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	Wittenborn	I.C.27

THE FIRST DAY

April 21, 1950

Artists:

William Baziotas	Peter Grippe	Robert Motherwell
Janice Biala	David Hare	Barney Newman
Louise Bourgeois	Hans Hoffmann	Richard Pousette-Dart
James Brooks	Weldon Kees	Ad Reinhardt
William de Kooning	Ibram Lassow	Ralph Rosenberg
Jimmy Ernst	Norman Lewis	Hedda Sterne
Herbert Ferber	Richard Lippold	Bradley Walker Tomlin
Adolph Gottlieb	Seymour Lipton	

Moderators:

Richard Lippold  
Robert Motherwell

*1st day*  
Lassaw: I would consider a work finished when I sense a "togetherness", a participation of all parts as in an organism. This does not mean that I entirely understand what I have created. To me, a work is at first, quite unknown. In time, more and more enters into consciousness. It would be better to consider a work of art as a process that is started by the artist. In that way of thinking a sculpture or painting is never finished, but only begun. If successful, the work starts to live a life of its own, a work of art begins to work.

Lassaw: I go through a very trying time when I'm ready to title a construction. I have used combinations of words or syllables without any meaning. lately, I have adopted the use of the names of stars or other celestial objects, similar to the way ships are named. It should be obvious that such titles are just names, and are not to imply that the constructions express, symbolize, or represent anything. A work of art "is" like a work of nature. *2nd day*

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(Note: preliminary remarks were not to be recorded.)

Moderator Lippold: It might be advisable to list a few things which we will probably not want to discuss. It would seem that the method of work of most of us who are here in this group has been a lonely one - I feel that much is gained from argument. I would like to learn from conversation with my confrères.

Hare: I think we ought to define terms and find a subject to speak about. Everybody here knows everybody else's work. There is no advantage in talking about a school of painting. I think we ought to talk about the problems of the particular artist, and not of ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> particular school. I don't see any point in discussing our own work. What a painter thinks <sup>he</sup> or does is very often different from what he does. There are painters who are extremely vocal. We would like to talk to them and see their work, but their work and speaking don't coincide. You can do it or you don't do it. You can talk about it, but you can't accomplish anything in talking about it. We don't just want to hear everybody talking about his own point of view. I don't see that we can get anywhere unless we all state a problem and give our ideas on that particular problem. Has somebody a problem to suggest?

Pousette-Dart: Our togetherness happens in institutions. It seems to me that you can't carry on a discussion like this without talking about museums. We don't get together ourselves, so we get together in the museums which persecute the artists.

Ferber: The public has been mentioned, and it seems to me even in a sophisticated group like this we should attempt to identify our relationship to the public, perhaps in two ways. In a personal way, and in a way which relates to our work. By the second I perhaps mean that the public really is asking all the time "What does this work mean?" I think it might be helpful to adopt an attitude toward the public in the sense of an answer to that question. We needn't answer the question. What I am asking is that we should adopt an attitude of either discarding the question or trying to answer it... Another thing I want to suggest is that we might want to talk about the possibility of discussing whether any of us feel that there



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is any difference in what is happening in America and what has happened heretofore, and in what is happening in Europe. There is some difference which is not a question of geography but of point of view. It is a question of origin of ancestry.

Gottlieb: It seems to me that we are approaching an academy version of abstract painting. I think that has some bearing on our getting together here, in that I think, despite any individual differences, there is a basis for getting together on mutual respect and the feeling that painters here are not academic, and we should make some distinctions.

Hofmann: What is abstract art in the "good" sense?

Moderator Motherwell: The word "abstract" has a technical meaning. It means "to take from." As a method, it signifies selecting one element from a myriad of elements, for the purpose of emphasis. Whitehead says, "The higher the degree of abstraction, the lower the degree of complexity." I suppose the word was first applied to a certain kind of art that was very highly abstracted (in Whitehead's sense) but consequently with a low degree of complexity. The people who first said abstract must have meant that so much was left out.

Grippe: Why is it that Picasso is not considered "abstract?"

Moderator Motherwell: Because Picasso represents a higher degree of complexity and a lower degree of abstraction than Mondrian, for example.

Moderator Lippold: I feel that if we are going to learn something from each other, let's dismiss our problems with relationship to the public and concern ourselves with the problems of creativity: how each one begins his piece of work and how he proceeds with it.

Newman: I was going to try to formulate a question. When Gottlieb raised the question of abstraction, I don't think we should just dismiss it. It might be formulated into this question: do we artists really have a community? If so, what makes it a community?

Hare: I don't see why we shouldn't feel lonely. An artist is always lonely. That is why he is an artist. An artist is a man who does not get along with society. You can be beyond it, ot ahead, but in any case you don't get along with it. I think our

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problem would seem to be fundamentally psychological. We feel badly because we are not accepted by the public. We can't be accepted by the public. As soon as we are accepted, we no longer are artists. Perhaps we go around on occasion thinking to ourselves, "This won't do, If we could only explain to the public, they would agree with us." They may agree in the course of years. They won't agree now..... I think this group activity, this gathering together, is a symptom of fear. Possibly you could connect this with the question of democracy, in the sense that in this country there is a feeling that unless you have a large public you are a failure. The public is always concerned with successful people. I will always be opposed to those people. We should get the public interested, if possible, but I don't think it is necessary to worry about whether the public understands, and I certainly don't think it is necessary to try to explain under the assumption that once you explain, they will agree. They shouldn't agree with us - they are not opposed to the status quo.

Reinhardt: There are many things that Hare brought up that I don't agree with. I think we should follow some kind of procedure, isolate some ideas, and find out each artist's opinion. Newman's question is pertinent. Why can't we find out what our community is and what our differences are, what each artist thinks of them?

Moderator Motherwell: What then exactly constitutes the basis of our community?

Sterne: We need a common vocabulary. Abstract should mean really abstract, and modern should mean really modern. We don't mean the same things with the same words.

H offmann: Why should we? Everyone should be as different as possible. There is nothing that is common to all of us except our creative urge. It just means one thing to me: to discover myself as well as I can. But everyone of us has the urge to be creative in relation to our time - the time to which we belong may work out to be our thing in common. But to formulate this would not be simple.

Reinhardt: There are a great many differences which I think we should find out about here. If we are doing the same thing, or have the same problems or the same fears - what are they?

Pousette-Dart: The museums can bless any artist and make him successful in a moment.



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The museums can, at any moment, bless any one of us. The disaster is that they can cause disparity among us, too.

Reinhardt: Does that have anything to do with our discovering ourselves?

Hare: I can't see how the museums have anything to do with the artist. In general, museums don't have very much taste.

Pousette-Dart: The people turn to the museums.

Moderator Lippold: What we are leading up to is why each person paints or sculpts. Why each person thinks he should paint. Do we do it to be a success, to make money, understand ourselves, or what is the purpose? To describe our own creative nature? Why do we use titles? Where do we pick such titles? Where do we begin?

Hare: I suggest that we pick three or four questions and ask the same questions of everyone around the table; since a lot of people won't express their points of view, we have the same ones talking all the time. Why not pick three or four questions and ask each person to give his thoughts about it?

Ferber: It seems to me that most of the questions revolve around "meaning." The public, the museums and the artists themselves are involved in the question of "meaning." It need not be "meaning" in any simple sense; but when Mr. Lippold asks for a description of the way in which, and the why-for in connection with a piece of sculpture or painting, he is asking about "meaning," I think.

Moderator Lippold: That isn't what I said.

Ferber: Then, I misunderstood you. If we attempt to talk about what in general ~~is~~ the work of this group has in common, I think it has been mentioned that it is modern, advanced and not-academic; we can rule out the problem of the museum, because we will be telling the public in our own way what we mean and the museum is no longer a problem. So far as the community of artists goes, it seems to me the question would involve the question of difference - between us and other artists. In that way we may have a feeling of community.

Moderator Lippold: To continue with the suggestion I made before: I would like to suggest that the question of method might be broken down into this: first - is it possible to say why we begin to create a work? Is it possible to say, if so, what is



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it? Second - how do we begin the work; from an idea, an emotional point of view based on experience or form? Where does the suggestion come from? Third - when is the work finished? How do we know that? I can't see that my relationship to the museum or to the public is concerned with what I am making. I am interested in how other people work.

Hofmann: A very great Chinese painter once said the most difficult thing in a work of art is to know the moment when to stop.

Moderator Motherwell: The question then is, "How do you know when a work is finished?"

Moderator Lippold: I don't know if I can separate that question without thinking about the first two questions. I would say the work seems finished to me when it concludes successfully the prophecy of its beginning and the problems involved in its working out. It may be that my work, by nature, almost determines its own conclusion; ~~however~~ it is not possible to do very much in making changes once the thing is quite far along. The early suggestions of form take place for many of us at the stage of sketching or small model making - if you have to make a model - and when that phase seems to have come to an end, and when I then begin to work on the piece itself, or a larger piece, so far this seems to be a more or less technical process. I would like to say a little about the beginning of my method. I have never begun a piece from the point of view of "pure form." I have never made a piece without its springing from the memory of some experience - an emotional experience, generally. I almost always, from the beginning, have a title which labels that experience, because I want it to act as a discipline in eliminating any extraneous ideas which might come into the sculpture. As we all know, the first line or brush stroke can lead to millions of possibilities, and for me to keep clear is to keep a title in mind. It is of value to me at the beginning. When an experience has made itself so persistent in my unconscious or conscious mind - or both - that I feel that I want to make something which reflects that experience, I find my eyes constantly observing all things. At the same time, that experience is a memory, and it may be that it is at the moment

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a line on someone's face, or a crack on the floor, or an experience at a newsreel theatre. The the problem of how to work out the experience which I have had presents itself; I may begin with that idea, and I have to adapt it to my medium. I have to make it clear enough for others to see in its relationships. All of this takes place in the sketch stage - in the models I make from drawings. The drawings become more conclusive as I work. Generally when I work on a piece I make very few changes. But with the last piece I made, the procedure was different, because towards the end technical and expressive problems required my altering the piece several times. I re-did it three or four times. But I felt that the piece was finished when I felt it satisfied my original intent. I can't talk about conclusions without talking about intent. On rare occasions I have seen a form which suggested some kind of relationship which called back a memory or experience. It is always an interplay between the two, I find. It is never one thing or the other.

