becomes witchcraft at the moment when somebody transforms a policeman into a pig. An industrialist resorts to witchcraft—or as some call it public relations policy—when he deliberately debases information to defend bad working conditions or conceal the dangerous and often contrived inadequacies of his products. To insist that technology is evil because our increased knowledge of the hydrogen atom has enabled us to destroy the world is the same as turning the evidences of comprehensible order upside down to perform a Black Mass. Our government, with all its faults, depends on our confidence that we can make it work; when we debase that confidence, as many do today, we do not improve our government but destroy the confidence on which our ability to govern ourselves depends.

If it were not order that underlies the confusion of phenomenal change, science could not have made that 50-year step from inability to comprehend the hydrogen atom to our present witchcraft ability to blow ourselves up with it and the more meaningful ability, which seems now to be within reach, that we can harness the same explosive energy to produce the most powerful and the cleanest energy source man has discovered.

But if we believe that knowledge of the hydrogen atom and the capability of saturation bombing have given us not only the power but the right to blow up our enemies, we should not be astonished when some other witches among us choose the same shortcut to a debased moral power by threatening us with dynamite.

The self-righteous justify in their own thinking the shortcut to seeming power which is the aim of witchcraft; it is quite as easy to justify the shortcut in legality

which encourages the hunting and mistreatment of witches. Historically the two ideas have been interchangeable, and we observe that in several countries they are so today. If you believe that a group of unknown dimensions has terrible power to conspire against you, you will ignore the historical evidence that such groups, although dangerous nuisances, usually fumble and destroy themselves. We give to such groups a witchcraft character of power by the exaggerated legal powers we call on to repress them. There is a difference between regulatory power, which implies self-discipline, and legalized repression.

If we believe that artists may be prophets, we should be careful not to line ourselves up with those who justify the transforming of spiritual energies to base uses. I see only witchcraft in debasing the spiritual claim of creative freedom to justify the commercialized propagation of pseudo-artistic filth. The law cannot formally draw that distinction, nor can we assert it by personal vigilante action.

I do not believe that those who hex us by terrifying statistics about crime, dope, violence, population increase, and pollution are public benefactors. We know that formerly in this nation crime, dope addiction, and violence have been worse than these are now. Americans, once addicted to spitting, have eradicated the spittoon. Population increase is most severe among peoples who have little time and small freedom to seek other amusement; among poverty-stricken peoples disease and famine righted the procreative balance. We have upset this natural order by our growing ability to prevent disease and famine. If we terrorize ourselves over the resulting population increase, we disregard the superlative accomplishment. We should consider the immense improvement during the last five years in the ability of formerly famine-stricken areas to feed themselves by growing new strains of rice and

wheat. We are just learning that bodies of water do not "die" — that witchcraft term — but given assistance can revive and restore their natural condition. If increase of wealth, mobility, and freedom have enabled us to befoul our environment, we gain nothing by a witches' sabbath of blaming; we must learn to discipline ourselves. People are rioting all over the world in the cause of self-improvement, because we know for the first time in human history that men are able to correct these evils.

Those among us who make a career of blaming mankind because of their own fears are not prophets but old wives, malevolent gossips, like those purveyors of the 19th century nightmare that Darwinian evolution meant "Nature red in tooth and claw" and "The survival of the fittest," who believed that human activity was purposeless because of the unavoidable entropy or running down of the universe within a few million years. Today we have forgotten that loquacious nightmare, but the effect still echoes among us. I do not believe that the current crop of doom-sayers knows anything more about the future of the human race than those who are really working in their respective areas to correct what has gone wrong.

When we turn to witchcraft or set fear and blaming foremost in action or in thought, we are preparing ourselves for evil; we will see evil conspiring everywhere around us and, believing ourselves incapable of correcting evil, we will propagate evil. We will live like witches in a debased environment of malevolence and hatred. It is that debasing spirit, that witchcraft of debased self-righteousness, that we hear clamoring today through all our thinking and also in the arts.

The real prophet has seldom been one who rode the current surf of hearsay and hysteria. Meaningful prophecy like meaningful art exerts itself in longer tides. If we wish to seek prophecy in art, we must go where the artist is doing his own work, not among the popular clamorers for notice. The history of art confirms this knowledge, yet we disregard knowledge and history to go tailing off after the latest piper in Hamelin.

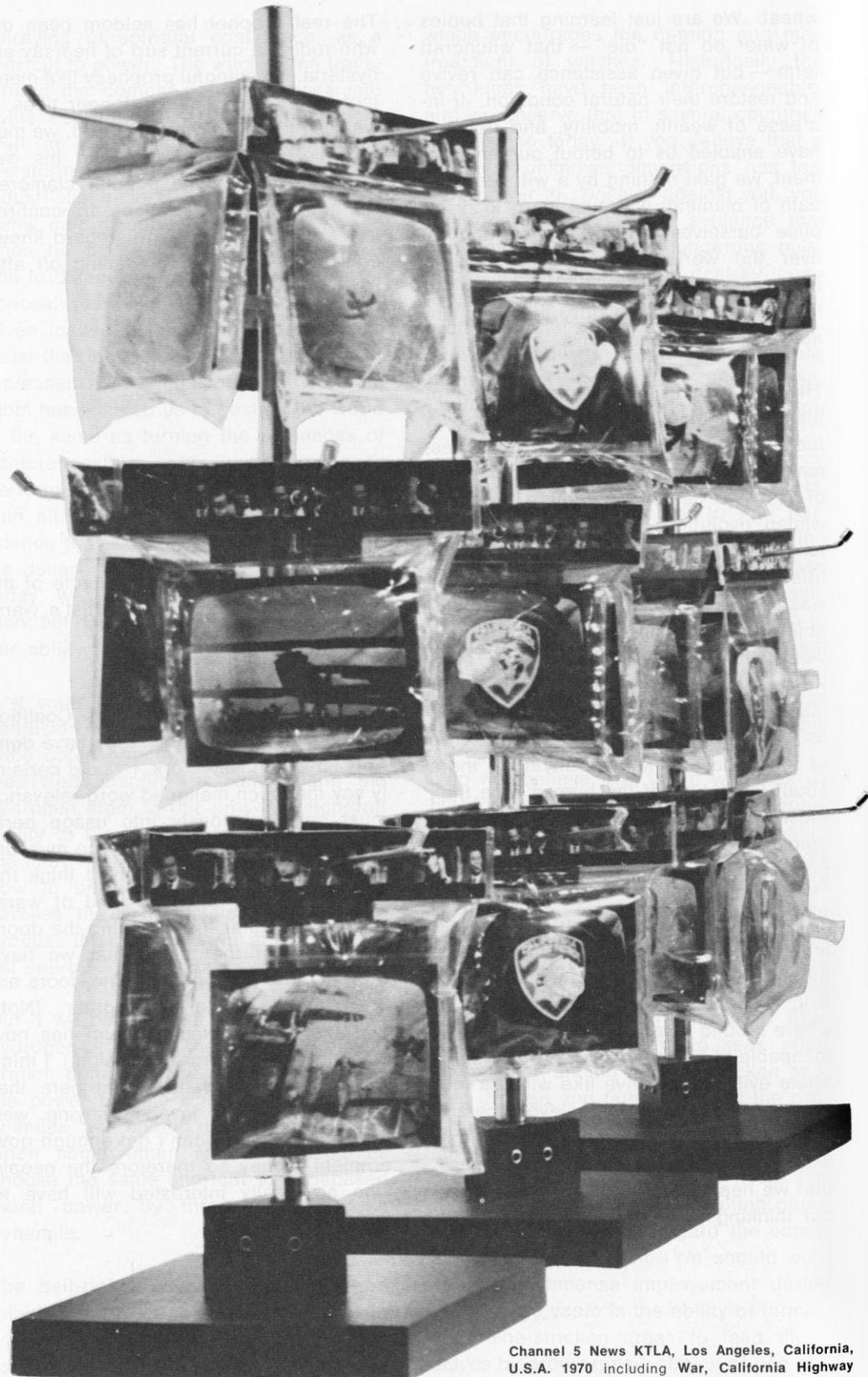
## DISCUSSION

### **Audience Member:**

What do you envision as the role of the museum in relation to the artist's warning signals?

### **Panel Member:**

I hate to quote the Art Workers' Coalition but considering the work they have done at least within New York, I would certainly say the much maligned word relevancy must come obviously into usage here. I'm not at all convinced that the museum is an educational institution. I think the museum in the end is a kind of warehouse and rather than opening the doors wider one of the things that we have right now is the opposite. The doors are being closed tighter and tighter. (Note that the Metropolitan Museum has now also started to charge admission.) I think that again we have a signal here that deals simply on a level by saying, well what the heck, we can't get enough government money so therefore the people who are really interested will have to carry the freight.



Channel 5 News KTLA, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. 1970 including War, California Highway Patrol, and Tom Reddin by Michael Stone. Courtesy: artscanada Photo by Eberhard Otto

# the arts in a technological environment

**Melvin M. Tumin**

*Professor of Sociology and Anthropology  
at Princeton University  
and Visiting Research Sociologist,  
Educational Testing Service.*

There is a growing tendency in this country to think in terms of the possibility of instant salvation or solution for some very troublesome, long-standing, and complex problems, including environmental pollution, war, racism, educational failure, etc.

The apocalyptic character of many of the proposed "instant solutions" represents an overly quick rise to despair by those who either are "hurting" from the existence of the problem or who identify with others who are being hurt. This "despairful" approach to the politics of social change makes the solutions themselves seem as desperate as the problems, and by the same token, they seem to have little or no chance of being adopted. In part, the rapidity with which such despairful programs have risen to public attention is a function of "guilt" felt by the members of the "establishment" regarding the situations in question. They have generated the sense of despair themselves, and legitimated the romantically exaggerated programs of solution, but are, of course, unable and unprepared to meet the terms of the drastic solutions being proposed.

There is a comparable tendency abroad to think that everything is relevant to everything else — equally over time and place. All people, agencies, and institutions are thus seen as capable of equally relevant and effective roles in problem solving. The arts are prime among the "newcomers" to "social problem solv-

ing." From some modest contentions, earlier, regarding possible new roles for the arts in the lives of children, the conduct of education and the long-term reshaping of society, we have moved with overwhelming speed and lack of thought to the notion that the arts and artists are relevant to everything and anything and that they contain some magic within them that will instantly overpower all naughty problems in their path. The result has been to confuse two things that are very different from each other and that if mixed may spell real doom to the arts. These are the 1) possible political and therapeutic uses to which art can be put — once the art has been created on its own terms, as against 2) the politicization of art, that is, the infusion of the process of artistic creation with political motives, themes and intentions, which results, of course, in a wholesale production of *non-art*.

As Harold Rosenberg has recently put it so eloquently:

*A museum under pressure to take a stand on Vietnam, women or blacks finds it expedient to distinguish between history and art history. History includes repression and war; art history is concerned with these only insofar as they are reflected in works of art. Exhibiting 'Guernica' does not imply that the Museum of Modern Art has taken a position against Franco, any more than ex-*

hibiting Ingres's 'Odalisque with Slave' implies an attitude toward Women's Liberation or equal rights for blackamoor harem personnel. Theoretically, art belongs to a realm removed from temporal events; in it, a different measure of seriousness prevails. Even Trotsky, who judged human undertakings by their usefulness to the Revolution, conceded—in opposition to Lenin's dictum that 'art belongs to the people'—that painting, or any other art, has interests that belong exclusively to itself. As the physical embodiment of the separateness of the arts, a museum is privileged to claim immunity from the issues of the moment. It represents the eternal in human performances, or at least the longer-lasting. In Malraux's view, the museum stands above the torments and defeat that the iron determinism of history inflicts on the man of action. Its sacred obligation is to compile and keep intact the record of human freedom and creativeness, and this demands that it resist adulteration by matters not yet resolved into the enduring forms of art."

The New Yorker, October 10, 1970,  
p. 149.)

There are so many examples of societies that have mixed art and politics and injured art seriously that one wonders whether anyone ever learns from history. The Soviet Union is of course a prime example of politicization of art with the evident deleterious outcome. Now in the United States we are approaching some of the same thing. It is dangerous beyond description to permit such a tendency to go on, but probably there is little one can do about it, except to hope, as one may reasonably do, that the best will not be trapped into the "new" role for art and artists.

Typically through the ages art has related

to dominant cultural values and practices in one of three ways: 1) by celebrating those practices in ways special to the art medium; 2) by turning its back on them and looking for its themes and inspirations either in the innards of the artists or in past historical values, or in futuristic visions; 3) by direct critique of the existing values and practices. In all three cases, when art has sought for some direct connection to dominant cultural values and practices, one might reasonably say we have had fallow periods in artistic production, or, if the production has been ample, it has been shabbier and more mediocre than at other times. By inference, we are saying that when the artist has put himself into even a quasi-political posture as he addresses his work, he has lost that major source of possible novelty, interest, and excitement that arises from addressing himself to his work primarily in terms of his vision of the aesthetic realm itself. This does not mean that his consciousness has not been shaped by, or that his work has not been influenced by, what he sees around him and what he has thought about those things. But it does mean that until there issues the amalgam between his perceptions of the world of cultural affairs and his sensitivity to the immanent demands of his artistic medium, nothing good is likely to result either artistically or even politically.

Of course much depends in this argument on how one defines art and artistic works and aesthetic medium and other such terms. But I do not mean to get involved in such definitional problems. Their complexities are too great—especially when a language can carry such terms simultaneously as art, found art, non-art, anti-art, and pseudo-art. I am going to take it for granted that we are commonly sharing some criteria of art and know what each other means by it. Whether this is so or not will become evident in our discussion, for at certain points we will either be talking to each

other's points or simply around, under, and to the side of each other. In the interim, I will take it for granted that we mean roughly the same thing, and I will proceed from that assumption.

On that assumption, I would go on to assert that the arts as such, and artists, functioning as artists, can do little or nothing about the so-called problems that modern technology is said to have produced in the form of alienation and depersonalization.

First of all, technology never did anything to anybody *per se*. Technology never alienated anybody or depersonalized anybody. Technology always exists and functions in a cultural context, including interests, values, resources, visions of the good life, criteria of value such as efficiency, etc. It is the context that determines the uses to which technology will be put, after having first shaped the conditions under which technology gets generated. It is true of course that once machines are built, whether for peace or war, they tend to get used, to some degree or another. But that is because some people, with power, have put some valuable material resources into the construction of the machines and they mean to recover their investments. Or, they mean to maintain their power for the augmentation of which they built the machines (as with the military). But it is people, in institutions, with power, and values, and interests who determine both the development of technology and the uses to which it will be put.

If we can put aside that problem involving the misidentification of the villain, one would next be inclined — at least I would — to question whether today there is any more depersonalization or alienation than there ever has been in the world. If most men used to work for smaller establishments or for themselves in earlier conditions of life, their lives

were far more bitter and hard, with precious little personalization in their relationship to things and products. The so-called individual, creative craftsmen were few and far between. Guilds were organized sweat shops. The ploughman and the frontiersman lived in dirt, hardship, poverty, disease, and ignorance. To think that we formerly enjoyed, as a people, some lovely, bucolic condition of life, in which every man was engaged at meaningful work and in which the conditions of life disseminated senses of purpose to everyone is, of course, a romantic falsification of our history.

So, too, it is, I think, a serious misreading of history to say that 14th and 15th century European communities enjoyed a real *communitas* in which the fundamental unity of the people was expressed in the life of art and in the central role of art in the life of the culture. These were highly stratified societies, largely feudal in structure, and hence totalitarian in governance. If occasionally powerful and rich men also had fine taste in art, decoration, and architecture, and accordingly created artistically unified towns and cities, this is a far cry from the kind of basic social and cultural unity that is sometimes ascribed. So, too, the putative community centered around the Church was surely as much if not more a unity of terror and fear of hell and damnation as anything resembling a unity of love of God and fellow men. One could seriously argue that there is far more genuine *populist* unity in a crowd at Shea Stadium or the Super Bowl Game than has ever existed in these so-called unified medieval communities.

By the same tokens, it is equally wrong to see our modern period as one which because of some especially nasty turns of affairs (that might otherwise easily be rectified if only men had the will to do so!!) has become impregnated with disillusionment, despair, alienation, and depersonalization. There is no question

that when men work in mass organizations—and most men in the industrial world do—and when work processes are pretty standardized and routinized—as in fact they are—then, depersonalization and alienation become characteristic of the *work* situation in that special way (as against the depersonalization and alienation of the earlier conditions; or, if you wish, as against the brutish personalization and connections of men to work and bosses earlier in life.)

There is equally little question that while men find these outcomes undesirable—(assuming they know what they're feeling) they find the other correlates of the modern industrial civilization rather gratifying, especially the material affluence and the comfort that they have newly come to experience. That they would like the latter without the former is unquestionable. But one has to ask what is possible in life, not just what is desirable.

I raise these questions about whether anything can be done at all, in any way, about the depersonalization and alienation of modern man, because that question has to be answered before one can ask what role art and artists can play in all of this. If, on examination, it proves that the very nature of modern industrial society, as *presently* organized, generates its special version of depersonalization and alienation—as it does—then we have to wonder whether any conceivable kind of reorganization could be effected that would reduce the negative outcomes. The answer is yes—if we can imagine a condition in which we deliberately, as a people, surrender national power, national wealth, and all the correlates of these in order to free men much more from the work place; and if we can correlative imagine “training for meaningful non-work” taking hold over a large mass of the adult population. Under those circumstances one could see a rather different psychological milieu being generated in which some partial recovery of

“meaningfulness” and “connection” might occur that does not now exist. Alternatively, one would have to imagine a peaceful, democratic, socialist egalitarian society, in a world at peace, so that questions of national defense, power, and wealth did not matter, and in which the reallocation of time and energy, along with wealth, would be such as to make it possible, *that way*, for men to be freed significantly from the work place so that they could then involve themselves in meaningful non-work pursuits, whatever these might be. Short of those conditions, it is hard to imagine what might be done to reduce the impact of the modern industrial society upon its members.

What then of the role of the arts and artists in either of those two visions of a future society, or more probably and usefully, on the modern scene? To ask what the arts can do, one might well turn to ask what the more powerful sciences have done and can do. I am thinking of psychological and sociological science more than physics and chemistry, because I am thinking of changes in social organization and relationships more than in technology. The most successful model, i.e., the one most frequently occurring, of social change in directions considered desirable by the liberal democratic ethos, is one which involves a time gap of about twenty years between the proposal or program developed by social scientists for remedying current ills and the adoption of that proposal in some part. I would venture that somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of any social science proposal is implemented some twenty years later in political action. This occurs primarily through the influences had upon college youth who then push hard when, twenty years later, they become voting adults, in positions of middle-range power to implement some of their new visions, while having above them yet a generation of top-level powerful people who, though willing to concede the necessity for some change, nevertheless are



Christmas tree in parlor, Levittown, N.Y., 1962  
Photo by Diane Arbus

**The People** by Howard Kanovitz, 1967  
Courtesy: Waddell Gallery, New York



able to resist most of it. In the interim, of course, the prior generation of top-level powerful people, age 50-70, have died out, retired, or otherwise been superannuated.

The power of science to effect this much change—10 to 20 percent in twenty years—depends importantly—and this is crucial for the arts too—on detachment, objectivity, depolitization, and freedom from political influences when science is working on the problems to be solved. That is, the strength and durability of scientific findings regarding social problems depends on its characteristic neutrality to political issues, its reputation for objectivity in considering and presenting alternative proposals, with their respective balances of costs and gains. So, science, to be useful politically twenty years later, must be apolitical and non-political twenty years earlier.

The same is true only more so, I would suggest, for the arts. The most significant way in which the arts and artists ever come to have an impact on public affairs is by the gradual infiltration into the mass mind of the visions of “the desirable” that artists, by their own lights, come to portray in their works. As the emerging consciousness of the artists, and the truths he tells, and the things he reveals about man and nature, come to be shared by the public at large, the artist comes to have some kind of effect.

Now it is true, of course, that there are more direct and immediate connections possible, through powerful patronage, which results in some daring new buildings being constructed; or some new paintings and sculpture being hung in prominent places; or some new colors coming to be used in decorative schemes, public and private. One worries about these, however, because if the powerful patrons are sufficiently prestigious, as usually they are, then the tendency is for the next wave of buildings or paintings,

constructed or hung in the next lowest circle of social prestige, to be copies of the innovative materials and thereby ruin and depress the landscape, both internal and external. It is probably true that by the time any painting, building, piece of furniture, or sculpture gets some popularity, even in *recherché* circles, it is quite time by then for any self-respecting artist to go on to something else. If not, then he loses much of his chance to be an important artist. So, the artists and the arts have an even harder job than science and the scientists in making a dent on public consciousness of sufficient dimension to matter.

There is, however, one path to “power” and “influence” for the arts and the artists that may have greater impact even if at the same duration of time. That is through the educational system. Under ideal circumstances one could imagine two major lines of influence on a future generation: 1) Children would have enough experience with free, open, creatively oriented experiences in the school, to come to know what that feels like, and hence would constitute a major political force, hopefully, for more of the same when they get older. 2) They would have their tastes, appreciations, and sensitivities shaped so that they constituted a powerful political force against ugliness in their lives wherever they went.

I wouldn’t, however, count on either of these too much; there are too many forces working against these. Most powerful of these “negative” forces is the quite valid demand upon the schools to “prepare” children for successful, “educational careers” (not the same as education, of course). Current definitions of such careers do not include any prominent place for taste, sensitivity, and need for creative expression, though that is in the beginning works at the moment, and it is surely one line of hope and possibility. Artists will have little to do with this possible development except to keep creat-

ing the things that children can come to learn to appreciate, understand, and respond to. We shall have to depend very much here on teachers of art who hopefully will have been better trained and more directly focused upon this kind of effort with school children at all levels of the educational system.

The most important suggestion one could make, as one seeks to maximize the influence of artists on our modern civilization, is to turn as many of them loose as possible with some degree of support. Don't politicize them. Don't tie them into reform movements. Don't organize them into political minority groups. Don't insist that they be "whole," at least not anymore than anyone else. Just make life as possible as possible for them, for as many of them as conceivably could be supported, hoping you get some decent standards of selection, so that talent is perceived and helped along. Thus, why not use National Endowment money to buy the works of many of these artists rather than giving annual fellowships to a few?

As for criticism, you will know better than I what you have to do about the state of criticism in the world; and about the relations between artists and museums; and between museum and neighborhoods. Meanwhile, I know as well as anyone what has to be done about such things as Black Art and Working Class Art and Woman's Lib Art: *they have to be exterminated as concepts from our thinking.* They are simply another version of Songs that Commissars Can Whistle, which was Stalin's criterion of acceptable music. Any art works—like any science works—that are modified by adjectives, such as Black, Free, Woman's, etc., and thereby enhanced in their public acceptability—are a curse to everyone, especially any self-respecting artist who happens to be Black or a Woman.

As for the more general conditions of society under which art and artists might

flourish, T. S. Eliot was probably wrong, as Mr. Straight has suggested, in arguing that one must have a non-egalitarian society. But I do not think Mr. Straight is persuasively correct in his optimism about the flowering of the arts and of talent in an egalitarian society. It seems eminently possible to have an egalitarian society that despises and fears art and artists or, at best, is indifferent to them. By contrast it seems equally possible to have a highly stratified and unequal society in which the arts flourish.

The argument here really centers around the confusion between two quite different concerns. One is for the location, training, and exercise of the highest talents in the culture. Like height, speed, and all other natural endowments, these high art talents are present in only a limited number of the population, whatever the form of social organization.

The other concern is quite different. It is an intention to secure the greatest possible development of three quite different, though connected, things, as follows: 1) an infusion and diffusion of good taste—beauty, if you wish—in all the objects of daily life, and in the man-made environment, especially, one would hope, in the schools; 2) a serious dedication to the cultivation and training of good taste and sensitivity among our school children and possibly among adults which would yield a greater revulsion at ugliness in the natural and man-made environment; 3) some form of direct participation in art-like efforts—painting, poetry, dancing, etc.—by much larger numbers of people at whatever their level of involvement of talent. Here the criterion of value is in the transactional process and involvement of the participant, rather than in the quality of the product.

One might also hope that in that process even larger numbers of people would come to be more knowledgeable about



The Kiss by Constantin Brancusi, 1908  
Courtesy: The Philadelphia Museum of Art:  
The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection '50-134-4

art history and the problems to which serious artists address themselves. Among the more intriguing examples of these problems on the modern scene (as I have recently learned from such people as Estéban Vincente and David Savage) are how to illuminate forms and colors on the canvas from below and how to combine three-dimensional objects and color in some significant statement. If it is argued that such problems are beyond the ken of the ordinary person, it will be remembered that large numbers of people have learned with great conviction what it takes to complete a double play in baseball and what is required to develop an offensive and defensive rhythm in a given quarter in a football game. There is no reason to suppose that the problems of the artists are any more difficult to understand, at least vicariously, than are those of professional athletes.

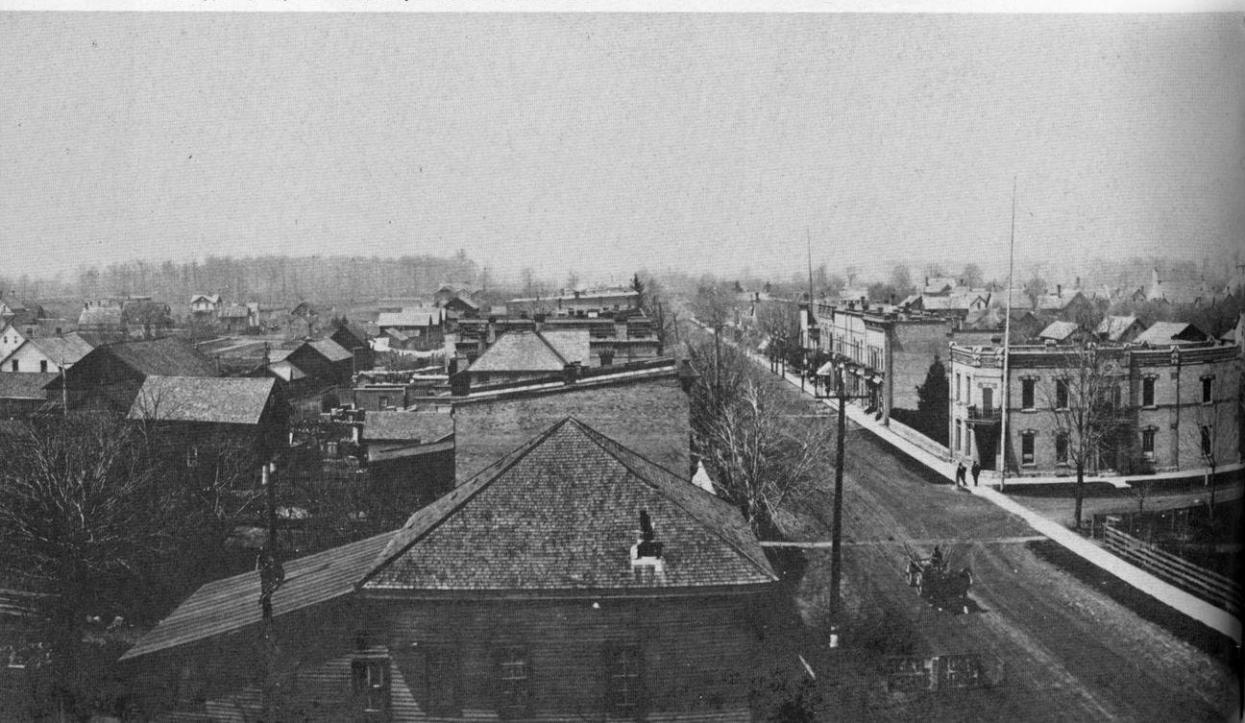
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The fact of the matter, of course, is that most critics and self-appointed pundits in the art world themselves don't seem to know very much about the problems of serious artists. The number of critics whom one can read and learn from, as against being told what to see or like, is precious few.

I repeat that the cultivation of the talents of our most gifted people is one thing, while the enrichment of the lives of our people in general in art, with art, and through art, is quite another. The second can't be accomplished, of course, without the first, but probably they are reciprocally supportive, at least under specifiable conditions of social organization. Yet the two tasks could be in antagonism, on some kind of a trade-off basis, especially under conditions of scarce resources and when the demand is strong to politicize art, as seems to be so fashionable today.

I have just spoken to the problem of the arts in the technological society, even though that may not have been apparent. It seems to me clear that when there is a felicitous conjunction between solid support for our best talents, on the one hand, and widespread, serious, enjoyable participation in art by the population at large, on the other, a value system will emerge that will introduce some greater concern for social costs into technological planning. That will mean that the concern for the quality of life will be more serious and effective.

