Contemporary American Art Critics, No. 1

Donald Kuspit, Series Editor
Professor of Art History
State University of New York at Stony Brook

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Network

Art and the Complex Present

by
Lawrence Alloway

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These articles [there are no reviews] written 1971-1983, have not been re-written. The historical, evidential nature of art criticism is slurred if pieces that were occasional in origin are revised for consistency or according to second thoughts.

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For Sylvia

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Network: The Art World Described as a System

The first exhibition of a newly made work of art is in the studio. This first audience of the artist's friends views the art in the work place in which it was created, in the artist's presence and associated with the rest of his life. The satisfactions of this contact are obvious, both to the privileged group and to the artist in touch with his peers. The second exhibition of a work, as a rule, is in an art gallery where it is seen by a larger but still specialized public. (The average attendance at an art gallery during a show is rarely more than a thousand people.) From the gallery the work may be purchased by a collecror, travel to other galleries or museums, or be acquired by a museum. Each change of milieu will encourage different expectations and readings by a changing audience. A fourth context is lirerary, the catalogues and magazines in which the work of art is no longer substantially present as an object, but is the subject of information.

By this point in a work of art's distribution a description in stages is no longer sufficient; it has acquired a record, not simply in terms of places shown and changing hands, but an aura of esthetic interpretations as well. It belongs in the context of the art world, with its special opportunities for compatison and mediration, for analysis and pleasure. The densiry that a work accrues as it is circulated means that it acquires meanings not expected by the artist and quire unlike those of rhe work's initial showing in the studio. Although wide distribution is the modern equivalent for the classical fame, there is an inbuilt alienating factor. Wide distribution can separate the work from the man who produced it as the variables of other people's readings pile up and characterize the object.

The alienation by distribution effect is not to be avoided except by withdrawal from the art world, for art is now part of a communications network of great efficiency. As its capacity has increased a progressive role-blurring has taken place. Before World War II, for example, museums worked at a fixed distance from rhe art they exhibited, which was either of some age or could be regarded as the latest form of a tradition of acknowledged historicity. Most American museums have abolished the time lag that previously regulated their

policies and now present not only new work but new artists. Though on a different scale and with different motives, such activity connects intimately with private galleries, whose profits can be affected by museum shows of their artists. The Alan Solomon-Leo Castelli collaboration at the Jewish Museum in the early sixties, the Rauschenberg and Johns retrospectives, at the ages of 38 and 34 respectively, is a remarkable example of the convergence of intellectual interest and high profits. Art historians prepare *catalogues raisonnés* of living artists, so that organization of data is more or less level with their occurrence. Critics serve as guest curators and curators write art criticism. The retrospectives of de Kooning and Newman at the Museum of Modern Art were both arranged by the editor of *Art News,* Thomas B. Hess.(A crossover in the opposite direction was made by John Coplans, former curator of the Pasadena Art Museum and later the editor of *Artforum.*) William Rubin, a curator at the Modern, wrote a monograph on Frank Stella; he is also a collector and lent a Newman to the retrospective. In ten years I have been a curator, a teacher, and an art critic, usually two at a time. The roles available within the system, therefore, do not constrict mobility; the participants can move functionally within a cooperative system. Collectors back galleries and influence museums by serving as trustees or by making donations; or a collector may act as a shop window for a gallery by accepting a package collection from one dealer or one advisor. All of us are looped together in a new and unsettling connectivity.[1]

Henry Geldzahler typifies the interconnections of roles in the system very well. He was—with dealers Richard Bellamy and Ivan Karp, then at the Green Gallery and Leo Castelli respectively—early in recognizing emergent trends of the '60s, and he appeared in two of Oldenburg's happenings. As a curator at the Metropolitan Museum he has retained his knack for publicity even though his big exhibition, "New York Painting and Sculpture 1940-1970," was essentially a recapitulation of his commitments of the early '60s rather than a view from the later '60s, when the show was executed. His capacity to expand the traditionally narrow role of curator has been admiringly recorded by Calvin Tomkins[2]: the keeper of the flame doubles as media hero.