Brooks: I think quite often I don't know when a work is "finished," because I often carry it a little too far. There is some peculiar balance which it is necessary to preserve all through a painting which keeps it fluid and moving. It can't be brought to a stop. I think you have to abandon it while it is still alive and moving, and so I can't consider a painting "finished." I can't think of working with a clear intent on a painting, because it often develops as I go through a painting. ~~It~~ It quite often changes in the middle of a painting. But the "end" is a very difficult thing, something that is determined, not by the form that is "finished," but by the fact that I have worked on it. It satisfies a need of some kind.

Kees: It is usually finished when it defies me to do anything more with it. I start with drawings and when I find that the drawings are incapable of being turned into a painting, then I start to paint.

Baziotes: I consider my painting finished when my eye goes to a particular spot on the canvas. But if I put the picture away about thirty feet on the wall and the movements keep returning to me and the eye seems to be responding



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to something living, then it is finished.

Gottlieb: I usually ask my wife... I think a more interesting question would be, "Why does anyone start a painting instead of finishing it?"

Ferber: I would say that I don't think any piece of sculpture I make is really "finished." Nor do I think it possible to call a piece a realization of any particular idea evolving from a specific emotion or event. There is a stream out of which these things pop like waves, and fall back. Therefore works aren't really complete in themselves. I think the day of the "master-piece" is over. When we look at our own work, in ten or fifteen examples, we really understand what we are doing, and what our friends are doing when we look at a group of their things. The sense of "finishing" a particular work is meaningless.

Moderator Lippold: I would like to ask you if what you describe applies to an individual piece? It is a thing which exists within its own particular shape. How can that come about?

Ferber: For a sculptor to insist that a piece of sculpture rises out of his stream of consciousness is perhaps ridiculous because sculpture is so three-dimensional and hard put. But I don't think there is any difference between one piece and another in the development and fulfillment of a particular idea.

Lassow: I would consider a work "finished" when I feel all the particulars participate in the scene and no part is less strong than the other.

Ernst: My work consists of two separate stages of development. I consider a painting almost "finished" when I am half finished with it, when I have reached what seems to be the greatest measure of surprise. The rest of the action is disciplinary on my part. When I see that I am beginning to destroy the surprise - the basic element of that surprise - then it is time for me to stop.

Pousette-Dart: For me it is "finished" when it is inevitable within itself. But I don't think I can explain anything about my painting, just as I can't explain anything about a flower or a child. When is anything "beautiful" finished? I can't discuss things about my paintings. The true thing I am after



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goes on and on and never can completely grasp it.

Lipton: I think that we require time and intimacy and aloneness.

Biala: I never know when it is "finished." I only know there comes a time when I have to stop.

Newman: I think the idea of a "finished" picture is a fiction. I think a man spends his whole life-time painting one picture or working on one piece of sculpture. The question of stopping is really a decision of moral considerations. To what extent are you intoxicated by the actual act, so that you are beguiled by it? To what extent are you charmed by its inner life? And to what extent do you then really approach the intention or desire that is really outside of it. The decision is always made when the piece has something in it that you wanted.

Hare: It seems to me there are two problems: when you stop, and when it is finished.

Rosenborg: When it stops, why does it stop? While the hands do, the picture moves, having a life (objective, emotional and intellectual) of its own. When I can do no more on it, it is done.

Sterne: Painting for me is a problem of understanding.. As I try to approach a subject, uncluttered by prejudices, I try to explain it to myself and it then turns into action and, I hope, an explanation. While I work the thing takes life and fights back. There comes a moment when I am vanquished and can't go ahead, and then I stop until I tackle the thing again.

De Kooning: I refrain from "finishing" it. I paint myself out of the picture, and when I have done that, I either thro it away or keep it. I am always in the picture somewhere. The amount of space I use I am always in, I seem to move around in it, andthere seems to be a time when I lose sight of what I wanted to do, and then I am out of it. If the picture has a countenance, I keep it. If it hasn't, I throw it away. I am not really very much interested in the question.

Bourgeois: I think a work is "finished" when I have nothing to eliminate. I

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make constructions that are usually vertical; when I start them they are full of colors and are complicated in form. Every one of the complications goes and the color becomes uniform and finally they become ~~xx~~ completely white and simple. When there is nothing else to take away, it is "finished." Yet I am disgusted by simplicity. So I look for a larger form and look for another work - which goes through the same process of elimination.

Grippe: A work of art is never really "finished." There is a feeling of trying to express the labyrinth in one's mind - its feelings or emotions, and to fulfill one's personality. Each work is trying to complete the expression of that personality. Whether it becomes more profound, I don't know; but I think a person is much more aware of himself in relation to the rest of the world.

Reinhardt: It has always been a problem - about "finishing" paintings. I feel very conscious of ways of "finishing" a painting. There is a value placed on "unfinished" work today. Disturbances arise when you have to treat the work as a finished and complete object, so that the only time I think I "finish" a painting is when I have a dead-line. If you are going to present it as an "unfinished" object, how do you "finish" it?

Lewis: I have stopped, I think, when I have arrived at a quality of mystery. I know this doesn't describe it, but it is the best word I can use.

Hofmann: To me a work is finished when all parts involved communicate themselves, so that they don't need me.

Moderator Motherwell: I dislike a picture that is too suave or too skillfully done. But, contrariwise, I also dislike a picture that looks too inept or blundering. I noticed in looking at the Carré exhibition of young French painters who are supposed to be close to this group, that in "finishing" a picture they assume traditional criteria to a much greater degree than we do. They have a real "finish" in that the picture is a real object, a beautifully made object. We are involved in "process" and what is a "finished" object is not so certain.

Hofmann: Yes, it seems to me all the time there is the question of a heritage.



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It would seem that the difference between the young French painters and the young American painters is this: French pictures have a cultural heritage. The American painter of today approaches things without basis. The French approach things <sup>very</sup> on the basis of cultural heritage - that one feels in all their work. It is a working towards a refinement and quality rather than working toward <sup>e</sup> new experience, and painting out these experiences that may finally become tradition. The French have it easier. They have it in the beginning.

De Kooning: I am glad you brought up this point. It seems to me that in Europe every time something new needed to be done it was because of traditional culture. Ours has been a striving to come to the same point that they had - not to be iconoclasts - but to be able to recognize ourselves as being elegant object makers.

Moderator Lippold: There are those here who feel that the things which they make are simply moments of a continuity and, therefore, in themselves, are not objects for their own sakes, but just moments in the continuity. Is there an irreconcilability in making an object in itself which, at the same time, reflects continuity? This, so far, has been spoken of as incompatible.

Sterne: But that means that you have decided already exactly what is "beautiful." "Beauty" can't be pursued directly.

Gottlieb: There is a general assumption that European & specifically French - painters have a heritage which enables them to have the benefits of tradition, and therefore they can produce a certain type of painting. It seems to me that in the last fifty years the whole meaning of painting has been made international. I think Americans share that heritage just as much, and that if they deviate from tradition it is just as difficult for an American as for a Frenchman. It is a mistake to assume that we are innocents who, just because we have no background of culture, are doing something which is new or unique. I think what Motherwell described is the problem of knowing what the tradition is and being willing to reject it in part.



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De Kooning: I agree that tradition is part of the whole world now. The point that was brought up that the French artists have some "touch" in making an object. They have a particular something that makes them look like a "finished" painting. They have a touch which I am glad not to have.

Baziot: We are getting mixed up with the French tradition. In talking about the necessity to "finish" a thing we then said, American painters "finish" a thing that looks "unfinished," and the French, they "finish" it. I have seen Matisse's that were more "unfinished" and yet more "finished" than any American painter. Matisse was obviously in a terrific emotion at the time, and it was more "unfinished" than "finished."

De Kooning: I don't mean that. I think this idea of picking up a "finished" painting . . . (trails off). I don't mean it because I have no idea really what kind of experience Matisse had in making a painting. It is possible that it was "unfinished" - you know what I mean. I am a little bit surprised that you talk in terms of the actual, formal ways of making a painting. There is an almost fluid expression in painting. ~~There~~ I never thought about it in terms of being "finished" or not. This terminology I am almost surprised about.

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THE SECOND DAY

April 22, 1950

Artists:

Same as on the first day<sup>3</sup> with the addition of David Smith.

Moderators:

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

Richard Lippold

Robert Motherwell

Sterne: I find that the painter has the problem of the title; the title seems to classify him. If you make a long, poetic title, you are immediately classified in one way or another. If you put a number, you are classified as non-objective. Whatever you do, it would seem a statement of attitude. You can't see apples or bread in a basket the way others see things they do, because that ~~mean~~ implies again a statement of attitude. So you refrain, or if you don't, somehow or other you create a misunderstanding.

Reinhardt: If a title does not mean anything, why put a title on a <sup>painting?</sup> ~~picture~~

Brooks: To me a title is nothing but identification. I have a very hard time to find a title and it is always inadequate. I think when titles are very suggestive, they are a kind of a fraud, because <sup>I</sup> believe they throw the spectator away from the picture rather than into it. But numbers are inadequate.

Gottlieb: I think the point Miss Sterne raised is inevitable. That is, whenever an artist puts a title on a painting, some interpretation about his attitude will be made. It seems obvious that titles are necessary when everybody uses them - whether verbal or numbers; for purposes of exhibition, identification and the benefit of the critics there must be some way of referring to a picture. It seems to me that the artist, in making up titles for his pictures, must decide what his attitude is.

Moderator Barr: Most people seem to think that titles are a kind of



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necessity. Does anyone think that titles have real usefulness in supplementing the object?

Rosenborg: The title is always arbitrary because we deal with unseen audiences; the reason for a title is that every Tom, Dick and Harry has to have some link. Once I had a show where I had numbers from one to twenty, and when it came to a question of reviewing, the critics found that number six was better than four, etc. I hope that the onlooker will make up his own title!

