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	Avalanche	II.318

GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP, No 1 White Street, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013
G.A.A.G.'s position paper for the panel at the College Art Association
Convention on "politics and current art", on January 25, 1973, at the
Americana Hotel in New York City.

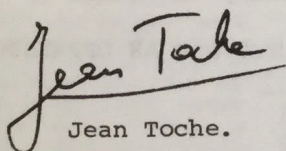
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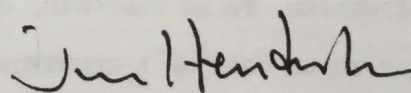
- THIS IS A CALL FOR A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ARTISTS.
 - AS ARTISTS, WE ARE TIRED OF BEING KICKED AROUND, TREATED AS
ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL ODDITIES. WE ARE TIRED
OF BEING INTERPRETED, AND RE-INTERPRETED, ANALYZED, FALSIFIED,
COMPUTERIZED, CLASSIFIED, CATEGORIZED.
 - AS PEOPLE, WE ARE TIRED OF BEING NIGGERIZED, OSTRACIZED,
COMMERCIALIZED AND OSSIFIED.
 - AS PEOPLE, WE USE THE LANGUAGE OF ART.
 - AS ARTISTS, WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES.
 - AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE HAVE CIVIL RIGHTS.
- * * * * *
- FACE REALITY: ART IS LIBERATION.
THE ANTITHESIS OF ART IS OPPRESSION.
IF YOU ARE AN OPPRESSOR, YOU ARE NOT AN ARTIST: YOU ARE EITHER A
BUSINESSPERSON, OR A MURDERER, OR A MACHINE, OR A "GOOD AMERICAN".
 - IF YOU CALL YOURSELF AN ARTIST, AND ARE ENGAGED IN DENYING OTHERS
THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS THROUGH YOUR ART ACTIVITY, BY BEING RACIST, SEXIST,
OR SUBJECTIVELY MANIPULATING OTHER HUMAN BEINGS - YOU ARE AN OPPRESSOR.
 - IF YOU CALL YOURSELF AN ARTIST, AND ACCEPT, OVERTLY OR COVERTLY, TO
BE MANIPULATED, TO BE CENSORED, OR TO CENSOR YOURSELF, OR PERMIT
YOURSELF TO BE USED AS A CONVEYOR OF OPPRESSION - YOU ARE AN OPPRESSOR.

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GAAG - 2.

- LIBERATION IS NOT A QUESTION OF ESTHETICS.
- ESTHETICS IS A PERSONAL CHOICE. WHAT YOU DO WITH THE ESTHETICS, IS A QUESTION OF LIBERATION. THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR OPPRESSION, WHETHER IT IS JOB, SECURITY, STATUS, ADVANCEMENT, TENURE, SALES, FAME, PERSONAL GRATIFICATION, MONEY, EGO, PEER ACCEPTANCE, OR ANY CONSCIOUS OR SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION.
- ARTISTS, STOP FOOLING YOURSELVES. WE WILL NOT PERMIT OURSELVES TO BE "GOOD AMERICANS" FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF TOTALITARIANISM.
- * * * * *
- ART TEACHERS, ART HISTORIANS, ART CRITICS, ESTHETES, ANTHROPOLOGISTS, ARCHEOLOGISTS, ART LIBRARIANS, ART RESTORERS, CURATORS, ART EDITORS, ART ADMINISTRATORS, AND WHOMEVER,
- ART MONGERS:
- HANDS OFF! STOP MASTURBATING ART, AND STOP IMPOSING YOUR ORGASMS ON OTHERS. YOUR "BENEVOLENT ACTS" ARE DESTROYING NOT ONLY ART BUT PEOPLE.
- YOU ARE SUFFOCATING THOUGHT. YOU ARE MANIPULATING THE MINDS OF ALL THOSE WHO COME IN CONTACT WITH YOU AND YOUR ACTIVITY. YOU DEIFY AND YOU VILIFY IMAGES AND SYMBOLS, AND THEREFORE THEIR CREATORS, PEOPLE.
- LET ART SPEAK FOR ITSELF AND STOP SPEAKING FOR ART.
- * * * * *
- LET ARTISTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.


Jean Toche.


Jon Hendricks.