Rodney, Ontario, 1905 Courtesy: Mrs. G. I. Wilkinson



It is only right for Mr. Straight, as Deputy Director of the Endowment, to take some encouragement out of the increased budget for the Endowment. One makes his public utterances strategically appropriate to the circumstances. In turn, I can and do look on this administration and others before it as essentially hostile to art and basically philistine in its commitment. If the Endowment budget has been increased a trivial amount, the arts-connected budget of the Office of Education and other agencies of government has been more than commensurably decreased, while we still spend billions a month on weaponry and in Vietnam. I can say these things because I am not in a position to have to try carefully to wean and cultivate a grudging and mean concern for arts into something more significant. We each have to speak from our own positions in life, and we owe it to each other to understand both the limits and the freedoms of our respective strategies.

Yet, finally, it is very dangerous to over-claim the probable impact of limited programs of culture on the life of our society. It is treacherous and self-defeating

to promise to move the world if one has only a digging stick and no point of leverage. Here I am returning obviously to my first words about the illusory and dangerous beliefs in instant salvation. So, too, quite contrary to Mr. Charles Reich, we cannot green up this country nor any other by the magical invocation of a new consciousness. For this is an approach to social and cultural change that is rooted only in mid-air and that Sir Kenneth Clark's otherwise visually-beautiful program on civilization has also unhappily promoted. Consciousness has to be created by hard, imaginative work in all the educational processes of a society and all the supporting social structures.

I end by noting that it would be wrong to say that none of it is worth doing, because we can only win a tiny limited gain, painfully, over time. All of us here came with some degree of common commitment to the important role of art in the life of our society. We would be quixotic and infantile to turn our backs petulantly on that commitment simply because we now more realistically perceive how very little we can collectively accomplish. There is simply too much at stake and when, after all, was it ever different?





Photo by Lois Siegel

## RICHARD C. CUNNINGHAM

Professor and Head of the Department  
of Mechanical Engineering at  
The Pennsylvania State University.

Professor Tumin seems to say that people are "hurting" primarily from the depersonalization of stultifying, repetitive work. This assessment is an over-simplification at best. I also detect an implication that society has experienced no particularly "nasty turn of events." I believe on the contrary that we are at a unique point in time. We now have noteworthy and significant changes in public attitude. There is an increasing sensitivity to changes in our environment and quality of life, and secondly, a mounting fear or conviction that technology is hurting more than helping. Only in the past five years has the public begun to realize that the cornucopia of science and technology emits bad along with the good.

The degradation of our cities and countryside, of our air and water, is an obvious source of concern. A *submerged* environmental factor is our concern over whether more scientific ingenuity will free or enslave us. For example, we are uneasy as we watch the revolution in microbiology. The creation of living cells, and control of heredity will ultimately lead to the deliberate design of living things. We thus have a much more severe problem than mere "depersonalization." While I agree with our speaker that there probably isn't any more depersonalization or alienation today, I simply do not believe that this is the problem.

Although I share our speaker's despair that artists and the arts can solve our societal problems, I optimistically do believe that institutions of higher learning can, and should do something about the problems of society attributed to science and technology, the STS issue. There is considerable evidence to suggest that students' concern over our degraded en-

vironment and "fear of the unknown" account for much of their alienation today. I have proposed<sup>1</sup> that we combat this malaise by including curricular material bearing on the STS issue in every degree program. Students differ widely in social and technological outlook and interests, and the STS inputs should be flexible and tailored to "types," e.g., humanities vs. science students. (I hasten to emphasize that learning *about* the impact of science and technology on human values is advocated. For non-technical students science courses *per se* are as inappropriate and useless in combatting STS malaise as classical studies are for science and engineering types.)

As a small but important part of college degree programs, we should encourage our young people to learn the causes of our environmental problems and the nature and costs of the corrections, and to learn what there is to know about their—and our—vague fears for the technological future. They should learn the difference between science, the control of which is unthinkable, and technology which we must *learn* to control. We can no longer afford the simple-minded luxury of exploitation of new science and technology on a *laissez-faire* basis alone.

In conclusion, I would like to ask a rhetorical question: First, many students today are more concerned with education as a "search for identity," "being," and "becoming" than as a means of making a living. Secondly, poetry, music, and art forms appeal more to the "now" generation than to an earlier generation—at least this impression abounds. New awareness and sensitivity: Do they provide a new opportunity in education?

<sup>1</sup>Cunningham, R. G. "Science, Technology, and Society: Implications for Educational Policy" *The Journal of General Education* Vol. 22, No. 4, Jan. 1971, pp. 215-225.

Although I find myself in essential agreement with Mr. Tumin's insightful appraisals, I would like to elaborate upon some portions of his commentary and to question certain of his conclusions. I wish particularly to stress music, for music has special attributes that render it at once vulnerable to certain pressures and immune from others.

I was very interested to hear Mr. Tumin's expression of doubt concerning the effect of the arts upon the course of public affairs, and while I agree with him that this may well be the case from our present vantage point, I would like to describe two circumstances that may ultimately effect changes of some kind.

It is perhaps impossible to obtain a measure of the impact of art music emanating from the entire spectrum of cultural groups in this country. On the other hand, we can gain some notion of the effectiveness of experiences with art music if we look at a particular group: today's university students. I have recently sat in a large concert hall among an audience predominantly made up of undergraduates, in variegated and informal attire, listening to a first-rate performance of a complex modern work by an orchestra made up of undergraduates, in uniform and formal attire, and conducted by a young graduate student. This is but one instance of the extraordinary development of interest in music among today's university students. Many universities in this country have become important centers of musical activity, by which I mean both formal educational activity as well as musical composition and performance. If this institutional pattern persists, as I believe it will, we will have gained at least a small bulwark against some of the pressures to which the musical undertaking is vulnerable. And in this

way, although art music will not come to have a direct influence on the mass mind—which Mr. Tumin suggests is the most significant way in which the arts and artists will influence public affairs—it will have a continuing effect on at least an important segment of the emerging leaders of the society. Thus, it seems possible to me that some degree of change will take place in public affairs, if only in the sense that the notion of public affairs will have been enlarged to include, as a matter of course, an ongoing concern for the support of music in institutions of higher learning.

If I have somewhat vaguely projected the beneficent effect of university music activities, I find it still more difficult to see the outcome of a related university-centered process which has been going on for some time now, the use of technological resources by composers and researchers in the field of music. While the musical community and its benefactors have recently paid a good deal of attention to the plight of civic orchestras across the country, only sporadic attention has been given to the extensive spread of electronic studios for music and, more recently, to the increasing use of computing machines for the manipulation of musical data of various kinds. I do not mean to suggest an adversary situation here: orchestra vs. machine. I only wish to dramatize the fact that there have been forces in operation for some fifteen years now that may one day drastically change the way in which music is produced, reproduced, and studied. Correspondingly, there may be a change in the way in which music is regarded by those responsible intellectuals with whom the future of any art form ultimately rests.

Both circumstances I have described are, of course, subject to decline. At the lower end of the educational scale, as Mr. Tumin has indicated, there are forces operating against educational experiences

with art. There is also the very real danger of politicization, although I believe that music is not especially vulnerable there. A major and more immediate danger, I believe, can be seen in the possibility that support for the arts within the university will be lessened. That is indeed a formidable threat, for in my opinion the very survival of music and perhaps other arts is now dependent upon the university environment.

### **RICHARD KOSTELANETZ**

*Critic, Poet and Cultural Historian.*

It is true, though uncommon to argue, that technology *per se* is not primarily responsible for alienation and depersonalization which should, instead, be blamed largely upon the proliferation of massive organizations — bureaucracies we call them — whose pre-industrial prototypes were the army and the Catholic Church, where great complexity and hierarchy reflect the purposes and procedures of their work. Indeed, technology often has a personalizing function in such bureaucracies. The telephone call, for instance, is more personal than the memo, as well as more democratizing, as it gives the respondent the chance to reply on the spot. Secondly, the horrors of industrialization become less pernicious, though more publicized, in the post-industrial society. Increasing automation is, by most humane standards I know, more beneficent than forbidding; and it is precisely in a post-industrial affluent economy, with burgeoning education and social-welfare programs, that art as such becomes more abundant and serious artists more numerous.

Professor Tumin has said little about the artist's actual use of technology today, so it should be pointed out that in "machine art," or machine-assisted art, to be more precise, technology functions to extend the artist's pre-technological esthetic designs. The composer Milton Babbitt can more effectively realize the musical idea of multiple serialization on an RCA Synthesizer than with a group of live musicians. The machine can do the score more precisely; and by offering concert producers a tape, whose accuracy is technologically insured, Babbitt need not fear that his unprecedented difficult music will be sabotaged in live performance. In "machine art," the technology is largely absent from the final work. Secondly, artists have also exploited a range of technologies to create works that could also be classed as "machines"—not only such elementary technological art as light shows, but also kinetic sculptures programmed, like machines, to respond in various ways to changing stimuli in their surrounding environment.

### **RICHARD D. SCHEIN**

*Professor of Botany and Associate  
Dean of the College of Science at  
The Pennsylvania State University.*

I agree very strongly with Professor Tumin's point about the twenty year lag period between the presentation of programs for constructive societal change and their institutional acceptance. As he points out, the cultural process of implementing change does make it necessary for art to take an apolitical stance. This is exactly the position of the basic sciences.

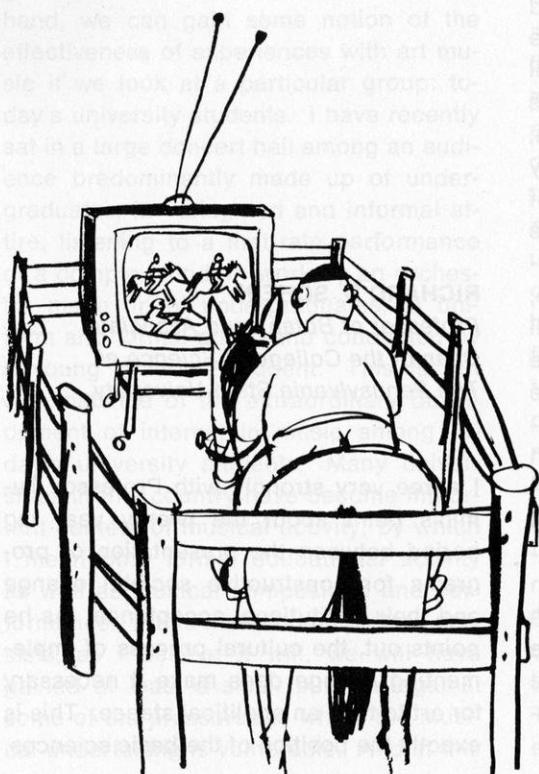
It is important to point out that there are significant functional differences among basic science, technology, and the application of technology. These are three different processes. I want to affirm that it is absolutely necessary that basic science be apolitical. It must have a third party posture. In those places where it has been politicized we have seen it degraded.

The basic scientist working in his laboratory has only one true purpose: to know the natural world. He cannot have thrust upon him the responsibility for all the uses or misuses which that particular work might be put to—as happened at the end of the Second World War when there was a great tendency on the part of many people to put onto the shoulders of the atomic scientist the mass guilt and attendant horror that we all felt for the subsequent creation and use of those atomic weapons.

As Mr. Tumin pointed out, when science is misused through technological application we are prone to create false villains. I feel very strongly that the real villain is man, in his failure to know himself and to define an individual and collective sense of purpose.

For me this underscores a special challenge for the artists of our time. One would think that they could be of great help in showing man how to fashion an environment in which we can achieve a higher order of creative interdependency. I believe that artists who reflect only despair in their work, creating out of abysmal ignorance of the real world or out of a weakness of personal integrity and strength, will add only further chaos to a world which is becoming more chaotic all the time as men lose further confidence in themselves.

I think art can and must continue to express man's agonized but inspired efforts



"Direct Human Contact"

Cartoon by Ivan Chermayeff. Reprinted by permission of Serge Chermayeff from **The Shape of the Community** by Serge Chermayeff and Alexander Tzonis, Penguin Books Ltd.

to see beyond the limits of his ordinary capabilities in his ordinary environment, and to see into all those areas of the mind, which only man of all the living things on this earth is capable of doing. Only then will we see again through art a new realm of human possibility.

I'd like to add a thought which, as a biologist and natural philosopher, I hope may be useful. I have for all of my professional career been an environmentalist—not in the new popular sense, but in our older scientific sense. When we mentally detach ourselves, like looking back on earth from a distance of a hundred thousand miles, we see that our planet is unique. That uniqueness rests in a thin layer at the surface of the earth where there is an interfacial reaction of the atmosphere, the lithosphere or crust, and what we call the biosphere. Life does not exist very high in the atmosphere nor very deep in the lithosphere, but only as a dependent thin film at the surface. We further see that the interactions here, of life to atmosphere, of life to lithosphere and of life to life are highly interdependent and more important, highly controlled by natural process. Life *includes* man, and man is a part of these *obligate interdependencies*.

Man has not traditionally thought of himself as part of the living world. He has neither acknowledged *his dependency* on other life forms nor his effects on them—and further, he has not acknowledged that his negative effects on other life redound to his detriment.

Now, our nation is developing a new *ecologic ethic* which acknowledges man—not as the exploiter of his biological and physical environment, but as an interdependent part of it.

Widespread understanding of this new philosophy, of its basis in natural science, can and is leading to a rethinking of man's place in the world—as *part* of the world and not as master and exploiter. In this are new hope, new outlooks, new aspirations, new lifestyles, new goals. This ethic can, should, and will have a strong effect on the arts and the uses of the arts and will provide a basis for a new art appropriate to the late 20th century.

## DISCUSSION

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### **Richard Schein:**

*I object to art which I find de-humanizing* and I see a good deal of that lately. I have actually faced some artists with the question directly. I mean by that the kind of art which was not even done by the artist himself.

### **Richard Kostelanetz:**

He did the conception though, didn't he?

### **Richard Schein:**

The conception was a very tiny part of what he displayed to us. It was what someone else had done and which, as a matter of fact, had been worked out on a computer. There was no human being really involved.

I think we'll see a new art—that it will be the rather agonized efforts of persons who are beginning to feel intuitively this new ethic and to express themselves accordingly.



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The Gas Station by George Segal, assemblage  
Courtesy: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

# the artist as perceiver of social realities: the post-art artist

Harold Rosenberg

*Art Critic of the New Yorker  
and Professor of the Committee on Social Thought  
and the Department of Art at the University of Chicago.*

I should like to be able to speak with enthusiastic expectancy of a creature described as "The Artist," a person who possesses, we are told in the brochure issued in connection with the conference, "a trained sensitivity, characteristic openness to experience, need for expressiveness, imaginative ability," and so on—and who, to cap these powers, is a "Perceiver of Social Realities."

Undoubtedly, there are artists—especially among the modern masters—who possess these virtues, or some of them, though, as described, they are rather abstract and might apply to sensitive and intelligent people who are not artists, and even, one might say, to man himself.

Of course, opposite traits are present, too, in both the artist and man. There are artists—and not insignificant ones—who evince rationality rather than sensitivity, who far from being "open to experience" exclude most experience as irrelevant to their art, who feel no need to be "expressive" but wish to assert truths and even dogmas—and for whom (to follow Freud) art is not an instrument for perceiving social realities but, on the contrary, is a means to avoid perceiving such realities, or, for that matter realities of any kind. To give an example, in response to a question regarding his behavior during the struggle against Nazism in Germany, Mr. Josef Albers, one of our most highly regarded artists, replied that he was at that time interested in glass, only in glass.

What the artist sees, first of all, is art. And in art, if he is sensitive and perceptive, he sees what other artists have put there. Whatever else the artist perceives is, in some degree, an effect of his primary apprehension of art. Art focuses and sharpens the artist's vision, as a microscope focuses and sharpens the vision of the researcher.

To be accurate one would have to say that it is art that has been the perceiver of social realities, not the artist. For instance, it is not a fact that Jackson Pollock was gifted with a knowledge of social forces, any more than it is a fact that David Smith was sensitive, or that Mondrian and Ad Reinhardt revealed a "characteristic openness to experience" or "communicated the texture and complexity" of their worlds.

The intuition of social realities is especially strong in modern art. In its revolt against the formal canons of earlier art, it has drawn heavily upon its awareness of the social and cultural situations typical of the modern world. Since Impressionism, painting has preferred "experience," even of the most ephemeral sort, to the aesthetic certainties of traditional art. Modern painting constitutes a remarkable chronicle of the changing consciousness and sensibility of the industrial age. Art took the lead in gauging the fundamental fact of this historical epoch: the precarious condition of Western culture. Specifically, modern art began to see as

early as a century ago that the world leadership of Europe was drawing to a close—it was in art that the European imagination embarked on a voyage to the cultures of pre-Columbian America, the South Sea Islands, Morocco, Japan and the African jungle.

European painting and sculpture found the means to mingle its own forms with those of alien civilizations, and to absorb conditions of the psyche intimated by the exotic signs it had come to appreciate. Thus a sophisticated primitivism established itself as a strain in Western painting, from Gauguin and the Nabis through Paul Klee and the Surrealists to the American Abstract Expressionists.

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Besides exposing the limits of the European heritage, modern art precipitated the sensibility into the new human conditions produced by modern industry. Cubism and Futurism wrenched visual perception out of the fixities of the bucolic and the ideal, which had been the province of The Academy, into the big city and its rhythms. Forms were developed to embody the simultaneity of events and the superimpositions of segments of time and place upon one another characteristic of the new pace of life. Hints were given of systems shared equally by the mind and objective reality. With Constructivism and the Bauhaus a new aesthetic was formulated out of technology itself and out of the processes of mass communication and consumption.

Art, then, has been a perceiver of social realities, has been sensitive, open to experience—and so on. But what is true of art is not necessarily true of artists. Art does not impart its perceptions to individuals as a matter of course—identifying oneself as an artist does not automatically bestow privileges, like taking out citizenship papers. There are artists who resist the intelligence of art, and who are not aware of the priority of that

intelligence in regard to their own talents. Thus artists may fall far short of the discoveries of the past, even though they are the youngest artists to occupy the scene.

Today, it has become a commonplace to speak of artists, or even of The Artist, as having left art behind in order to venture into modes of creation presumably far in advance of the most advanced art of yesterday. In contrast to earlier modes, which introduced new functions for painting—for example, research of the psyche by the Surrealists—the new post-modern outlook aims at an aesthetic liberated from all traditions, including the tradition of the new.

Since no models are relevant to the new work, the artist exists by self-declaration. In the language of our Conference, “today’s venturesome artists are . . . removing the veils separating art and life,” a blending that implies that anyone who is alive is both an artist and a work of art. In New York, for example, one artist periodically notifies his public by mail that he will mount a stool in his studio so many times on a certain date, and that this “work” may be viewed by visiting him at the designated period. This mounting and dismounting could be described, again to quote our brochure statement, as “obliterating and transcending traditional boundaries and categories of art, and employing a more open form language of space, movement and sound.”

In brief, we are speaking of “The Artist” in a pure state, without the benefit of art. Having put aside the art of the past to the point of putting aside art itself, he has passed beyond art to its essence. Instead of painting he deals in space; instead of dance, poetry, film he deals in movement; instead of music he deals in sound. In the current jargon of the art world, he is a mixed media or intermedia creator, for whom the individual arts are inadequate.

The assumption regarding this post-art artist is that an artist has no need of art, since, by definition, he is a man of genius, sensitive, open to experience, a communicator and a perceiver of social realities. In the past, this endowed individual chose to paint pictures, model forms, compose poetry or music. Today, he need no longer confine himself to these ancient modes, which, it is often added, were based upon a rudimentary technology which our age has surpassed. Instead of concentrating his talents on an art, the new artist can blend the visual, the aural, the somatic—coordinate—images with sound, light and motion to produce a super-art able to contain all experience. Through an electronic console he can create effects beyond nature and program symphonies of unheard-of sensations. He can go further—he can fashion an “environment” (most potent word in present-day aesthetics), in which all kinds of stimuli and forces play upon the spectator and make him no longer a spectator but, willy nilly, a participant and thus himself a “creator.”

The vision of the transcendence of the arts in a festival of sensations accessible to all rests upon the crucial issue which we have outlined above: the nature of the artist and the source of his perceptiveness. With what kind of insight has the post-art artist replaced the accumulated insights of art, which such artists as Matisse, Picasso, Klee have drawn upon in their work? A related question is, What makes one an artist? I have said that the artist is a product of art. If this is so, with the arts left behind, the title “Artist” would appear to have become largely a sentimental one—though for that very reason, not without an enormous prestige.

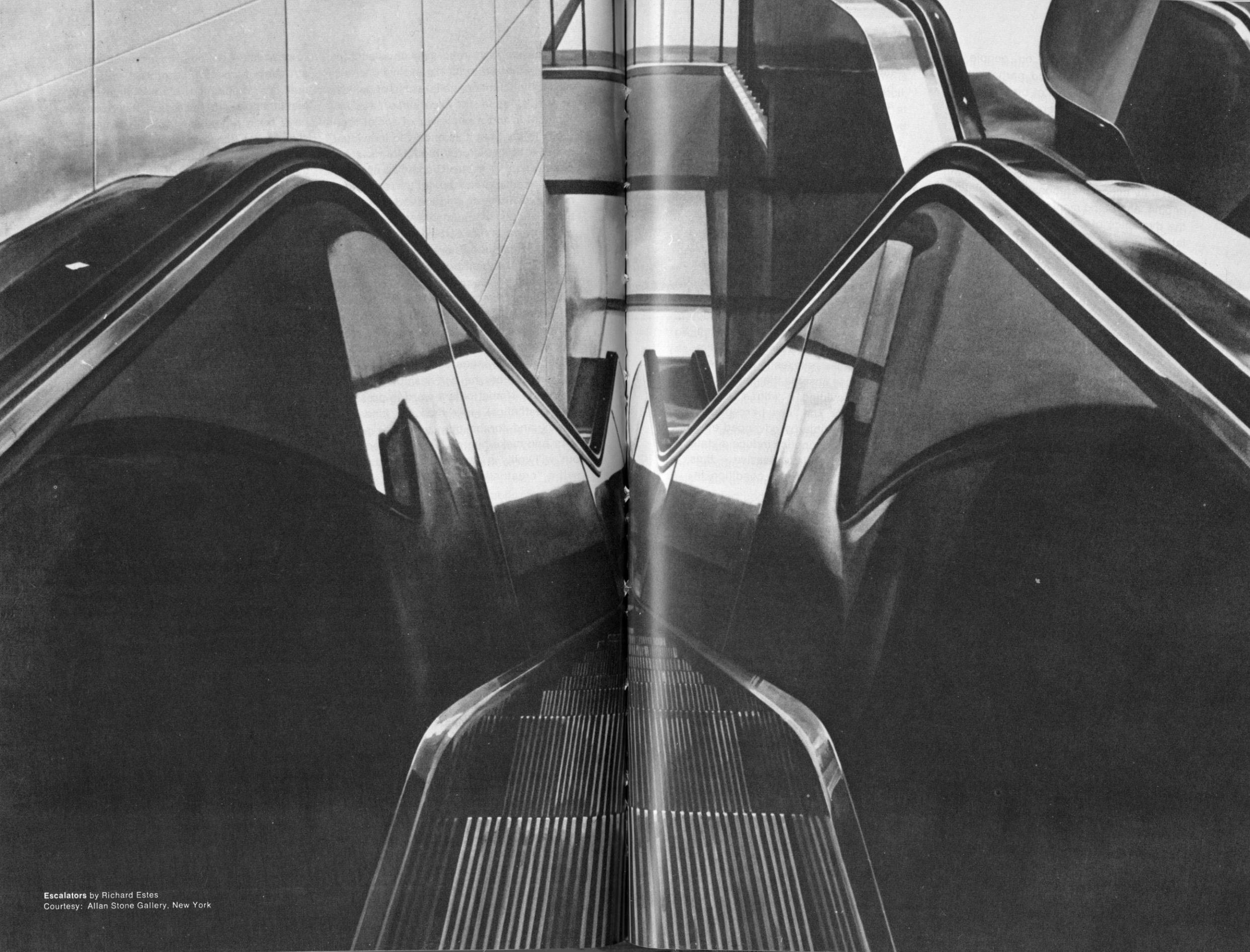
A person feels himself to be capable of creation, he wishes to move people, and he declares himself to be an artist. In the “old days”—that is, up to today’s free-

form artist—he would have begun by instructing himself through art, pro and con. Today, his title refers exclusively to his inherent gifts, the list of which we have been repeating. Actually, they are social gifts, the opposite of the narrow-mindedness, obstinacy, self delusion of the ordinary person. Identification as an artist is heightened, too, by an improvised style of social behavior, by costume, above all by a vocabulary centered upon such newly consecrated words and phrases as “environment,” “community,” “sense extension,” “audience activation,” “new technology.”

Creation beyond the arts consists chiefly of words about art, coupled with the aesthetic goal of attention-getting combinations of phenomena typical of the industrial environment, from noise to projected images and electronic signals. Free of art, the post-art artist is a kind of aesthete-in-readiness, prepared to employ an “open form language” for any purpose that seems feasible—for example, Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Happenings, the Pepsi Cola pavilion at the 1970 Osaka Expo. Having replaced painting, poetry, theatre with devices for stimulating crowds indifferent to art, the artist as contriver of intermixes, technological demonstrations and publicity-inspiring modifications of the landscape is an advanced version of the Hollywood-Madison Avenue idea man.

Does the approach of this late-model director of mass-entertainment features hold promise for a better society?

In my opinion the wrecking work on the arts conducted by the post-art artist in behalf of a generalized aesthetics used to “sell” the technological environment is a feature not of some future society but of mass society as *it is now*. In a word, the new art is neo-commercial in character, an extension of the existing system. As to its theories of working on the senses of



**Escalators** by Richard Estes  
Courtesy: Allan Stone Gallery, New York

its audience, the effect on people of clogged highways, air and garbage polluted streets, the clatter of broadcast announcements is no different in character from that of mixed-media performances—a traffic jam “employs the open form language of space, movement and sound” and could be transferred to a museum with only minor alterations. Manipulating people, and being manipulated, constitute the dynamics of contemporary social relations.

Modern art, it is often observed, has demolished the barriers between art and life. Under these circumstances, sharp distinctions between modes of creation become more vital than ever before. For instance, it is one thing to build forms in art out of forms perceived in experience (instead of fitting experience into ready-made aesthetic moulds); but it is something else to conceive the world as “a toy for grown-ups,” as the wife of the president of Pepsi Cola described the “open form” creation of EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) at Osaka. The twentieth century provides numerous instances of how socially destructive an excessively aesthetic outlook can be for society—the latest documentation is to be found in the memoirs of Mr. Albert Speer, Hitler’s architect, adviser of decors for Party rallies and super-builder.

A baneful aestheticism has been eroding the arts in the United States during the past fifteen years. Today, having gone through the “pure” art of color painting and minimal sculpture, it has conceived a Utopia of the permanent fairground, enlivened by a constant circulation of light, sound, texture, motions. I believe it is self-evident that “technological intoxication” (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Speer) is hardly the model to follow in reconstituting society.

Here are a few of the respects in which post-art aestheticism falls short as a “perceiver of social realities.”

1. It misunderstands the nature of the artist—that the artist is made by art, at least to the degree that art is made by artists. The term “The Artist” is a personification of the sum total of art. Individuals are artists to the extent that they are inspired by this sum total. The beyond-art artist is not an artist, no matter how talented he may be as an impresario of popular spectaculars.
2. Post-art aestheticism also misunderstands the nature of technology as a possible instrument of creation. The complex equipment and synthetic substances constantly developed by industry stimulate sense reflexes in the observer. These unsettle the mind, rather than providing it with a useable language. The “new perceptions” made possible by advanced electronics and kinetics induce a state that is essentially passive—thus the opposite of the condition induced by art.
3. Technological society is not an amusement park. No conception of it is adequate that fails to include recognition of the social forces that control technological research, development and use in the contemporary world. Neo-aestheticism overlooks the fact that in harnessing his work to expensive equipment the artist is under pressure to surrender his freedom. He makes himself subject to the proprietor of his means of production, as well as to the ordinary functions of the equipment itself, the efficiency of which is limited to the purpose for which it was built. In Osaka, after a series of compromises, EAT was dismissed and management of its creation taken over by Pepsi Cola

which introduced changes. The glory of painting and literature is that the paint brush, the pencil, the sheet of paper are totally at the command of their user. Above all, they are available to everyone, thus making creation potentially as broad as the human race.

In contrast to the new "open form language," the individual arts, in whatever condition they have assumed under the pressure of cultural change and the will of individual artists, have never been more indispensable to society. With its accumulated insights, its disciplines, its standards, painting (or music or poetry) provides a means for the active self-development of individuals—perhaps the only means. Given the "societal patterns" in which mass behavior is presently organized, art is the one vocation that keeps a space open for the single person actively to elaborate his unique potentialities. An environment that lacks the presence of self-developing individuals—but in which persons are constantly being acted upon—hardly deserves to be called a *human* environment.