In 1910 Apollinaire described attendance at the opening of the annual exhibition of the Société des Artistes Français: "lovely ladies, handsome gentlemen, academicians, generals, painters, models, bourgeois, men of letters, and blue stockings."[3] This was written for a newspaper so the 19th-century typology is journalistically apt but the assumption of a recognizable art world is clear. Painters and models were solidly legible in their roles and their support system was equally clear—generals, young couples, writers. The art world now is neither as clear nor as simple as it seemed then. Not only has the group of artists expanded in number but art is distributed to a larger audience in new ways, by improved marketing techniques and by the mass media. What does the vague term art world cover? It includes original works of art and reproductions; critical, historical, and informative writing; galleries, museums, and private collections. It is a sum of persons, objects, resources, messages, and ideas. It includes monuments and parties, esthetics and openings, *Avalanche* and *Art in America.* I want to describe it as a system and consider what effects it has on art or on our understanding of art. Let me state at once that system does not mean merely "establishment"; as Tomás Maldonado has pointed out,[4] system is often used as a synonym for regime, which vulgarizes an exceedingly useful term.

Recognition of recent art, the art of the '60s, induces a sense of product proliferation. An example from industry is the big airplane, the DC-10, being followed by the short-haul DC-9 in two different versions. Artists use their own work and each other's in this way, rapidly and systematically following up new ideas. In addition, the written criticism of the period has supplied visual art with instant commentary. There has been therefore a considerable increase in the number of short-term orderly projections and their improvised interpretation. The effect is, to quote Henri Lefebvre, of an "enormous amount of signifiers liberated or insufficiently attached to their corresponding signifieds."[5] In reaction to this there has been a widespread discontent with the existing system of information-handling in the arts. The problem of an art for the educated has taken on acute significance with the emergence of an alienated audience, for instance, the youth market and the black community. Reassessment by the artists of their role in society parallels their audience's doubt about art's centrality. The market or exchange value of art has been discussed since 1960, not as a source of prestige but as the taint of corruption. Art is a commodity in a part of the system but not in all of it, and at this point I am more interested in differentiation than reduction.

The art world can be viewed as "a shifting multiple goal coalition."[6] It is, to continue regarding it as an organization, "a 'negotiated environment.' That is, long contracts with suppliers and customers, adherence to industry-wide pricing, conventions, and support of stable 'good business' practice."[7] The contracts are usually less formal in art and good business practice is pretty vague, but the parallel is there. Decisions in art galleries, museums, magazines, and publishing houses are made close to the working base of each enterprise, as in decentralization. Thus we have a network, not an hierarchic structure. As H.J. Leavitt points out, apropos of individuals in a network: "It is enough, in some cases, if they are each touched by some part of a network of communication which also touches each of the others at some point."[8] Such a pattern of partial information fits the complex movement of messages and influences in the art world. Raymond D. Cottoll has referred to "the principle of 'simple structure,' which assumes that in an experiment involving a broad and a well-sampled set of variables, it is improbable that any single influence will effect all of them. In other words it is more 'simple' to expect that any one variable will be accounted for by less than the full complexity of all the factors added together."[9] This

should be borne in mind for it is absolutely against my inrention to reduce the art world to any single influence by describing it as an organization. On rhe contrary, it is only in this way rhat its complexity can be kept cleat.

"The organization as a system has an output, a product, or an outcome, but this is not necessarily identical with the individual purposes of group members," obseve D. Katz and R.L. Kahn.[10] Whar is the output of the arr world viewed as a system? It is not art because that exisrs prior ro distribution and without the technology of information. The output is the distribution of art, both literally and in mediared form as text and reproduction. The individual reasons for distribution vary: with dealers it can be assumed to be rhe profit motive and with teachers it can be assumed ro be the motive ro educate, with the profit motive ar one remove. Art galleries, museums, universities, publishers are all parts of the knowledge industry, producing signifiers whose signifieds are works of art, artists, styles, periods.

F.E. Emery and E.L. Trist have discussed systems in relation to the various forms of envitonment that they occupy. The art world would seem to be more animared than a "placid clusreted environment" but less momentous than a "turbulent field." Between rhese rwo falls the "disturbed-reactive envitonment."