Grippe: The title is a very necessary key to the kind of expression - the kind of symbolism that is behind the work. We are all working in a subjective approach. Therefore, it becomes difficult to title works. Another factor is fear - I think Miss Sterne reveals fear. We feel in some way someone is going to criticize. I think we must get away from this fear of titling works. We ought just to be honest with ourselves as well as others.

Pousette-Dart: I think if we could agree on numbers it would be a tremendous thing. In music they don't have this dilemma. It would force people to ~~look~~ just look at the object and try to find their own experience.

Ernst: I would object to doing any such thing as that - such as numbering a picture. I don't particularly care what people classify me as, or whether people understand the title or not. It suggests something to me, or something may pop into my head - so I give it that title.

Smith: I think titles are a positive means of identification. I never objected to any work of art because of its title. The only people who have objected were critics because they did not like the work.

Reinhardt: The question of abandoning titles arose, I am sure, because of esthetic reasons. Even the titles like "still life" and "landscape" do not give you anything about a picture. If he does have a reference or association of some kind, I think the artist is apt to add a title. I think this is why titles are not used by a great many painters - because they don't have anything to do with the painting itself.

Moderator Barr: There are some painters who attach a great deal of importance to titles.



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Moderator Motherwell: I think Sterne is dealing with a real problem - what is the content of our work? What are we really doing? The question is how to name what as yet has been un-named.

Moderator Barr: I would like to get some information on this. Would you raise your hands if you name your pictures and sculptures?

(                      raised their hands.)

How many people number their pictures?

(                      <sup>people</sup>                      raised their hands.)

How many don't title their pictures at all?

(                      raised their hands.)

(Note: objections to this procedure.)

Hare: It seems to me if you worry about titling, it is the same as worrying about how to make it. Both are creative acts. I think the only thing the title of the picture can do is note the content of the work.

Baziotas: Whereas certain people start with a recollection or an experience and paint that experience, to some of us the act of doing it becomes the experience; so that we are not quite clear why we are engaged on a particular work. And because we are more interested in plastic matters than we are in a matter of words, one can begin a picture and carry it through and stop it and do nothing about the title at all. All pictures are full of association.

Reinhardt: The titles are very important in surrealist work. But the emphasis with us is upon a painting experience, and not on a sexual experience. The only time I would object to a title is when it is false or tricky, or is something extra that the painting does not have.

Sterne: I don't think anybody really has a right to say exactly how I feel about my paintings. It seems too intimate to give them a correct title.

Moderator Barr: Do you think it is possible to enrich the painting by words?

De Kooning: I think that if an artist can always title his pictures, that means he is now always very clear.

Lassow: I usually take a combination of words that has no meaning in itself.

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(Note: preliminary remarks weren't to be recorded.)

otherwise, I think we can make that statement. Speaking for some

MOTHERWELL: In general, the principal procedure in preparing for this forum was to choose extremely advanced artists who, at the same time, were not especially identified either with the so-called non-objective position or with the surrealist position, simply on the assumption that the premises of these positions was very well established; what seemed to be of real interest was to get at what basis of over-lapping there happens to be among people who really have been very independent in their development, and at the position of people that one can't clearly say were non-objective artists or concerned with surrealism -- and not to say Braque was a cubist in 1912 or that one can't be primarily concerned with wonder whether we should adhere to topics which would enable us to learn something which might be of common interest to substantial our feelings about our work and our methods. I don't know if that

POUSETTE-DART: In regard to museums and the reservation that Mr. Barr made to you - does that apply to today's discussion (even though he is not present), or does it apply to all three sessions?

MOTHERWELL: I think it has to, because he is associated with it, and he suggested that at any time any one wanted to discuss the question of what the museums should do that we do it outside of these discussions, which to me seems to be reasonable. get lost

LIPPOLD: To get things started, it might be advisable to list a few things which we will probably not want to discuss. If you feel



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otherwise, I think we can make that statement. Speaking for some of those who are here now, it would seem that the method of work of most of us who are here in this group has been a lonely one -- at least one of solitude. To come together to express our views on our own work and the viewpoints on the work of another would seem perhaps bewildering and confusing, and the temptation not to talk about such things, but rather to discuss matters of technical or more social natures might be a temptation. I think if there is any purpose in our coming together, it would seem rather to learn something of one another from a constructive rather than a destructive one. I feel that much is gained from argument, and I would like to learn from conversation with my confreres. Therefore, I wonder whether we should adhere to topics which would enable us to learn something which might be of common interest to substantiate our feelings about our work and our methods. I don't know if that is enough in airing it whether it is a necessity to find relation to what we think and act as artists and always thought and acted, but rather to start a discussion of materialism. I think it would be more interesting to begin with attitudes. How do you feel about that? All in accord!!

ERNST: I will break this. I don't think there is any necessity to get anybody to talk about museums. I think we would get lost if we did. The thing I am very interested in myself is a question that has bothered me for a long time so that some kind of explanation I think that should be discussed.

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tion might be forthcoming - that is not the solution, and that is the bewilderment which exists; not the work, itself, but the bewilderment created by some artists who theorized in an opposite way than the painting indicated. Now perhaps we can talk about something like that and find some way of explaining it or saying that there is no basis for things that seem to be misleading. Our attitudes seem to be misleading - at least to me.

also, by the fact that they don't become current. Somehow the

MOTHERWELL: Can you give me a concrete example?

ERNST: I can't mention myself. We don't want a slug-fest. I would like to say something about the painting when I see it and the impact it has on me, and the emotion on first sight, and then to hear a man say, "That's what you say, but it's just pure painting to me." Well, that would be an acceptable statement. But for a man to say, "I really don't like to talk about it in terms of an emotional impact, because I don't like pure painting" -- that's the sort of painting I'm talking about. These statements have not only been made to fellow artists, but to people who have had the courage to go into museums.

REINHARDT: One thing I would like to point out: The simple exclusion of a non-objective and surrealist painter is very simple. I think at some point we are bound to have to go into those ideas, and if you think they represent ideology they will have to represent ideas here, too -- if it's different or if it's related, I think that should be discussed.



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MOTHERWELL: I think certainly that should be done. There is hardly any one here who does not have relations on one side and even both. Even the problem of terminology is complicated. Most of the artists here are normally called abstract artists, and yet no one feels the terms are very adequate and the terms that have been substituted, such as objectivism, are inadequate, also, by the fact that they don't become current. Somehow the right word is picked up, I think, or maybe it is the other way around -- it becomes right because it is picked up.

HARE: I think we ought to define terms and find a subject to speak about. Everybody here knows everybody else's work. We all know objectivism and surrealism one way or another. There is no advantage in talking about a school of painting. I think we ought to talk about the problems of the particular artist and not of the particular school. I don't see any point in discussing our own work. What a painter thinks or does is very often different from what he does do. There are painters who are extremely vocal. We would like to talk to them and see their work, but their work and speaking don't coincide. We should not speak about problems in connection with their work. You do it or you don't do it. You can talk about it, but you can't accomplish anything in talking about it. We don't just want to hear everybody talking about his own point of view. I don't see that we can get anywhere unless we all state a problem and give our ideas to that particular problem. If somebody has a problem

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to suggest in that way we will get coherence. It would be

(GOTTLIEB:

(REINHARDT: A great many of us are split to some extent. This problem should be expressed because a great many have ideas and you try to keep them pure. The whole notion of this situation is of being a process instead of a saleable commodity. Yet, to put a price on paintings, even though they don't sell, is an inconsistency which might be one of the subjects to discuss.

STERNE: As soon as you put a title on the imaginative you are going to brand it. If you are going to put numbers, you are going to be considered non-objective. If you make it into a book, it goes into a paper. There should be created some kind of convention which would apply to all of us. No one really wants to put a number or a title to a picture in order to convey something, and I haven't seen anybody doing it right today at all. I think we should make it concrete. The purpose of

GRIPPE: It seems to me one of the very important considerations is to have a certain amount of freedom. All of us have this one thing in common - to be free to do what each one wants to do, that is, without any antagonism from other artists.

STERNE: Each one should do what he wants to do.

HOFFMANN: This can be done and this cannot be done. It is not really being an artist.

GRIPPE: All of us have what we think is a style, and we feel



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that we want that right to work in the way which would be individual to us. Now I have heard that this business of isms and styles and such hasn't anything to do with the problem. I think the main problem is to work and not confuse the one particular need of the artist to do his own work without being molested by the artists or the public. That is, we should fight to be free to do what we want and how we want to do it. We ought to forget isms. When modern art first started, terms were used as derived by other artists. We are losing our ideas of movements. I think it is very necessary for us to have some kind of communication. We ought to get together as a group. It is a marvelous thing. It is something I have thought about for a long time. The one thing necessary is for all of us to do it. Let's not have isms or styles. Let someone else do it. Let a writer pick up from what we do.

LIPPOLD: I think we should make it concrete. The purpose of this whole conference is not to bring us together in order to give us labels. We would walk out if that was the intent. On the other hand, speaking with Motherwell I was interested in his point of view. Although not agreeing with us as individuals, he feels that there is something which binds us as a group of younger artists at this time in America in contra-distinction to the very movements which you have been labeling from abroad. I don't know many of you, and I don't know the work of some of you. But it seems to me from the work that I do know, no label can be tagged on to our work. If we are developing a style or

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method and that style or method hasn't found a name, it can't be found by sitting down. I don't think that is our purpose in meeting - as to what we shall call ourselves. try to reach

POUSETTE-DART: We all feel and yet we haven't been able to realize it in a togetherness. We all feel it and yet we haven't been able to clarify it. Our salvation in America is a togetherness in believing in one another here, as we have a beginning here and as a possibility.

ERNST: I would like to leave continents out of this altogether. Geography doesn't have anything to do with it, nor this business that we happen to be in New York. I agree with Lippold as far as togetherness is concerned, and also that we shouldn't have a common label at all. We are all individuals who work very much by themselves, but to fight against isms is just as dangerous as accepting them. These labels are tagged on by people who are outside of this circle. I am not going to waste any energy in fighting them.

POUSETTE-DART: The artists have not believed in one another. They want the public to believe in them, but they have not sufficiently believed in one another. They want the people to understand and believe in their work without understanding one another.