### JOSEPH ADAMSON III

*Instructor in the Department of Theatre Arts, The Pennsylvania State University.*

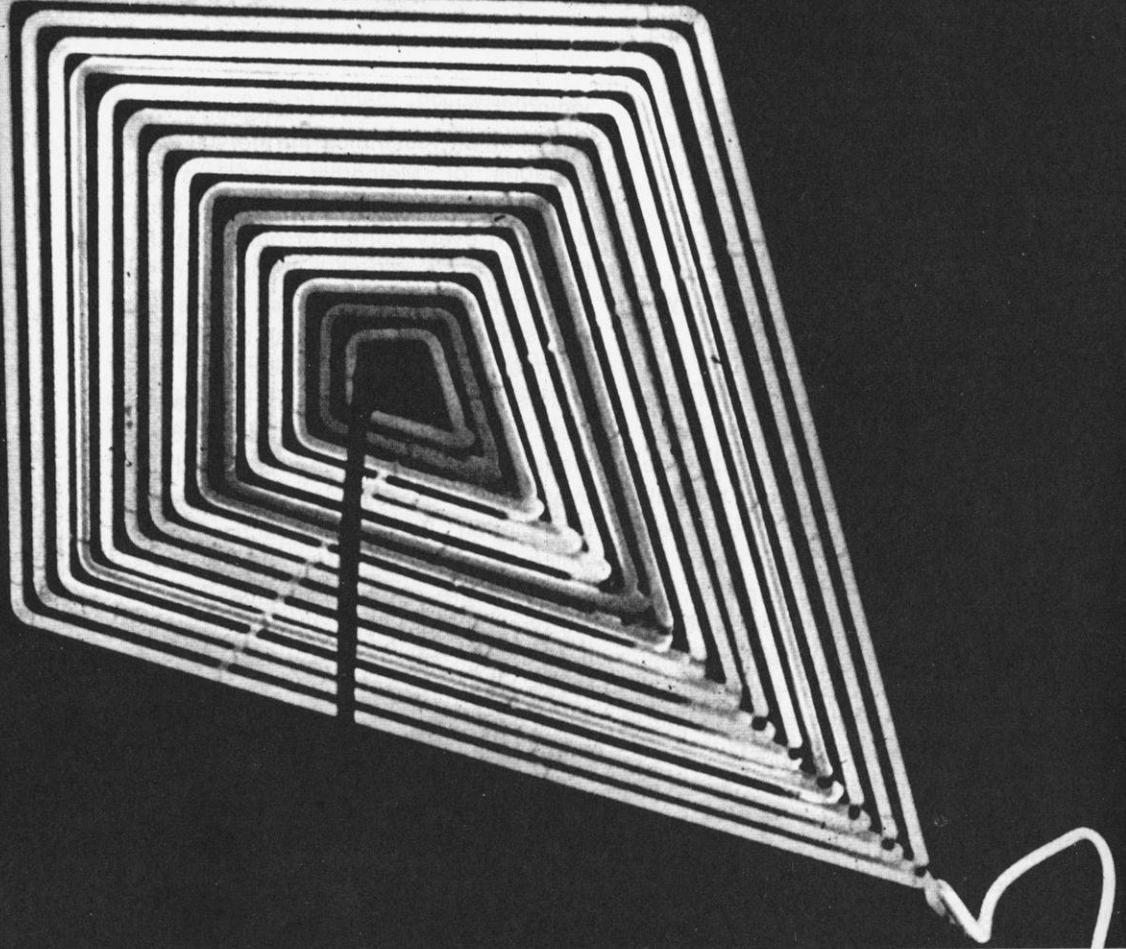
The few references in the address we've just heard that can be taken as applicable to film seem not to be made by an artist, or even a proponent for artists, but by a spokesman for some kind of League of Decency. "The complex equipment and synthetic substances," for instance, "stimulate sense reflexes in the observer. These unsettle the mind, rather than pro-

viding it with a useable language . . ." All of which resembles the nervous declarations of Methodist ministers and Chataqua orators to be found in abundance in every corner of our great land the minute the nefarious invention of the motion picture appeared on the scene. It was as if some wizard had arrived with strange supernatural powers no one understood nor wanted to understand, they just wanted him to leave. Statements of this kind have followed film everywhere, particularly in articles like the Motion Picture Production Code, which was always so afraid of what sense reflexes were going to be stimulated in the observer and kept sticking wives and husbands in separate beds in the name of "purity" and "decency." This frame of mind persists to this day, to decry any "unsettling" effect a film such as *Bonnie and Clyde* may chance to have.

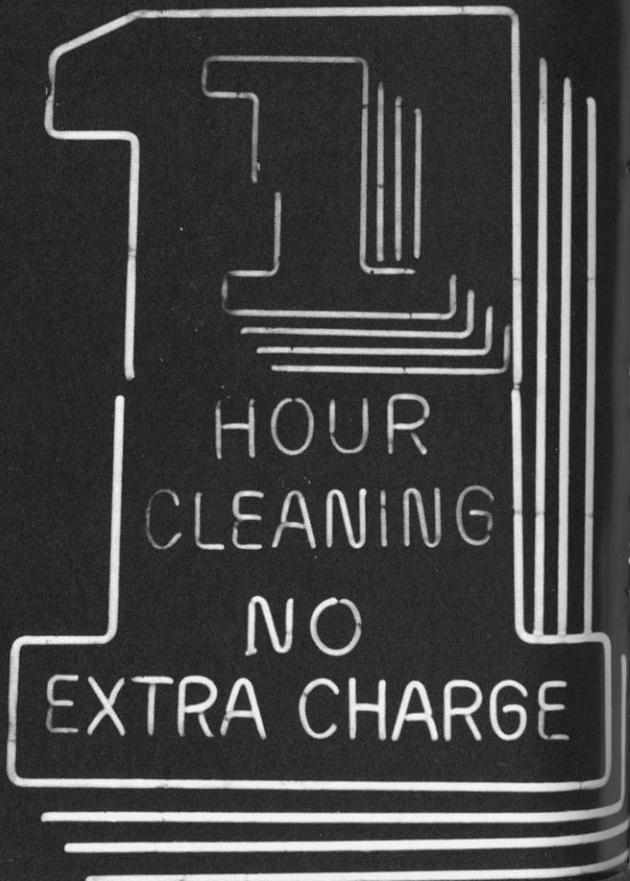
The real sweeping statement, however, is the following:

*Neo-aestheticism overlooks the fact that in harnessing his work to expensive equipment the artist is under pressure to surrender his freedom. He makes himself subject to the proprietor of his means of production, as well as to the limited functions of the equipment itself, the efficiency of which is limited to the purpose for which it was built. In Osaka, after a series of compromises, E.A.T. was dismissed and management of its creation taken over by Pepsi Cola which introduced changes.*

This inflammatory rhetoric is, I presume, intended to indicate that the aesthetic value of the artist or his art necessarily deteriorates as the monetary value of the equipment he uses increases. The entire aesthetic that has been constructed around the film medium over the last seventy years has had to deny that any such statement could be made, or, if it



↑ **U.F.O.** by Billy Apple, neon, 1966  
Collection of Sidney R. Solomon



could be made, that it could be used to deny the value of the art produced.

The fact remains that a technological social reality calls into being a technological artist, and *something* has got to be done about him. There will always be the Pepsi Cola who comes in and introduces changes in the E.A.T., just as there will always be Universal Studio who introduces changes in *Touch of Evil* without consulting Orson Welles. Society is defined by the degree to which it does manipulate; the artist is defined by the degree to which he does not. If it is within the nature of the artist, or the nature of his art, to perceive social realities, it is within the nature of society not to listen. The artist and society are, almost by definition, in opposition to each other. These are definitions that are not about to break down, not very soon.

The tendency is to look upon everyday reality as something of little importance and art as a thing in itself. We presuppose for the purposes of art a submerged or more profound reality, transcending Death, Violence, and America. And yet, Death, Violence, and America are real and terrifying, and constitute active threats against all living things. In its insistence on mystifying and hallucinating, art has become in the main an instrument of escape from reality.

For instance in avant-garde theatre and films, the characters are frequently presented — either physically or psychologically — as standing in spiral shadows; and amid a nostalgic ambience the audiences are induced to seek out a shadow for whomever it might be standing in a shadow. In the end we discover that no one was there, that no one was standing in this shadow or that shadow or the other shadow. We learn only that they stood in shadows.

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Such puzzles are fascinating but hardly crucial to the needs of life and the world. Walter Kerr, the New York Drama Critic, in one of his rare moments of coherency and adulthood, once wrote:

*If we are not content, it is because drama has generally been thought to have a purpose. Its purpose is not to leave a mystery, but to display one, to display it in its ambiguity and in its elusiveness but to display it so thoroughly that we feel we have stepped, for a moment inside it — that we have come to know intuitively what we never could know intellectually.*

So if the mystery in art remains merely something for us to talk and write about, then all the so-called artist has done was to trick us into an intellectual con-game. But the terror of life has not been perceived or confronted, and we cannot

### LONNE ELDER III

Playwright living in New York City.

Out of my own world and my own prejudices, I am moved to state that as they are currently thought of in America the concepts of "art" and "artist" are false. They are unrelated to social realities — unconnected. These concepts have very little correspondence with those realities that come to us in our dreams and with those that are apparent in the dangers that confront us in life. Because we are anxious to set art aside from reality, the premise on which these concepts are based is a fraud. The truth is that we like to think of art as a unique personal expression or as some experimental excursion at the apex of the sacred mind-waves of the so-called artist.

accordingly in any way take precaution against the dangers in the reality about us. All you get are images and mermaids and the perpetuation of all that historical, intellectual bullshit we've grown to expect and predict.

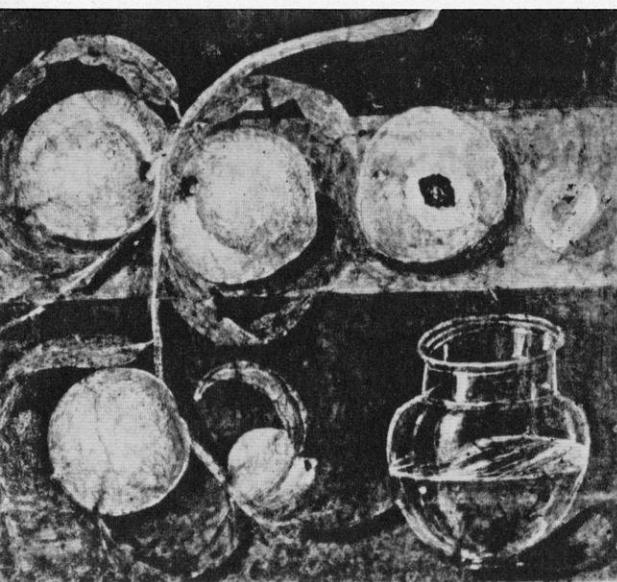
A few years back, I went to the opening night of a play by a friend of mine, and on the bill with my friend's work was a play by Samuel Beckett which opened up with huge man-woman size jars on the stage, with people in the jars. As the characters spoke their lines, clever jelled lights were flashing back and forth. While I sat there, tired from the day's work, I decided I would close my eyes for a few minutes to give them rest, knowing that I would not miss any visual stage activity, that the people in those jars would never venture outside of them, that I would be content with the thunder of Samuel Beckett's language. My prediction was right. But even the magic of his dialogue couldn't prevent me from falling asleep. After the lights had gone down on the final moment of the play, there were those about me uttering testaments as if something eventful, of worldly magnitude had burst into their faces — as if Richard Nixon had

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suddenly been revealed as a great moral leader.

Of course, nothing really happened on the stage. We can talk the play to death but it hardly had anything to do with all those little boys and girls dying on the streets of Harlem or with the death of America that is consistently circulating in life.

What I am basically trying to say is that the so-called "art" and the so-called "artist" have failed as elements of creative living. They have fallen prey to a large force, called "culture," which includes the cultural critic, cultural essayist, cultural academician, and the cultural fashion-maker. It is sad, especially when artists have the opportunity to explode and explore the nerve of the universe — with all its brutality and ecstasy. The need was and is to challenge the force of complexity and not to sing and dance with it as some fool in a king's court. Jean Paul Sartre once suggested that the writer should ask himself one question before he wrote a single word: "What if everyone read my book?"



**Peaches and Glass Jar,**  
wall painting from Herculaneum, c. 50 A.D.  
National Museum, Naples



**Still Life**  
by Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin (1699-1779)  
Bequest of Robert H. Tannahill  
Courtesy: The Detroit Institute of Arts

## ALBERT CHRIST-JANER

Fuller E. Callaway Foundation Professor of Art at the University of Georgia.

I am convinced, after a lifetime of serious and yet joyous participation in the world of the arts of our strenuous time, that the biggest danger of all time is implicit to the arts in what is recently coming up to the top as non-art, anti-art, or a new social art. It is not all the same, of course, but these days, what is? In one sense, it is all the same, however, in that this kind of destruction of limits, of boundaries, of definitions, is more likely to undermine civilization's structure than even the Vietnam War. And how can I say anything more agonized?

When I read that art is now going to march onward and upward to save the world, I am sick at heart. This new development is ecological, environmental, informational, everywhere and nowhere. The mind boggles at the limitless expanse. The educated mind staggers at all the implications.

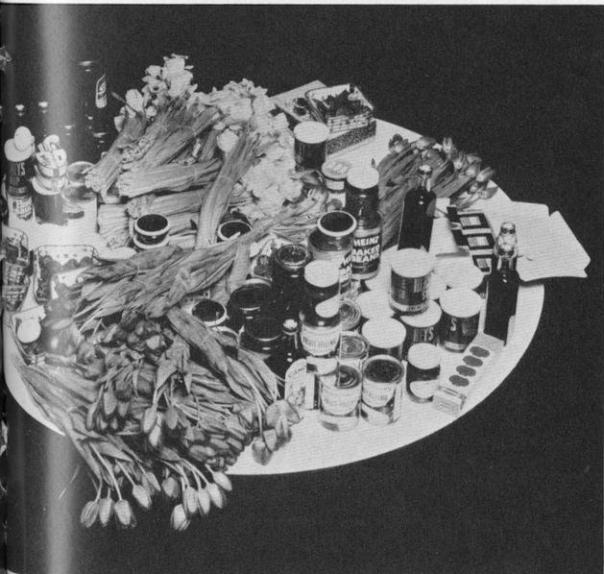
The historical fact of modern art is really twisted when it is implied that it has de-

molished the barriers between art and life. Picasso, the high priest in its now venerable and central temple, would never subscribe to this statement. For it is not a true statement of fact.

From its beginning modern art took the opposite position. It gave plenty of evidence of this fact, for us in America, when its philosophy helped rescue us from the jejune efforts of social conscience limners, after about 1940.

I know that this now classical viewpoint of modern art might mark me as a square, but I have recently acquired some concepts of history which are more serviceable to me than others I have tried to think my way through. While I, as a pale remnant of 1930's liberalism, detest the smell of absolutism, I am more willing these days to see that a steadfast faith in some verities is not likely to misserve me. I more than faintly trust the larger hope that some thoughts are better than others and that I am no fascist when I select some as more trustworthy than others. One I trust, I am sure, is that modern art, like any expression or form

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Pews from the edition, *News, Mews, Pews, Brews, Stews & Dues*,  
by Edward Ruscha, screenprint, 1970  
Courtesy: Editions Alecto of America Ltd.



Photo by Linda Heddle

of protestantism, is good for what ails us at this time in history.

I am content to let some distinctions abide. Thus, I cannot do better at this point than to write huge ditto marks after the last sentence which Mr. Rosenberg has written in his paper: with all that is said about environment, nothing suits me better than to know that Harold Rosenberg appreciates that the self-developing person *must* be regarded as central in the *human* environment.

I seem to disagree only here, on this most significant point: while art may well be the single vocation which offers an important opportunity for the individual's single activity, the artist need not necessarily make obvious social commentary in order to be relevant or significant.

Rather, may I bring to my position's support the words of the gentle and otherworldly William Carlos Williams, who in his "Imaginations" offers a statement about art which I am sure will survive:

*When the wheel's just at the upturn it  
glimpses horizon, zenith, all in a  
burst, the pull of the earth shaken off,  
a scatter of fragments, significance  
in a burst of water striking up from  
the base of a fountain. . . . this is art.  
. . . a thing to carry up with you at  
the next turn; a very small thing, in-  
conceivably feathery.*

I continue faithful in my love for the art of the visionary whose very genius escapes from the rude clutches of the mundane. It does not hold me exclusively but I, among many, will ever enjoy it profoundly.

**VINCENT ARTZ**  
*Executive Director of the Pennsylvania  
Council on the Arts.*

Are we in a position to make a judgement concerning the artist's ability to be a "perceiver of social realities?" We have yet to develop clear definitions that are commonly understood of what art is and what an artist is. The following are some pertinent questions which might point toward useful definitions:

... Should art, as it is understood, be the province of every human being?

... Does the artist's training as it is now constituted develop a sensitivity and an ability to be imaginative, inventive, and searching? Is he aware of what is really happening?

... Is the artist motivated by an interest in his fellow man and, if he is not, can he really be a perceiver of reality?

... Does the artist search for new methods to solve problems that are a detriment to the society in which he lives?

... Can the artist create better understanding by breaking age-old shackles that are stifling the progress of the human race?

... Does the artist have the courage and intuitiveness to detect destructive elements in our society and, if so, is he in a position to make positive statements that will affect and improve existing conditions?

If the artist really exists as a person that stands at the core of society has he, in



Photo by Ray Metzker  
from Ben Shahn, Steichen, Metzker: The Wisconsin Heritage in Photography,  
an exhibit assembled by the Milwaukee Art Center

the past, been a perceiver of social realities? Is he presently in a position where he can perceive social realities, or can he be expected to remain on the periphery and make statements that are little more than adornments?

It is possible that we have failed to create an atmosphere that is conducive to freedom and pure expression of a man involved in artistic endeavors. Are we satisfied with our methods of preparing people to create, to make constructive social comments through their creativity, to appreciate the creative talents and offerings of others: to be in these various roles truly "perceivers of social reality?"

misplaced affection for fascism later on. Technology did not, and will not, usher in the millennium for Italy, and it will not do so for the rest of us either. We are, as everyone knows, living in an age when nearly everyone is completely surrounded by, fed by, transported by, entertained by, and kept track of by technology, and since it is so pervasive and, at times, so exciting, as in the great moon adventure, artists have begun to think that it is the heart of what we are. We confuse its vitality with the value of organic life; we make machines that are almost human, and we are almost ready to commit one of the greatest of all follies — we would really like to start tinkering with our genes so we can improve ourselves.

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#### JOSEPH C. SLOANE

*President of the National Council of the Arts in Education, and Professor and Chairman of Art at the University of North Carolina. He is Director of the William Hayes Ackland Memorial Center.*

What worries me is the possibility that the artist is about to sell out to technology, an event which is suggested by a number of trends on the local scene and which is asserted with considerable skill in Burnham's fascinating book, *Beyond Modern Sculpture*. Like many of my fellow citizens I am running scared these days, and the two things which scare me the most are the bad habits of my fellow men and technology. The former need not concern us, but the latter is very germane to the very essence of our problem. The Futurists were the first in this century to really embrace the machine — and its step-child, war — as the embodiments of the new aesthetic suitable to our times, an enthusiasm which led them to a badly

There was a time, there still is a time, when the central thing in the artistic act was a revelation of truth about our humanity. It is my growing conviction that revelations of truth about our addiction to technology is not only a different matter, it is a dangerous path for the artist to follow. To "go beyond art" really means that we have given up trying to make something moving and expressive out of ourselves, and can now be "turned on" only by the qualities central to machinery, and the energies which animate it, but not us. Mr. Toffler writes in *Future Shock* of the "disposable culture" we are living in, but the only thing we cannot dispose of is ourselves. I believe artists must be free to venture, but I also believe that they accept a marriage with technology and its relatives at the risk of their humanity.

## DISCUSSION

**Audience Member** (question addressed to Harold Rosenberg):

Speaking of "technological intoxication," wasn't the proliferation of printing presses an enormous technological advance in reconstituting an earlier conforming society? If it wasn't, I don't know what we're doing here. I'm speaking of the rebel Bibles, of the English Church and the Vatican and so forth. Humanity did survive somehow, so too, evidently, have the writers and machines. *I wish we would give the media artist and the environmental technology a chance. I wish we could see and experience as well as hear.*

**Harold Rosenberg:**

I never heard of anybody writing a poem on a printing press. It's simply a form for reproduction.

**Audience Member** (comment addressed to Harold Rosenberg):

I appreciate your role as critic but *I resent your tampering with process.* It is my task as a filmmaker to use as a so-called post-art artist all kinds of media. You are saying that it is wrong for someone as an artist to mix media — theatre, sculpture, film, etc.

**Maureen Russell** (Youth panel member in the audience):

How does the role of the artist fit in with the environment? Where does the critic come in, or the architect? How do they help the environment? I don't understand. We seem to be dealing only with what each individual thinks his own particular role is — but not in relation to anything else. I don't understand. I don't understand where you (panel and conference members) bring in solutions.

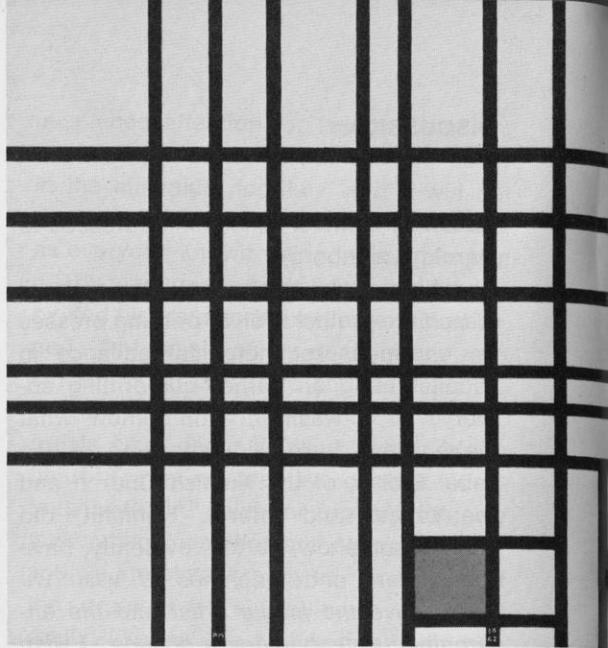
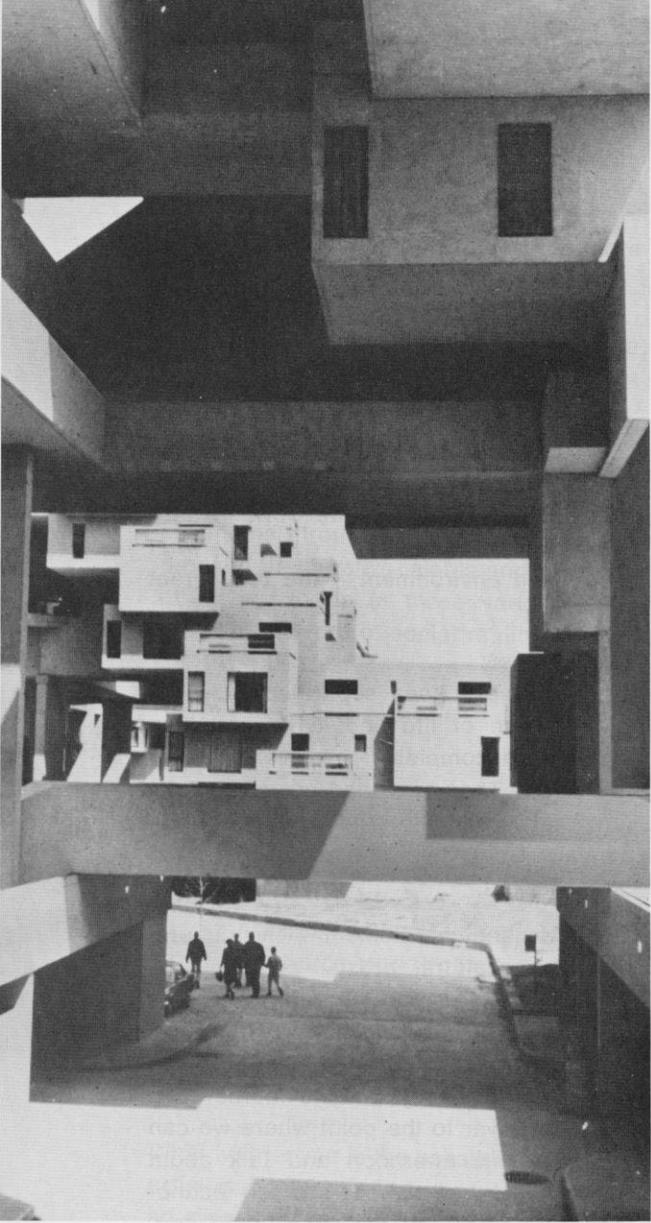
**Audience Member:**

May I say how deeply moved I am by the question the young lady asked. I am 60 years old, I have worked hard all my life and I enjoy the day, but I don't have a great deal of optimism as I look ahead five or ten years. I just have enough guts to make it day by day. One of the reasons for this is that I have such a profound sense of limitations. The reason your question touched me is because you, very much like I at your age, are asking not just the panel, but the world: Where are we going, how can I get help; what about the environment — the total great big thing?

**Lonnie Elder:**

The arts have been separated from the basic value of life and living and they have been completely irrelevant to that life itself. They have had no real impact on what is actually guiding us from day to day. I call them so-called artists and so-called art.

There is another element — the cultural element. Cultural artists, cultural academicians, etc. have conditioned so-called art to be in its place. They have also conditioned so-called justifiable suicide or so-called justifiable murder and justifiable war to the point where we can sit here this afternoon and talk about technological art opposed to non-technological art, tasteful art opposed to non-art. Meanwhile the world is falling in pieces. This is why I say that it has nothing to do with reality. The so-called artist has only one job — to confront reality. Unless he would rather be a fool and live in a world of sound and abstract pictures, complete nudity, or what have you. *When someone takes on the awesome task of communicating with people, he should confront that with his life.*



There was a time, there still is a time,  
when the central thing is to find a mood,  
a feeling, a way to express it, a way to reveal it,  
of truth, of beauty, of meaning.

There was a time, there still is a time,  
when the central thing is to find a mood,  
a feeling, a way to express it, a way to reveal it,  
of truth, of beauty, of meaning.

↑ **Composition 2 with Blue Square**

by Piet Mondrian

Courtesy: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

← **Habitat Montreal**

from **Beyond Habitat** by Moshe Safdie

Courtesy: Tundra Books of Montreal

↓ **Taos Pueblo, New Mexico**

Courtesy: New Mexico Department of Development



# the shape of humanism

**Serge Chermayeff**

*Professor Emeritus,*

*Department of Architecture, Yale University  
and Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.*

I think we are all perfectly conscious of being in a transition period. Though everybody describes the accompanying aches and pains in different ways, for the sake of argument I think one could say that what is really happening to us at the moment is that we are moving away from a concept of the world which assumes rather simple things and simple ways of doing things and we are now nervously beginning to accept the sense of complexity which has suddenly been revealed to us — a complexity which governs all forms of life, including man. We do not like the new view. It makes us uneasy.

For years we have been prone to describe human beings through the use of simplistic, mechanistic analogies, assuming, for example, that since each member of the species had a similar circulatory, digestive, and nervous system, that we were all governed by a constant set of factors. But it is now apparent that that view did not tell us much about the real nature of individuals, who are infinitely variable, not only in time and space, but within their own beings. Finger prints have for a long time suggested the fact of personal variability, but now we also have the evidence of voice prints to further highlight our sense of strangeness to one another — the strangeness we all now feel even amidst the intimacy of the family breakfast table.

So we have to get used to the idea that we are living in a very complex world, one constantly undergoing an evolution-

ary process. We no longer can take it for granted that everything is going to be exactly the same from the moment of birth to the moment of one's convenient disposal. We have to accept the fact that reality is a process of living development, change and growth, and that the notion of completion is a mortuary concept.

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Though the significance of change is still largely ignored, it has become the most vital aspect of our life. Through the acceleration of change, we and our society are continually becoming quite different. An important fact that we are still failing to grasp is that a qualitative change is the inevitable by-product of quantitative increase. For years we have been in the ridiculous trap of believing that more was always better. We were quantity-minded consumers in our approach to practically all problems — with the result that we now find ourselves trapped in this environmental mess.

The deteriorating environment has actually two natures: that which exists outside human endeavor but which is becoming more and more modified by our interference with it, and that which is man-made. The latter has now become more powerful and pervasive than nature itself. At the same time both are moving toward an indissolvable kind of duality. We can no longer step aside when we have made a mistake and hope that the jungle will cover up the error. We just have nowhere to go. Our mistakes haunt us and everything that we pollute or inter-

fere with remains a constant reminder of our persistent folly, some of which has reached a point of no return.