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On My Mind

Black comedy: The USA vs. Jean Toche

by Carman Moore

The fact that C. Douglas Dillon, president of the Metropolitan Museum, just had avant-garde artist Jean Toche arrested is no laughing matter but it is bizarre enough to sustain our suspicions that the 1970s may go down in history as the golden age of comedy. The Administration's bad-guys list (full of playboys and Housewives for Nixon), coupled with its wire taps on Kissinger and on Nixon's brothers, are of course musts for the "Greatest Hits of the '70s" disc you will purchase hungrily in the '80s for prime examples of what is America's number one contribution to art anyway . . . comedy. (Brezhnev-Solzhnitsyn and Greek colonels-Theodorakis will also have a band or two.) The wildest forms of this madness take place wherever the art mentality tangles with that mentality which seems to circulate the same face through all the managements—factories, bourses, governments, armies, unions, universities, and front

offices of concert outfits and museums. Part of the problem arises from the fact that both the artists and the management people tend to be of above-average intelligence but the laws upon which their minds have been trained are totally divergent.

Dillon, once U. S. Secretary of the Treasury, is certainly used to power, order, and symbols of both. Show him an annual report with books balanced and wonderful attendance figures and a few prestigious acquisitions and he's got to think to himself, "good job, C." Jean Toche, on the other hand, for years a regular on the happenings-events-intermedia art scene, is a little bearded guy who wears old clothes and springs a predictably outrageous work on a tiny public a few times a year. He has trained himself to be a tool of his version of art, and "good going, Jean" he reserves for those moments when his pieces are in progress and there's some reaction to them. C. Douglas and Jean do not understand each other. That would be just another squabble except that C. Douglas is in Toche's kingdom trying to define grammar in Toche's own language and has the power almost to do so.

The case is not isolated . . . many



—Jon Van Raay

TOCHE

a record company executive and movie mogul has risen up from company lawyer to artistic decider, and consequently many a fine but far-out score or script has been turned down as either uncommercial or incomprehensible. Next step—a class of pseudo-artists springs up which aims to please the art managers and bingo, the quality of that culture's output goes down and the public settles for the best of the worst (give a critical listen to this week's Top 40). To my knowledge Toche never tried to tell Dillon how to make dollar bills (forgive my disingenuousness: there's more to this tale).

You've probably noticed over the last eight years or so that a small but growing band of artist revolutionaries has been involved in demonstrations outside and inside MOMA and the Met with the general theme, "turn the museums' programs over to the cause of living art and the people." How this guerrilla movement which includes critics, black artists, women artists, and fairly traditionalist painters as well as avant gardists would realize the term "turn it over" or what

museums would be like after such an event is something I don't know, but as these folk have devoted lives to art and hence are historical colleagues of da Vinci, Rembrandt, Picasso, and Jackson Pollack, it is presumed that good paintings and electrifying statues would still get looked at by a public that could dig it.

At any rate, when a crazed cat by the name of Tony Shafrazi wrote a sentiment across Picasso's "Guernica" and got predictably jailed, Toche took the opportunity to send out a Free Tony position paper likening his jailing to an artist's being kidnapped for having freely expressed himself. Toche went on to describe "Guernica"—with fresh paint as "an angry and justified SHAFRAZI/PICASSO political conceptual art work denouncing all genocides," and to call for the kidnapping of "museums' trustees, museums' directors, museums' administrators, museums' curators, and museums' benefactors to be held as war hostages until a People's Court is convened to deal specifically with the cultural crimes of the ruling class . . ." He mailed about 50

copies to critics, artists, and all of the museum functionaries mentioned.

C. Douglas was one of them and, perhaps feeling more culpable (or simply powerful) than the rest, freaked and rushed four FBI agents down to cop the small-bear-like Toche who was sitting home, unarmed as always and either dreaming up a new work or planning a meal or planning a new statement in behalf of artistic freedom (or all of these in one). True rank-and-file gun-toting political revolutionaries would laugh at the letter and I suspect, were some of them let into power, might trash his work as strange, unpopular, and anti-revolutionary.

There are those who see in this arrest not the comedy of mistaken identities and burlesqued misreadings which my interpretation implies so much as an act meant to break the back of and perhaps test the mettle of a movement which simply has been annoying the establishment. The educational value of Nixonian democracy has been invaluablely instructive on this level of arrogance. In this case the example of Jean Toche sent off for a few months to be "examined" in a mental institution or imprisoned for five years for misuse of the mail or for intent to kidnap might scare the hell out of any group of artists and friends who'd normally commit some of their time and energy to organizing for sweeping change within the monied halls of plastic art. At any rate the U. S. attorney's office has "USA vs. Jean Toche" all set for hearing before the U. S. magistrate this week and (upon Dillon's complaint) they ain't jokin'.

SO MANY CASES of I Don't Know What To Do proportions have happened in Nixon's 70s that I really don't know what to do. But I've known Toche at least to say hello to for several years and my first reaction to any taxpayer dollars being spent to battle him in the courts is—"laughable." My second is the accompanying article. And my third is to pass along the address and phone number of Jon Hendricks at the Committee for Artistic Freedom, 1 White Street, New York, City 10013; 925-4697.

C. M.

Thursday, April 18, 1974

the Village

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