GRIPPE: That is true. Much of our work is primarily in an experimental stage, and a lot of us have shown the experiments or



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so-called experiments for a number of years. We try to reach the public but not each other, which is important. We feel the loneliness Lippold spoke of a while ago. We try to reach out because of this loneliness and try to stand out. The public is confused all the more because we are not together. What difference does it make about what I do or anyone else does? It doesn't matter. The point is, we are trying to express something of ourselves - inner or outer - and we have confused the public. You would be surprised. There are many artists in New York and these thousands of artists confuse the public. I think almost all the public who go to the museums are confused.

POUSETTE-DART: I think what happens when we don't get together, our togetherness happens in institutions. It seems to me that you can't carry on a discussion like this without talking about museums. We don't get together ourselves, so we get together in the museums which persecute the artists.

FERBER: The public has been mentioned, and it seems to me even in a sophisticated group like this we should attempt to identify our relationship to the public in several ways. One, in a personal way, and one, in a way which relates to our work. By the second I perhaps mean the public really is asking all the time, "What does this work mean?" I think it might be helpful to adopt an attitude toward the public in the sense of an answer to that question. We needn't answer that question. I am not proposing that. What I am asking is that we should adopt an attitude

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of either discarding the question or trying to answer it. The other thing I want to suggest is that we might want to talk about the possibility of discussing whether any of us feel that there is any difference in what is happening in America and what has happened heretofore, and what is happening in Europe. I make this proposal. In spite of what was just said about not talking about continents. I feel there is some difference which is not a geographic thing. There is some difference which is not a question of climate but of point of view. It is a question of origin of ancestry. I think that has some bearing on our

getting together here, in that I think despite any individual differences, there is a basis for getting together on a common

REINHARDT: I think we should pick out a particular topic.

MOTHERWELL: I think the topics emerge. I want to pick up what Hedde said about titles. Such distinction and attach the idea of

GOTTSLIEB: I want to say that I think as far as labels are concerned, it seems to me that everyone in this room has consistently been labeled an "abstract painter". That is a common term applied to all of us. I don't see that there is any question about that. It seems to me that any attempts to make distinctions between the various kinds of abstract paintings haven't gotten us anywhere. We must accept that title. If anybody asks what work you do, merely out of having this term applied you say, "I am an abstract painter," even though you don't mean it literally. I think the point which may make the existence of an issue today is the fact that in the last few years what is called abstract painting in that sense has spread all over the country, and I am informed that it has been stated by people who get around a bit.



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But the majority of students around the country are painting in what is called the abstract manner. The point I want to make is that it seems to me what is happening is that there is a school of abstract painting developing which seems to me similar to the school of impressionism which arose in this country around the beginning of the century. It was officially adopted by the National Academy of Design. For many years what was called academic painting was really impressionism. It seems to me that we are approaching an academy version of abstract painting. I think that has some bearing on our getting together here, in that I think despite any individual differences, there is a basis for getting together on mutual respect and the feeling that painters here are academic, and we should make some such distinction and attach the idea of abstract painting and separate ourselves from the academic version. I bring this up merely as a suggestion in that there may be an issue here which is real.

HOFMANN: What is abstract art in the good sense?

GOTTLIEB: Since the term abstract is implied so loosely, we may not agree with the way it is used. We must discredit the term and have some other epithet applied to us.

HOFMANN: What is abstract art, and which abstract art is qualified and which is not qualified?

REINHARDT: Abstract doesn't apply only to this group. The

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term abstract applies to practically every other school, so that that does not make for any kind of unity here because this group has all been called abstract, and schools that are completely opposed to our way of painting are called abstract. It is important to find out exactly what you are doing if you know.

HOFMANN: I think we are all modern.

REINHARDT: I think the idea is to find that what you are doing is to know.

GRIPPE: I agree with Mr. Hofmann. I think that we presume no danger if we call ourselves modern artists instead of abstract, but for the sake of discussion would it be wise to clarify what is meant by abstract? I prefer modern artist. It would get us out of a lot of difficulties. If we say abstract that seems to imply, let's say, that it has an element of obscurity about it. It means something intangible - at least that is how I feel about it. Of course, if it isn't recognizable or explainable to the public, no matter how it looks to them, it is called abstract.

MOTHERWELL: Let me say one thing: the word "abstract" has a technical meaning. It means "to take <sup>form</sup> form". As a method it means selecting one element from a myriad of elements for the purpose of emphasis. Whitehead says, "The higher the degree of abstraction, the lower the degree of complexity." I am not talking about art, but the nature of abstracting. In mathematics we



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abstract numerical relations from all the relations in reality.

I suppose the word was first applied to a certain kind of art meaning very highly abstracted in Whitehead's sense in a low degree of complexity. The people who first said abstract meant so much was left out.

GRIPPE: The term is relative. The counterpart is abstraction.

MOTHERWELL: The other side of the coin is that it isn't possible to make a work of art that does not do abstracting. What is really meant is that the different relations are abstracted from one's impressions of the world. I think that is why the word "plastic" became used, to define the kind of relations in that abstract artists were identified.

GRIPPE: Why is it Picasso is not considered abstract?

MOTHERWELL: Because Picasso represents a higher degree of complexity and a lower degree of abstraction.

LIPFOLD: In 1776, when we were fighting our war, Bach wrote a letter to a schoolmate of his that he was looking for another job, and one of the most important sentences was that the people with whom he was working were complete idiots who understood nothing about music. I would feel that if we are going to learn something from each other, my point would be to dismiss our problems with relationship to the public and concern ourselves with the problems of creativity: How each function might be of

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interest to us - how each one begins his piece of work and how we proceed with it.

NEWMAN: I was going to try to formulate a question. In Gottlieb's raising the question of abstraction, I don't think we could just throw it away. It may be formulated into a question: Do we here really have a <sup>community</sup> commodity? What makes it a <sup>community</sup> commodity? -- and that seems to be the question that persists.

POUSETTE-DART: Are we here as artists, or in some relationship to an institution of any kind? Are we in fear or in any relationship to any institution? If so, I don't see any relationship to it.

MOTHERWELL: No, certainly not! Officially this meeting is being sponsored by Studio 35, which really means that we are sponsoring it ourselves, and we are a collection of individual artists.

POUSETTE-DART: Why did we want Mr. Barr here? I don't understand that.

LIPPOLD: He would do a better job of moderating.

MOTHERWELL: You may be right, but I should add that Mr. Barr would be present in his own capacity - as a scholar interested in modern art. The question was in finding a neutral moderator. Anyone who moderates - - - is really a symptom of fear.

POUSETTE-DART (interrupts): According to Mr. Barr's statements, he is incapable of being neutral.



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MOTHERWELL: These questions represent practical problems which have to be resolved in one way or another.

POUSETTE-DART: It should be something inspirational. We have to break away from inequality and ignorance. Museums persecute us and, therefore, I don't see why we should bring in Barr.

HARE: I want to say two or three things about what has been going on. First of all, in dealing with the question of Barr, it would have been good if he were here. He has had more experience in dealing with people, and aside from the practical point, it might do him some good to hear views that he doesn't hear. I don't see why we shouldn't feel lonely. An artist is always lonely. That is why he is an artist. An artist is a man who does not get along in society. You can be beyond it or ahead, but in any case you don't get along with it. The public labels you. I think our problem seems to be fundamentally psychological. We feel badly because we are not accepted by the public. We can't be accepted by the public. As soon as we are accepted, we no longer are - ? - . We go around thinking to ourselves, "This won't do. If we can only explain to the public, they will agree with us." They may agree in the course of years. They won't agree now. And I think this group activity, this gathering together, is really a symptom of fear. And possibly you could even connect that with the question of democracy in the sense that in this country there is a feeling

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that unless you have a large public you are a failure, and that is contradictory in relation to modern composers, artists, writers, etc. The public is always concerned with those people. It will always be opposed to those people. We should get the public interested, but I don't think it is necessary to worry about whether the public understands, and I don't think it is necessary to try to explain to them under the assumption that once you explain to them they agree. They shouldn't agree - they are opposed to the status quo.

ROSENBERG: I agree with what Mr. Hare says. The individual problem isn't a thing of the moment. The relationship of the artist to the museum and public is nothing. This is the first time since the old days that I can recall that a group of artists such as we have gotten together. Each one of us here, including myself, has a particular problem, interest or peeve, or something of that nature, and what interests me is that something as I develop as a painter grows and forms is not at the present time verbalized. I would like, as the letter said, to transcribe this in some written form to our art to the vast audience which lies in the hinterlands. I would like to find out what is bothering the other artists. We accept each other. I want to find out what is bothering us and what we can do about it.

REINHARDT: There are so many things that Hare brought up that



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I don't agree with. I think you should follow some kind of procedure and isolate the ideas and find out each artist's opinion about it. Barney's question is something everybody is fascinated by. Why can't we find out what the <sup>Community</sup> commodity is and what the differences are, and what each artist thinks of them?

MOTHERWELL: As I understand Reinhardt's question: The reason we are together is that this represents some kind of material <sup>Community</sup> commodity, and if that is true, what exactly constitutes the basis of the <sup>Community</sup> commodity?

STERNE: We should establish a common vocabulary. Abstract should mean all abstract, and modern should mean all modern - which we don't. We don't mean the same things with the same words.

HOFMANN: Why should it? Everyone should be as different as possible, and not give up our individuality, otherwise we wouldn't be artists. There is nothing that is common to all of us except our creative urge. Everyone feels he should express himself without consideration of schools or movements - abstract movement, surrealist movement, which means to me nothing. It just means one thing to me: To discover myself as well as I can. What we are speaking about seems to me we are speaking not from thought. It has no sense. But everyone of us has the urge to be creative in the sense of our time -- to which we belong may work out to a common thing. To formulate this would not be so simple.

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REINHARDT: If the problem is to discover ourselves, the museum has no place in it. Let's make that a topic then - ought you consider this creative activity? In what way does the museum have a relationship to this? If there are painters busy destroying their work, that is a completely different activity. If it is yours, then obviously a museum has nothing to do with it. There are a great deal of differences which I think we should find out about here. If we are doing the same thing, or have the same problems or the same fears - what are they?

POUSETTE-DART: The museum can bless any artist and make him successful in any moment. The museum can, at any moment, bless any one of us. The disaster <sup>in that it</sup> can cause disparity among us.