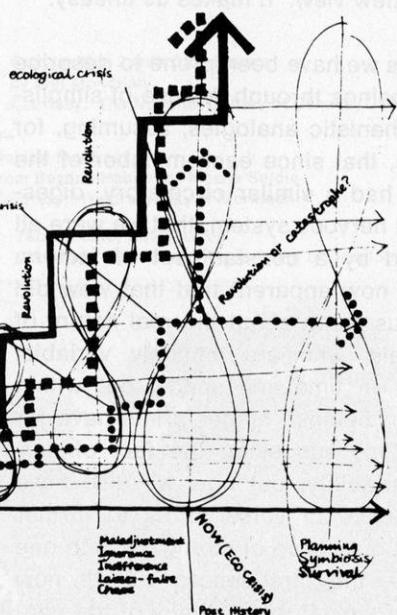
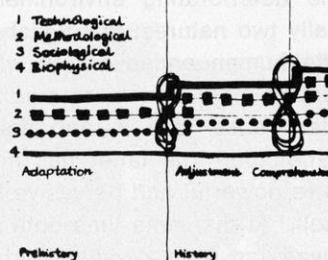
To summarize the nature of my concern and commitment, it has become very obvious that things are, indeed, complex and not simple and that this complexity is something of which we have to become masters.

I do not think there is any question in anybody's mind that technological development has extended the range of our ability to deal with complexity. For example, the telescope and microscope have infinitely broadened our natural capacity to see, the automobile and airplane our natural mobility. But we have also actually extended the whole of our nervous system through the new processes and methods of cybernetics. For the first time we have the necessary tools to make all problems manageable in terms of

analysis and measurement. This is perhaps the most significant development that has ever been witnessed in history.

Our new technological capacity to deal with complexity can also be viewed as potentially a vastly increased creative capacity for a man, in a new sense. Since the arts have always dealt fundamentally with complexity, one presumes that the artists are now challenged to move into an expanded role. But it is most difficult to define what that role might be. We do not yet clearly know how the artist operates. We do know that he comes by all sorts of strange quantum jumps to solutions which are as good as or sometimes better than the logical structures of lesser men. But we have not yet learned how to measure this capacity or how to encourage its flourishing. Certainly it seems evident that we can no longer indulge our sense of aestheticism, a practice which normally is a symptom of uneasiness and escape.

Human evolution occurs in 'four time-orbits' simultaneously: in the natural and the man-made environments. Change and growth through innovation and transformation extend both the habitat and man himself.  
(In this diagram evolutionary time is on the horizontal scale and change and growth are on the vertical scale.)



Practicing creative minds do not discuss the nature of excellence and the perfection of their acts. They just look at them. I have had any number of painters come to my house (which I am happy to say is filled with paintings from some rather distinguished people — the collected loot of a long life) who never look around at the paintings. These are pseudo-visual people. Instead they talk about themselves. Then I know I am not talking to an artist and that I shall never have to invite him to my house again. There are these kind of litmus paper tests which I think can be reasonably applied in considering the question of the role of the artist.

Now that we can tackle complexity as a whole, we can say that the past is not just history but an ever present component of the present, and that the future is not something in a crystal ball (to be sneered at) but the predictable obvious which is just as much part and parcel of the present as the past. So what we are now searching for in every act, and particularly when we are designing environments, is some kind of vision of a new symbiosis. It is this symbiosis which we are obviously searching for — not only between us and what we still think of as nature, but between us and other men. This is our challenge.

No matter who plans what or where the result has its reverberation in the Pacific, in Africa, Latin America, Russia, China, or any other place you would like to think of as physical or political, economic, technological entities. In fact, what we are seeking is a symbiosis for the human species, one global in its nature, effect, and purpose.

We do not yet realize that when we say let us have more of something that appears very seductive, that more is going to become either better or worse. And when it becomes worse the result is threatening and may even mean death

and destruction. I do not think we have to wait now for a nuclear holocaust to destroy our humanity. All we have to do is to continue to build cities as we have in the past — thoughtlessly.

Now we know that technology has its own pace and moves absolutely independently of any institutional or cultural patterns. It spins off way ahead of institutional adjustment to the new realities. Most of our problems really result from the fantastic disparity between technological growth and our institutional reaction. So it is institutions that you must finally battle and not technology, which is relatively simple and has its own logic and inevitable process of advance. Actually the lag between the two is lengthening, and if you were to draw a graph showing the current relationship you would find that we have reached a point of no return. Now the technological effect digs right down into our biophysical, psychological, evolutionary pattern, which we always took for granted as being eternal, untouchable — a kind of framework within which we could conveniently maneuver and escape destruction. We cannot escape the consequences of our acts any more. We are undermining the very roots of our being, the very roots, if you like, of our humanity.

In Galbraithian terms our society is now a "technostructure." This is a culture where everything interacts. It is for that reason that we have to build new bridges between diverse sets of understanding. We can no longer afford to draw the line between intuition and intellect, but must develop tools and media which will be shared by the scientist and artist alike.

Because of its resources and because of its objective stance, the university has an apt role in developing our capacity to denote and deal with complexity. It can not only help forge links between the

various methods and mechanics of inquiry but it has the marked capacity to remove art from the context of mystique or fashion, and to put the creative process as a whole in its proper perspective as a human activity which is carried on at different levels of excellence. Most people are not creative because they have never been given an opportunity to exercise their talents. There are any number of situations today in which we lose excellence of all sorts simply because we have not provided ample opportunity for it to exercise itself in the company of its peers.

In America we have a peculiarly fragmented culture. Children are totally protected from any contact with reality with the result that they become unbearable and unteachable. The old are considered to have lived beyond their usefulness when their reactions are slower and we forbid them the great "open sesame" of our culture, the driving license. But we do more than neglect our children and our old people; we systematically exclude every single group which does not conform to the established norms and institutions.

There are no mixing places in our culture. The designing of the environmental process must include the making of mixing places — public places where young and old, middle-aged and adolescent, will find themselves as a matter of daily necessity and be able to observe how humanity behaves at different stages of its development. It is important that we continually encounter persons of varying culture, intellectual preoccupation, and emotional make up and color.

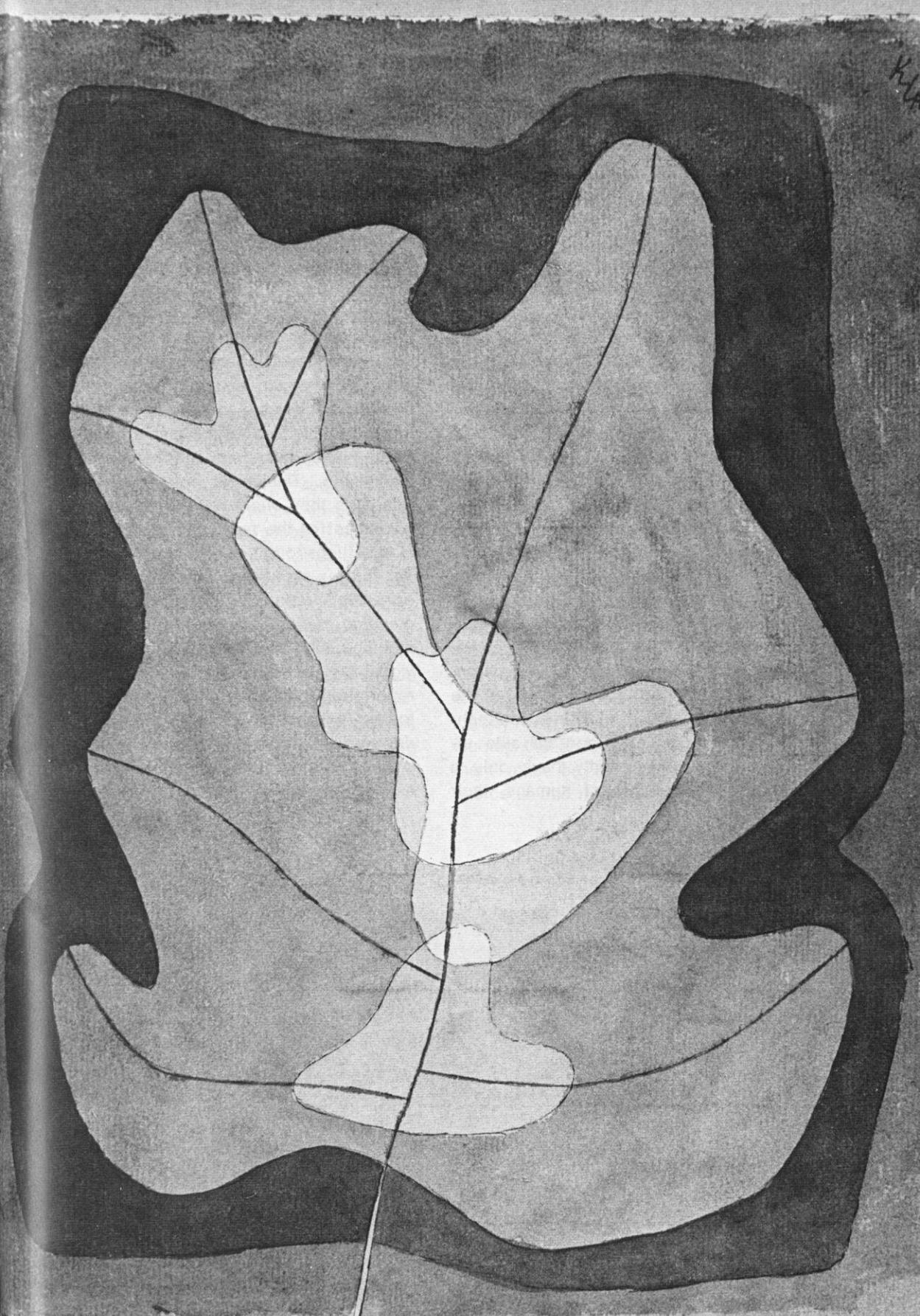
What I am talking about, of course, are the great priorities in design — compassion for others, human concern, awareness of the condition of *all* men. Indeed, it particularly behooves us to become sensitive to the needs and aspirations of

those we don't know, because they may very well become the very catalysts we need in order to transform ourselves.

As he approaches the now enlarged and complex societal vision of environment, the designer assumes multiple responsibilities, social and moral as well as technical. Similarly, his commitment must be multi-dimensional, broad-based, and totally comprehensive. It is a commitment to design public places which will be rewarding, rich containers for life; places where man in balanced measure meets strangeness and adventure as well as reassurance and the expected; places of concourse, of mix and the maximization of human experience; complementary places offering choices between apparently contradictory opposites; places to induce receptivity to new idea: all conceived as part of the kind of open system essential to human evolution.

Simplistic scientific answers or arty attitudes will no longer do. If we follow Bertrand Russell's advice to "remember your humanity and forget all the rest," then we can be assured, in the words of Eric Gill, that "beauty will look after herself."

"The Klee water-color on the opposite page adds another dimension to the structural movement of energy within the city: the creation of fields of quality at the points of convergence of movement systems. Since the veins of a leaf or the branches of a tree are comparable to the channels of movement of people and goods within a city, we see the parallel between organic structural forms and the city movement system, their sequential effect on the sensibilities of the people who move over them, and the resulting effect on the appearance and character of the city adjacent to them."



Illuminated Leaf by Paul Klee, 1929

Courtesy: Paul Klee Foundation,  
Museum of Fine Arts, Berne

**RAYMOND STUDER, JR.**

*Director, Division of Man-Environmental Relations, Pennsylvania State University.*

Professor Chermayeff has identified the fundamental issues with which this culture must deal — complexity, man versus nature, change, technology and our lagging institutions. Thanks to the energetic commitment of our "youth" (not chronologically defined), the knowledge of our scientific community and the vision of our community of artists, I predict we will deal effectively with these issues in the future. We are beginning to understand how, and the social "revolution" we are experiencing hopefully provides the spirit to get on with it.

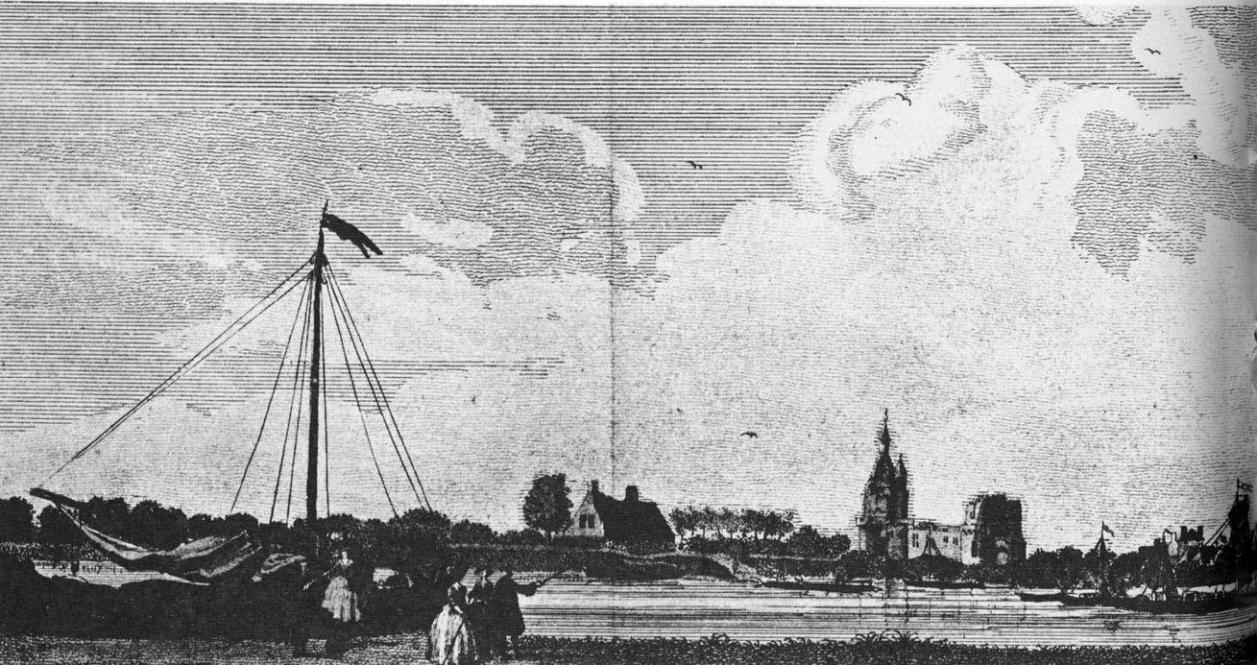
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The complexity of contemporary human systems is due not only to increasing population (the fundamental issue) but to the imposition of technology itself. Technology has been interposed to reduce the conflict between man and his environment, also man and man (a subset of the former). We have certainly misused technology and misunderstood its side effects, and we apparently have only a limited understanding of humans, their

capabilities and limitations. The present situation is one wherein we can think only in terms of fundamental reorientations. This is no time to make small and harmless plans for the future. But Professor Chermayeff has made the case for the problems we face. Let me make some general recommendations for their solution.

Environmental planning and design involves the development of strategies for organizing human settings to overcome existing social, biological and environmental deficiencies — the disparities between human intentions and their accomplishments. Design is concerned with things as they ought to be, and the development of the means for moving human settings to this new state. Before we can make a significant and lasting impact on the environment we must become a *planning culture*, one wherein collective planning is an integral aspect of the individual member's thought and behavioral repertoire — an inculcated orientation toward existence. There is a need for decision-making mechanisms which are participated in by those persons affected as well as specialists and professionals

J. de Beyer, engraving with watercolor, 1750  
Reprinted by permission of the author from **Design of Cities**  
by Edmund N. Bacon, The Viking Press

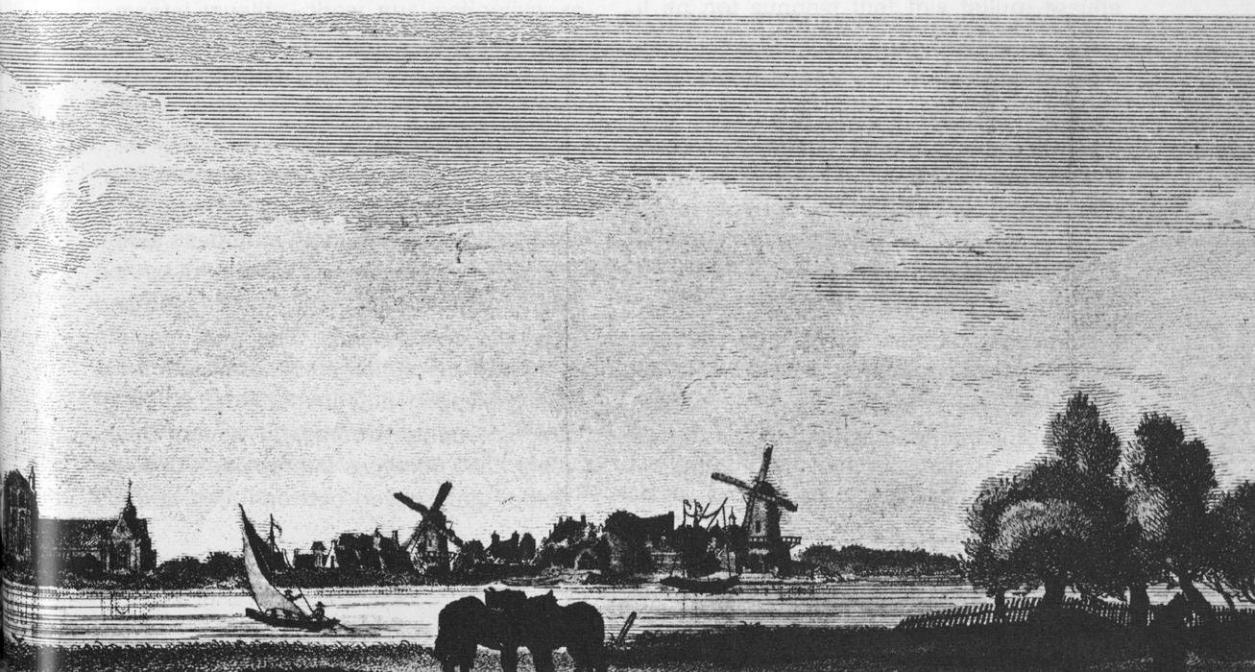


in the arts and sciences. Environment developed by either artists or technologists independently will probably lead us further into disaster. Consensus is required concerning a formal structure of decision-making which admits systematic inputs from all involved participants and relevant professionals. We can assume that in a *planning culture* this proposition would be neither excessively difficult to implement nor productive of bad plans. Many professionals are concerned with the environment and it is their collective talents which are needed.

To develop environments for large and complex human settings requires that traditional problem spaces be collapsed and redefined in complicated ways, requiring more complicated approaches to problem solving. A transdisciplinary approach is clearly the only way open to us. But we as yet have no conceptual framework for operationalizing this commitment. Settings such as this conference are necessary to move towards such frameworks. Conflicting epistemologies, conflicting research and problem-solving paradigms, disparate levels of addressing problems, and closed systems of analy-

sis: all these make the required transdisciplinary synthesis extremely difficult. We must face not only our areas of agreement but as well our areas of disagreement. For the difficulties emerge not at the level of Professor Chermayeff's interesting comments but at more substantive levels. That is, we must soon move to the details of environmental organization.

The fact is that most humans exist in predominantly man-made environments. What we now understand is that these environments are as a rule grossly conceptualized and developed — lacking the subtlety of natural systems. We cannot possibly return to a "natural" state. We cannot even identify what a "natural" state would be like. We can only move toward a more sophisticated understanding of how to organize man-made systems. The skillful use of technology is an integral aspect of this development. Both the artistic and the scientific communities (if one wishes to maintain such dichotomies) have a stake in this technological innovation. Human systems including the environments which support them must be *designed*. There is no choice in this matter.



If we are to accommodate humans, individually and collectively, with responsive, even *challenging* environments, we must better understand human biological and extra-biological characteristics. This involves not only a poetic understanding of man, but a rigorous scientific understanding of the human organism. Clearly this is where our greatest epistemological conflicts will occur in our models of man. There is no simple answer to this dilemma and it is one not soon to be resolved, but we must try.

So essential is a systems analytic perspective in dealing with the complexity of human systems at almost any scale, that there is little need to argue for its general acceptance. Implicit in general systems theory and its application to human phenomena is the realization that human systems are above all *dynamic*. Man's fundamental condition is and will no doubt continue to be predicated upon a state of uncertainty, but uncertainty does not preclude action. Our ability to respond incisively to human dysfunctions is, within the bounds of present knowledge (much less within extant institutional constraints), critically limited. But more important, human problems change before solutions to them can be realized. So we must agree with Professor Chermayeff that our environmental design objectives should respond more directly to the variable nature of human settings. These are clearly open systems which by nature are anything but staticized. Considering our state of human knowledge and the variability which inevitably emerges, we should view man-made systems literally as *experiments* in which relevant elements are managed in order to move us toward our goals, which are themselves subject to change. A *planning culture* committed to adjustment and change would be one in which the process of living becomes a process of (systematic) experimentation to upgrade human existence. The quest for "timeless"

artifacts has little utility in today's world. In other words, the dynamics of change should be *institutionalized*. The artists can take leadership in this development, for they can both prepare and induce this necessary orientation.

The final point I would make is that we must develop entirely new and different environmental structures from the ones which exist. We must reconsider our design objectives, not only with respect to the dynamics of change, but also with respect to the nature of environmental structures generally. Traditional approaches to environmental problem solving are cluttered with preconceptions regarding the various components and arrangements of environmental elements in human settings. The various subsystems which make up the human environment—for example, transportation, housing, medicine, education—are considered discrete, requiring specialists to deal with them. Indeed vast, complex bureaucracies have evolved which insure that these subsystems are neither redefined nor appropriately interrelated. Entirely new topographies are required. Each of the basic human service systems, such as education, the administration of justice, medical services, recreation and transportation require serious reexamination with a view toward both their internal reorganization and their potential intersystem integration into new subsystems—contingent upon human behavioral goals, not bureaucratic ones.

The "ecological crisis," for example, cannot be resolved through attempts to change environmental attitudes alone. Pollution behavior is maintained by the man-made political, social, economic and physical environment. The only feasible permanent solution must grow out of a reorganization and institutionalization of the various environmental support systems. The mindless interposition of technology (interposed between man and his

environment to overcome immediate problems) has produced a state of affairs which has obscured and/or dampened the network of feedback links which are essential to self-regulating man-environment systems. Technology can (I believe) get us out of this mess as surely as it got us into it if we can become more sophisticated in our methodologies. Neither the resources of art nor science can change our ecological course if we continue to deal only with symptoms. The causes lie at more fundamental levels and it will take the best that is in all of us, regardless of discipline or role, if we are to bring about the necessary redefinition of human existence.

Consider for a moment the super cities of this country, such as the Northeast megalopolis, the Southern California megalopolis, and the Chicago area megalopolis. While it is as yet an unproved hypothesis, I believe that there is some promise in the idea of a regional city made different over time from the present large city which might be functionally efficient and provide an environment of quality. While we recognize the immensity of all of the negative factors which have made cities in varying degrees unlivable, we must not be prophets of doom. We must be optimists as well as realists and we must justify our optimism by effective action.

### **CHARLES A. BLESSING**

*Director of City Planning for the  
Detroit City Planning Commission.*

We must recognize at this time in the history of our nation and of the world that man is indeed at the crossroads. If the continuing growth of our urban areas, is leading to the destruction of environmental quality, then our collective responsibility as educators and professionals concerned with the human environment is to identify and provide growth concepts for those urban areas which we believe can provide a good environment for significant increases in population as well as those massive urban agglomerations whose further growth we feel cannot provide an environment of desirable human quality. This itself is no easy task, but I am convinced that the distinction can be made between the two categories, and that our society has both the vision and the resources to create truly human environments.

This is the challenge which Mr. Chermayeff has stated with clarity and force.

In planning our fifty billion dollar Interstate Highway Program we have invested approximately five hundred million in some two hundred and forty Standard Metropolitan Area Transportation and Land Use Studies, sponsored by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Yet, we do not find a single example of an adequate and comprehensive regional city design concept plan for any major urban region in the nation.

I do not suggest that this failure results from lack of concern on the part of urban and regional planners and highway planners, but I do suggest that our collective efforts have not yet produced such conceptual plans. While this situation is indeed a most discouraging one, on the other hand, I see promise in the tremendous and growing support coming from citizens, legislators, government administrators and design professionals for a commitment to further intensify our efforts toward the creation of truly human environments at all scales — from the neighborhood to the nation. I believe that our society today with all its over-

whelming social and environmental problems still has within it the seeds of greatness. But our efforts must be predicated on an unalterable commitment to universal human welfare and human satisfaction, including fulfillment of the universal yearning for beauty in the natural and manmade environment.

This requires that the responsibility must be accepted as a highest priority by society as a whole and that basic commitments to human welfare and the freedoms essential to a good life represent the first step in any ordered program leading to the creation of a better designed human environment. I am convinced that the philosophy of a society must undergird the total response of those who would shape the environment.

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### PAOLO SOLERI

Architect who recently published  
*Arcology: The City in the Image of Man.*

At the start of his talk Professor Serge Chermayeff speaks of change and complexity. Toward the end he makes a passionate appeal for widespread individual creativeness.

#### Change:

I see change as of two kinds.

The first kind: The change brought about by what I call "process." Process is the transformation of the inanimate world, the mineral and the technological world. Process is really timeless in the sense

that it operates more on frequencies than time lapses. (One can accelerate or decelerate a process.)

*The most crucial character of process is that it is reversible.* (Even though limitations of knowhow might prevent it.)

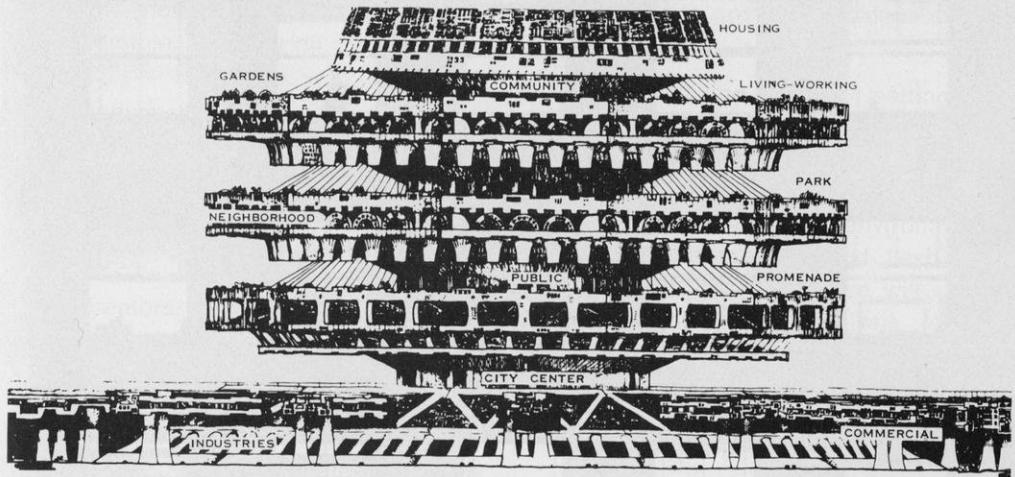
*Determinism governs process.*

The second kind: the change brought about by what I call becoming. *Becoming is irreversible* and qualifies and is qualified by duration, the biopsychological time by whose beats life develops. *Creativeness is the etherealizing aspect of becoming.* We have made the barbarous mistake of identifying process with becoming. The confusion is killing us and civilization. The production-consumption carnival has put process on the altar. Process, not becoming, is the business of business and the business of the ecological debacle. Becoming, on the other hand, is incapable of destruction, inasmuch as becoming is the antithesis of un-becoming. The opulent society is unbecoming.

#### Complexity:

Duration-complexity belongs to becoming. Frequency-process tends toward complicatedness. An organism is duration-complexity oriented. Our present society is still mechanico-complicated. It must metamorphose toward the durational-complex.

It is only in the esthetic phenomenon, the esthetogenesis of things, where process and becoming can come into fusion. There is where life must tend to, to make full use of the energetic universe without being itself distracted from the



↓ Design for hemispherical dome, 2 miles in diameter  
Courtesy: R. Buckminster Fuller

Elevation of Babel 11B ↑  
Reprinted from **Arcology: The City in the Image of Man**  
by Paolo Soleri Courtesy: The MIT Press



Photo by Walter B. Lane  
from *The Family of Man*, an exhibit created by Edward Steichen for  
The Museum of Modern Art, 1955  
Print supplied by Life magazine



swell of evolution into a mechanico-deterministic event, durationally indifferent, that is to say reversible, ethically nil.