> This term refers to a situation in which there is more than one organization of the same kind; indeed, the existence of a number of similar organizations now becomes the dominant characteristic of the environmental field. Each organization does not simply have to take account of the others when they meet at random, but has also to consider that what it knows can also be known by the others. The part of the environment to which it wishes to move itself in the long run is also the part to which the others seek to move.[11]

Certainly the art world meets Emery and Trist's requirement of "the ptesence of similar others" in a disturbed teactive environment.

The principle of conflict of intetest is fully applicable to the siruarion in the art world. Thete is, for example, the competition among artists to do a certain kind of work that is porential in the level of knowledge that a group of them shates. It applies also to the relationships among critics: these are rarely antagonistic, but it is noriceable thar critics have not as a rule reviewed one another's books, though in rhe pasr few yeats Kozloff, Calas, Lippard, and Kitby have all published collections of their essays. The conflict of interest among museums is marked because ropicality favors certain shows at cerrain times and the institutions know it and know each other knows. Thus there is considerable competition fot a limited numbet of desirable properries.[12]

The essential figute in the system is of course the artisr. His is rhe product on which the system depends. In addition to his iniriating acr of production the artist has a privileged social role. The presrige of the position was earned by the Abstract Expressionists originally, by the existential and seerlike attitudes with which they confronted a society not rhen teady for their arr. It has continued in the '60s, but on a changed basis: early success and media coverage give artists, or

some of them, considerable control of rheir work, and tax problems replace money worries. One aspect of the enhanced social starus of artisrs has been an increased artention to rheir words. The typical verbal form of rhe Abstract Expressionist generation was the srarement, essentially a firsr-person expression purting succinctly fundamental ideas about art. It is summarizing and authentic in that it originates from the same source as the art to which it relates. In the '60s the sratemenr was supplemented, maybe supplanted, by the interview which preserves the virtue of the first person, bur on a more conversational level.[13]

On the other hand, statements and interviews both get overused, precisely because of their impeccable origins. Sources become clichés, as has happened to Pollock's, "When I am *in* my painting, I'm nor aware of what I'm doing" and Warhol's machine analogy.[14] Since artists are fairly accessible and their prestige high, critics frequently make a new interview in the preparation of a catalog or book rather than search the existing ones fot complexities of intention, unnoticed details, and changes of opinion. The failure to inrerpret has left us wirh a backlog of unevaluated interviews.[15] This documentation constitutes authenticity withour contexr. Contact wirh the artist can produce information of an accuracy impossible to achieve in another way, but it can also inhibit writers from taking the discussion in directions that the artists resist or have not thought of. If the critic's interpretations are bound by the intentions of the arrist, there is a corresponding neglect of comparative and historical information. The authority of the interview has the effect of freezing critical discussion of artists at early points in their development, which is usually the time of the greatest verbalization. Marcel Duchamp has proposed that the function of the audience is to determine the meaning of the work when it is out of the artist's hands by variable acts of "deciphering and interpreting."[16] This is not a frivolous idea, but one that is confitmed by the history of taste and by the record of artists' reputations. The statement and the interview are both aimed ro correct this slippage of artistic intention by fixing meaning once and for all.

Artists and their works have changed less than the system by which rheir art is distributed. The conditions of consumption, in which one is faced with the abundance of world art, have changed more than the conditions of production. Art is still operationally what it became in the Renaissance, a situarion of one-man control over an object that provides a full record of process at each stage of the work and thus permits the fullest feedback from the artist. The availability of the whole for inspection along the way combined with the crucial fact of sole authority are basic satisfactions and conveniences of painting, drawing, and some forms of sculpture. In this respect Rembrandt is not operarionally different from Lichtensrein: personal decision and direct control are fundamental to rhem both.

In connection with early Pop art the term "fine art-pop art continuum"[17] was used to describe the inrerconnections of culrural levels, "low" and "high," unique or mass-produced, in nonhomogeneous groups. It included rhe esthetic