REINHARDT: Does that have anything to do with our discovering ourselves?

HARE: I can't see how the museums have anything to do with the artist. In general, the museums don't have very much taste.

POUSETTE-DART: The people turn to the museums.

LIPFOLD: What we are leading up to is why each person paints or sculpts. Why each person thinks he should paint. Do we do it to be a success, to make money, understand ourselves, or what is the purpose of it? To describe our own creative



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nature? Why do we use titles? Where do we pick such titles? Where do we begin? What do we have in common in this movement?

HARE: I think that is right. I suggest that we pick three or four questions and ask the same questions of everyone around the table, as a lot of people don't express their points of view we have the same ones talking all the time. Why not pick three or four questions and ask each person to give his thoughts about it?

FERBER: It seems to me that most of the questions revolve around meaning. The public, museums and the artists, themselves, are revolving around the question of meaning. That is, it needn't be meaning in any simple sense; but when Mr. Lippold asks for a description of the way in which and the why-for in connection with a piece of sculpture or painting, he is asking about the meaning, I think.

LIPPOLD: That isn't what I said.

FERBER: Well, then, I misunderstood you. But it seems to me if we attempt to talk about what in general the work of the group has in common, I think it has been mentioned that it is modern, advanced or not academic, we can rule out the whole problem of the museum, because we will then be telling the public in our own way what we mean and the museum is no longer a problem. So far as the community of artists goes, it seems to me the question would revolve around the question of difference -

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between us and other artists. In that way we have a feeling of community.

MOTHERWELL: I propose then that we go around the table - and since there are so many of us, to answer even one question <sup>would</sup> be a bother, so the questions should be relatively direct and simple. To take <sup>all</sup> the artists' relations - each person will talk for hours and we won't get anywhere. Several things have been suggested that are really concrete and <sup>that</sup> might even be an advantage - either a substantial one or a trivial one.

LIPPOLD: To continue with the suggestion I made before: I would like to suggest that the principal question of method might be broken down into this: first-- is it possible to say why we begin to create a work? Is it possible to say, if so, what is it? Second-- how do we begin the work; from an idea, an emotional point of view based on experience or form? Where does the suggestion come from? Third-- when is the work finished? How do we know that? Those are the problems that interest me very much as an artist. I can't see that my relationship to the museum or to the public is concerned with what I am making. I am interested in how other people work.

MOTHERWELL: Are people generally interested in these questions?

LIPPOLD: I think the first and the last are important.



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MOTHERWELL: I would propose that we start with the last question. One might arrive <sup>somewhere</sup> more quickly. "How do you know that a work is finished?" <sup>A reasonable</sup> The first one is indirect and vague.

HOFMANN: A very great Chinese painter once said the most difficult thing in a work of art is to know the moment when to stop.

MOTHERWELL: If we are in agreement with that, I would suggest that Mr. Lippold be the goat and begin, and then go around the table. If somebody does not want to say something - if he doesn't feel articulated at that moment, he should say he passes and we go on to the next person. The question then is, "HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A WORK IS FINISHED?"

LIPPOLD: I don't know if I can separate that without thinking about the first two questions. I would say the work seems finished to me when it concludes successfully the prophecy of its beginning and the problems involved in the working out of it. It may be that my work, by nature, almost determines its own conclusion, because it is not possible to do very much in making the changes once the thing is quite far along. The early suggestions of form take place for many at the stage of sketching or small model making - if you have to make a model - and when that phase seems to have come at an end and when I begin to work on the piece itself or a larger piece, that much seems to be a more or less technical resolution. I would like to say a little about the beginning of my method. I have never

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begun a piece from the point of view of pure form. I have never made a piece without its springing from the memory of some experience - an emotional experience generally. I almost, from the beginning, have a title which labels that experience, because I want it to act as a discipline in eliminating any extraneous ideas which might come into the picture. As we all know, the first line or brush stroke can lead to millions of possibilities, and for me to keep it clear is to keep a title in mind. They are of value to me at the beginning. When the experience has made itself so persistent in my unconscious or conscious - or both - I feel that I want to make something which reflects that experience, and I find my eyes constantly observing all things. At the same time that experience is in a memory, and it may be that it forms at the moment a line on someone's face or a crack on the floor or experience at a newsreel theatre might find itself. Then the problem of how to work out an experience which I have had presents itself, and I may begin with that idea, and I have to adapt it to my medium. I have to make it clear enough for others to see in that relationship. All of this takes place in the sketch stage - in the sketches I make of drawings. The drawings become more conclusive as I work. Generally when I work on a piece I make very few changes. The last piece I made the procedure was different because towards the end technical and expressive problems required my altering the piece several times. I re-did it three or four times. I felt the piece was finished when I felt it satisfied my original intent.



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I can't talk about conclusions without talking about intent. What I would be interested to know would be whether most of us have some pet procedure; some favorite method of work. On rare occasions I have seen a form which suggested some kind of relationship which called back a memory or experience. It is always an inter-play between the two, I find. It is never one thing or another. I would want to know if each person has a general procedure which he follows.

BROOKS: I think quite often I don't know when it is finished because I carry them a little too far. There is some peculiar balance which it is necessary to preserve all through a painting that keeps it fluid and moving. It can't be brought to a stop. I think you have to abandon it as it is still alive and moving, and so I can't consider a painting finished. I can't think of working with any clear intention on a painting because they often develop as I go through a painting. They quite often change in the middle of a painting. But the end is a very difficult thing, and something that is determined not by the form that is finished, but by the fact that I have worked on it and it satisfies a need of some kind.

KEES: It is usually finished when it defies me to do anything more with it. I start with drawings and find that the drawings are incapable of being turned into a painting, and I start to paint.

BAZIOTES: I consider my painting finished when my eye goes to a particular spot on the canvas. But if I put the picture away

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about thirty feet on the wall and the movements keep re-  
turning to me and the eye seems to be responding to some-  
thing living, then it is finished.

GOTTLIEB: I usually ask my wife! I think a more inter-  
esting question would be, "Why does anyone start a paint-  
ing instead of finishing it?"

FERBER: Adolph really jumped my gun! I would say that I  
don't think any piece of sculpture I make is really finished .  
Nor do I think it possible to call a piece a realization of  
any particular idea evolving from an emotion or event. There  
is a stream out of which these things pop like waves and  
fall back, to some extent. Therefore, they aren't really  
complete in themselves. I think the day of the masterpiece  
is over. When we look at our own work in ten or fifteen ex-  
amples we really understand what we are doing and what our  
friends are doing when we look at a group of their things.  
The sense of finishing a particular work is areally a mean-  
ingless question.

LIPPOLD: I would like to ask you if that happens in an  
individual piece - if that answers the question. It is the  
thing which exists in its own particular shape. The ques-  
tion is - how does that come about?

FERBER: For a sculptor to insist that a piece of sculpture  
rises out of his consciousness is almost ridiculous because  
sculpture is so three-dimensional and hard put. I don't



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I think that people require time and intimacy and aloneness think there is any difference between one piece and another in the development and fulfillment of the particular idea.

LASSOW: I would consider a work finished when I feel all the particulars participate in the scene and no part is less strong than the other.

TOMLIN: I think when Gottlieb comes in and says, "Don't touch it!" it's finished.

ERNST: My work consists of two separate stages of development, so that actually I consider a painting almost finished when I am half finished with it and when I have reached what seems to be the greatest measure of surprise. The rest of the action is disciplinary on my part. I exercise self-control and discipline myself. When I see that I am beginning to destroy the surprise - the basic element of that surprise - then it is time for me to stop, or just about.

POUSETTE-DART: For me it is finished when it is inevitable within itself, and yet when I can't figure it out, but I don't think I can explain anything about my painting just as I can't explain anything about a flower or a child. When is anything beautiful finished? I can't discuss things about my paintings. The true thing I am after goes on and on and I never can completely grasp it. So I really can't answer the question.

LIPTON: To answer that question off the bat is difficult.

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I think that people require time and intimacy and aloneness to think it out. I think at a time like this it is difficult. Offhand, I work from a lot of drawings. I used to work from clear) plain) models. The sculpture is finished when I decide on the selection of the drawing and the feeling of the drawing is arrived at in a very complex and subtle feeling of relation between the form, experience, ideas - everything in a very complex unity. It is a kind of energy I feel to be made. Actually, the working out of the thing becomes a further circularizing of material and space, and to intensify the feeling that is being projected. When the thing has been worked on it more or less works out on its own. There are certain feelings of balance of space and form to create a fourth dimensional feeling we didn't get in the drawing. In rough language that's about the size of it.

BIALA: I never know when it is finished. I only know there comes a time when I have to stop.

NEWMAN: I think the idea of a finished picture is a fiction. I think a man spends his whole life-time painting one picture or working on one piece of sculpture. I think in answer to the question of when or why does one stop a specific piece, I would say I think I have some general intention or desire; a desire which, as I work, becomes an intention, and the question of stopping is really a decision of moral considerations. To what extent are you intoxicated by the actual act so that



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you are beguiled by it? To what extent are you charmed by its inner life? And to what extent do you then really approach the intention or desire that is really outside of itself? It is a difficult thing to decide, but I think the decision is always made when the piece has something in it that you wanted. You seem to feel that you have found it and then try again. That is why I work three months on a painting and then lay off. That might explain it.

HARE: I was going to say very much about the same thing. It seems to me there are two problems: When you stop, and when it is finished. If you want to put it in more practical terms - I would say as I work on a piece of sculpture, I add to it as long as I feel it adds to that personality. That wouldn't mean the work was finished, since a work of art does not live by itself, I don't think; it only lives when it is <sup>looked</sup> ~~worked~~ at. It's existence takes form when it is looked) ~~worked~~ at. I refrain from finishing it. I paint myself out when I have done that, I either throw it away or

ROSENBERG: The problem to me has always been two-fold: When it stops, why does it stop? Most of my work has always been objective and emotional. Today I have written out that quality and retained the best parts of it. I have a trinity established: emotional, objective and intellectual. I am interested in nature. If I am in the city, I will start something when I know I can stop it. If I am in the fields or by the water, I will let nature dictate when it is started or finished. It is finished so that when it is left off there

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else to eliminate. I make constructions that are usually vertical, but when I start them they are all full of colors and are complicated in form. Every one of them goes and the color becomes uniform and finally they become completely <sup>white</sup> fine and simple. When there is nothing else to take away, it is finished. I am disgusted by simplicity. I work for a larger form and look for another work which goes through the same process of elimination.