### **Creativeness:**

Creativeness is the great body in which shadow gregariousness can perform. It is utterly cruel, because misleading, to propose the possibility of five to seven billion creators. Most of us create by proxy (mimesis). It is then right to say that the human animal is creative, illusory to make of creativity a blanket event. The creation (estheto-compassionate event) is not an electric blanket, but a blazing flame too hot to be handled indiscriminately. It is the other sun, the non-deterministic sun of becoming. The question then arises: what is in it for the young student? A performance commensurate with the intensity of one's own being (reverently congruous to the great event of becoming, which is enormously surcharged with pain, horror and joy) and with one's humble participation in it, as we all are of it in the exact measure of our worth.

### **Further Elaboration of Mr. Soleri's Notions of Design**

#### **Audience Member:**

Have you made any studies or investigations or at least speculations about the kind of human organizations and human institutions that would have to exist in order to generate the complex technological solution to man's environment that you propose.

#### **Soleri:**

I believe that a structure must precede the performance. It is not even sensible to consider a performance of any kind without the underlying support a structure

affords. It is quite clear that unless you have a drum or the equivalent of a drum you are not going to produce rhythmic sound.

We have to find a way of setting up topographies which will allow society to perform. We must not try to set up the environment, but rather provide a skeletal system for which the environment will produce the muscles and flesh. If we don't start somewhere, we will continue in a cycle of eternal analysis. When we have a pile of analytical elements confronting us with no idea of what the synthesis might be, we opt for a degradation of life instead of an evolution.

I don't believe that we can simulate when we are dealing with human problems which is what the city problem is. Simulation works beautifully with technical, scientific problems; it has very little to do with the living. You can go to the moon by simulation and know exactly what is going to happen but you cannot simulate my life or your life between today and tomorrow. It is a great illusion and an unholy undertaking to think that simulation is going to tell us what the city of the future is going to be. At this point in man's history, life is basically a non-logical phenomenon. All the rationalization and business about truth, justice and logic, although important, does not touch the essence of mankind which is to go beyond those levels. Simulation is an instrument to set up a platform from which you can start to fly, but the actual flight is the important thing.

When you speak of having people simulate their own life you are asking people to live. And that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to build a structure in which people can live, as guinea pigs somehow in this first experiment, but live and find out about new urban approaches.

#### **Audience Member:**

I would like to raise a question of scale: If a million is the goal for a complete

mega-structure city, why not ten or fifty million? Would you explain which determinants led you to your idea of scale. Can't scale be one of the greatest variables in what you are imagining and developing?

**Soleri:**

Scale is not a visual problem; it's a problem of efficiency. Something can be very small but very inhuman in scale because it does not relate to the abilities or performance of the person using it. It is the reaching power that an instrument furnishes for the user that makes it human or inhuman in scale. If it serves, it's human in scale; if it doesn't serve, it's inhuman. For certain purposes, ten thousand might be the right scale for the size of the community; for others, one million might be. The total performance should be the determinant.

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I have a somewhat daemonic view on life. I do not think that life can remain what it was because it has never remained what it has been. I think it is utterly melancholy to see in previously created communities, such as Reston or Columbia, or suburbia, the light of the future. We are going to have to move toward something that is far more complex, far more lively, and dialectically valid.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Raymond Studer, Jr.:**

When you involve participants (in the design process) you not only ask them what they want but you participate with them to learn together what might be an

appropriate environmental response. It seems to me that if people could externalize these human goals properly and we as designers and whoever else is involved could move toward some sort of objective together, we could get there without unnecessary disjunction when the thing actually happens.

**Serge Chermayeff:**

There is a kind of limitation as to what society can invest in an experiment in order to find out how it must amend its institutions.

I think that it does not matter what jumps we make in a purely technical sense as we are now doing by simply producing magnificent demonstrations like the trade center in New York. I'm sure, they have books and books of statistical information on what the peak loading periods of this immense facility are going to do to downtown New York. But the point is that the institutions of this commercially oriented city just don't give a damn.

The most unrewarding thing that any specialist in terms of knowledge can do is to ask a lot of people what they want. He will get an immense amount of unusual information and he will then act as a dogmatic, creative person and find perhaps that that is what they wanted all the time.

**Audience Member:**

I work for the Center for the Arts at Ithaca and we're developing a Model of Community Involvement. We have a site — an old airport with a hangar on it. I wondered if you might give us some guidelines not only for this project but for other projects of this kind.

**Raymond Studer, Jr.:**

I think that one of the great things that can happen in a community is for people to get into situations where they can explore some of the details of their exist-

ence—their environmental existence. So I'm putting up for consideration one possibility for your center and that is to develop a situation where people can come together and simulate their intentions and some possible environmental structures to support them.

**Charles Blessing:**

What bothers me is the word efficiency. Is this the future criterion that is going to judge all of our future thinking about the city. Let's talk, for example, about a museum for seeing and enjoying art. Is it simply that you must enjoy it efficiently or that you want to enjoy the art, efficient or inefficient as it may be?

**Serge Chermayeff:**

If you ask the average person what the texture of the house across the street from where he has lived for twenty years is, what the tree outside his door is called, and how many steps there are on his porch, he will not know. He will have to count them and look it up in a dictionary. That is why I think it is a very questionable assumption to demand this sort of a response from the environment. I would like to cite an example, however—the ideal communities in Europe where the option of community and the option of withdrawal to privacy is in perfect equilibrium all the time. This, I think, is an environmental factor to which everyone responds.

**my hands are alive**

(from a Sequence of Indian Poems)

my hands are alive and find their way  
feeling like vines  
on the rough warm rocks

tree tops below me tossing  
and a river like fire  
burns in the deep canyon

i grip carefully the few plants  
old shrubs and trees like clenched teeth  
look from the crevices.

now in the loose gravel of the top  
i breathe the cool sunlit air  
a quick deer bounds away

echoes and echoes of hooves scratching.

NORMAN RUSSELL

*Poet and Professor of Biology at Central  
State College in Edmond, Oklahoma*



Photo by Linda Heddle

Irving Kaufman

*Professor of Art at The City College  
of the City University of New York.*

Ecology and the environment currently have become familiar concepts with the advent of the new but dangerously uncertain decade of the seventies. Education is an ancient idea, but it too has recently been pushed to the center of social consideration, unfortunately as much for its failings, as for its accomplishments or promise. Both the human environment and education are highly pragmatic contexts which generate moral or ethical as well as matter-of-fact consequences. Suddenly, a nurturing environment is no longer taken for granted: we are more aware of the interdependence of people and places, of the mix of institutions and surrounding social patterns, of the interaction between culture and habitat, of the relationships of art to life. We have also become conscious of the limitations and disorientation of our educational system with its stress upon abstract methodology and intellectually specialized subject matter which results, as has been noted by discerning observers, in technique prevailing over the human being.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, "It is very unhappy, but too late to be helped, the discovery we have made that we exist." In a very contemporary sense and especially within a technocratic setting, a basic element of such existential consciousness needs to be of an aesthetic nature, as the fresh life style of youth has demonstrated: the "good life" predicated upon a genuine artistry and a refined concern for an aesthetic ordering of relationships; the discovery of meaning

and the creation of beauty; values which insure qualities of understanding, passion and excellence without which human existence is ultimately condemned to mediocrity and meaninglessness. Our surroundings give little evidence of such artistic character while our educational system gives little promise of a high level of aesthetic expectation. We know we exist, but the question remains, how do we exist?

We live largely in an artificial world, a very complex conglomeration of sights, sounds and objects, established not only in reality but as a symbol of man's dominion over the earth. There are few naturally happenstance qualities in the technological landscape and few untampered-with, pristine areas in the electronic and urbanized extensions of homo-faber, man the maker. The surroundings have become contrived corridors of utility, work areas which, unfortunately, also double as living areas, rapidly becoming computerized to secure maximum efficiency at the lowest cost. Little care is expended upon the looks of our land, except as we often reluctantly preserve wilderness areas like giant potted plants on the window sills of civilization or egregiously and with questionable taste adorn the facades of our surroundings with superficial, graceless ornamentation.

Despite this, there is a hint of creative excitement, a perceptual dynamism in our environment which can be vivid and exhilarating. There is a radical newness

born out of a vigorous inventiveness and out of the enduring aspects of tradition which breeds a fresh poetry of sights, a stimulating blend of the natural and the humanly shaped, possessing its own aesthetic delight. But our collective tastes are commercially and psychologically jaded or they stay raw and uncultivated despite the evangelical spread of arts education. Popular imagery and responsiveness are stereotyped and fitful in their affairs with beauty. Beauty remains a surplus commodity, not something encountered during a daily walk or met casually during working hours. Outside of a restrictive educational context, we permit youth to play with it however they shape its forms, but only while they are off the labor market and not productively or economically affecting the environment. In fact, the over thirty generation has been initially fascinated with the aesthetic criteria applied to the life style of the under thirty generation. However, such fascination turns to rejection as the older onlookers reflect upon the moral quandaries posed by the aestheticism of the young. The rejection has its underside of jealousy. This occurs when the onlookers find they cannot divest themselves of the cultural masks and habitual disguises a social conformity insists they wear. Beauty is then limited to the esoteric concerns of art, or is contemplated during otherwise vacant moments. And it is not only the visual world which is thus diminished and made ugly.

Our very survival as a species is in question because we have upset and not re-established an essential balance among humanly created and natural elements. Though there has been a necessary dissembling of superannuated traditions, there has also been a crude trampling upon and scattering of rather sound regulations of living. We have created tensions between civilization and nature which are not only agitated and unmanageable but have also become the means of individual depersonalization. We have too

often neglected or ignored the relatedness of time and place, the inter-connection of people to events, the reciprocal dependence of the production of things to the lay of the land. The seemingly suicidal poisoning of the land, sea and air is paralleled by a corruption of the spirit. As we confront the despoliation and ugliness of our manufactured surroundings and calculated rationalizing which encourages a withering of our inner landscape, we should begin to recognize the illusion of our controls and the speciousness of our good will.

Man has always had cause to fear the knowledge that may be derived from nature, even as it has inspired and nurtured him. There have been consistent efforts to subdue and shape nature and to utilize knowledge for purposes of comeliness, comfort and profit. But knowledge does not always breed understanding. Now that we are on the verge of a monstrous success in these endeavors, we may well be appalled at our handiwork of havoc. Our education, indeed, has not prepared us for the calamity of success, nor has art had any ameliorating effect, except in an individual sense.

The structure of the schools has reflected the techniques of large scale organization in society. Relying upon a cajoling persuasion, if not a coercive indoctrination, an imposed set of academic and cultural criteria has been formulated which pervades much of public education, especially below the college level. Youth has rebelled against those educational and social conceptions which would deny them a genuine personal expressiveness and inhibit the exploration of their sensuous and speculative natures. Nevertheless, the compulsions are forceful to conform to the prevailing social controls which carry their own versions of truth and happiness: affluence, status, unexamined traditions, the notion of progress, the ubiquitous mass media and a thrall-dom of bureaucratic purposes.

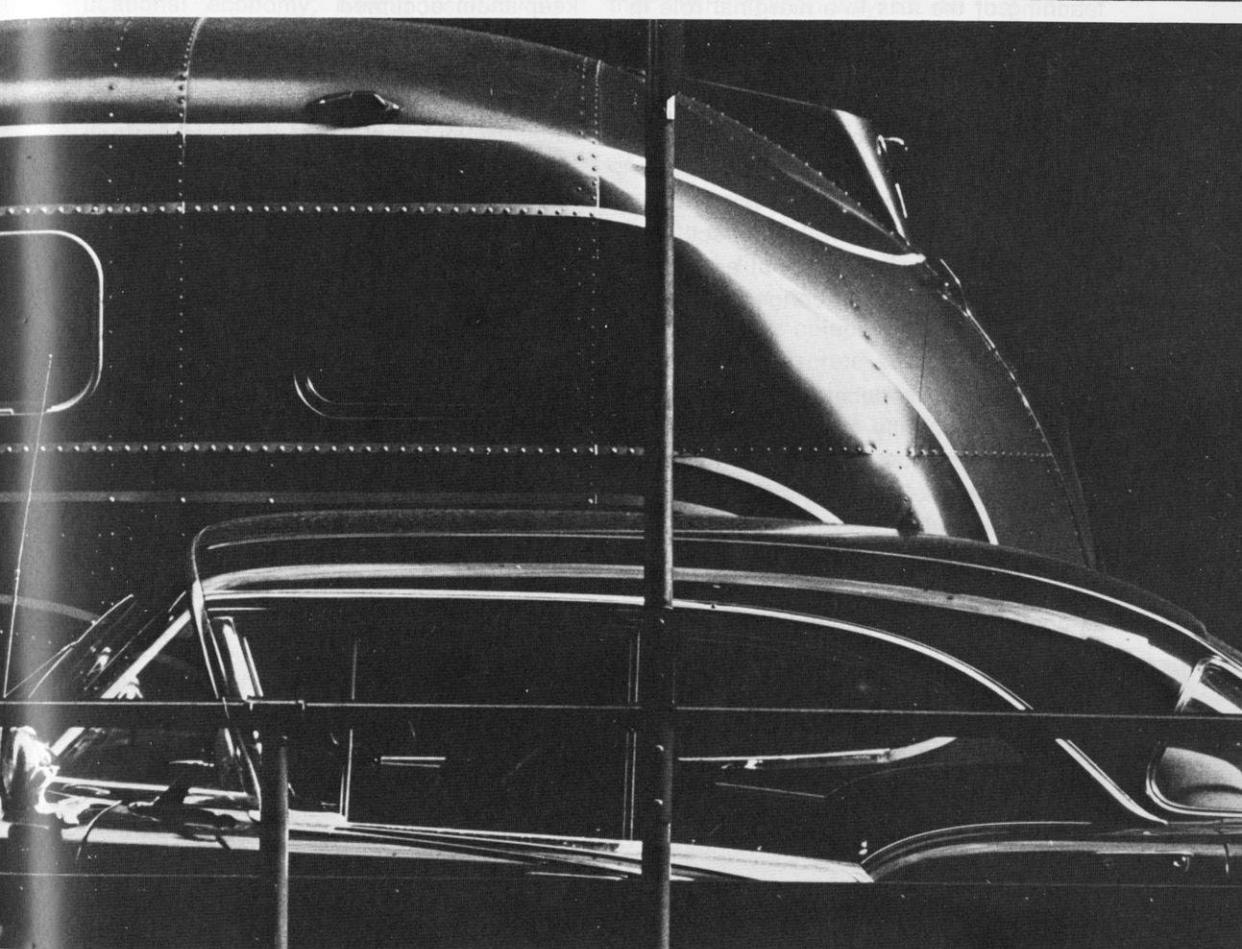


Photo by Ray Metzker  
from **Bennett, Steichen, Metzker: The Wisconsin Heritage in Photography**,  
an exhibit assembled by the Milwaukee Art Center

The continuously defining and refining aspects of art understandably have difficulty in establishing their own modes of creative action in such a barbarous bramble of social habit. The consequent pressures have either falsified many conceptions of art or have relegated the teaching of the arts to a marginal role in education. Mass education in the arts has presumed to raise the taste levels and provide the opportunity for the expressiveness of successive generations of students. Yet this has been characterized, as Louis Kronenberger wrote some time ago, by attitudes which reflect, "we are not a people for whom, at any level, art is just a natural and congenial aspect of existence."

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On the various educational levels, the arts have generally been structured as isolated disciplines, separated from the more central intellectual, social and vocational responsibilities of a curriculum. Not connected to the basic issues of life, the arts have frequently been presented as contrivances, as genteel ornaments of social status, as therapeutic instruments or entertainments, and as reservoirs of reassuring cliches or propaganda. These bastardized conceptions of artistic experience have been compounded as education, which regards itself as the custodian of taste, develops systematic methodologies to instruct the ignorant and shepherd the uninitiated into its hierarchy of values. The emphasis all too often, has been a rote and shallow transmittal of taste rather than a personal exploration of experience and a search for values. Despite those instances of free and imaginative teaching in the arts evidencing a stress upon disciplined encounters with experience, there are the offsetting tendencies of a dominant scale of values which are assertive, intellectually abstract and emotionally mawkish. Public education in the arts is thus forced into either a structural divorce from its companion school disciplines in order to

retain some of its inherent character or it submits to a pedagogical flummery which deprecates its own vital qualities. A clue to the relative importance given to the arts in education may be had in the common practice of dumping academic nonachievers into the art class so as to keep them occupied.

Even on the elementary levels of education, where art is frequently considered to be an important, if not a central factor in the student's growth, there is a kind of mincing sentimentality and rote methodology surrounding its role. Frequently lacking legitimate substance in its programs, elementary art education also is largely unanchored as to the purposes of the arts, outside of a kind of diffused acceptance of creativity. Such artistic "creativity" in many classrooms becomes a ritualistic procedure dimly understood and experientially trivialized. It is separated, figuratively as well as literally, from the more important work of school. It is misunderstood as belonging to a subordinate, albeit pleasurable, and immediate level of play and psychological catharsis or tolerated because of a superficial obeisance to cultural uplift. Such patterns exist as well on the secondary levels of education. However, the opportunity to elect art is quite circumscribed, especially with the emphasis given to academic preparation for college. It is primarily with the growing humanities programs in high schools that the arts are offered in any further context. And there are as many curricular confusions and inadequacies in that area as in arts education.

As an example of establishment response to criticism, art education has attempted to pull itself up by its own, or I should say, by someone else's bootstraps, over the past several decades. It has located its own brand of relevancy, developing a methodological nemesis patterned upon materialistic and behavioral research. Re-

searchers have endeavored to objectify the goals and the techniques of art and then relate these findings to the psychologically extended behaviors of students. Art education thus conceived could envision an educational technology designed for classroom efficiency and educational economy, having established external coordinates of reference. The teacher could be handed a prescriptive list of do's and don'ts and a standardized curriculum which should satisfy Johnnie's and Jane's creative drives. There is a similar undertaking in a more sophisticated vein now developing in what has come to be called aesthetic education. The acts of critical analysis, interpretation and evaluation, and the nature of aesthetic experience are being plotted and graphed, again so that an objective pattern may be determined and utilized for pedagogical ends. There may be some substantive gain in the field as a result, but it is mainly an abstracted

methodology that is being refurbished and expanded.

There is not the time available here to examine fully the inappropriateness of a systems engineering methodology applied to the arts in education. In a rather oversimplified way, let me just point out the aloof, external objectivity and regulatory nature of methodological research as against the engaged, personal and subjective nature of artistic creativity or aesthetic responsiveness. They appear to operate out of different sensibilities or toward dissimilar goals, even if both find themselves emerging from a shared matrix of human consciousness. In addition, this objective research, which cannot be as discrete as that of the sciences, is predicated upon some kind of uniformity of elements or predictability of ends, and can only regard a student as a specimen and art as an instrument. The arts are by their very nature not only

Fourth of the series, **6 Piccadillies**, by Diter Rot  
Courtesy: Petersburg Press, London, England





Photo by Mike Murray

forms with intrinsic meaning offering private experiences, they are unique, necessarily shifting within a context of immediacy and contingency.

A most telling criticism can be directed against an educational procedure beholden to social engineering that applies with misplaced confidence one dimensional solutions to very complex problems. The latter tightens the psychological strings of the technological straitjacket we now find ourselves in, aggravating the cliches and contradictions of our culture mentioned earlier, as well as defeating its own purposes of encouraging genuine individual and creative freedom.

Such a freedom cannot be of a disarming nature so as to establish consensus. Rather, art experience within appropriate age levels and with some personal safeguards should reveal to the student the diverse and often conflicting array of interests and conditions in himself, in his classroom and in his culture. It should remind the student of pain and loss as well as joy and success, sting his imagination as well as excite his sensual nature, question his values as well as to reinforce his sense of achievement; his search for identity and meaning has to encompass the fear underside of events as well as the fun surface gloss of things. The student's freedom of expressive involvement and critical responsiveness also requires a disciplining based upon a perceptual awareness of form. Such a disciplining through focused exploration would acquaint students with the available symbols of an art form and teach him that forms carry expressive meaning. It would permit him to recognize the possibilities and limitations of media and aesthetic relationships. It would hold him accountable for an expressive clarity as well as a sensuous exploration and manipulation, hopefully developing those critical discrimina-

tions which lead to sound but independent aesthetic judgments.

Thus, art education on the public school level need not only confront the outside pressures of cultural conformity with fresh or even radical different ways to teach; it also requires corrective internal influences. Such influences as are necessary would put a much greater trust in the individual student and teacher. The former would be respected as someone capable of expression and growth in the existential sense, and also challenged and provoked to a realization of self to the degree that his private vision permits. Such an open structuring would require of the teacher a quality of commitment which implies his own continuing growth and education in relationship to both students and the forms of art. This has to be expressed concretely in a conscious choosing and active doing, permitting the creation and continuity of personal identity. A further inference would be to look to the arts themselves as to what to teach and how to teach. It is particularly in the arts of the past century that we can discover the immense range of modern insight and expressiveness embodying the feelings and intellect which tells us who and what we are. From such an examination of the modern arts, but one that also incorporates older traditions, might be fashioned an arts curriculum of legitimate substance and relevant purpose. Arts education on the public school level needs also to involve artists and critics more directly in their formulations of curriculum and development of teaching methods. It is the artists and critics who fashion many of the basic perceptions and sensibilities which either reinforce conventional wisdom or boldly establish new forms of understanding. They could help immeasurably in shaping curricula in the arts, making them more disciplined in substance and more open but legitimate in purpose. The extensions into environmental control are obvious.

The schools have to aim for a development of artistic literacy based upon personal participation in one's own work and critical responsiveness to the work of others. This would necessitate the development of a communicable grammar of the arts arising out of the inherent properties and possibilities of the art forms rather than one based on discursive logic or psychological theories. It would also encourage the development of individual teaching styles which if they require models would look to the artists' studio practices and the critic's or scholar's dialogue with phenomenon and feeling for the appropriate cues to method. But in all instances, the arts curriculum should seek to make connections to life, to relate the making and seeing of art to those conditions which shape art and which it shapes in turn. This would involve the current dynamics, dislocations and conflicts in society as well as the more private contemplative aspects of aesthetic reverie.

Educators in the arts have not always respected such a philosophical integration. Especially on the college level can we see a divisive condition. There, arts

Photo by Steve Alcala

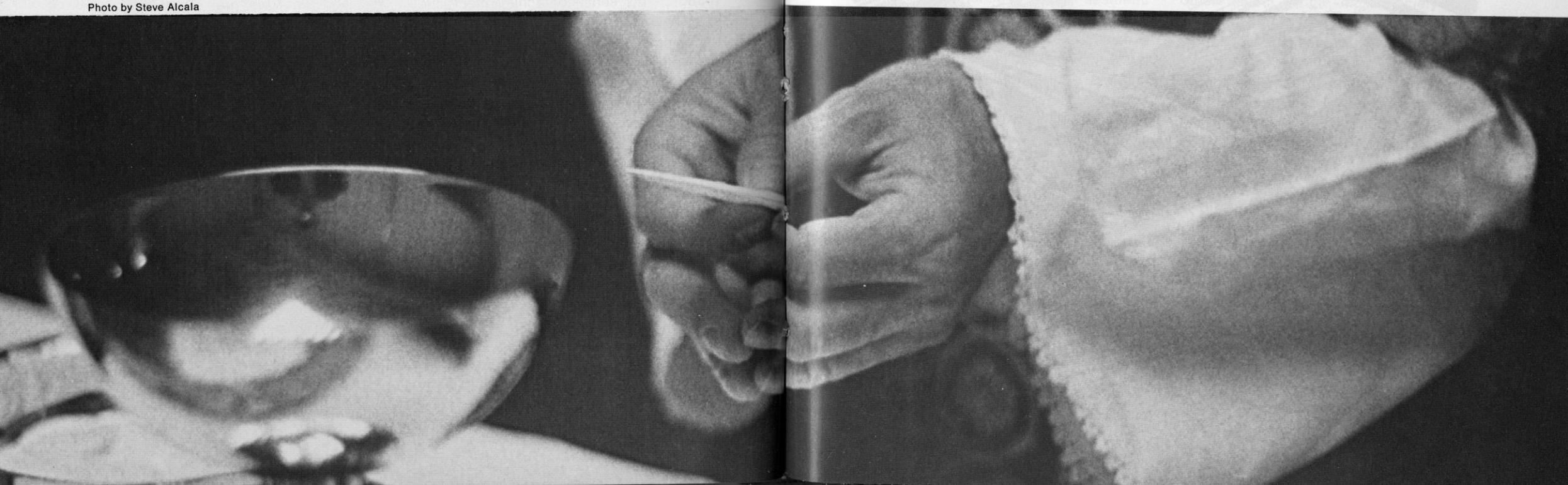
education suffers an isolation from other disciplines but also from its own internal separation — that between the studio, the recital hall or the writer's refuge and the academic classroom which systematically and verbally examines the historical and critical aspects of the arts. There is a well known antipathy between the scholar and the practitioner, so that in many instances their teaching is not even carried out in the same department. In the classic image of such conflict the scholar may regard the artist-teacher as an academically disorganized, and troublesome interloper, while the artist may look upon his supposed colleague as a desiccated parasite who unfeelingly conveys dull data about art objects with intellectual condescension. Though this is an exaggerated imagery, even a friendly separateness, reflected in the formal division of teaching, leads to an artificial segmentation of learning and experience for the student. There is little, if any fluid interchange between the creative process and the critical act; there is no current connection between an aesthetic experience and a social imagination. The more rigid formal structuring makes for a confinement of attitudes and understanding. This is further reinforced by the severe

practice of objective analysis to which many historians are formally committed, leading to a disturbing neutrality in the contemporary cultural marketplace of ideas.

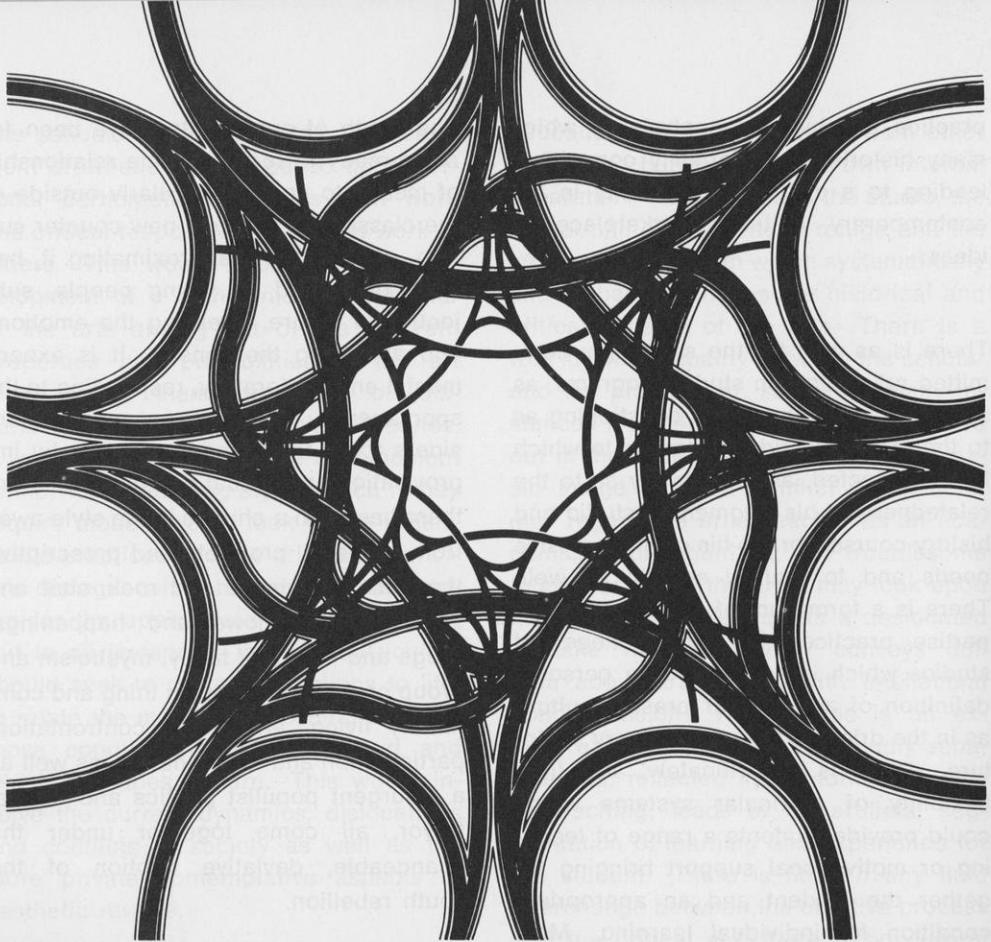
There is as well for the seemingly committed art student in studio programs, as for the general student, a questioning as to the technique ridden classes to which he is subjected, an uncertainty as to the relatedness of his fragmented studio and history course work to his own expressive needs and to that of society as well. There is a formalism of manipulative expertise practiced in many college art studios which is as bereft of a personal definition of aims in our present culture as in the driest lecture on funerary sculpture. There is, unfortunately, also little flexibility of curricular systems which could provide students a range of teaching or motivational support bringing together the student and an appropriate condition for individual learning. Most college art curricula are divided into standardized blocs of time and content, making it rather difficult for either instructors or students to pursue independent work and personal interaction.