appreciation of mass-produced goods, the appropriation of popular material by artists (Pop art) and the mass media's interest in art. In the '60s, however, it became clear that the art world itself had become subject to a similar nonhierarchic connectivity. The mass media covered prominent artists or museum shows; the occasions of high culture became the subject of publicity. Abstract paintings in *House and Garden* features on collectors, or the Park Place Gallery photographed with fashion models among the sculpture, are two examples. Here the works of art become a part of the lively flow of signs and symbols that populate the environment. In the case of one movement, that of European-based Op art, it was welcomed in the general press earlier and more cordially than in the art magazines.[18] Lichtenstein and Rauschenberg have both done covers for *Time* and Lichtenstein one for *Newsweek* as well. One of Robert Smithson's earliest texts appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* and the first article on earthworks, by Howard Junker, appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post,* years before Calvin Tomkins got to it in *The New Yorker.*[19] The literature of art now runs copiously beyond the reviewing of exhibitions by critics as art is assimilated to the sphere of consumption. Thus there exists a general field of communication within which art has a place, not the privileged place assigned to in humanism as time-binding symbol or moral exemplar, but as part of a spectrum of objects and messages.

According to Roland Barthes "what makes writing the opposite of speech is that the former always *appears* symbolical, introverted, ostensibly turned towards an occult side of language, whereas the second is nothing but a flow of empty signs, the movement of which alone is significant."[20] Thus he maintains the traditional separation of closed high art and popular culture as an extension of Saussure's terms language and speech. The proponents of visual art as a closed form, a type of classified information, also suppose irreconcilable levels. To use a statement of Rothko's, one that has become a cliché: "A picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is, therefore, a risky and unfeeling act to send it out into the world."[21] This view of art, highly estheticizing, but also snobbish, rests on the assumption that a painting possesses a deep singular meaning and that correct reception consists of identifying it. The history of taste and the study of human communication does not suggest such perfect matching as a plausible occurrence. Though art may be a private act in its origins, this is not what we can be expected to see as art becomes part of a system of public information. Art is a public system to which we, as spectators or consumers have random access.

A work of art consists of at least two levels of information: one that can be translated into other media for reproduction, or that other artists can use, and one that is identified solely with the original channel.[22] Any work of art contains both special channel characteristics (unique) and transmissable information (repeatable). The stratification is not mechanically arrived at, but is a consequence of the interaction of the artist's intention and the spectator's

interpretation. One may be more interested in the unique component than the other, but to restrict the work's meaning solely to that is restrictive. In addition, it goes against all one's experience of art to presume that exhaustive interpretation is possible. A consequence of the incorporation of art into the fine art-pop art continuum is that the variable responses inevitably evoked by art have been made more fully visible.

This saturation by information, though new in its scale and intensity, has ample historical roots of which I shall mention two. To quote Karl Mannheim: "the educated no longer constitute a caste or a compact rank, but an open stratum.[23] Linked to this is Mannheim's observation that sophistication is no longer "an adjunct of status and breeding."[24] Thus the criteria for sophistication are separated from a required level of stored knowledge in certain areas and become a reflex of topical orientation. This is a form of knowledge, of course, but adaptive rather than normative. The fine art-pop art continuum, a disordered realm to orthodox humanists and formalists, is a gymnasium for the development of this sophistication without depth that is characteristic of much of the attention that the public brings to art. Its flexibility is preferable to dogmatic avowals of singular meaning and absolute standards. At least it does not reduce one's continued exposure to changing configurations by narrowly set prior standards. When the occasions for viewing art were restricted and the spectators were few in number and socially uniform, there were agreed-on limits of response and interpretation. Now that art is seen in wildly differing contexts, the diversity of response to art is public too. For this reason it seems that the notion of esoteric art and everyday life in opposition needs to be modified to allow for art's presence in the quotidian realm.

Protectiveness towards original works of art, with their aura of uniqueness, derives from a notion of art as the maximized handmade object. Writing in the late fifties, surrounded by Abstract Expressionists, Meyer Schapiro even referred to free handling "as a means of affirming the individual."[25] Intoxicated by the autographic he contrasted Abstract Expressionists with Léger's regard for the reproducible products of technology, "but the experiences of the last 25 years, have made such confidence in the vision of technology less interesting and even distasteful."[26] This is like blaming crime in the streets on a TV program, but the fallacy is still common, though now expressed by a new generation of *naturists* reacting against industrial pollution and American militarism instead of World War II and memories of the Nazis. It is presumed that aura is lessened when art is reproduced mechanically. Some properties show up more than others in reproduction it is true: autographic solidity is lightened and connections with other artists and the rest of the world are facilitated, but these are nondestructive emphases. It is not possible to restrict the meaning of a work to its literal presence; art consists of ideas as well as objects.