GRIPPE: I think I can agree with some of the people at the back of the table. A work of art is never really finished. It is a feeling of trying to express the labyrinth in one's mind - their feelings or emotions, and to fulfill one's personality. Each work is trying to complete the expression of that personality. Whether it becomes more profound, I don't know; but I think a person is much more aware of himself in relation to the rest of the world. Each work tries to complete his personality. I have seen things I did recently and some fifteen years ago and I began to do them over and form new possibilities and new ways of completing them. When the works are finished I generally wait until they are on exhibition and published and then I can see them in a new light outside of my environment. Being of a very complex nature, of course I like to express my personality in a complex way, so that I don't limit myself. I feel since it is very important to express myself it must be done these various ways, and I might say in finishing that practically all I do that comes out of a real experience that I have had



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is like that. I very seldom do improvisations and most of my things come directly out of experience. I think a work of art never really is finished. Out of a man's experience he changes, adds to what he has done previously, looks at things he has done before - so that I never really know. I only hope that a work is finished. That is all I can say. I always find it isn't when I show it, but I can always add to it.

REINHARDT: It has always been quite a problem about finishing paintings. I feel very conscious of all the ways of finishing the painting. I also know there is a reason pretty much for the value placed on unfinished work. The problem is an important one and the disturbances arise when you have to treat the work as a finished and complete object, so that the only time I think I finish a painting is when there is a deadline. When there is a reason for it to be shown as an isolated object on exhibition there is a continual questioning of that, and the feeling of it being wrong about showing a thing as a kind of unfinished thing - if you are going to present it as an unfinished object, how do you finish it? It is a continual question.

LEWIS: Frankly, I don't like to verbalize how you would consider a visual thing finished. I have stopped I think when I have arrived at a quality of ~~mystery~~ <sup>mystery</sup> ~~mystery~~. I know it doesn't describe it, but it is the best word I can use at the moment.

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BOFMANN: To me a work is finished when all parts involved communicate by themselves so that they don't need me.

MOTHERWELL: I find the problem of finishing very complicated in one area, and that is the area that in one sense we work, or I work, as though there is no precedent for the picture and that's in the process of being made, and certainly for me one of the great difficulties is knowing whether I would regard the picture as being finished or not. I don't know how the picture is finished subjectively as there is no subjective criteria involved. It is difficult to say what approach in the adventure represents the true termination of it. I think this problem has been raised throughout in that a number of people tend to regard it as a cross-section, so to speak, of a general process going on, and the criteria for the picture being finished is when it represents that process. There is another notion which seems to be in the minority here that a picture is really an object that fulfills certain criteria and is finished when the object fulfills those criteria. In my case in the back of my mind I have criteria though I can hardly describe what they are. I also know that the painting process is multiple for me. Certain pictures are real adventures in that I don't know how I begin them. I lose sight of what I was beginning with. I grope for something that will re-orient me and some of my pictures have been painted over for as many as ten times, and I know when I think I have finished a picture that it is very apt to be the picture that really dies. When I really feel quite blank looking at it some months



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later I am satisfied much more. Some other times I paint for other reasons though one is always concerned with the finished object, and you feel very badly if the object isn't satisfactory. Nevertheless, certain times I paint for the sheer joy of painting, and simply take the question of stripes and make stripes. Many of my feelings are contradictory. I dislike a picture that feels too suave or too skillfully done, but on the contrary I also dislike a picture that looks too inept or imbecilic, or blundering - which we all do. And I notice in looking at the <sup>Carne</sup> ~~Garay~~ exhibition, which are supposed to be the ones closest to this group, in finishing a picture they do assume outside criteria to a much greater degree than we generally do. There is a real --2-- in that a picture is a real object - a beautifully made object. Though we, most of us, loathe something that is inept, we are certainly groping for something that is no so certain.. It is almost as though the pictures were people, and at other times your impressions were extremely accurate.

HOFMANN: It seems to me all the time it is heritage. It would seem that the difference between the/young French painters as opposed to the young American painters is this: French pictures have a cultural heritage. The American painter of today approaches things without having a basis for it. The French approach things on the basis of cultural heritage - that one feels in all his work. It is more in working toward a refinement and quality than

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working toward newer experiences and painting out of this experience what may finally become tradition. The French have it much easier than the American painter. They have it in the beginning.

MOTHERWELL: You have the feeling in general the French pictures always have a sense of being made in relation to the American heritage.

HOFFMANN: The French pictures have a consciousness toward cultural refinement. The American painters are more searching. French art is not on the decline, but rather the opposite. The French have influenced the Americans, but the Americans are also influencing the French, and out of this something beautiful can come.

DE Kooning: I am glad you brought this point about. It seems to me that you are (not?) really interested in America. To me the work of art really is an object. Mr. Hofmann picked that up and I feel we have come to a certain point of interest. I am very much interested in that. It seems to me that in Europe every time something new needed to be done it was out of culture. The American never needed to be an iconoclast. Everything is very serious here. The only difference I see really is - if there is any difference at all between us - the same as Mr. Hofmann said. It is almost a striving to come to the same point they did without this idea of being iconoclasts, and recognize yourself as being an elegant object maker.



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LIPFOLD: Perhaps we could put that in the form of a question - it is the crux of everything we have said so far. There are  
There is a difference here. /Those who feel that the things which they make are simply moments of continuity and, therefore, in themselves not masterpieces - are not objects for their own sakes but moments in continuity. Is there an irreconcilability in making an object of itself which, at the same time, reflects continuity???? This so far seems to be incompatible. There were three-fourths of the people here who said a piece rises out of continuity and that ultimately rises again. I would like to know whether it is possible to make an object which in itself is a beautiful resolution.

STERNE: It means you decided to know exactly what is beautiful. Beauty can't be pursued directly. You can pursue understanding. If you think you make a finished object you are concerned with how beautiful it will look. You have to express yourself and understand and then you might reach beauty.

GOTTlieb: I want to elaborate on Hedde's and deKooning's remarks. It seems to me that there is a general assumption that European - specifically French - painters have a heritage which enables them to have the benefits of a tradition which they follow, and therefore they can produce a certain type of painting. It seems to me that in the last fifty years the whole meaning of painting has been made international. But the point I want to make is that I think Americans share that heritage just as much, and that if they

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deviate from the tradition it is just as difficult for an American to do it as for a Frenchman. I think it is a mistake to assume that we are innocents who, just because we have no background of culture, are doing something which is new or unique, and, therefore, we are sort of innocents who stumble on something which is new. I think what Motherwell described in the process of confronting his own painting is the whole problem of knowing what the tradition is and being willing to reject it in part. The tradition is something which is handed down to us.

DE KOONING: I agree with Gottlieb that it is part of the whole world now. It is an international thing, but it also seems the point was brought up that the French artists have some touch in making an object that Motherwell brought up. I agree with him about that. When I see others' paintings they don't look so much different. They have a particular thing that makes them look like a finished painting. They have a touch which I am glad not to have. Actually, I don't see any difference otherwise between French and American art.

BAZIOTES: We are talking about young painters. We are getting mixed up with the French tradition. We were talking about the necessity to finish a thing and then say American painters finish a thing that looks unfinished and the French, they finish it. If you look at Picasso, it has less of an unfinished look to it than others. I have seen Matissees that



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were more unfinished and yet more finished than any American painter. Matisse was obviously in a terrific emotion at the time, and it was more unfinished than finished.

DE KOONING: I don't mean it that way. I think this idea of picking up a finished painting . . . (trails off). I don't mean that because I have no idea really what kind of experience Mondrian\* has in making a painting. It is just as possible it is as unfinished - you know what I mean. I am a little bit surprised that you talk in terms of the actual formal ways of making a painting. There is an almost fluent expression of painting. I never thought about it in terms of its being finished or not. This terminology I am almost surprised about.

\* \* \*

\* (note: He speaks of Mondrian while Baziotis speaks of Matisse. Shouldn't they be the same?)

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# SATURDAY'S DISCUSSION

April 22, 1950

## Artists Present:

Baziotes	Grippe	Motherwell
Biala	Hare	Newman
Bourgeois	Hofmann	Pousette-Dart
Brooks	Kees	Reinhardt
deKooning	Lassow	Rosenborg
Ernst	Lewis	Smith
Ferber	Lippold	Sterne
Gottlieb	Lipton	Tomlin

## Moderators:

Alfred Barr  
Richard Lippold  
Robert Motherwell



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apples or bread in the basket the way they see things they  
 do, because that seems again a statement of attitude. So  
MOTHERWELL: Many people felt the question of the title  
 really interested people as a concrete lever by which to  
 get hold of more general things. If there were any crit-  
 icisms of the session yesterday it was inevitable - the  
 breaking of the ice, etc. Perhaps the conversation at  
 the question has been raised, we can go into it.  
 moments tended to be so general that any one who is not  
 an artist could have been making those remarks. It so  
 happens that I have been concerned for several months with  
 a suggestion brought up and I want to talk about it, since  
 other people also suggested they were generally interested  
 in the question. I would like to hear other people speak,  
 too, and perhaps Hedde herself would phrase the question  
 in relation to her own work. Mr. Barr also has a number of  
 questions which he discussed with Mr. Lippold and me, and  
 we would like to go into those as well as any other ques-  
 tions brought up by anybody. So, Hedde, would you ask again  
 your question?

STERNE: I find every time a painter has the problem of the  
 title, because the title seems to classify him by the way he  
 picks it up. If you make a long poetic title, you are imme-  
 diately classified in one way or another. If you put a  
 number, you are classified as non-objective. Whatever you  
 do, it would seem a statement of attitude. You can't see

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apples or bread in the basket the way they see things they do, because that means again a statement of attitude. So if you refrain, or if you don't, somehow or other you create a misunderstanding - that is all. I am just puzzled. I have nothing to say about it.

