

We meet tonight, not for us alone. We wish to change policies, so that the tyranny reflected in the institutions of this nation at the present moment can never again oppress us or our children. We demand that the nepotism, favoritism and fear of innovation of the New York art world be exposed; the official avant-garde taste during these last five years of the great American military dictatorship has had the taste of a credibility gap. The revolution we seek is no more -- and no less -- than to tell the truth.

In this proposed return to democratic principles, truth telling may once again become a secondary concern of artists. The innovation and training of sensual appetites, which is the traditional concern of artists, seems a frivolity to most citizens (as it seemed to Plato) for politics seeks to subdue those conflicting appetites which are the very meat of art. But art also cannot flourish in a time of war and exaggerated tensions. The tyranny of military requirements reveals itself slowly, at first in traces of conversations, in esthetic theories which detach the spirit of the times from the events. ~~Tyr~~ Tyranny even begins to creep through the studio doors as the artist sits alone, until the fear of a police inspector (be he from the 5th precinct or the Guggenheim foundation) paralyzes those senses essential to guide the artist's voyage of discovery.

And so we have a stake in peace for Vietnam, simply as professionals, in the fairer distribution of national resources, in the end of racist domination in the Senate, the ~~restoration~~ seizure of the electoral processes by the people, and the establishment of a world community -- we have a stake in these ideals if only because these things would help restore that privacy which is the pre-requisite of art.

We begin. We wound the tocsin, and its cry already rises above the jangling voices of fear. History has for too long been written for the homeless few charged with coding the past. Their world of cowed and petty bureaucrats needs their codes, their iron glossaries of morality, in order to keep the machinery of nationalism and racism in working order. But we would not be bureaucrats. We would be free, not slaves. Already we re-write history. We offer, even to the bureaucrats a way to escape the cages which official approval has built around them. Let Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella get out of their lackey's uniforms, let them stop serving the masters of their modern house, let them come and join us field niggers. Is it not better to be chained to poverty than to be an Uncle Tom of the soul? Is it not better to be bloody in defiance than to be praised as the artist with the purest water in his vein?

We are the revolution. We will be free, because our spirit is already free. We are the irresistible tide of the future. We remember the examples of Jan Palach and Martin Luther King in our hearts. The tide drowns even our own fears. The more we give, the more we sacrifice, the more we are. Ours is a golden dream, ours is a promised land, and we are first settlers beyond that new frontier. Our political aims are simple and sturdy: a world beyond guns, a chance to stake out our own territory in the infinite land of the soul, and the right to hope for immortality. Our artistic aim is even simpler: we want to be free.

Institutions have already begun to tremble at our mild demands, our thirteen points. Let the state wither away. We have only begun.

