

The Museum of Modern Art

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FACT SHEET

TITLE COMMITTED TO PRINT

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ORGANIZATION Deborah Wye, Associate Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art

SPONSORSHIP This exhibition has been sponsored in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

The publication accompanying the exhibition has been made possible by the Samuel Rubin Foundation.

FOCUS This is the first museum exhibition to explore social and political themes in American printed art from the sixties to the present. It examines prints and books by contemporary artists whose work is primarily in the fine art tradition of painting and sculpture in contrast to the art of the political poster or caricature. Concern with such issues goes back to the origins of printed art in the fifteenth century.

CONTENT The exhibition includes 144 prints and thirty-six artist books by 108 individual artists and sixteen collectives. While all the represented artists live in America, their concerns are global. Drawn from all sections of the country, the major portion of the work illustrates activity on the East and West coasts. (Complete list of artists attached.)

Documenting an important aspect of recent art, the exhibition provides fresh and vivid insights into many of the fundamental issues of our era. The printed works are organized by the following headings: governments and leaders; race and culture; gender; nuclear power and ecology; war and revolution; and economics, class struggle, and the American Dream. Works overlapping several topics or exploring universal themes comprise the introductory section to the exhibition.

Examples of specific issues and events represented in the exhibition include: civil rights campaigns, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the Vietnam War; the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the 1971 killings of Kent State University demonstrators in Ohio; the feminist and

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ethnic pride movements; the plight of family farmers; and the American military buildup of recent years. Presidents from Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon to Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan are frequent subjects, as are the policies of foreign governments, particularly in Latin America.

Deborah Wye writes in her catalog essay, "The artist, in the traditional role of seer, gives us images filled with meaning that is otherwise inexpressible. Here there are powerful distillations of hope and striving, of the complexities of cultural heritage, and of the concept of the hero. . . . But in the final analysis it is not the specific issues or events that stand out. What we come away with is a shared sense of the human condition: rather than feeling set apart, we feel connected."

PUBLICATION Committed to Print by Deborah Wye. Commentaries with each illustration; chronology of social, political, and art-activist events of the period; notes on the artists; bibliography. 120 pages. 134 black-and-white illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Paperbound, \$12.50; available in the Museum Store.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.