MOTHERWELL: Since time is pressing, so to speak, and since the question has been raised, we can go into it.

REINHARDT: I think the title does have some meaning, otherwise there is nothing to it. I think a great deal of question about it is excused generally simply as a matter of identification for each particular picture. But a number does that just as well. If a title does not mean anything, why label the picture or put a title on it?

BROOKS: Well I disagree. To me a title is nothing but identification. I have a very hard time to find a title and it is always inadequate. I think when titles are very suggestive, they are kind of a fraud, because I believe they throw the spectator away from the picture rather than into it. I think we are concerned about some kind of painting, but numbers are inadequate.

STERNE: I wanted some help. I have always been doing it wrong because I did find they were always creating a misunderstanding again and again. The artists make some sort of



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compromise because there is a necessity for a title. There is a choice out of many wrongs. They are really not satisfied. It is traditional.

GOTTLIEB: I think the point Miss Sterne raised is very true, and I also think it is inevitable. That is, whenever an artist puts a title on a painting, some interpretation about his attitude will be made from the nature of the title. It seems obvious that titles are necessary when everybody uses them - whether verbal or numbers; because for purposes of exhibition, identification and the benefit of the critics there must be some way of referring to a picture, and it seems to me that the artist, in making up titles for his picture, must decide what his attitude is and he feels that a number expresses a point of view. You generally find that artists will use numbers; and, on the other hand, if there is some sort of an idea that it be verbalized, I think artists prefer to have a verbal title when it is possible. But I don't see why Miss Sterne should feel that is something that is disagreeable. I think each of us has to solve it personally.

LIPPOLD: The problem is insolvable because of the character of art itself. There are essentially two aspects: one, the object and two, the fountainhead. If the artist leans toward the experience of the fountainhead, he leans toward - - ? - - ,

However, the point is that titles are necessary.

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and it largely depends upon the ability and the choice of the artists . In a sense the selection is arbitrary and the problem is insolvable in a sense.

BARR: Most people seem to think that titles are a kind of necessity. Does anyone think that titles have real usefulness in supplementing the object?

ROSENBERG: On the question of titles: it bothered me for a long time and I don't really understand the specific question. The title is always arbitrary because I think we deal with unseen audiences and the reason for a title is because any Tom, Dick and Harry has to have some link, and, therefore, it is necessary to identify a picture by a title. Once I had a show where I had numbers from one to twenty, and when it came to a question of reviewing, the critics - being the people who convey to the unseen audience a reaction to the individual work of art - found that number six was better than four, etc. If you have a number on a picture, it would appear that you become identified as non-objective. Therefore, there are two reasons why I put a title on a picture: First, is to give a conveyance of an idea which I am trying to express to an onlooker, (and I always hope that the onlooker will make up his own title!) and second, I found by experience that putting a number on a picture would identify me with surrealists - and I don't happen to be one. However, the point is that titles are necessary.



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GRIPPE: May I answer the question in two or three different ways? I would say that, first of all, the title is a very, very necessary key to the kind of expression - the kind of symbolism - of the idea that is behind the work; and I think it is very, very important that you can't feel as an artist that you can't kid anyone - least of all ourselves. The public has to know. I think we are all working in a subjective approach. Because we feel the existing kind of psychology in the world today we have to go on to a more subjective approach. Therefore, I think it becomes difficult to title works. I think it is very important there are keys. I think another factor is fear - I think Miss Sterne indicates fear. We feel in some way someone is going to criticize, and that is what we said yesterday - this need to come together to build up this unity between us so that this dilemma would be worked out. I think we must get away from this fear of titling works. If we feel we want to title them with numbers or without numbers, that is not the question. We ought just to be honest with ourselves as well as others.

POUSETTE-DART: I think if we could agree on numbers it would be a tremendous thing. I think that in music they don't have this dilemma. It seems to me far superior, and it would force people to just look at the object and to try to find his own experience, and I think that titling is a part of the hangover of the Greek prejudice, or whatever you want to call it.

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ERNST: First of all, I would object to doing any such thing as that - such as numbering a picture. I have a personal reason for that. At the risk of sounding somewhat romantic, I don't particularly care what people classify me as, or whether people understand the title or not. So far as the painting, itself, is concerned, it is all mind and I have a certain affinity to it. I feel that I have worked on it long enough and somehow it suggests something to me, or something may pop into my head - so I give it that title. As a matter of fact, I am firmly convinced that that kind of reaction - a painting to a painter, and vice versa - has some affinity. I mean there is some significance. I don't go around looking for a simple painting, but there is an almost automatic reaction on my part. I am really not worried about this problem at all. I find numbers very impersonal.

SMITH: I think titles are a positive means of identification. I think it would be the same as a man who makes a work of art. I never objected to any work of art because of its title. The only people who have objected were critics because they did not like the work and were free to say that. But the titles have never thrown me off on good art or anything, whereas no matter what it is or how it was done it was an interpretation of the man who made the work.

REINHARDT: The question of abandoning titles arose, I am sure, because of esthetic reasons. Even the titles like "still life"



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and "landscape" do not give you anything about the picture. If you do have a reference or association of some kind, I think the artist is apt to put a title in there somewhere. I think this is why titles are not used by a great many painters - because they don't have anything to do with the painting itself.

HOFMANN: I think that it depends upon the type of work if the title is justified or not. Quite simply there are works which would permit to choose on the basis of the inherent quality of the work. There are two possibilities all the time - to give a title or to give a number.

BARR: There are some painters that attach a great deal of importance to titles.

ROSENBERG: Perhaps I might repeat myself, but I always consider when a picture is finished, 25% of the picture to the artist is clarified. If art is from a subjective painter, it would follow that he would subjectively title the picture. Therefore, as the word was used yesterday in connection with international painters, objective painting must have an object. Therefore, art being visual as far as painting is concerned, we would have to deal with an unseen audience like a composer.

MOTHERWELL: I think Hedde is asking a real question. What

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and when people questioned me about it, they always called it she is really saying is that she finds the problem a real one in the sense that she finds the titles everyone is using to be inadequate in relation to what the content of the picture actually is, and that is why it bothers her; *whether* whether it is to merely number them or, conversely, to give a title which has to convey the content of the picture. In that sense, I think she is dealing with a real problem, which is what we are talking about, and that is - what is the content of our work? What are we really doing? Along with everyone else I have formed a hypothetical solution for myself which I have not yet accepted, but which I would really like to explain in very concrete terms - how it came to me, the elements involved, etc. I would say the original premise is that I can't name what the real content of the picture is - that was my first line of reasoning. *None* All of us, to my taste, have the gift for really naming. I don't mean by that the subjects are right --- but the titles are *right* *not* in perfect accord with the contents of that painting. But I find I don't have that gift, and naming the picture itself is impossible for me. Why should I name them at all? There are practical things involved - particularly the things that have been raised from time to time, such as the question of identification, and I can give you three examples. One picture that I had made was shown at the Whitney this year,



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and when people questioned me about it, they always called it the "Whitney picture". It has no title, and the fact that it was exhibited at the Whitney is the least interesting thing about it. I also had a picture shown somewhere in the Middle West at the Chicago Art Institute. They asked what is it called, and I said "Composition". It was made about five years ago and I can't remember <sup>it</sup> because there were about ten of them at the time. I simply don't know what picture is going to be shown. If somebody is going to say ~~etc. etc.~~ <sup>something</sup> about a picture, I don't know what <sup>one</sup> he is talking about. So it is in two situations. There is a third situation in which -- and last year was a rotten time for me in many respects -- I made a series of pictures in Black and White which I think had a somber quality. At that time I happened to be reading an English translation of some <sup>Spanish</sup> poems and one is "From the Death of a Bull Fighter" and one of the lines <sup>is,</sup> ~~was that~~ it was 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon," and the series of pictures had to do with a sense of a dirge or something to do with death; so I called one of the pictures "5:00 o'clock in the Afternoon", and the other day I was talking to someone who asked, "Whatever happened to that cocktail picture of yours?" I couldn't think what he meant. I realized then he must have been talking about "5:00 o'clock in the Afternoon". So I thought to myself -- now I am in a position where the pictures are identified in the first case as a Whitney picture by a relation that is ex-

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sentially unimportant; in the second case by <sup>h</sup> composition-  
 a picture where I can't recall what it is. If it is a number,  
 such as sixteen, it is the same thing. I can't remember those  
 numbers all the time. In the third instance, the case of  
 "5:00 O'Clock in the Afternoon" where I made an effort to in-  
 directly convey the idea that this picture was a ~~eulogy~~ *elegy*.  
 There is too much in the world of possibilities. And, by  
 chance, somewhere I was reading something which has to do with  
 horse racing - which I am not at all interested in - and I  
 was looking at the names of horses that had run in such and  
 such a race. It really struck me as being extraordinarily  
 beautiful, and I thought to myself, "Why don't I name the  
 pictures after race horses?" -- not in the sense that they  
 convey the ~~thought~~ <sup>felt</sup> contents - whatever it is - but in the  
 sense that I have the same feeling with regard to my work.  
 Which is to say in one sense I love such and such a picture  
 the way somebody loves a horse - whether it's Sea Biscuit,  
 Man O' War, Lord Jeffries or Twenty Grand - or whatever it  
 is. It has an association with the kind of thing a person  
 is really interested in. I went to Brentano's to look for a  
 book that had the names of race horses and I discovered that  
 the only book they had cost \$50, and thought I would name the  
 pictures one by one. However, I didn't buy it, and the only  
 thing I could do was to buy a World's Almanac which has the  
 names of horses that have won. I thought it really is too  
 much to name these after horses who have won the English



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Derby, etc., so for the present I have abandoned the whole notion. Excuse me for speaking so long on this subject, but I do think that I am saying one thing that is interesting - which is that the problem is real and by the same token this conference is real in that the question is how to name what as yet has been un-named, and whether there is an arbitrary device; and whether one makes the decision such as naming them after race horses or by numbers it is really not because we fear ability about the pictures, it is because we don't know exactly how to enter into the realm.

BARR: I would like to get some information on this. Would you raise your hands if you name your pictures and sculptures?

( raised their hands.)

How many people number their pictures?

