

CARL ANDRE

12

A REASONABLE AND PRACTICAL PROPOSAL FOR ARTISTS WHO WISH TO REMAIN FREE MEN IN THESE TERRIBLE TIMES

Recently, artists, sensing that the times are out of joint, have ~~demonstrated~~ demonstrated at the Museum of Modern Art and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They have been demanding free admission to the Modern and various actions designed to ~~assure~~ assure black artists representation in the museums.

The difficulty is that the proposals are not radical enough; all granted, the corrupt conditions ~~in~~ in which artists work and live would not be altered.

The solution to the artist's problems ~~is~~ is not getting rid of the turnstiles at the Museum of Modern Art, but in getting rid of the art world. This the artists can easily do by trusting one-another and forming a true community of artists:

1. All artists should withdraw instantly from all commercial connections, galleries and otherwise. Gallery exhibitions must be picketed; all gallery exhibitions, all the time until the artist exhibiting feel their shame and withdraw to join the community of artists.

2. No more "shows" and "exhibitions." Let artists show their work to their friends and let artists see the work of their friends. But no more public exhibitions.

3/ No cooperation with museums. They make "shows", get everything wrong. "Will you lend a painting?" "No." So they will borrow a painting from a person to whom an artist has sold a painting. Fine. At least the proper relations between artist and museum have been established, the proper distance between what museums do and what artists do is maintained.

4. No more "scene." No Vogue, Time, Life, Newsweek, interviews. Artists who permit themselves to be used this way are not in the true community of artists, who are universal ~~hostile~~ hostile ~~to~~ to such public humiliation.

5. No more big money artists. Big money artists who don't immediately sever all commercial connections and commence instantly to sell their pictures at modest and reasonable sums should be held in the utmost contempt by the community of artists.

The point is not that artists should not have a lot of money. The point is that in this society, the amount of money you get, the speed with which you get it and the amounts you get at a time go very far in determining the community toward which you will gravitate. And so big money ~~xxxxxxx~~ artists, drawing huge ~~xxxxxxx~~ sums in great rushes ~~xxxxxxx~~ take on the ~~xxx~~ life-style and attitudes of the only other community that earns large doses of money in frantic bursts -- the entertainers. And, like the entertainers, the big-money artist soon becomes involved in fashion, in obsolescence, in a paranoid, nasty fear and hatred of the fellow behind him, and begins to live the kind of life with which entertainers have been disgusting us for several decades now.

6a. For ~~xxx~~ similar reasons, no more "young unknown artists" either.

Collectors all have a secret dream: to discover their ~~own~~ very own artist, unmentioned, unshown, unknown, and they pursue this dream vigorously and expensively. Perhaps because they doubt their taste, and are never certain that they like what they buy, or would have liked it had they come to it "on their own", they are constantly prowling the studios of young artists about whom they are told, and forever buying their work at ~~xxx~~ prices that to both are unheard-of.

So that not an uncommon way of life among younger artists is the professional role of "young unknown artist." To such ~~xxx~~ horrors does the art world lead; these young people are, in their own way, as nightmarish as the professional transvestites one sees on 42nd Street.

When people come to town to see "unknown" artists, ~~xxxxxxx~~ there is thus an entire class of young people who are the regular itinerary. These artists never seem to become "known" and never seem to stop being "young" and "unshown." Every once in a while such an artist "goes public," so to speak, but it is extraordinary for how many years such an artist will show regularly, and still be a "young unknown artist."

31

6. People who wish to own works of art should do so by moving into and community of artists. No one should ever "represent" an artist. Artists should their artists and other collectors in a face-to-face and man-to-man way.

and purchase that

deal with the artist directly, in a human fashion.

8/ Artists should attach binding conditions to the sale of their work. Such conditions should include ~~xxxx~~ the condition that the work may not be re-sold that upon the death (or loss of interest in the work) of the owner, the various museums have first refusal the work of art. Should they refuse, the work may pass to the heirs of the purchaser. Another condition should be made universal and should be enforced systematically, rigorously and with a constant eye to filling loop-holes out of which the force of the condition that condition is, no owner may in any way enrich himself through the possession of the work of art.

9. No more "reproductions." Reproductions lead to a false and destructive kind of "fame" which separates ~~xxxx~~ artists from the community of artists by making them poor and rich. Reproductions give rise to a body of people who "know your work" without seeing it. This is an abomination. Artists should forbid people to snap pictures of their work.

10. Let the museums alone. They are not the proper ~~xxxx~~ for artists' attention. Whether better or worse, our past is there, and our standards. Museum people are a peculiar distant breed of people; artists are not that type and couldn't do the job better if they had the chance. Artists can pressure museums -- those that wish to -- ~~xxxx~~ a little something now and then. But for the most part museum people are hopeless and will be hopeless and it is best for artists to simply pay ~~xxxx~~ no mind. When things are good, artists will be interested. When things are not good in the museums, they should be ignored. Museums will never be right: they are owned by the wrong people, controlled by the wrong people and staffed by the wrong people. But the right people are artists and artists

CARL ANDRE

12

simply will not do that kind of work on a regular, day to day basis. This is not to say that artists should not, for example, attempt to pressure museums to collect and preserve the works of black artists. But this kind of activity is in the same nature as artists who wish to join Vietnam demonstrations or rent ~~damn~~ demonstrations -- ~~with~~ those who are interested in such things, do it.

With the elimination of the art world, there are no problems between black and white artists. Black artists simply become part of the community of artists; collectors are directed to their studios by better-selling friends; struggling black artists are helped along by their white or more successful black friends.

11. The art press should be treated like museums, and for the same reasons. If the art press is responsive to the community of artists, it will flourish. If it is not, it will wither. There is nothing, once the art world is abolished, to prevent an art press from springing up within the art community.

12. Artists should take every nickel they can get from foundations, grants, the various ways the rich have found to give away their money. Artists should constantly be demanding more and larger grants and foundations.

13. Artists should teach if they want to, and can do it right. Artists should never conform to the structure of the various educational systems which employ them. Teaching should be understood as simply moving into another community of artists, most often a younger one. If none of the younger community of artists become the artist's ~~fix~~ friends and lovers then he is probably doing it wrong.

The immediate cause of the sense of infinite corruption, degradation and humiliation that is the normal lot of the American artist today is the art world. The proposals for behavior outlined above are neither difficult nor far-fetched -- in good part, in fact, these proposals simply describe life as it is currently lived among nine out of ten artists. One has only to observe what happens to the sense of friendship, love, fraternity and comradeship among artists as they are "picked up" by the art world x to see, instantly, that the rewards of such "success" are death and degradation. The art world is a poison in the community of artists and must be ~~abolished~~ removed by obliteration. This happens the instant artists withdraw from it.

33

CARL ANDRE

It will surely be objected that there have always been dealers, always been middlemen, always been galleries, always been big money artists and starving artists, always been "shows" and "exhibitions" and "reproductions," always been a "scene." The answer is that they may very well be all these things again. But not now. Now, this ~~system~~ "system" has been the curse and ~~the~~ corruption of the life of art in America ^{and} in the world and it must be repudiated, abandoned, crushed out like a ~~cigarette~~ cigarette.

(ADOPTED)

35