

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

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

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

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

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

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

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