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A report

for once gov't is right

I do hope that no one will be disappointed and that the title has ~~not~~ been misleading — I do not intend to speak about either the fashion avant-garde — I think Women's Wear Daily does it very well nor of the avant-garde of politics, I am sure there is someone in Washington much more qualified than I am.

not along of demonstrations at MOMA.

What I really want to do is to present a number of ideas that present themselves as a ~~meaningful tangent to the exhibition~~ ~~view~~ "European Painters of Today". I felt that a slide lecture to talk about the works might be quite boring for both of us. However, in case anyone may be missing television tonight I will show a short film — Who is Richard Smith —

The Smith is one of the artists represented in this ~~exhibition~~ ~~and~~ the film hints at many of the things I want to talk about.

One of the most important points I want to make is that art too has its jet-set — I do not mean this derogatorily but to point out the easy communication and extreme internationalism that exists today. No longer is it easy to say that a painter is British.

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A footnote before the film which will be elaborated on later. In the last year Richard Smith worked in New York, Irvine (California) where he was teaching, Bath and London - England, in Milan while he prepared for a show there, visited Venice, Rome, Florida (where he was making prints), Kassel - Germany for Documenta among other places. While this seems more than most artists it also points out that Smith is familiar with work in many countries, knows their art worlds and for that sense is at home in all of these places.

I might also say that this extensive travel has become part of many curator's lives and of course collectors so that more and more the art world becomes quite unified, less provincial and above nationalism. I shall return to this after the film.

Workstavel extensively too and the film is limited because work was on way to N.Y and in S. A.

MOVIE.

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This film was made for Germany, England, Canada & U. S. A.

It means that we now have to take into account the rapidity of communication. Nearly everywhere in the world Time, Life & Newsweek are available on Wednesdays — N.Y. ^{Sun.} Times on Monday morning and the art magazines all delivered within one month so that the ambitious artist has a lot of information at his disposal. Unfortunately, fortunately because of the reproductions he often misinterprets and the weak imitation shows up, nevertheless, soon he sees the work of a Biennale, ^{a Documenta} or he comes to New York and catches up rapidly and soon he seems to be part of the "avant-garde".

story about Venice int'l exhibition and how anxiety of European critics to prove that their artists are doing it distorts history. Now dating of work is meaningless since it may only be a difference of weeks.

False idea that the art is co-existing, ignoring conveniently the innovator.

Particularly ridiculous often in Europe while now accepting pre-eminence of American art they often misinterpret the impetus & esthetics of it. America has no long art history can afford

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to be radical. The sculptor does not have to live daily with Michelangelo or Donatello — it removed which it is not for an Italian — this pressure of the heritage obviously also creates problems for the good artist since he has to be aware of the tradition which preceded him. Has caused problems for example with French painters.

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This avant-gardism is now a chronic condition of contemporary art.

avant-garde — a myth

concept to be questioned

to think what it is

"Where the energy is" — a definition of ^{artists' artists.} the new well.

does the avant-garde have a sanctity

{ pioneer producing original work

identification with myth

show stylistic symptoms

contrast with "academic" & "establishment"

avant-garde is now sought out & part of official culture

myth is now part of our creed.

It is felt by museums, business etc. e.g. this exhibition. Corporation support has to be examined.

no real separation now between avant-garde & establishment

Time & Newsweek now seek out unknown artists,

almost acting as critics, curators. Artists are

respectable and news.

advertising; fashion now absorbs quickly

E.g. Bridget Riley and "op" art in fashion. Jawsuit

There is no longer shock — tacit acceptance

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the avant-garde seems to become constructive where definitions are being reshaped; where the arts are forming new relationships with one another or with non-artistic world of language, science, ideas, technology, human behavior.

composure of fun, life, nonsense, exploration, struggle

avant-garde has its favorite philosophers, dancers, poets, — heroes (Duchamp, Schwitters, Russian avant-garde 1912-22) — most artists have moved out.

but who is not with the A-G is not necessarily against it.

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Cinema — grows in range
new impulses.

Musical —

Film

Cinema — great popular & international art form
example avant-garde can exist in world at
large

the only truly int'l art of the moment

Re-examine own premises.

To move on,

Today no responsibility to the intellectual &
creative reservoir at disposal — ^{enlightened} no patronage —
neither governmental nor corporate
collectors (bankers) ^{State Dept. & Smithsonian} buy the avant-garde of their
parents (Impressionists). ART IN EMBASSIES

Stagnation — suffocation

Arts may be in a decline particularly painting.

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International exhibitions (national prestige)

What should they be?

Do they still serve national prestige?

Should they be of a common esthetic,
loosely formed?

Does this show have a validity?

Biennales

Last years demonstrations.

Representations of the countries

Poor role of U. S. A. financially,
last ones "Dean Rusk" selected
esthetically (!)