One work that has been submitted to mass production in a curious way is Jackson Pollock's *Convergence,* 1952. The original painting is in the Albright-

Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; it has been reproduced in the form of a jigsaw puzzle. It is therefore an extreme example by which we can test what remains when art is treated not as a self-evolving process but as something added to the continuum of moving daily signs. The original is not destroyed when the colored reproduction is cut up into little Arp-like free form units. The painting is a Herculean late work, one of the two major efforts Pollock made to recapture and extend the big drip paintings of two years earlier (the other is *Blue Poles*). Is it degraded by its ludic form? I think not, inasmuch as any transmissable image is subject to re-contextualization, whether it is the lion's feet, derived from Egypt, on Napoleonic furniture, or a Coca-Cola sign in a South American jungle. The continuum of translated messages requires acts of continuous estimation before a succession of alternatives. Is the person who successfully completes the puzzle simulating the work of the artist and hence being brought close to the creative process? Obviously not, for the arrangement of standardized parts does not resemble Pollock's way of painting, but it might be like making a Sol LeWitt ("the process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course."[27]) The variables of context and interpretation released by 20th-century communications have become the subject of this mass-produced object. A connection can be made between painting and puzzle: the image of the labyrinth, a structure with blocked routes, continually evoked by writers on Pollock, is appropriate to the initial unordered scatter of the bits; and when it is terminated it becomes a sign for the painting, *Convergence.*

The sixties was a brilliant decade in which an exceptional number of young artists emerged, without the tentative or inhibitory starts of their predecessors. Their work, along with the continued work of slower-developing older artists, helped to make the decade one of numerical and stylistic abundance. There was undoubtedly a sense of relief and ebullience at having got out from under the gestural form of Abstract Expressionism which dominated the fifties. The escape from de Kooning opened out a series of options which had been excluded by the esthetics and operational lore derived from him. For museums it marked an efflorescence of retrospectives, or their equivalent. Not only were exhibitions on a large scale, there was lavish duplication, such as two different Lichtenstein exhibitions in two years, and big short-term expenditures, such as Morris's colossal piece at the Whitney Museum or Serra's at Pasadena. Museums cooperated in the realization of artists' projects on a vast scale. In the catalog there is a convergence of art history as a methodology and art criticism as a response to present art. Thus there has been an increase in the objective complexity of data available about living artists. For publishers the sixties included a number of monographs on, to name a few, Johns (Kozloff), Oldenburg (Rose), Stella (Rubin), Warhol (Coplans, Crone), Lichtenstein, Kelly (both Waldman), Frankenthaler (Rose). The support system of the knowledge industry was firmly lined up behind the artists.

It was in the sixties, starting with Pop art, that regular mass media coverage of art began. Previously magazines and newspapers had treated individual stories, often in detail, but now art was recognized as a theme of leisure which was itself named as a subject in this decade. Instead of occasional pieces on defaced statues or extravagant collectors, art was steadily covered as a constituent of the culture. *Life* and *Time,* for instance, had reproductions of and statements by Pop artists long before the specialized art journals got around to them. Later in the sixties, however, it is true that the art magazines and general press share the same subjects much of the time. (It is the promptness of the coverage that is one of the reasons for the corrosion of the concept of an avant-garde. A group's lead-time in new ideas is of almost negligible duration now.) When I wrote a piece on Rosenquist for *Artforum* recently, selection of the color illustrations was delayed until we could find out which of the transparencies available from the Whitney Museum were being used by *Time* and *Newsweek.* Although my article was longer and later, it was essentially no less occasional than Robert Hughes's and Douglas Davis's pieces. I did not time the article myself; the Whitney Museum did. It is a weakness of the art magazines that many of the articles are as much reviews as the shorter pieces acknowledged as such. Color reproductions in the catalog are reused in the magazines, a convenience that ties later uses closer than ever to the initial occasion. The effect of criticism as reviewing is to produce a series of suddenly uniform topics in the journals, which gives the appearance, to suspicious provincials, of a rigged scene.