The youth of our country have been far more ready to recognize the relationship of means to ends, particularly outside of the classroom. A whole new counter culture, or something approximating it, has been generated by young people, subjective in nature, stressing the emotions and accenting the senses. It is experimental and exploratory, responding to the spontaneous, searching out what it considers to be fresh and expressive by improvisation and casual creativity. In short, there has been a change in life style away from property, propriety and prescriptive thought. Blue jeans and rock, soul and sexuality, lightshows and happenings, drugs and flights of fancy, mysticism and group gropes, doing one's thing and community living, encounter, confrontation, participation and hallucination, as well as a resurgent populist politics and radical fervor, all come together under the changeable, deviative caption of the youth rebellion.

Some part of this is obviously attributable to new as well as old political pressures, to the impatience at waiting for overdue social changes which accept war, racism



High Art Space Way Complex by Francois Dallegrat, 1966



Milwaukee Interchange Courtesy: Wisconsin Department of Transportation



and hypocrisy as workable values. But a good part is also due to two even larger issues. One, we have a society which permits a somewhat anti-intellectual educational system to exist which is spiritually and aesthetically impoverished and two, a society which further consents to the befouling, if not the actual devastation, of its own environment. The response of the young to all of these issues, but particularly the latter two is an attempt to create their own culture and surroundings, to establish an inward looking personal refuge and humane enclave where they can pursue what they consider to be humanly dimensioned and personally satisfying or even joyful goals.

Mere survival has not been deemed sufficient. For many of the young there has been a seeking of self-realization, a value inherent in artistic activity. Yet arts education so far has not succeeded within its formal context in extending any lasting influences; in fact, education on the whole has only provided truncated, superficial and abortive experiences in the arts for the mass of students on all levels. They have been broken pieces of experience, revealing no consistent pattern or understanding of expressive form. Without any authentic artistic or aesthetic clues, youth has uncovered for itself all of the arcane and savage delights which a rampant romanticism can conjure up, often confusing self-knowledge and the actualization of personality with libertine license or mindless, brittle ecstasy. Yet, over and above the concerns of unbridled freedom or those of alienation and political rebelliousness many have also affirmed such values as grace, expressiveness and artistic order. There has been an unabashed delight in the use of the body, intensification of sensuous and imaginative experience, a wholesome regard for the humane control of the environment and an open exploration of fresh cultural possibilities. There are also the young who have accepted the sensi-

ble thinking which calls for a withholding of some vital part of each person from the material and even the political concerns which so beset one's individuality, stressing a creative and aesthetic experience which is self-sufficient, its own reward. A number of them actually pursue an expansion of consciousness through art rather than drugs, but this seems to be discovered serendipitously rather than through educational programs. Certainly, the subjectivist attitudes evidenced among many of the young people, their existential dependence upon personal experience rather than abstract data and their revolutionary activism in matters of manners and morals attempt to respond to a goal of self-actualizations. They do not permit any pat, isolated educational packages or teaching methodologies structured in efficiently mechanical fashion, making for a neat curriculum but a processed student.

Yet even the "turned on" youth give evidence of what may be fatal contradictions. Those who unquestioningly accept the new life styles appear to rely upon a collective-communitarian understanding, despite the stress on individual worth, moving like a vast herd that feeds out of a common trough, simply reflecting another aspect of the mass society their parents inhabit, albeit with a more developed social and sensuous consciousness. They too appear to accept an essential conformity which characterizes mass society on all levels. It may be a new conformity, but it is as often a depersonalization of the individual as is the impingement of establishment patterns of behavior and insight. There is a quality of acquiescence among the cohorts of the counter culture which dismisses a choice of life styles based upon an awareness of alternatives and the complexities of modern society. This is further aggravated by a merging of life and art which creates moral as well as aesthetic confusions. There is a denial of that aesthetic distance which permits art to achieve mean-

ing and assists in the construction of values and truths. There is rather a stress upon the appearance of style as the normative influence in living which can provide liberation and excitement. Somehow in the indiscriminate melding of art into life, both art and life are left bereft of genuine revelation and truthful form.

Woodstock may have offered a momentary liberation, but it demonstrated little responsibility for the environment or respect for life as at Altamont. The movie *Easy Rider* may have offered a "life as art" hero as a model, but it also demonstrated the futility of play acting in its now well known phrase "We blew it." Though they ask questions, the "turned on" young have not learned to ask the kind of qualitative questions often enough which indicate a growing aesthetic sensibility and consciously ethical understanding. They do not often display the necessary discriminations to reflect upon their life style as one among various possibilities or the insight with which to assess in a mature way the intrinsic worth and expressive merit of the things, events and conditions of their environment. It is because of this low level of personal and critical comprehension found among so many students that we can accuse education of gross failure, with its overly rational organization for citizenship, its neglect of or crude presentation of artistic qualities and for coercing the young to fit into the system, offering the various blandishments of security, affluence, entertainment and an unexamined technological potency. There is little wonder the rebels are led to a fierce unthinking renunciation of all tradition, an immersion in sensation for its own sake and a mocking of a thoughtful, sensitive transformation of the physical and spiritual environment. Yet change in our cultural values and a reshaping of our environment are overwhelming needs. Change will come, no matter what; it is vital that such change possess aesthetic as well as ethi-

cally based considerations.

Aesthetic expectations may outstrip our capacities to affect the environment; our individual accumulation of artistic understanding and creative wisdom may be greater than our ability to put them into educational practice. Yet, more than ever, we now require the kind of living which can be derived from artistic initiative. We need to believe in the exemplary qualities of artistic enterprise which can provide a characteristic humanism. Awareness, integrity of expression, critical intelligence, a respect for and involvement with materials and craft, a delight in the senses, the joining of the intellect and the emotions so as to achieve an inherently functioning yet imaginatively structured order are some of the value considerations of art which can encourage a humanly dimensioned encounter with experience. Not that art is a panacea; it is not. It should not be confused with daily life or the ethical choices to be made there. But the intrinsically rewarding and productively engaged nature of artistic activity can offer intelligent alternatives to the destructive, chaotic contradictions which now beset us.

The role of the arts in education, under such a cultural directive, assumes a vital and central position. This is not to suggest a pious or utopian joining of hands, or the utilization of the arts as the instruments within education that would secure social justice and uplift. This would be a simple-minded reading of a very complex condition. It is not that arts education would become a pedagogical means toward ends other than its own, but rather that the arts themselves would be seen as worthy and rewarding ends as a part of everyone's education. In that sense each student has to be regarded as a potential artist in as much as his private vision is the starting point of an artistically disciplined expressiveness and understanding of himself and the ways of the world.



**Pastry Case** by Claes Oldenburg

The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection  
Gift to The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Any superficial smattering of knowledge about or practice in the arts in education through some loosely organized interdisciplinary courses is also an uncertain approach. That only shifts the scene of our current inadequacy. Fundamentally, arts education should make the general student literate in the arts and unafraid of attempting a personal expressiveness, developing a progressively sophisticated level of critical and creative intelligence. This requires some solid perceptual study of form which would relate the natural, the expressively symbolic and the functionally manufactured objects to one another. It also should lead to the development of experiences which pose problems of practice and criticism permitting an intimate interaction to exist on a continuing basis. We need not only to educate our vision, our hearing, our sense of touch and our sense of movement but all of these have to be related to the dramatic tensions and symbolic or ritual characteristics which operate in culture. Here there would be a crossing over among disciplines to explore such focal considerations as myth, religion, social grouping, psychological character, historical precedent and so on. We are thus obliged to develop an arts education which in addition to transmitting a cultural heritage and a sense of tradition will also make the past usable for students and society alike. Tradition should not be imposed, but validated and altered or rejected as a contemporary responsibility, and as we discover just what the present is.

All of this suggests some new if not radical curricular changes and alterations of teaching methods in arts education. This may lead to the creation of new courses, but hopefully, it may also take us to a more fluid organization of interaction between teachers and students outside of any formal course framework. Education has an obligation to provide the opportunities by which an individual student

can best realize his creative and critical potential and relate such experiences in the artistic domain to a vital encounter with life. In this sense, an art teacher or professor acts as the confidant, guide, mentor and dialogue partner for the student, and does so without constraints of formal instruction, curricular systems or approved teaching methods. In confronting one another, they must accept the existential presence of the other, basing the encounter upon a conscious educational choice that learning occur and that there be mutual growth in a shared experience.

As some of the young have indicated, we need to seek out fresh identifications, though perhaps with a felicity which is less uncritical. This means fresh explorations, new pattern of exchange and even a radical dialectics which undoubtedly would alter our education in very basic ways. I am suggesting here a much more pervasive and disciplined influence of the arts in general education as one of those considered changes. But this can be no more than an expression of forces in the larger environment which seek meaning and order within an existential framework of the present, creating sense and sensibility for the individual and society alike establishing truly humanistic surroundings.

#### **JOSEPH C. SLOANE**

*President of the National Council of the Arts in Education, and Professor and Chairman of Art at the University of North Carolina. He is Director of the William Hayes Ackland Memorial Center.*

Dr. Kaufman is very right, and if the things he says were listened to, if his advice was followed, if his analysis was regarded as significant by the people who will not so regard it, but should, we could all expect things to improve.

For some reason our society simply cannot take the artist or the arts seriously, and since this is so, we cannot take education in the arts seriously. This fact constitutes the greatest single obstacle to the improvement of our arts and to education in them, and until we can contrive some way by which to ameliorate this fatal judgement of triviality, we are going to make very little progress. Let me illustrate. In a paper delivered some years ago, I asked my audience to imagine a society in which the ruling power was vested in artists. The room was instantly convulsed with laughter at so comical a thought. But is it really so silly? In the past, states have been run by priests, by the military, by people born into the job, and now by businessmen and lawyers. All of these have made bad mistakes and some improvements, but we are convinced that artists are too trivial as citizens to be entrusted with such powers. Perhaps; but I would be willing to predict that there would be no world wars and no Hiroshimas in a world run by musicians, actors, dancers, and sculptors. Confusion, yes; the ultimate in disasters, no.

This failure to take us and our subject seriously is particularly trying right now when the educational practices we have got appear so faulty. Dr. Kaufman is under no illusions here, and neither am I. The problem is not only that most school instruction in the arts is bad; we are suddenly called upon to defend ourselves against another and rather startling charge, namely that schools really aren't the place to learn anything important anyway. To put the matter somewhat crudely, we are asked to consider whether the anti-school isn't more effective than the school, the anti-university than the university, and so on. Whether we have the anti-kindergarten yet or not I don't know. But many are now saying that education isn't any longer a process of learning at all; it is simply an experience, preferably of a fairly emotional type. The thing is

not what you want to know, but whether you have been turned on. In many cases it is no longer even necessary to learn how — a well-known young creator recently performed a "work" in Canada by covering the village green with cornflakes, a process which he described as "making information." In some arts you have to learn how, but in others you don't and in these the experience comes quicker, and with less effort.

But if we don't succumb to the idea that education in the arts is mainly process and very little a matter of result, we may be asked to consider the notion that the professional teacher of the arts is a pretty sorry performer at best and thus the remedy is to bring the professional artist into the schools. But this has its dangers too. If all the artists of any consequence are in a school somewhere (there are enough for all of them and then some), showing the young what art really is, they obviously won't be practicing, or performing, or creating which is what they are here on earth to do. On top of which, many fine artists are very bad teachers indeed and often do far more harm than good.

What then is the answer? Sudden answers simply do not exist, but we can look for improvement all along the line when the people who love art the most, both creators and consumers, can convince society that their love is a good one, and when these same lovers can formulate more realistic statements than we have been hearing up to now of what they are trying to do, and what the values in that doing are. Restructuring art education will only be possible when America is prepared to believe that this education is one which their young people must have.

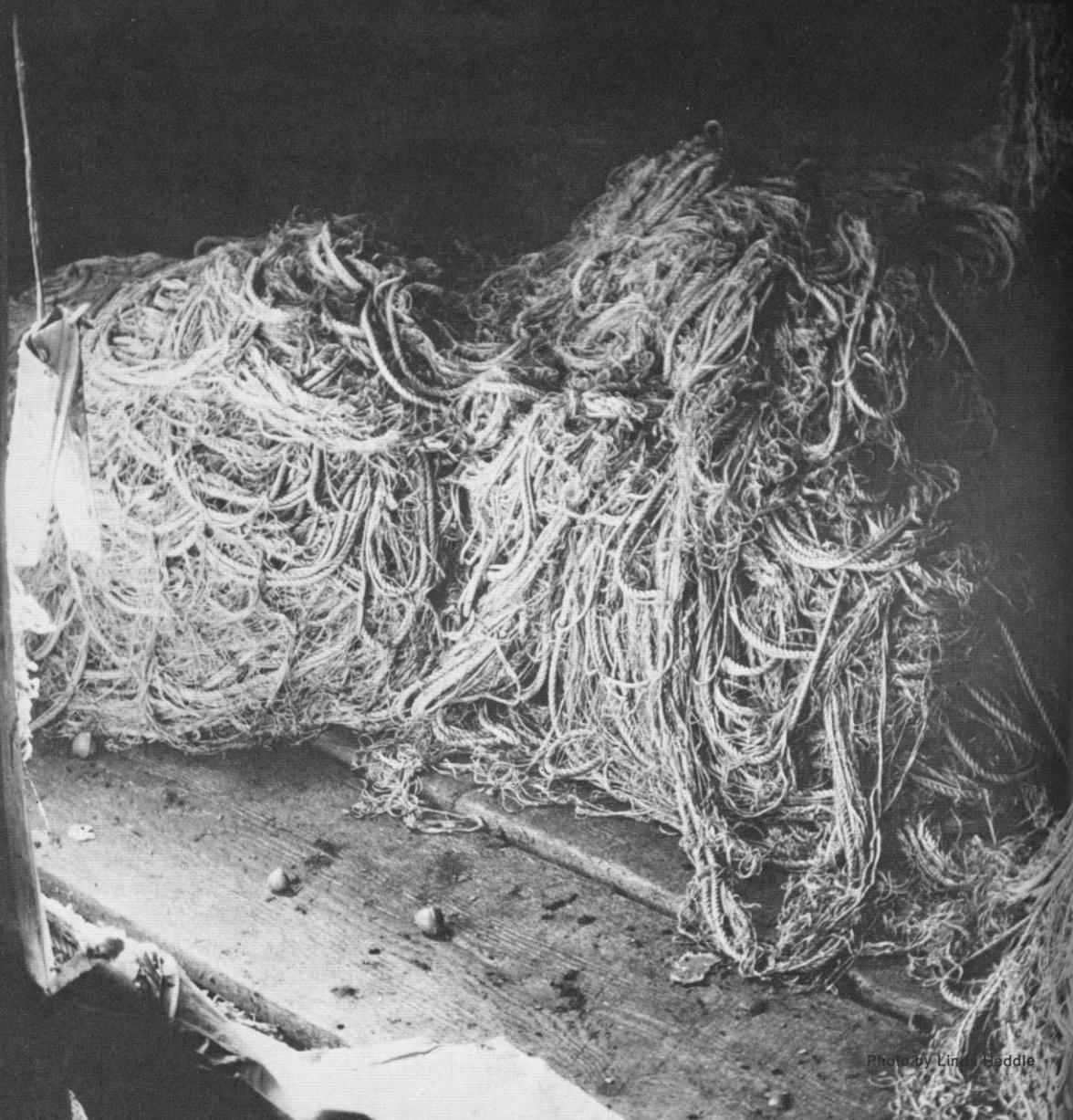


Photo by Linda Heddle

## HARLAN HOFFA

*Professor and Head of the Department of Education at The Pennsylvania State University.*

The first point at which I differ with Mr. Kaufman is where he said "each student should be regarded as a potential artist if there is to be any legitimate creative or critical experience in the school." Such attitudes, in my judgement, have been a monkey on the back of art education for a generation or more and, frankly, I just do not believe it! Is there no other way to apprehend, appreciate, understand, love, receive, conceive, judge, interpret or relate to a work of art other than by falsely clothing each student in the mask and robes of the artist? I am no aesthetician, much less an epistemologist, but I am an art educator and I have enough faith in my discipline to think that any such single track approach does my profession a disservice. More to the point, it doesn't work, as the evidence of enrollment figures in the nation's high school art classes amply demonstrates. Half the schools do not even offer art courses and, of those that do, only about one student in ten enrolls. I believe that art education must get away from the crazy notion that only artists know about art and, therefore, the only way to teach art is through the behavioral model which artists provide. I do not demean this model, but I do insist that it is not the only road to aesthetic salvation. Rather than decry the split between the studio and the classroom, I believe that we should capitalize on it. Art historians may be a stuffy bunch and art critics may be pompous; museum types may be the squirrels of the art world and gallery owners may sometimes place monetary values ahead of the aesthetic. All this is probably true some of the time but all these windows on the art world really do exist and they are not going to disappear if art teachers ignore them long enough. Moreover, in

the context of this conference, I believe the artist-teacher or artist-student model is particularly inappropriate. Artists have not historically demonstrated an overwhelming concern for their fellowman and it strikes me as unrealistic, if not downright inaccurate, to propose that the only road to aesthetic and environmental nirvana is through the artist's studio.

I must also take issue with Mr. Kaufman when he said that "researchers have endeavored to objectify the goals and techniques of art and then relate these findings to the psychologically extended behaviors of students" in the interests of "educational technology," "classroom efficiency and educational economy." I have been identified with educational researchers in the arts for sometime—though perhaps more as an ombudsman than a practicing researcher—and I must confess that I have never heard any of them speak of their research efforts in those terms. Researchers, believe it or not, are neither more efficient nor more economical than painters or poets and their use of technology falls into exactly the same mode as does that of a film maker or a sculptor. There are, to be sure, irresponsible researchers who make unwarranted claims about their findings—or who allow others to do so—just as there are charlatans among poets and painters (and I am certainly not making a case for showboat researchers who publish only in supermarket women's magazines.) I do, however, claim that objective inquiry, which seeks insight into the manner in which the human mind functions when confronted with aesthetic phenomena, is a legitimate undertaking for arts educators.

On a related point, I think it is important to separate the goals of education, in art or anything else, from the systematic observation, study and analysis of learning behaviors. Researchers do not set educational goals; though, presumably, they

work within the frameworks set by those who may seek to do so. As David Ecker insists, this separation of the "ises" and the "oughts" of education is essential—it is the philosophers who lay out the parameters of what ought to be and the researchers who set out to describe what is. To take what a researcher tells us "is" in an educational setting and make an "ought" of it is both foolish and foolhardy and every responsible researcher in art education knows this very well.

The research models which we have drawn from psychology and other behavioral sciences are, to be sure, of limited value for precisely the reasons which this paper describes; they often force the arts into an unnatural mold, but there are other models which may not be so ill fitting. The descriptive ways in which anthropologists or other social scientists work to define a phenomena without affecting it, for example, may be more useful tools for arts educators than those of the more rigidly scientific disciplines.

The third point which I feel I must speak to relates to his comment that arts education should not become "pedagogical means" toward ends other than their own. Do I hear art for arts sake again? Maybe it isn't such a bad idea at that! Art education has attached itself to many passing vessels—as self expression and therapy in the heyday of psychoanalysis, as manual dexterity and eye training in service to 19th century industry, as a social grace in much of antebellum education and, more recently, to creativity when it became one of the magic words in education. Now, it looks as though art education may be ready to seduce itself once again; this time in the bed of ecology and the environment.

Frankly I am not really convinced that art has much to contribute to "confronting the human environment" except art. I suspect that we should probably start

there and I am absolutely convinced that we must stop there too. As art people, we may be able to add a dimension to all manner of social and educational problems but I suspect that, in the long run, we lose more than we gain by chasing rainbows other than our own.

#### **GENE WENNER**

*Arts Education Specialist, The U.S. Office of Education.*

There is no question that arts education as it exists today needs desperately to be restructured in order to assist the student to not only confront but to *alter and control* his environment as well.

But it is critical that we first comprehensively restructure the entire educational system in order to free it of its obsessions with vocational training—preparing Johnny for a good paying job. Charles Reich eloquently describes the problem in *The Greening of America*:

*Beginning with school, if not before, an individual is systematically stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his heritage, his dreams, and his personal uniqueness, in order to fit him to be a productive unit in a mass technological society. Instinct, feeling, and spontaneity are suppressed by overwhelming forces. As the individual is drawn into the meritocracy, his working life is split from his home life, and both suffer from a lack of wholeness. In the end, people virtually become their occupations and their other roles, and are strangers to themselves.*

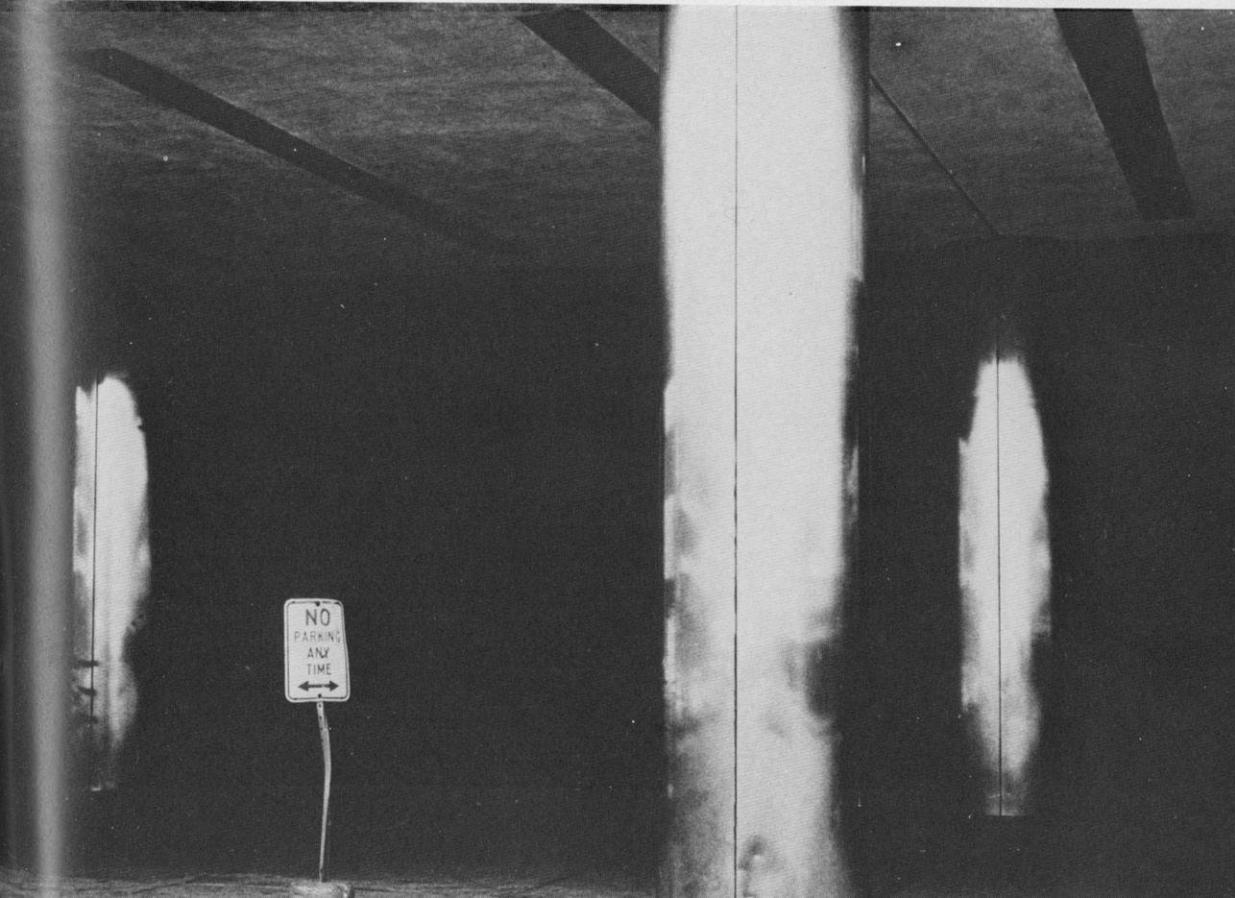
Regardless of the quality or quantity of arts programming in the schools, it is not likely that the arts instruction will be able to have much effect on the concern for the environment as long as the technological-vocational approach to education prevails.

I must agree with most of Dr. Kaufman's observations concerning the shortcomings of art education. I would like to suggest that these weaknesses are aggravated by our increasing tendency to polarize viewpoints on art education. For example, there is on the one hand the insistence that the art of today is the only thing that is relevant to the young, while on the other hand there is the older belief that one must "master the masters" before one can call oneself an "artist." There is polarization with respect to tests and measurement of art instruction. On the premise that everything in art is subjective, many would excuse the artist-teacher from any evaluation of the effec-

tiveness of his instruction while another group suggests that artistic expression can be categorized and systematized — even to the point of ignoring the humanness of the experience. Similar tendencies to polarize exist with respect to administration of the arts — whether they should be separated in departmental structures or unified under a single head, and also with respect to their educational role — whether the arts should primarily serve as an aid to learning in other areas, as opposed to the view that the arts should exist solely for their own sake.

It is imperative, then, to endeavor to strike a meaningful balance between the opposing polarities, a "some of both" rather than "one or the other" philosophy. Unless we do it is not likely that the arts will ever become central in education and will provide an aesthetic base upon which students can make decisions about and act upon their environment.

Photo by Ray Metzker  
from **Bennett, Steichen, Metzker: The Wisconsin Heritage in Photography**,  
an exhibit assembled by the Milwaukee Art Center





Asilomar, California  
Photo by Linda Heddle

# youth/the arts/human environment

Timothy Palmer

*Senior in the Department of Landscape Architecture  
at The Pennsylvania State University.*

How about the artist's sense of relationship to the earth?

From the evidence of their work it would seem that for many contemporary artists this question is of little importance. Yet, isn't it a question that is uniquely cogent for our time, one that like it or not we are forced to confront?

Man has been blundering along for centuries with his environmental problem. Only recently has he become aware that his existence on the earth and that of all forms of life are in great peril. Do the arts now have a major role to fulfill concerning the nature and scope of that peril? If the arts are to be taken seriously in our time, I feel that they do have a role and a responsibility.

Those artists directly involved in architecture, landscape design, and planning have, of course, an obvious and important function. But there are many other vital roles that all artists can play in helping society confront the environmental issues. One presumes, for example, that those deep concerns for the condition of the environment which we all feel as human beings can and should challenge the special sensitivity of the artist. In somehow reflecting those concerns in the creative work of our time our artists can exercise a most significant role in vitalizing our perceptions to the reality around us. Most of us have become hardened and calloused to our deteriorating environments. Fresh, sensitive vis-

ions are continually needed in order to highlight our tragic sense of loss.

Take note how the vast majority of people have come to accept, with little question, the decay and visual blight that plague nearly all our roadways. Either the roadways have been so all their lives, or else we have become inured to the fact of slow degradation. Once having assumed that there is no recourse to the degradation (because seemingly there never has been one), individuals begin to forgive the ugliness and to forget the beauty which may have been there at one time. In a short while, they not only do not care about the landscape, but also they do not see it as well. The result? Unrestricted development of all roadways, with the natural features of the landscape obliterated by high tension wires, drive-in establishments, and neon signs demanding first priority on the driver's attention. Bill board battles grow more fervent each year: Whoever constructs the most massive and obnoxious visual obstruction to the landscape, places his next door competitor in the shadow of obscurity.

Peter Blake's *God's Own Junkyard* gives eloquent testimony of the shameful degradation we have perpetuated on the American landscape. This book through its photography and text clearly communicates a perception which is sorely needed today, and furnishes a telling example of the kind of role contemporary artists might well play.

Another vital need of society today is that of positing prophecies of man's future — a task which artists have traditionally been equipped to fulfill. We deeply need positive visions that will show us how men and other forms of life will be able to survive in an acceptable and desirable environment. I feel that the two most basic ingredients of any human endeavor are: 1) hope that success may be achieved; and 2) a sufficient sense of control over one's present situation to permit the pursuit of his goals. To have hope, one must have a vision — a dream, if you will — of tangible possibilities, for a new environment and a new life. Our world today — and the desperateness of the environmental situation, in particular — inspires few young people to hope. It provides little basis for a necessary optimism, an essential motivation, or a vital vision of a future with promise.

Much art today reflects a change in the spirit and media of creativity. This corresponds to the change which has already occurred in the American landscape and in our human environment, through an unrestricted and uncontrolled technology. Just as our surroundings reflect less and less of the natural environment, of the organic unity of all life, and of the very human relationship of one person to another and to the land, so does our art reflect a similar depersonalization. Our functional creations of engineering are shaping our aesthetic creations of art, reflecting a change in human values, sensitivity, and attitudes.

Technological visions of the future have been much publicized in past years. Their common ingredients have included moving pedestrian sidewalks, automobiles directed by a master control, and domed cities, freeing our race from the inconveniences of rain, snow, and temperature variation, providing a Hawaiian climate to urban dwellers everywhere.