Documenta	1959	Germany catching up.
	1968	Big fair atmosphere

Point out mammoth catalogues — remind
how much reproductions influence art —
has this profusion of printed matter affected
art — does the artist think of well it
will reproduce & send the message?

e.g. a work that only existed as a photograph.

The art audience — who are they?

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Demonstrations.

Venice riots part of challenge to whole
of capitalist society.

repeat { but'll show at Biennale
issue of claiming things exist simultaneously
dating of works.
promoting national interests.

Biennale now questionable
is it only for tourists

European critics ill informed - often provincial.

Careful U.S. selection must be made ^{for Biennale} since
others particularly artists are well informed.
often a lack of conviction in American art - still
vestiges of supremacy of Europe exist.

Europe dislikes the idea of any patronizing

National representation ^{prizes} may now be outdated -
success of Documenta

~~past~~ gallery activity in Germany
German dealers & collectors

Museums acquiring in Europe

best work goes e.g. Pop Art

Exhibitions in Europe of artists before even being seen
here.

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Problem of trends — often
exhibitions of a common aesthetic also have
stifling rather than stimulating effect e.g.
The Responsive Eye at MOMA — Op art.

Critics tell what are the
next aesthetic problems to be solved.

Hopefully,

~~But~~ now because of numerous sources —
~~we can hope~~ many different styles coexist —
no one institution official taskmaster —

public art, private art, "museum art",
large scale "anti-museum" pieces — anti-collectors.

Crisis for museum collections

Avant-garde — not completely academic.
museums ~~at~~ cannot afford mammoth collecting

~~Ambition is to do unique, original
work and so some reassurance of
continued good, great work~~

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Mention specific politics.

Julio Le Parc & Hugo De Marco — Argentina
kinetic artists arrested & deported in Paris June

French gov't using foreigners to release
xenophobic feelings of middle class. Other instances of
political persecution.

Many artists put their talents at disposal
of May rebellion.

~~Art as property~~

But students are ill informed. — look at
art as part of establishment.

Demonstrations — for publicity — lack knowledge
of meaning & power of art because of stifling European
art establishment.

~~Concept of nationality is a myth today.~~

Another kind of political protest

artists telegram Sept 1968 to Mayor
Daley refusing to show in Chicago — others
while objecting reasonably refused to
deprive others in Chicago from seeing their
works — to deprive them would perhaps
serve interests of Mayor Daley.

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protest at MOMA—

beginning involved a group of one's feeling neglected

Open hearing on tonight

Want to have someone asking for some of author's rights.

Implications.

These are some instances of increased political activity

also many benefit shows against the war

but more significant is being implicit in work

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Survival of artist as individual to avoid conformity

Fight to preserve identity creates avant-garde before fight was more hostility and neglect now fight is too much acceptance almost fighting one's self since it creates distrust — this tension creates more ~~star~~ ambition

Work today has a rebelliousness that leads into unpredictable areas e.g. earthworks. — Nevada desert never seen; never sold.

Society always accommodates and perhaps benefits from ~~the~~ poetic imagination

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look for An Anthology by La Monte Young
published by Jackson Mac Low
& La Monte Young 1964



Walter de Maria
Meaningless Work

Meaningless work is obviously the most important and significant art form today -- meaningless work is honest. Meaningless work will be enjoyed and hated by intellectuals -- though they should understand it.

avant-garde almost an autonomous style
but writers & artists only one of number of sources
from which new ideas & styles seep into
vernacular of mass culture.

but avant-garde is still separate from mass
audience

avant-garde -- retreat into unbrid games of style
& aesthetics -- art & "anti-art"

America -- cult of the new
opermindedness

Germany -- anxious to catch up -- sense of obligation

England -- not susceptible, diffident

France -- interested like a fashion

The eye is now much more athletic

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While I have tried to point out some of the problems of the avant-garde I also want to say that there is a necessity for us to accept good "traditional" art which often gets lost in our eagerness for the new. "traditional" as long as it has the energy of the avant-garde.

I have purposely not spoken this evening of many specific artists — because I felt that these issues are important critical ones and that along with appreciating the works we have to pay much more attention to the intellectual and political climate from which they originate. recently because of the pressures and machinery of some critics who insist on only a formal analysis and see that only in a very straight line

I have not touched on the more mundane idea of fashion — ~~which~~ the implications of the pressures brought by some critics, dealers and collectors on certain work — the promotion of a certain style over the ordinary everyday art politics e.g.

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~~where~~ the artist ~~conpires~~ may get
someone to write an article on him to
further his career or perhaps try to seduce
a lady critic hoping for a good review.

However I would like to ~~point out~~ ^{say} that
the int'l avant-garde is very fashionable,
quite well-dressed almost dandies, urbane
sophisticated and very political and
creative.