To all this must be added the prosperity of the decade. There was money for museums (new plant, new acquisitions) and for investment in private art galleries (Scull's backing of the Green Gallery, for instance, or the support that several collectors gave the Park Place Gallery which raised cooperatives to a new luxurious space). There was as well a willingness to pay high prices for new art, subject to elaborately negotiated discount: Harry Abrams, Leon Kraushaar, John Powers, Scull were among those who attached the principle of conspicuous consumption to the newest art. By the end of the sixties, however, the cluster of social injustice, Vietnam, and inflation had destroyed the favorable situation, for the art world as for other sub-groups. Robert K. Merton has proposed a method of studying social change: it is "the concept of dysfunction, which implies the concept of strain, stress, and tension on the structural level,"[28] of an organization. The smoothly functioning art world of the sixties exhibits numerous dysfunctions now. The price and turnover of goods at galleries are down. The deficits of museums all over the country are getting harder to make up, sometimes resulting in violent abbreviation of services.

The confidence produced by the simultaneous success of two generations of American artists, the delayed recognition of the older and the accelerated recognition of the younger generations coming together, promoted a sense of common identity. At first this amounted to little more than a loose agreement to

being part of a professional group in a situation sufficiently stable not to demand continual, conscious participation. By the late sixties, however, artists had developed a sharper sense of themselves as a permanent interest. Typical of a new intransigence and desire to modify the form of distribution of art were the Art Workers Coalition and the short-lived Emergency Cultural Government, both of which presumed the need for reform of the market and institutions of the art world. Another sign is the move to protect the artist's power of copyright by the Artist's Reserve Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement, a contract that a number of artists require their collectors to sign. (It provides for future remuneration if a work is resold at a higher price.) What has occurred, of course, is that the revival of ideology has extended to the art world. It takes two forms: first, an increase in one's own political commitment and, secondly, a fundamental scepticism concerning other positions. Ideology as a method or argument is corrosive in that it substitutes *my* interpretation for *your* motive. The discontent of many artists with galleries and museums therefore may amount to a fundamental re-orientation of attitude to the entire system that encloses their work.

To the militant artists who have a place in the system can be added other special interests, such as women artists and black artists. These groups include not only professional but lay artists who work outside the traditional options of 20th-century art in naïve forms of realism, expressionism, and abstract design. There is a possibility that the pressure of lay art, the natural product of an educational system that has stressed both the need for art and the easiness of techniques for doing it, may introduce a real revision of our expectations of art in the next few years. The sophistication that is a product of 20th-century information services makes it inevitable that the lay art movement will include people who use it for its career and political potential, but this does not invalidate it. It seems then that there have been a succession of crises at different points in the system that meets Merton's requirement of "strain, stress, and tension on the structural level."

It is worth remarking that a majority of writers and curators were trained as art historians. In fact, critics without art historical training often claim the role when all that is meant is an increase in the count of verifiable facts. (Speaking personally, what I write is art criticism with footnotes.) The profession of art historian now shares its own crises with other academic disciplines. It is oriented towards a set methodology suitable for research by graduate students whose incorporation in society afterwards is no longer assured. In the immediate future the important issues may be the devising of alternate methodologies and goals, including analysis of the teaching of undergraduates (who, for one thing, arrive at university with a built-in mastery of the fine art-pop art continuum). It seems possible that the art historian is being displaced as model for critics, for the reasons given and also because of the activation of conscience by recent political

events. This has led to an ideological evaluation of historians' supposedly objective techniques.

Both the status of art as an object and the validity of the gallery exhibition as a unit have been questioned. The first sign of the problem may have been in the '50s when Pollock, Newman, and Rothko made their large paintings. After initial consternation, however, the paintings were assimilated into small spaces, like a gallery or apartment, because the artists wanted intimate, participatory contact. Happenings, though sometimes producing residual objects, like Oldenburg's, were outside gallery limits; even more so were Events, which could be imperceptible, except to participants, dispersed, and protracted or momentary. Earthworks, which substitute terrain for the object, were supported by galleries, notably Virginia Dwan's, and what was shown in the gallery was usually the documentary evidence of work in New Jersey or Nevada. The new expansion of scale was wittily stated by Morris when he observed of his *Los Angeles Project 2* (air conditioning and heating equipment buried in a square mile of earth) that there would be "a little more weather in the area." Smithson's dialectic of site and non-site set up a network of signs between the absent signified and the present signifiers, a procedure which assigns the gallery a partial role, as a container of rock samples, maps, and photographs. Andre's "post-studio art," has the potential, not followed by Andre himself, of going straight from inventory to site, which would make it post-gallery art, needing no middle stage of display. Conceptual art, when it consists of photographs, schedules, lists, maps, and instructions is better viewed in books and catalogs than when mounted and framed on the wall where it subsides to tacky graphics. Finally performance art such as Vito Acconci's, deals with states of low visibility, interaction, exhaustion, vulnerability which dissolve the usual day-long solidity of spectacle at an art gallery.