Visions of this type are, I believe, inspired by an unquestioning faith in the value of the technological creations of man. They are founded in the kind of monstrous belief that Henry Thoreau has described:

*To make a railroad round the world available to mankind is equivalent to grading the whole surface of the planet. Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough, all will at length ride somewhere in next to no time, and for nothing, but though a crowd rushes to the depot, and the conductor shouts "All aboard," when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed it will be perceived that a few are riding but the rest are run over,— and it will be called and will be "A Melancholy Accident."*

The technological visions of the future have been accepted with little question, but today's environmentalist, much like H. D. Thoreau, is quite likely to reject them vehemently. Rather than predating our value system on an obsessive concern for physical comfort, possession of property, higher gross national product and a higher standard of living, we must plan for a future of ecological stability and stewardship with the land. Man's past efforts have continuously aimed at muting the effects of nature upon man. Positive visions of the future must include efforts to mute the effects of man upon nature, showing us how to adjust our lives to a system which will preserve and restore aspects of our environment which are vital to our planet's well being.

What premise must characterize those visions which point to the possibility of ecological survival? I feel the absolutely essential one is reverence for life, for all life, not only man's life. Because it underpins the values and attitudes neces-

sary for the survival of man in the natural world, this reverence must be just as real, just as basic as man's reverence for God during the Middle Ages. It surely must be more real than the reverence man has developed for himself since the Book of Genesis. It must be far more real than the idolatry which we practice today in regard to our technological creations. Even in the language of the artist and poet, we have lost this reverence, as Robert Graves points out:

*Nowadays is a civilization in which the prime emblems of poetry are dishonored. In which the serpent, lion, and eagle belong to the circus tent; ox, salmon and boar to the cannery; racehorse and greyhound to the betting ring; and the sacred grove to the sawmill. In which the Moon is despised as a burned-out satellite of the Earth, and women reckoned as auxiliary State personnel. In which money will buy almost anything but truth, and almost anybody but the truth-possessed poet.*

Another important need is undoubtedly education; education directed against the dangerous transformation of man's attitudes, perceptions, and response to his environment. To me that transformation is without doubt the most horrifying consequence of the environmental problems and it is one which most directly challenges all concerned creative individuals.

We are becoming increasingly alienated from our surroundings. Many people in our cities are a generation or more removed from any direct vibrant contact with nature, or any acceptable human environment. We are forgetting what the natural world is. We are drifting further and further from contact with those evolutionary forces which brought about our own existence. As J. A. Rush says, "In a deeply terrifying sense, man is on his own."

We are drifting from the earth in a great artificial sea of pavement, losing first the sensitivity and knowledge which the earth breeds and finally the awareness of our natural heritage and dependence. In many cases, we are selectively outbreeding this inherent sensitivity. Faced with the brutal surroundings of asphalt, freeways, highrise living units, sulphur dioxide, 120 decibels, and with no other forms of life but our own, one must be calloused and hardened to survive. One must learn to accept the brutality of environmental degradation when there is no escape. Yes, the most horrifying future would be one in which we manage to survive, but are unaware of what we have lost. The educational responsibility here is to preserve and renew that sensitivity, love, and sense of dependence for the natural world which brought about our own existence.

On a very practical level I think we need civic leadership from persons who are perceptive and sensitive to the environment and to art. We need to develop civic concern over such issues as community planning, zoning, open space, and signing control — but concern from persons other than the local developer and the taxpayer's league.

From a broader view, how do we integrate man's creations within our sense of relationship to the earth? Just how does our art relate to our environmental problem? I feel that the subject matter of art is life, and that when the subject matter of art is not life but other creations of man, we are left with nothing but idolatry. In too many cases our art today is idolatry. Life itself is, indeed, in great peril today, and thus I feel that our art is in great peril. What we are creating today are shrieks of agony — an agony due to separation. This separation from life, from organic wholeness, and from the earth, leaves us with no life but our own, no wholeness but that which we create



artificially, and no earth but that which we have destroyed. Our art, our society, and we as individuals are looking at only parts of the whole.

The individual and the society surely must not accept this fragmentation of life's function — we must not form collectives but communities. And so, too, the artist must reject this fragmentation, for life and wholeness are the very subjects of his work. Robinson Jeffers makes this very point effectively:

*... however ugly the parts appear  
the whole remains beautiful. A  
severed hand  
Is an ugly thing, and man disserved  
from the earth and stars  
and his history . . . for contemplation  
or in fact . . .  
Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity  
is wholeness,  
the greatest beauty is  
Organic wholeness, the wholeness of  
life and things, the divine beauty  
of the universe. Love that, not man  
Apart from that, or else you will  
share man's pitiful confusions  
or drown in despair when his days  
darken.*

Our times, more than any other, suffer from a want of human understanding. At a time when our technology has brought us closer together than ever before, we find that our differences are greater than ever before. Problems of the environment are not now individual problems, neighborhood or community problems — they are global problems. All of us are affected by radiation and DDT. The fact that we are all subject to the same blight of our natural resources gives a forced unity. We have no choice in the matter — we are all victims of the same problems, though some suffer from them much more than others. At the same time our differences in opinion and attitude increasingly

widen, and the chance of controlling our outcome continues to lessen.

The urgent need from persons trained in or sensitive to the arts is commitment to the task of communication with others, and to the advancement of design responsive to the environmental imperatives. While there are very essential reasons for artistic endeavor of every type, the desperate need today is not answered by the architect who builds monuments to his profession, nor by the filmmaker and painter who are understood only by an artistic elite.

We are facing a global situation of despair. We must forge a new feeling of purpose. We must develop a new ability to confront our problems. Only then will we succeed in restoring hope and a sense of control.

#### STEPHANIE COTSIRILOS

*Graduate Assistant in the School of  
Music at Yale University.*

I feel perhaps that Tim did not distinguish as well as he might have between the artist's awareness and his effectiveness in relation to the environmental crisis. The artist may be very well aware of ecological problems but his art may not lend itself to be a specific message carrier. My own field, music, is often non-specific with regard to words and to message. Finding answers to the socio-ecological problem and producing fine works of art may be simultaneous needs in our society but we should not assume that they can necessarily be fused. There are all kinds of art and all kinds of artists. Some art may be capable of expressing very specifically the artist's feeling about the degradation of our environment and convincing its audience about the gravity of

the ecological situation. And it may do this while at the same time being a skillfully wrought and respectable work. But a lot of art—perhaps most of it—relies on metaphor, on multiplicity of meaning, on emotional response divorced from verbalization, and on sheer beauty of form. One can't necessarily attack an ecological problem through these kinds of art. But nevertheless it's very important that such arts exist.

Tim said that we need a vision for the future, an optimistic vision, a kind of hope for success. While this need may be valid, it is not necessarily the kind of thing that art deals with. There is much art—an example is tragic literature—that transcends optimism and pessimism. Such art deals with things as they are and with man's behavior in his environment.

A celebration of life, as Tim puts it, is not inherent to the metaphors of art. Metaphors of decay and destruction have always been an important element in artistic expression. Donne and Baudelaire are prime examples of artists who use such metaphors. Art reflects what is, bad or good, as well as what should be. Therefore, the artist in order to be an artist must remain true to his art, be it optimistic or pessimistic, but he must be honest. He may in addition try to improve man's lot in his capacity as a broader social being. If his art is capable of being didactic, that's fine. His functions in the role of artist and in the role of responsible citizen who effects reform may overlap. However, his art may be abstract or it may simply appeal to a deep emotional level in man by depicting in a very special way what things are. But in any event art must not be restricted to any specific content of form. The worst thing that could happen to man's environment would be the stifling of art. It must be free to flourish in all its optimism, in all its pessimism, in all its morality, di-

dacticism and abstraction. I see this as the most important ecological role of the artist as an artist—to protect and preserve his art, no matter what kind of art it may be.

I think that young people are beginning to come to this realization. I'd like to bring in something that happened last spring at Yale University. As you know, we had a strike in May and it was on this occasion that most of us began to realize that we had to choose between our role as singer, composer, dramatist, whatever, and that of a civically responsible person living in New Haven. I would defend almost to death the right of the violinist to play his violin as best he knows how, but somehow on this particular day, I had to become part of that civic group who did something about the situation in New Haven.

Having been secretary of the steering committee for the strike, I found that there was indeed a separation in my life between my art and what I had to do about my environment at that time.

At some point we have to recognize the fact that we may have to be split individuals, that our art may appeal to an elite—historically, it always has, let's face it and that perhaps we might have to step out of our role as artists to be responsible citizens. We can't assume that our art is going to be effective, if it isn't going to be effective in practical terms. I think that it's effective in spiritual terms, but that's something else.

## DISCUSSION

### Mark Winkworth

*Senior in the Department of Drama,  
Hofstra University*

### Leslie Mesnick

*Candidate for Masters Degree in  
Architecture and Landscape Architecture,  
University of Pennsylvania*

### Audience Member:

Mr. Palmer said one of the tragedies is that the human being not only finds himself in a degrading environment, but he doesn't know it. So, therefore, it seems to me he gave us a clue, and that clue might be increased sensibility. It isn't so much that the artist should have to create explicit messages so much as that his product or his art, whether it be abstract or non-abstract, be made available to

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Photo by Burton Wilson

many more people, so that their sensitivities are increased. It seems to me that we shouldn't say that only a small group of people can enjoy an abstract sculpture. You can enjoy it. I can enjoy it. Perhaps our parents couldn't. That isn't because we're superior people; it's because we had certain advantages which they didn't. Perhaps if we spoke about ways we could bring the artists' work to more people, thereby increasing their sensitivity, wouldn't you think that that would be an environmental contribution? As people become more sensitive they will rebel or be less willing to put up with the kind of physical environment in which they now find themselves.

### Mark Winkworth:

Before you start talking about spreading the art, you've got to talk about where the art is and where it isn't, and in practical terms what the university student does when he gets out of college. He doesn't



go to the College Placement Office, and say, "I'm an actor. Set me up."

**Stephanie Cotsirilos:**

There is one way in which an artist can help and that is to try to make what he does somewhat more accessible to people in the sense of bringing them into contact with it. At Yale they are establishing a neighborhood music school on Saturdays for children who otherwise wouldn't be able to take music lessons. People will have to step out of their roles as artists. They will have to help build some kind of groundwork. You can bring the art to people but they have to be in some way equipped to deal with it.

**Leslie Mesnick:**

I think we have to be concerned with bringing art to the people. I worked on a program in Philadelphia with Inner City children, and I came to realize that you have to make an effort to encourage kids to respond to their own environment first, to see what beauty there may be in it. No matter how bad an environment is, it isn't hopeless. There are some positive things in it that can be appreciated. Unless kids can learn to respond to what is around them, I don't think that they will be able to fully respond to art in a museum. My point is that I felt that children should begin to look at the weeds in the vacant lots, and when I encouraged my inner city kids to do this, the effect was tremendous. The children responded with great energy and enthusiasm. These children thought the weeds were flowers and it was only the adults who thought the flowers were weeds.

**Audience Member:**

I want to suggest that there is one sense in which there may be a fundamental conflict here between artistic values and environmental values. It takes fairly large centers of population to support our major artistic institutions, the opera, the museum, etc. At the same time it's in

these centers that our environmental and more generally social problems are most acute. I think a good illustration of this is the case of Lincoln Center in New York City. Sure, it's a beautiful monument, but at the same time it is essentially foreign to its environment and clashes with the social and environmental problems that are all around us. We have to be concerned with this dilemma.

**Mark Winkworth:**

I couldn't agree more about Lincoln Center and similar centers. As beautiful as they are and as valuable as they might be, it is a common phenomenon in this country that we don't allow art to thrive, we don't allow it to *begin* to thrive. Don't build us these buildings. They mean nothing to us. That's not art. Lincoln Center may be architecturally beautiful, but it does nothing for those of us who want to practice our art.

Isn't it important in the elementary schools for the kids to have some kind of aspiration toward artistic goals — a lot of kids want to be baseball players, politicians, whatever — isn't having an aspiration important to them? Don't they need to relate to something? Don't we have to start down there in the elementary schools? I didn't know the culture thing until I got way into college. Isn't that a problem? Those kids need that chance to be stimulated by art. They need to draw from that environment. Mr. Kaufman was talking this morning about bringing in the artist and saying, "Hello kids, I'm an artist." Well, the credentials of that artist to very young people are nothing. So you've got to start somewhere else; and I think the key word maybe is aspiration.

**Leslie Mesnick:**

We're talking about artists in education, and I think this is very important. Some artists, as teachers, do make it. I think it is up to the individual teacher, his ability to relate within a human environment.

**Audience Member:**

If you were to repeat your education what methodology would you wish changed? And how would you wish it to have been?

**Stephanie Cotsirilos:**

I disagree with the word "methodology." I also disagree with the idea of having the artist as a point of aspiration. I think we're all missing the point when we talk about either a goal label or a methodology label. What you have to deal with is the arts process. What are the processes going on? You don't teach a process by method, you teach a process by doing it.

You had asked if we had our education to do over, what would we have changed about it. One thing I would have had changed is the categorization that often occurs even at a very early age of children. I was told I couldn't sing when I was young; I'm now a voice major at the Yale School of Music. The point is a child is not encouraged to try something in the arts. A boy is not encouraged to play the guitar or play the piano instead of going out for sports. Kids that take music lessons are laughed at. This is the sort of thing that I think is wrong and it's getting back to the attitude that I think Mark was talking about.

**Leslie Mesnick:**

The first thing I personally would do about changing education is that I would abolish all undergraduate architecture programs. I started out in one and I failed at the end of the first semester. My teacher said that I would just never make it as an architect because I just couldn't letter.

**Audience Member:**

What do you do with the general mass of people who have already gone through twelve to fourteen years of an educational system that has completely inhibited them from any kind of creative process or even thinking? Can the community act as a vital force in this or is it beyond the

realm of that? Is it our responsibility to face, or do we just say, No! We'll start with the three-year-olds and Sesame Street or something equivalent and work on from there and forget about the rest of us.

**Herb Aach:**

One of the things that occurs to me is that we still have the confusion between art and artist. What are we talking about here? Are we talking about art or the artist? The people that have been hurt by their early education may have been turned away so far that they'll never get there. My survival as an artist has been in a hostile environment from the word "go." There was never anything in my environment that said go ahead and be an artist. To borrow your saying "to do your own thing," that has been something that the artist has always known and always will in spite of all. In the end, what are we speaking about? The art or the artist?

**Stephanie Cotsirilos:**

I think that we all agree that the definition of an artist is that he creates works of art. Whether they relate to the environment or not is purely his prerogative completely. If he wants to relate to them, fine; if he doesn't want to relate to them, fine. He can also act as a civic individual. He may have more than one role, but his role as artist depends on the fact that he creates works of art.

**Audience Member:**

How is this remark consistent with your previous complaint against educational categories and categorization? You take a human being and you ask him to become a schizophrenic essentially. He has an artistic role and a civic role but isn't this just another reflection of more categories? It seems to me that an integrated human being is concerned about social issues, as Mr. Palmer said we ought to be. If he is, this will come out in his art.



**Annual Rings** by Dennis Oppenheim, 1968  
Schemata of annual tree rings severed by political boundary  
USA/Canada Border at Fort Kent, Maine  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. Anderson, New York

**Stephanie Cotsirilos:**

I fully admit that I will contradict myself many times today. I object to the categorization so early, because then a child has no way to decide whether he can sing. The child is not capable of categorizing himself. He may choose to do so when he's older but you can only do that on your own. You can't tell somebody else what to do.

**Audience Member:**

There isn't any kind of a sick schizoid split in an artist between his media and his environment because after all we're working in many media. And the one thing the schools screw up is the imposition of the categories. The one role artists can play and I think the one mission that art people have in the schools is to provide leadership to make available the idea of process; to help the kids know where they are and what kind of media they have, and encourage them to work with it. That applies in kindergarten and that applies in music school, and in graduate school. It's a broadening approach, a learning to discipline interiorly, breaking down the external categories. This perhaps is the only thing that is true about art instruction. It is a process, a growth. There is a starting and an opening up. And this isn't the thing that happens in schools. Process doesn't occur. I think we can help other educators open their classes to process.

**Audience Member:**

I wanted to say that I thought Miss Mesnick hit the nail on the head as to where the problem is in her experience with kids thinking weeds were flowers. The problem with the artist and environment is that often works of art in an environment are totally unnoticed by Americans, not often but almost all the time. How many times are we aware of an extremely beautiful building when we go into a city for the first time, for instance? But the natives don't look at it any more. That's

happened to me again and again in Buffalo where there are some very great buildings and the natives there are absolutely astonished that you notice them and they've never looked at them. I myself am a musician and in music you get the reverse thing. In this day and age when composers are showing us that there is a sort of continuum of what is supposed to be music one gets the strong impression that if you're not offering people Beethoven's Ninth they wouldn't notice it either. And until something can be done at the level that Miss Mesnick was trying to do — getting children simply to enjoy their senses in the most simple things — we're never going to be able to turn off that goddam Muzak and we're never going to get people to look at the Richardson and the Sullivan buildings that are in their midst. That's the problem.

**Audience Member:**

I think that I would take exception to two things: First of all, Mr. Aach's concern about the artist as divorced from the arts. If the title of this conference had read the Artist and the Human Environment, I don't think I would have been here. The title of the conference reads the Arts and the Human Environment. It suggested to me a relationship and perhaps an evaluation of how much of the arts are getting into the human environment, at least in one aspect. I think the example of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony illustrates a disagreement here because when Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was performed a couple of years ago by the New York Philharmonic in Central Park 90,000 people turned out. People don't walk past the Beethoven Ninth Symphony. To be very simplistic about it, in my opinion, they just don't have an opportunity to hear it. The symphonic musician finds, first, that his product is confined to a very small audience who can afford to come to the fine palaces which we built and pay

the prices of admission; and secondly, he finds that his art is determined not by aesthetic considerations but by considerations of what will sell at the box office. His art is determined by what the recording companies decide will sell records, etc. So, between the artist and what I feel is a tremendous potential audience, we have all kinds of institutional blocks—the system if you will, to use a trite expression. There are institutional barriers between the arts and the human environment.

**Peter Yates:**

I would like to point out that in this panel we have had the best example of how art can be used to discuss the environment. We have been given examples in terms of art; we have been given examples in terms of the environment. These things have been tied together tightly so we won't forget them. And maybe some of us somewhat older people can learn a little more when we go to another conference not to be quite so distant from the subject.

**the sky has hands**

(from a Sequence of Indian Poems)

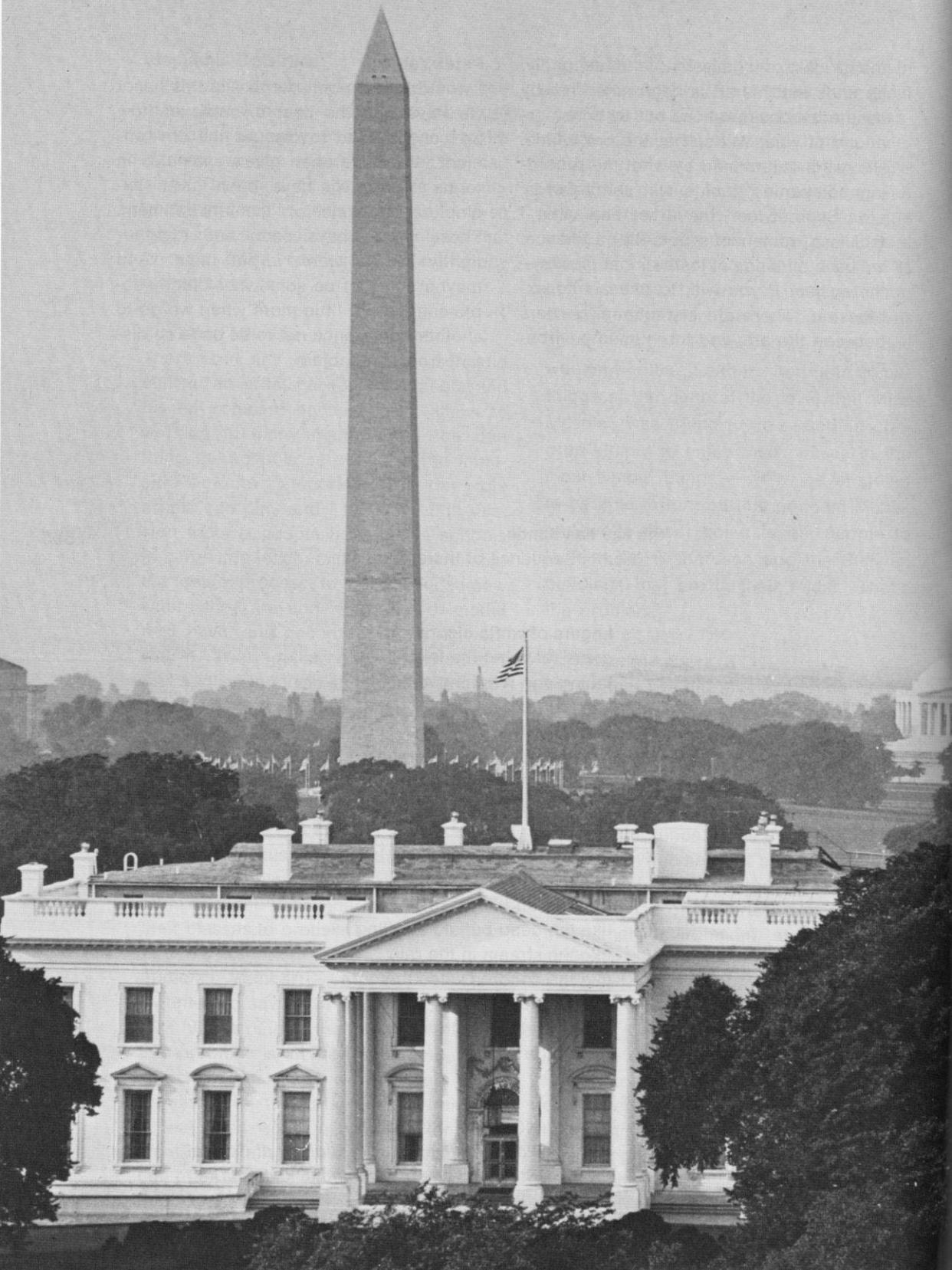
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fingers of white clouds  
come reaching the lake  
falling and reaching again  
like the fox crawls  
on his belly one foot  
reaching one foot reaching  
so slow i must look away  
to see

the sky has a belly  
it fills in the day i see  
it grows and it grows  
like the dead buffalo swelling  
like the stream in the rain  
like the children when the corn  
is ripe and i wonder  
what it eats and i think  
it eats the sun.

NORMAN RUSSELL

*Poet and Professor of Biology at Central  
State College in Edmond, Oklahoma.*



View of the White House, Washington Monument, and Jefferson Memorial  
Courtesy: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service  
Photo by Abbie Rowe

# citizens' strategies for strengthening the role of the arts in human environment

William S. Moorhead

Member of the U. S. House of Representatives.

I think that there possibly is a message that a politician can bring to a discussion of the arts, whether we talk about the art of politics or the politics of art.

It is important to look at where we are, what is now the national attitude toward the arts and what has preceded it.

Today some of the most original writers in America have concluded that we have reached the quintessence of Carlyle's statement when he sounded the feeling of the age of the industrial revolution, a time when the arts came to be considered as frills: "Produce! Produce! Were it but the smallest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name!"

Zbigniew Brzezinski refers to our times as the technitronic era. Theodore Roszak thinks of our government not as an aristocracy, not as a democracy, but as a technocracy. Alvin Toffler warns us of the future shock which will come from the impact of accelerating technology on the individual required to live, in the words of Nicola Chiaramonte, "a collective existence." On the dust jacket of *The Greening of America* it is said: "There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture and it will change the political structure only as its final act."

Now, then, are we in America on the eve of a revolution which *The Greening of*

*America* suggests or are we mired down in the bog of technocracy which Ralph Lapp calls the "weapons culture," or Roszak calls "the making of a counter-culture?" Many will become pessimistic because of the utterances of the articulate prophets of doom. I, on the other hand, have become optimistic because I have seen considerable reform during my twelve years in Congress.

I fight the proclivity toward pessimism, remembering Sigmund Freud's observance in 1928 that, "The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Ultimately, after endlessly repeated rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points in which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind." I think we all agree that the first step towards solving a problem is to recognize that there is a problem. The first answer to Carlyle's "Produce, produce!" is to assert that our goal should not be just the material quantity of life but something more delicate, more important to the individual, the quality of life.

Note in the words of the prophets of doom the repetition of the word "culture." For Ralph Lapp, it's the "weapons culture." For Roszak it's the making of a "counter-culture." For *The Greening of America* it is the revolution which will originate with the individual and with culture. Now, as we know, machines do not, corporations do not, and committees do

not create culture. Individuals do create a culture. Artists and art leaders are in the vanguard of the attempt to redeem the quality of life for each and every individual. Note, I do not say the masses — *each and every individual of our nation*. A painting, a poem, a piece of music, a terse philosophical observation, an entry in a biography or history: these expressions by individuals can rescue us from the isolation of mass unimportance. I am optimistic because I really believe that if we nurture it we will see a reemergence of the culture of the individual.

In the past five years, artists and humanists have witnessed and helped achieve what I hope will prove to be a changing of our national priorities. I think this change might be simply identified as the assertion of the importance of the individual. Artists and humanists have always been outside the mainstream, set apart by their creativity, but it is such people who are the last to feel alone, or suppose that man is without worth. They provide those less contemplative with a sense of continuity and a sense of worth.

I want to direct my remarks toward three concerns, drawing on some recent trends which lend support to my view of the emergence of the individual. I want to point to some of the criticisms originally levied against government support for the arts and humanities — criticisms that have been refuted by the existence of the National Foundation and its Arts and Humanities Endowments. I will concentrate on this Foundation as a harbinger of the federal role both because of its central importance and because I proposed the legislation for it and consequently know it best. Finally, I want to emphasize that the major responsibility for the state of the arts and the human environment lies with you. Substantive ideas and pragmatic programs are the real solvers of problems, and these will have to come from you. Concerned rhetoric offers hope.

But that is insufficient. The federal government is more responsive now to humanistic and environmental concerns than it has been before. Knowledgeable artists, humanists, and environmentalists must lead and provide conduits for a redirected sense of priorities.

In August of 1964, in the waning days of the 88th Congress, I introduced a bill based on the report of the Commission on the Humanities, to establish a National Foundation to "promote progress in the humanities and the arts."

During the 88th Congress, I did not ask any one to co-sponsor the legislation because I did not want to ask any member to take the political risk attendant upon backing that sort of legislation in the year of the Goldwater campaign.

Instead, we prepared for the 89th Congress. We planned a program to get first public and then political support for the legislation. We had one thousand copies of the bill printed and distributed to key groups and individuals across the country. Letters to me began to pour in from across the nation. I had these letters printed in the Congressional Record so that my colleagues would be aware of the scope of support for the bill. Several magazines published articles on the subject and newspaper publicity was favorable. Whenever there was a favorable editorial, I had it reprinted in the Congressional Record.

We held many conferences and made many changes in the original bill. Plans were made for speaking tours which took me and the other supporters of the bill to all parts of the country. In January, February and March of 1965, I spoke to various groups in Washington, Maryland, New York, California, Illinois, North Carolina and Georgia. We urged all who listened to us on the subject to write to their own Congressmen and Senators.

The people who favored this legislation were very articulate and they did indeed write their law-makers in Washington urging support.

Just before the opening of the 89th Congress, I wrote to every member enclosing a copy of a redrafted bill, a reproduction of some of the favorable publicity on the legislation, and copies of letters from the state which the particular member represented.

I asked each member to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation. The purpose of this technique was to give each member a feeling that he would receive support from back home if he backed this legislation.

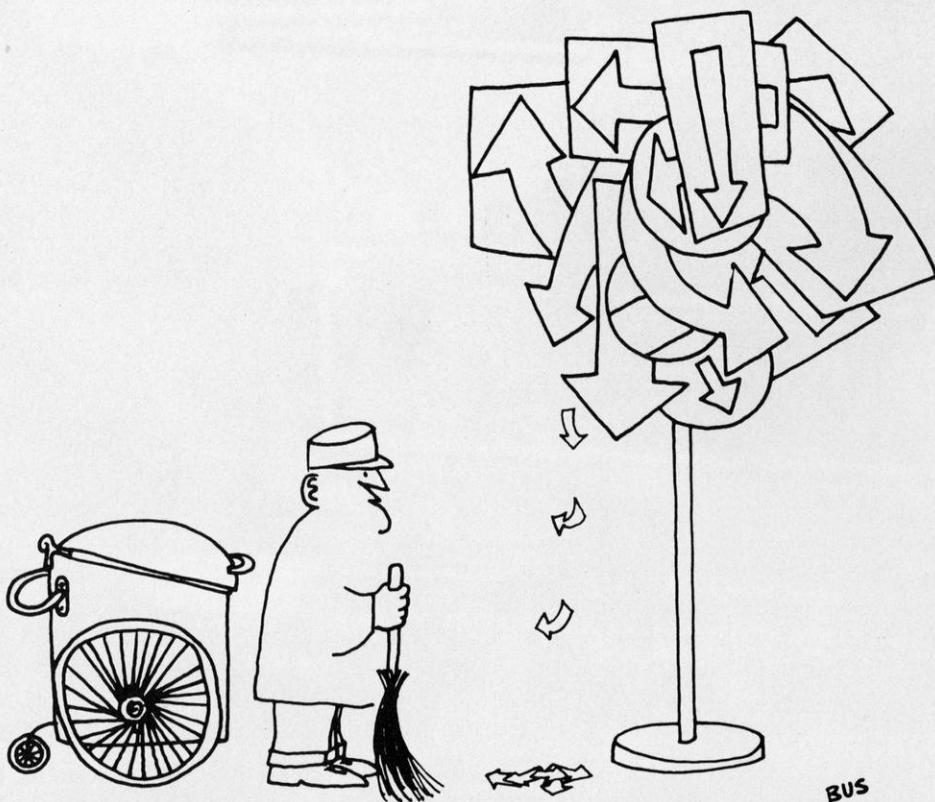
I could not promise that anyone would win reelection because of backing this legislation. I tried to suggest instead that if a member approved of the legislation, he could back it without losing votes.

By the end of the opening day of the 89th Congress, January 4th, 1965, fifty members of the House had introduced identical bills. Less than three months later the number had gone over a hundred and there were, in addition, some forty co-sponsors in the Senate, giving this particular piece of legislation the largest number of co-sponsors of any bill in the 89th Congress.

All these developments show that the public can have an impact on Congress and the Congress can be made to react, because it was the tremendous public response to our effort that spawned its successful congressional backing.

The Foundation was not born with rapturous unanimity; criticism of the marriage of the arts and government was pointed. I want now to examine in retrospect some of the putative fears attached to the proposal for government funding of the arts and the humanities, and see how

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Cartoon by Franco Giacomini,  
Torino, Italy



View from the Eiffel Tower  
Photo by Jim Heddle

these fears have been met. I do this in the Socratic vein of attempting to know where we have been, so we can then know where we must go. A dynamic role for the arts and the humanities needs to be fleshed out by artists, humanists, and councils of such men. If there is an American spiritual crisis, it is such individuals who must confront it.

The main thrusts of the arguments against an alliance between government and the arts and humanities were threefold. First, there was the claim made on national television that, "billions of dollars have (already) been made available to the arts by the government—Federal, State, and local—through tax advantages of every sort."

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If tax advantages were dubious, direct aid was dreadful. Government subsidy implied government control, and the spectre of a "censoring foundation" reared. Secondly, there was the fear that the community pride in some of the symphony orchestras (New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco) would be weakened by Federal support. Legitimate support could somehow only flow from the communities' enthusiasm and sense of financial responsibility. Thirdly, and perhaps the most legitimate concern, was the fear that government subsidy would involve a ministry of fine arts, with the Orwellian connotation not only in title. The politicians' familiarity with the plethora of cumbersome bureaucracies made him wary of creating another for the arts and the humanities. A bureaucracy's bent is often the antithesis of creativity. The issue recalled the Lockeian-Jeffersonian tenet that the government which governs least, governs best. There was the fear that a committee which decided upon the allocation of funds for artistic and humanistic endeavors would of necessity be a bargaining committee. Compromise would be promoted, the conservative and cor-

rect perpetuated, and mediocrity and philistinism the rule.

Fortunately, these arguments were defeated and the National Foundation's operations for the past five years have dispelled them. As *the New York Times* phrased it:

*The Foundation has set a record of which it can be proud. Born part of despair and disbelief, it has established for itself in the world of the arts a reputation not only for fair dealing but also for perceptiveness.*

If you insist on being pessimistic you have only to look at the budget of the National Science Foundation of about 500 million dollars and realize that the budget for the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities is just a fraction of that. If you would rather be, as I am, more optimistic, look at the way the support for the Foundation has grown. You will then realize that the American public through their representatives are now increasingly sensing the importance of the arts and humanities.

The Appropriations for the Foundation and its Endowments grew from \$5.7 million in (fiscal year) 1966 to \$19.6 million for 1970. For 1971, \$31.3 million dollars were appropriated with a conference report authorization of 60, then 80 million dollars for the next two years. It appears a real government commitment is increasingly being etched to promote our national cultural heritage.

Hopefully the question that Roger Stevens raised last year will be raised more frequently: "Why is it perfectly legitimate for the government to bring about massive social change through the sciences but not through the arts?" Like Mr. Stevens, I think it is neither legitimate nor intelligent and indeed it might be dangerous. In 1967, for every hundred dol-

lars invested in sciences only twenty cents was invested for the humanities.

A colleague of mine dismally pointed out that it might one day be said that "in reaching for the moon we turned our backs on the heart and soul of America."

I do not like to quote politicians, other than myself, and particularly not Republicans, but I think President Nixon's December 1969 address to Congress warrants quoting. He stated, "The attention and support we give to the arts and humanities — especially as they affect our young people — represents a vital part of our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Americans." I think this will be a prevailing sentiment.

#### **RICHARD HUNT**

*Sculptor and Member of the National Council on the Arts.*

Congressman Moorhead outlined some of the strategy employed in gaining the enactment of the bill that gave birth to the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. At this time no less important are the further strategies that need to be employed to keep this agency a vital bureaucracy, creative in its approach and sensitive to the needs of the artistic community.

Although the first five years of the Endowment are impressive for the range and thrust of their programs, I am one member of the National Council on the Arts who harbors some fears that the Arts Endowment rather than becoming more confident and creative in its new programs, may as a result of its past suc-

cesses choose to move toward a conservative role, one in which it may largely tend to see itself as a guardian of the past and a preserver of established institutions.

With the prospect of somewhat larger budgets have come pressures from those large special interest groups in the arts—such as the American Symphony Orchestra League and the American Association of Museums—who are charged with maintaining our cherished cultural institutions. The needs of the institutions these associations represent are real and deserving of financial remedy. But there is also urgent need to encourage individual creative efforts in the arts. To achieve both ends it may be necessary, as the monetary level of government participation in the arts increases, to establish separate budgets for creation and subsidy, and separate areas of responsibility for each.

The Arts Endowment is currently funding a multi-million dollar program of assistance to orchestras, while making no awards to composers for new compositions. If our funding is increased for the next fiscal year, we are contemplating a multi-million dollar program for the support of museums, while holding fellowships to individual artists at a present low level of *only twenty per year* to be distributed across the length and breadth of the country. There has been a similar pattern with respect to fellowships for creative writers.

As an artist member of the National Council on the Arts, I regret this trend. The requirements of a vital contemporary culture are varied, and the government's financial support of the arts should be directed more toward creation than preservation. Federal support of the arts should not ignore the opportunity or the challenge of providing incentives for cultural growth and individual creative

achievement in a time of cultural revolution. Unlike the large special interest groups of the arts establishments, we have no associations of individual creative talents to apply constructive pressure for more developmental objectives. I wish that we could somehow form an artist-citizen lobby to define the importance of the artist's role in society, and to continually press Congress and the Endowment to support individual and innovative creative efforts.

I think this is an opportune time, and an important point of entry for artists, educators, and citizens interested in the arts to take an active interest in developing governmental policy in the arts for it combines both an assertion of self interest at its highest level, and the utilization of creative possibilities we have not known in America before.

is not tangible. It is entirely different from the physical world where we can see the object with our eyes, feel it with our hands, taste it with our mouths, hear it with our ears, and smell it with our noses.

"All right," you say, "granted! But how do you give form to such an esoteric thing as a cultural environment?" Obviously we have a certain physical form present with respect to our libraries, museums, and performing arts centers. But we, of course, are talking about something more. We are talking about attitudes, sensitivities, an awareness of beauty in our lives—and even more, a feeling of assurance that there are in our community well organized institutions furthering each art activity.

It is my sincere belief that each community should be so structured that the arts can flourish. This means that there must be a focus of leadership for each art as well as a center around which each of the groups can gather to present the strongest position on behalf of their objectives in competition with those of other interest groups. What we are talking about is the development of concepts which we can subsequently test to see if they are workable, viable, and believable. It is, therefore, important that the community establish goals, that it determine its priorities, that it maximize its resources—that it then accordingly determine its strategies.

#### **THEODORE HAZLETT, JR.**

*President of the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust and Chairman of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.*

In a book entitled *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry*, John Dewey, the American philosopher, made the statement that the environment in which human beings live, act and inquire is not simply physical but cultural as well. It is difficult for me to understand why so few people share this belief. I believe in it though I am a lawyer, and lawyers are not apt to believe in amorphous concepts.

Of course, most of the difficulty comes from the very fact that the cultural world

I have been impressed with a plan developed in Dallas a number of years ago called "Dallas Goals." This is an example of a community that attempted to project a desirable image of itself, one that notably did not leave culture out of the picture.

What I am suggesting as a proper role for a citizen is to see to it that a cultural plan is developed in his community, which is the necessary tangible form to



New Jersey Avenue, Brooklyn

Courtesy: M. Paul Friedberg and Associates

which I referred, and to see to it that the plan is carried out.

Even within my lifetime the notion of physical planning of communities did not have wide acceptance. But attitudes have changed. Physical planning is now accepted and in fact has become very sophisticated. Now everyone is beginning to cry because it perhaps has gone too far due to the influence of computer technology. Then within the last five, six years we have seen another type of planning develop — social planning. It is important to stress that both types of planning were started by citizen groups. I would like to suggest that as citizens we now also move toward cultural planning. *The cultural plan is the form that must come before the clout.*

No battle was ever won, no major concept ever really swept the world, without a plan. If we are serious about improving our cultural environment, this is where we must start. In my opinion this is the primary citizen strategy.

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#### **MICHAEL STRAIGHT**

*Deputy Chairman, The National Endowment for the Arts.*

If we start from where we are, as one of our youth panel members suggested we must, then this is where we are: the arts institutions of this country, the carriers of our culture, are broke. The patronage patterns of the past are inadequate today. Artists are no longer willing to work for less than a living wage. The new role for arts institutions, which in the long run will sustain them, has not yet been estab-

lished. The new audiences are not yet adequately compensating the artists through whom they are enriched. And so the institutions are broke.

The symphony orchestras are broke. The dance companies are broke. The theatrical resident repertory companies are broke. The museums are broke. The conservatories, which are now training the young musicians who will be the performers of the future, are broke. The cultural centers are broke, from the smaller ones in our ghettos up to and including the giants such as Lincoln Center.

Congressman Moorhead understood the financial plight of the arts when he turned to a new source of support for the future — the people themselves, acting through their government. He emphasized two points which are of enormous importance: first, that it is necessary for all of us to understand the importance and validity of the political process; and second, that politics is a matter of continuous, and hard, disciplined work. He described the process by which he got his bill passed: through letters, through editorials, through seeing that people were kept in touch. It was hard work, and it was successful. And his creation, the Endowment, is now engaged in bringing musicians to new audiences, in getting artists and poets to go into schools, in sending dance companies into every corner of the country. We are engaged in creating a new order of priorities — slowly. But anybody who deals in political realities knows that change takes place slowly in a democracy.

On a poignant note, Congressman Moorhead mentioned his unwillingness to go to his fellow legislators and ask them to risk their futures in what was a bad year for voting on behalf of the arts. Now that sounds distant and academic to all of us who do not put our professional heads on the block once every two years. But I

spent a good deal of time this spring tramping up and down the halls where Congressman Moorhead and his colleagues live and work, and I found that they are under enormous pressure. At the time I visited them, they were smarting from letters from teachers who had their salaries held at present levels by the President's veto. They were smarting from pressure from farmers who felt that their subsidy payments were being cut back. *There were no signs of significant pressure from the arts community.*

But the arts legislation was in danger in the spring. There were those even in the White House, who did not think it would go through. I would not ask for a show of hands here as to how many, during this period, wrote to their Congressmen. I would guess a handful at most, because our heritage is such that we are not yet involved in the political process.

We in the arts are on the margin. And yet there are enormous opportunities. The only sense of disquiet I have gained from this Conference is that we are not yet ambitious enough. We have not raised our horizons as to our importance in this country, as to what we can do.

Planners are currently engaged in remaking the face of American life day by day. But are we as artists participating in this endeavor? Through the Department of Housing and Urban Development this country has undertaken to relocate thirty million of the next one hundred million Americans in new communities. There are between sixty five and one hundred of these new communities now under construction. Recently the commercial planners of these communities were polled to see what they were planning in the way of community facilities. Virtually everyone was planning a golf course; almost everyone was planning a swimming pool; one fifth were planning movie houses; one in ten were planning li-

braries. Less than five per cent were planning community centers in which live music or live theatre could be performed. But within twenty years time these will be the communities in which thirty million Americans will be living.

The reason it is happening this way is that the commercial developer is operating on a very narrow margin and he has no incentive whatever in providing any facility that does not give him a cash return. At the moment he can claim an accelerated tax deduction by putting in a swimming pool. He cannot claim such a deduction by putting in a piece of sculpture. Why not? Because we have not yet made that point to the Congress and implemented it through legislation. There is no reason why the government should not add an arts component to what it is now doing. The Department of HUD is putting \$250,000,000 behind these new communities, none of which is yet being spent on an arts component. But if you increase the funds, there is no reason why we cannot send the Richard Hunts of the United States to participate with the commercial developers in their earliest plans and all the way through the completion of the communities. From the beginning those communities should be thought of as places in which the arts will play a central and vital role, the spaces conceived in terms of the sculptor's eye, the location of buildings in terms of the centrality of a communal meeting place. This could be done rather simply by the application of the processes of democratic government at the right place, at the right time. But what is required is acceptance, full acceptance, of the opportunities and obligation of the democratic process.

At the beginning of the Conference, the efforts of government were dismissed by one or two speakers as being absurdly small, of no interest, philistine. It occurred to me that if this meeting were not

new approaches to urban design, defined positive urban economics, and more efficient government and public service delivery. These findings will lead to better distribution of resources and more effective government at the state and local levels. Physical planning is now a clearer and more productive discipline, and economic development is becoming a major factor in city planning and development. The public sector is more involved in the private sector, and private sector involvement in public sector development is increasing. The private sector is more involved in the public sector, and the public sector is more involved in the private sector.

Civic Center Plaza, Milwaukee



a group of arts administrators and artists and educators, if we were the National Association of Real Estate Boards, or the National Association of Home Builders or the National Rifle Association (which through a national campaign just brought down its major enemy in the Senate, Mr. Tydings), or a national association of executives of banks or railroads or the airlines, that we would not be spending our time carping about the inadequacies of the government role. We would move beyond the inadequacies, we would take them for granted, because we are in the business of politics. We would take politics seriously. We would be committed; we would be in the game. Our time is precious. If we are to be permanently in the game we must spend our time wisely — as those lobbies do. They make their influence very much felt on men like Congressman Moorhead. We do not. So the point I want to underscore along with Congressman Moorhead and Richard Hunt is the importance of using the democratic process in gaining support for the arts.

I agree with Mr. Rosenberg that we cannot take the arts more seriously than the artists take themselves. I think his point is basic here. What he asked of artists is that they take themselves seriously. We who work to help artists cannot demand more for them than they themselves seek and earn.

## DISCUSSION

### **Audience Member:**

When you speak before Congress on the subject of the arts can you get their attention?

### **Congressman Moorhead:**

Of course I can get up in the house and say what I've said here. I've said it in the past in different forms. As to how much attention it will get that's the question. What *will* get attention from members of the house are letters from their constituents. Unfortunately most artists, especially visual artists are loners, very much individuals. The only group minded people, who therefore exert more power, tend to be the performing artists and this tends to concentrate their political power on the two coasts. I found that when we got going on this Arts and Humanities Foundation that the *political muscle of the humanists exceeded that of the artists*. They are more evenly distributed across the country—so that if you needed a vote in Iowa, you could contact someone in Iowa who would stir up a group to write many letters to that particular member. It's much more difficult to get that kind of cooperation out of the artists. I mention that because Mr. Hunt mentioned an artists' lobby. God, I'd like to see that come to pass. But I'm not too optimistic. I hope I'm wrong.



George Washington Bridge, New York, 1931 Photo by Edward Steichen  
Courtesy: The Edward Steichen Archives, The Museum of Modern Art

# the arts as environmental imperatives

John Hightower

Director of the Museum of Modern Art.

All in all, the papers represent an impressive compilation of opinions on a subject for which there has been too little thoughtful consideration. The planners are to be commended for focusing the attention of so many able minds on the role of the arts as a positive instrument for generating a sense of collective care about all of life.

To hit some of the highlights: In his keynote address, Michael Straight articulated the underlying dilemma, and often polarity, of the conference extremely well. He saw the problem of the arts in the human environment as essentially a conflict between traditional elitism on the one hand and, on the other, the need to permeate all of society — its buildings, its products, its towns and highways — with the sense of aesthetic quality inherent in a full understanding of the arts. He pointed to education as the mechanism for accomplishing a valid aesthetic populism. And then, with inconsistency, he bowed in his final paragraph to a line from Harold Rosenberg's text that glorified the elitism of painting in a way that had little to do with the more catholic definition of art Mr. Straight had been suggesting up to that point. Serge Chermayeff spoke fleetingly about planning and more passionately on the need for fostering individual creativeness. Irving Kaufman independently reiterated the concern for creativeness and challenged the existing as well as accepted notions of so-called art education. Congressman Moorhead

expressed what I found to be a heady if not altogether realistic optimism over the future role of government, with too little concern over the hazards of either political or bureaucratic censorship. It was Timothy Palmer and the attendant youth panel of unusually incisive participants that offered real hope and made Charles Reich's *Greening of America* seem almost possible. There seemed to be a consistency of thought among them that sensory awareness — the humus of the arts — could become a part of everyone and could be translated into a concern for one's immediate surroundings. The Palmer panel was both complemented and strengthened with the scholarly and often poetic recall of Jack Morrison who related, with focused and intelligent perception to the basic humanism of the conference theme, the insights of a mind-boggling roster of people including Anton Chekhov, William Shakespeare, Eugene O'Neill, Albert Camus, Martha Graham, William Butler Yeats, Eldridge Cleaver, Chubby Checkers, and John D. Rockefeller III.

But it may be more illuminating to touch upon points of disagreement with some of the speakers than to toast their intelligence. Let me begin by revealing a bias which was piqued by Michael Straight's closing inconsistency and echoed by several other conference participants. Somehow I am always suspicious of a critic's incantations about art as only object and his failure to recognize the artist as

“an antennae of society,” to borrow from Ezra Pound. As Kenneth Tynan has said, “The critic knows the way but can’t drive the car.” Mr. Rosenberg contends that social reality can truly be perceived only in works of art, not through the artist. There is an intellectual arrogance operating here which intrigues me. Is he suggesting that only when perceptions are as finely honed as his, can art be related to social reality? I would be more willing to grant the point if Mr. Rosenberg did not imply that the uses to which art had been put were acceptable in recent centuries by our European oriented non-culture. He does not challenge the use of art as an investment (“Where are those paintings that have been beating the pants off the Dow Jones’ averages lately?”); he does not challenge the use of art as an icon to be revered in museums, the templed attics of our civilization; he does not challenge the use of art as an excuse for a social club.

I have the feeling that Mr. Rosenberg tolerates the artist as society’s freak-in-residence. Presumably as long as the artist remains outside the institutional apparatus that makes society function with godawful aesthetic consequence, his role is an acceptable one to Mr. Rosenberg. There is an uneasy hint in his view that the artist is a totally buyable element of society — and not the goad of our collective conscience.

In Melvin Tumin’s paper he warns against the politicization of artistic creation which he carefully distinguishes from possible political uses to which art can be put after it has been created. I would only add that the capitalization of art — an adornment for the wealthy, a commodity to be traded with not nearly the honesty of jewelry — is potentially as full of doom for our culture as the politicization of art. Unfortunately we have just about reached the penultimate in the capitalization of art. The Museum of Modern Art, for instance, is not only contemplating buying

an earth work in Nevada for its collection but, if you will, has already bought a chunk of “experience” from a work in its recent *Information* exhibit.

Mr. Tumin also makes two gratuitous points, which disappointedly detract from his central and excellent point of humanizing those factors that govern man’s use of technology in order that it not become the Frankenstein’s monster of contemporary society. The first unnecessary toss-off is that great art does not usually come from social or political themes. It is the same demeaning bag that art history can be guilty of dropping everything into. Art can be, invariably is, illuminating. To say repeatedly with an intellectual “ho hum” that the Dadaists were doing the same thing years ago can take the edge off art’s capacity to relieve contemporary agony. For the most part, however, it is true that social art is less affecting as art. Again, however, the argument smacks of the old academic saw of the definable, acceptable, categorized role of art. And besides, how does one explain Picasso’s *Guernica* painted at the height of the Spanish Civil War?

The other is a fatuous point about Black art. Art works modified by adjectives can sometimes be the only way by which artistic validity can be recognized. Unfortunately, our orientation to the European tradition of the fine arts is so inconsistent that we even refuse to recognize flower arranging, the tea ceremony, and landscape gardening as art forms although they are thoroughly accepted as such in Japan, a culture, it could be argued, that is considerably more sophisticated than ours. Adjectives by which art is modified can be done away with only when one is omnisciently capable of perceiving valid artistic expression no matter what its orientation, where its origin, or what the adjective. Black-experience art of the genre of Romare Bearden and Benny Andrews is, in my

opinion, artistically valid. To view it otherwise could raise the question of one's ethno-centricity, as they say euphemistically.

There were three papers that were very much related. Serge Chermayeff passed the baton eloquently and gracefully to Timothy Palmer by providing the entire conference with its mandate. He described it as follows:

*It is a commitment to design public places which will be rewarding, rich containers for life; places where man in balanced measure meets strangeness and adventure as well as reassurance and the expected; places of concourse, of mix and the maximization of human experience; complementary places offering choices between apparently contradictory opposites; places to induce receptivity to new ideas all conceived as part of the kind of open system essential to human evolution.*

Along with his fellow youth panelists, Mr. Palmer seemed to accept the challenge Chermayeff presented. His vision of his surroundings was comprehensive. He also saw the unique talents of the artist as an effective instrument in the fight against profound and pervasive human disregard.

Congressman Moorhead offered the suggestion that government had the apparatus to help alleviate some of the blight, the decay, the lack of concern which has fouled the air we breathe and made our waters putrid to drink. He charged that concerted action by a concerted constituency for the arts could orchestrate the political machinery of the United States to alter its priorities away from, would you believe, the Defense Department. But something seemed missing. Will government, for instance, be magnanimous enough to accept the incontro-

vertible fact that artists, by definition, will be among its most conscientious critics? I can not help thinking immediately of the Sierra Club which lost its tax exemption as a result of government intimidation through the Internal Revenue Service.

Finally, Irving Kaufman offered with irreverent insight and awareness probably the most practical and immediately realizable solution of anyone—education. However, in order for education to relate in any way to environmental concerns, he suggested wisely and with a touch of bitterness that a whole new approach to sensory awareness be undertaken. To borrow from a friend, Eric Larrabee, in summarizing Mr. Kaufman's "mean reds" about arts and education: "The arts survive in a university only insofar as they are successful at masquerading as a traditional discipline."

The consequence of Professor Kaufman's observations and its relation to each of the discussions of the conference suggest several imperatives which I would like to offer along with one reminder.

### **Education**

We are essentially, for better but currently very much for worse, a nation designed by choice. The problem is how to improve the choices that affect the look and character of our surroundings at all levels of decision making—government, business, educational bureaucracies, what have you. The arts—how to see, how to move, how to touch—have to be taught as an extension of literacy. Visual illiteracy should be as socially shameful as not knowing how to read and write.

I agree with Professor Kaufman about the limited chances for the arts in most of our educational institutions. I am convinced that arts institutions rather than educational institutions will have to take



United Nations  
Photo by Maria Bordy

the lead in introducing the concept of a literacy of the senses.

### Artists

Rather than "freaks in residence" isolated to lofts or campus studios, artists must become part and parcel of the institutional fabric of society. Artists must sit on the boards of banks, insurance companies, planning commissions, town boards, industrial corporations, universities, hospitals, and most especially arts organizations. No library in the country, for instance, should be without a poet on its board of trustees. Artists' insights, irreverence, and integrity are needed within the structure of society; they should not be relegated to the role of court jester rapping the occasional bufoonery of others currently in charge of shaping our hapless technological destiny.

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### Politics

An active arts constituency must be developed not merely to raise more money and to support the National Endowment as Congressman Moorhead implied, but to defend principles of artistic freedom and to fight against aesthetic brutality, whether it is urban renewal, highway construction, slum clearance, banal housing projects—environmental pollution of every conceivable variety.

An effective constituency as well-orchestrated as the National Rifleman's Association could also come to grips with zoning and ordinances, real property taxes, government designed building projects, and a host of other hidden items of legislation that adversely affect the human environment.

### Institutional Restructuring

A complete restructuring of arts organizations should take place so that they are governed and directed by people who feel passionately about the arts and secondarily about the institutions that house them. At the present time, most arts or-

ganizations are dominated by wealthy individuals, most of whom are businessmen. Their concerns are primarily the management of money and not the philosophical or aesthetic courage of the institution. People are needed on boards of non-profit organizations who are not afraid to risk the almighty tax exemption to defend a principle of artistic or intellectual freedom.

### A Reminder

Aesthetics are the mark of a society's integrity. At a commencement address given by Patrick Moynihan several years ago at Seton Hall, a small Catholic girls' college, he was discussing the "crisis of intellect" that had been on the rise in the contemporary Catholic Church. He said:

*A church that does not meet the aesthetic and intellectual expectations of its people will lose their confidence, and thereafter their allegiance just as surely as one that cannot bring them to comprehend and accept its position on doctrine. It is a profound failure of understanding, and one perhaps characteristic of Americans, not to see that the issue of aesthetic standards, for example, involves the question of truth just as much as do doctrinal issues. The searing, vibrant beauty of the artifacts, and music, and architecture of the Church in the great ages were not an adornment of faith, they were the mark of faith. Banality attests the absence of grace. . . .*

*The experience of worship in the modern Church must be aesthetically and intellectually convincing or it will lack integrity, and thereby fail as a religious experience.*

The same point that he made so forcefully about the modern Catholic Church is just as true about academic institutions,

business corporations, foundations, government at all levels — federal, state, and municipal — and those organizations that consider themselves citadels of the arts. If a community permits banality to engulf its main street, its shopping centers, its public squares; if a state fails to recognize its responsibility for the arts and permits unthinking, monolithic agencies to destroy its architectural past and construct bureaucratic bunkers — in all these instances they will lack integrity and fail in the task their citizens have granted them. If colleges and universities miss the opportunity to construct exciting, beautiful buildings for their students to experience, as well as learn in, they will lack integrity, and fail in their responsibility as institutions of higher learning. The same is true for business. The corporations which insist on putting up the same dreary, monotonous motels that mar our highways from one end of the

nation to the other have managed to deface the distinctive characteristics of communities throughout the country more than any other single form of commercial construction. Unimaginative urban development has been just as bad. Public Housing in the City of New York has obliterated the character of entire communities and with them, chances for individual identity. Environmental pollution is as much an aesthetic problem as it is an economic, social, industrial, or educational problem.

Introducing the arts — or more precisely, the sense of care for the consequences of man's actions that the arts can engender — into the basic fabric of society at all levels of awareness might profoundly affect the change of aesthetic values and human priorities for our environment that all of us so passionately desire.

### **the world**

(from a Sequence of Indian Poems)

the world speaks itself large and small  
the stars are fireflies  
the fireflies are stars

in the trunk of this old tree  
the mosses are tiny trees  
the ants are warriors searching  
for enemies hiding in valleys  
the ants are hunters scouting  
for buffalo and deer in the trees

the world has its many worlds  
each world is the same as the others  
but each world is also different.

**NORMAN RUSSELL**

*Poet and Professor of Biology at Central  
State College in Edmond, Oklahoma.*

# A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

November 15-18, 1970

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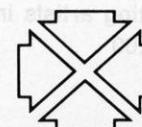
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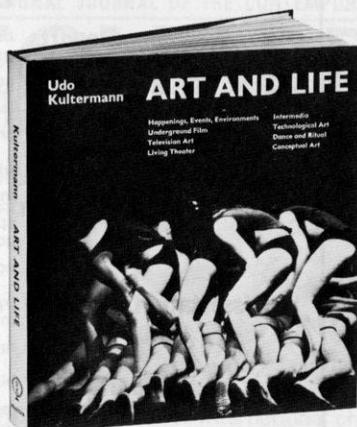
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