In conclusion we must ask what is likely to follow from the crisis of confidence that artists (some artists) feel in the distribution system. There is a basic continuity from (1) the public consumption of prints that started on a big scale in the 17th century and (2) the public display of heterogeneous uncommissioned art in annual exhibitions that started in the 18th century to the sixties. The continuous assumptions are that art is translatable and that public access to new art is desirable. For any development in the seventies to introduce a real difference, these ideas or one of them, would need modification. It is highly unlikely that any change will originate with the galleries which have never been remarkable either for "degree of flexibility" or "span of foresight" to quote two criteria of M.P. Schutzenberger's for evaluating behavior.[29] To judge by the recent record museums do not seem a likely source of new forms of distribution, subject as they are to their own institutional traditions and to the ceiling imposed by wages and overheads. Any change would need to originate with the artists, though the difficulty of making viable changes is suggested by the underlying

assumption of public access which I take it nobody wants to abridge. However the cumulative effect of post-studio, site-based, and conceptual art forms is a clear sign of stress, requiring changed forms of presentation. The problem is that search-bias, the tendency to look for a new solution close to the old solution,[30] is pronounced in the art world, because we all tend to conceive the world in the fixed image of our vocation.

Notes

1. This passage derives from the author's "Art and the Communication Network." *Canadian Art,* June, 1966, pp. 35-37.
2. Calvin Tomkins, "Moving with the Flow," *The New Yorker* November 6, 1971, pp. 58-113.
3. *Apollinaire on Art,* ed. LeRoy C. Breunig, trans. Susan Suleiman, New York, 1972, p. 87.
4. Tomás Maldonado, *Design, Nature and Revolution,* trans. Mario Domandi, New York, 1972, p. 51.
5. Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World,* trans Sacha Rabinovitch, New York, 1971, p. 56.
6. D.S. Pugh, D.J. Hickson, C.R. Hinings, *Writers on Organizations,* Harmondsworth, 1971. Paraphrasing Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, p. 81.
7. Ibid., p. 8.
8. H.J. Leavitt, "Some Effects of Certain Communication Patterns on Group Performance," in *Organization Theory,* ed. D.S. Pugh, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 72.
9. Raymond B. Cottoll, "The Nature and Measurement of Anxiety." *Scientific American,* 208, 3, 1963, p. 96
10. D. Katz, R.L. Kahn, "Common Characteristics of Open Systems," in *Systems Thinking,* ed F.E. Emery, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 88.
11. F.E. Emery, E.L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Events," in Emery, *Systems Thinking,* pp. 247-248.
12. For an account of one such competition, between the Museum of Modern Art and The Guggenheim Museum, see the author's "Art," *The Nation,* December 30, 1968, pp. 733-34.
13. For fuller details concerning artists' statements, see the author's "Art" *The Nation,* May 22, 1972, pp. 668-69.
14. Jackson Pollock, "My Painting," *Possibilities,* New York, 1948; Gene Swenson, "What Is Pop Art?", *Art News,* February 1964, pp 40-43.
15. For the difference between data collection and idle exchange compare John Coplans's excellent interview in *Roy Lichtenstein,* Pasadena Art Museum, 1967, with Diane Waldman's *Roy Lichtenstein,* New York, 1972.
16. Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in *The New Art,* ed. Gregory Battcock, New York, 1966, pp. 23-26.
17. The concept of the fine art-pop art continuum is given in the author's "The Long Front of Culture," *Pop Art Redefined,* ed. John Russell, Suzi Gablik, New York, 1969. Originally published in *Cambridge Opinion,* 17, 1959.

18. See the author's "Notes on Op Art," *The New Art,* ed. Gregory Battcock, New York, 1966, p. 83-91.
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