( three people raised their hands.)

How many don't title their pictures at all?

( raised their hands.)

HARE: I don't see this problem of titling a picture. It seems to me if you worry about titling, it is the same as worrying about how to make it. Both are creative acts, unless it adds to the work and that kind hasn't been used very much. It is used by surrealists and by Beauchamp. I do not agree with Mr. Motherwell that you name them after race horses. It all pictures are full of association. I don't agree with Rain-

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is fun as a game, but since it is an objective thing and used by the public... (here he quoted the bull-fighting session which Motherwell spoke about earlier - couldn't get it.) That I can't understand. I don't think it is very good because that is public property. I think the only thing the title of the picture can do is note the content of the work. If you could you would be a poet and not a painter. I think numbers are unsatisfactory, but it is not my problem.

BAZIOTES: I think David is very right about that. I think a good title is "The Palace at 4:00 A.M." It is long and still does not take away from the sculpture. It is also the subject. I admit to sheer laziness about the question of titling. The subject came up yesterday in our discussion and that was whereas certain people start with a recollection or an experience and paint that experience, to some of us the act of doing it becomes the experience; so that we are not quite clear why we are engaged on a particular work. And because we are more interested in plastic matters than we are in a matter of words, one can begin a picture and carry it through and stop it and do nothing about the title at all. But when I think about what I would do, I begin studying my pictures and they would have great meaning; they become quite rich and clear to me, and then I go beyond it and I simply can't go through eighteen canvasses and think up titles for them. So I let the thing slide. To me all pictures are full of association. I don't agree with Rein-



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hardt in his reason for not giving such titles to pictures. I quite agree with Mr. Rosenberg in feeling that we owe responsibility to attach a handle, and I can't agree with Hare because one person finds a cocktail party when one finds death-- it seems to me the public will also misunderstand the picture. And if you concern yourself with misunderstanding, one is just as possible as the other.

HARE: I did not quite see your position. If you would call the picture " - - - ? - - - " you wouldn't have gotten into any trouble.

REINHARDT: I think Hoffmann is right. It depends on the title of the work. The titles are very important in surrealist work. The emphasis is upon a painting experience and not on a sexual experience; if you are not involved in anything else but since you are a human being, it is all right to single out some other experience, but if you don't want it it is certainly valid not to call it anything else. The only time I would object to a title is when it is false or tricky, or is something extra that the painting does not have. For example, if you call a gay picture a dirge I think somebody is kidding someone.

STERNE: When I started this thing I said that I - - - us here for the very reason that we are neither abstract nor surrealist. As we are neither, that is why I don't think any real personal subjective question can be discussed here, and the only reason I asked it is that I think in general I felt

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guilty of a sense to admit to that. I don't think anybody really has to say exactly how I feel about paintings. It seems too intimate to give it a correct title. If they communicate anything, I want to say the painting should do it alone and not depend upon a title.

BARR: Do you take "D." seriously?

STERNE: Yes, certainly I do.

BARR: Do you think it is possible to enrich the painting by words?

STERNE: Well it seems to me slightly articulate.

DE KOONING: I think that if an artist can always title his pictures that means he is not always very clear. Art does not have to be so clear. It would be very good for an artist if he were very - - - about what he wanted to do.

LASSOW: I found that one time I was tempted to use numbers and it became very boring. Nowadays, I usually take a combination of words that have no meaning in itself. What I am interested in is the sound of the words in relation to each other, and I usually try to make it in some way fit the work of art. It is hard to explain how I can do it. For instance, one piece I called, "Charms of Four" The title, so far as I can see, has no meaning. Yet it happened to four phases in the work. Again I try to keep it as non-committal as possible



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and yet the sound is very important. It is almost like a separate artist entitling the work.

MOTHERWELL: I merely want to say: unless somebody feels he really wants to add, we might go on.

FERBER: What we all have been saying is the simple fact that the designation of a painting or a piece of sculpture has become more important as a problem than it has before. Actually, since recognized iconoclasm is no longer present in our work as it has been in the work of the past, our attitude is challenged on that score. In other words, an Assumption or Crucifixion needed no title and the subject matter of iconoclasm was known to a large audience - which is no longer true. Since I feel strongly about this question of attitude, and since I think I made the point yesterday that this stream of creative consciousness (automatically?) out of which we work and from which the pieces rise as manifestations of this, I feel that this creative consciousness of the individual as an artist can be related to other fields of creative endeavor. Poetry and literature are often very rich sources of titles. Novelists often do this on the title page where a phrase or quotation or snatch from a poem somehow represents a basic idea in a book. To designate a work merely relates you with your fellow beings insofar as you feel close to them in a creative way. I think that numbering pieces is really begging the question.

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Because numbering the piece is an admission or a statement or a manifesto that this is pure painting or sculpture - that it stands by itself without relation to any other discipline.

It seems to me that since we are - most of us - leaders(?) and masons (?) in addition to being plastic artists, that we shouldn't cut ourselves off from this great rich world.

BARR: I don't know how much longer this discussion of titling works will go on or how valuable this is. There are a good many interesting implications. Do you want to go on along with this? I don't know whether I am supposed to do this or not.

It seems to me there are three levers of titles: (1) Simply a matter of convenience. (2) Questions of titles as explanations or as a kind of finger point and which did not work particularly well. (3) There is the surrealist title in which the words are a positive part of the work of art, and there is a question and conflict set up between the words and the picture. It is the second of those that I would like to hear some conversation about very much. The question of specific emotion in the work of art. The general public is very much interested in that factor of the work. How did the artist feel when he did the thing? Was it painful? Was it a matter of love, or fear, or what not? Very often he gets no guidance at all from looking at the picture. That's where the factor of titles comes in. At the same time the title may distort the picture a great deal. But to return to the process of painting. How important



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is (whoever wants to answer) the expressed emotion in the sense that you describe pleasure, grief or fear in making your work?

POUSETTE-DART: I believe that a natural work of art should not only be not titled, but I think it should not be signed. I think it is very important. I think modern art compels people to look at an object or work and to try to get people to get their own experience out of that work. I think that the great thing about modern art is that it must stand on its own as a thing in itself.

NEWMAN: I think it would be very well if we could title pictures by identifying the subject matter so that the audience could be helped. I don't think it is really traditional to title things. I think the question of titles is purely a social phenomenon. The story is more or less the same so that you identify them. I think the implication has one of two possibilities: (1) We are not smart enough to identify the subject matter, or (2) The language is so bankrupt that we can't use it. I think both are wrong. I think the possibility of finding language still exists, and I think we are smart enough and have arrived at a point where in the last forty years making a title is the <sup>last</sup> <sub>least</sub> social act. I don't think it is necessary or an important tradition. There are other arts where those things don't exist. Perhaps we are

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arriving at a new state of painting where the thing has to be seen for itself. I feel our inability to make a title is a - - - - rather than a menace. suddenly afraid and wanted to fill a

LIPPOLD: I think we are getting away from the question - a description of the subject of the picture - especially Mr. Barr's question in relation to an emotional experience we might have felt.

BARR: I don't want to have the discussion kept on a question of that sort, but I was interested really not in the question of title, but as to whether emotions such as grief or joy or pleasure or fear - how important that is consciously in the very production of the works of art.

GRIPPE: It seems to me that the title of a work of art is something that is an appendage to the work itself. I think the title becomes much simpler I should say if the work itself is clear to the person. I think if you have an idea that idea is part of the title, or rather the significance of the work of art. I don't consciously stand around to think of a title. I think of the title around the idea. When I have the idea it becomes richer and more personal when I know the idea so that I can add a great deal more and the work itself becomes simpler because I have the idea.

BARR: Is the work of art an act of confidence or pleasure?



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BOURGEOIS: I try to analyze the reason why an artist gets up and takes a brush and a knife - why does he do it? I felt it was either because he was suddenly afraid and wanted to fill a void. He is afraid of being depressed and runs away from it. That was one alternative. The other one was to record a state of pleasure or confidence, which is contrary to that feeling of void or fear. My choice is made in my case, but I am not especially interested in talking about my own case.

BROOKS: It seems to me that it is impossible generally to clarify the emotions that go into painting. We can't get away from the grief or joy we put into a painting, and it is a very complex thing and in some cases a very ambiguous thing. I think we are in some cases identifying ourselves through our painting and that means everything we are and a great many things we would like to be. But I would like to say I don't agree with Bill in that an artist should be able to title his picture if he is clear about his painting because that kind isn't necessarily the same kind of clarity.

DE KOONING: The other thing about the picture most of the time if you are an artist is to make a picture work whether you are happy or not. If I want to express an emotion of grief, then I am bound by that. And I think that now we feel in this world things change so rapidly that we feel very - - - .

BARR: Could you raise your hands to this question: "How many

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people name their works of art after they are completed?

(13 raised hands to this question.)

How many people name their works when they are half-way through?

(6 raised their hands to this.)

How many people have their work named before they start on it?

(1 person responded.)

(note: Mr. Barr said above was just a rough count of hands.)

LIPPOLD: I seem to be the only one here, so far as I have been able to discover who titles work as I described yesterday, in describing how I finished the work because of intent. With my meager knowledge of history of art - although this is unrelated to my method of operation - it has seemed to me that the whole business of title or what to make is a phenomenon peculiar to our times. I see it also as a particular difficulty where the artist was simply a craftsman. Therefore, the job was a great deal easier, it seems to me, in being artists in any period but our own. The idea of what to paint is already pre-determined. I am talking of such cultures as oriental and the middle ages - in which a sculptor was asked to carve a king or queen. It wasn't his job to complain because he didn't want to make a king or queen. And there <sup>were</sup> <sub>are</sub> people like that, too. I believe that in our own time the discipline that is enforced upon our work has to come from ourselves. The only basis I know of on which I can begin is the basis of simple human relationships, because that is the only thing I understand. I don't understand



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what is happening in the political world. And the various beliefs - religions which exist today - I don't know what is true or false. Therefore, I must go back to simple human relationships, and I believe I must function as a craftsman, and I find myself deeply in love with the materials which I have selected. I find myself deeply interested in human relationships because they are the only real experiences which I know. Therefore, as I described yesterday, I must begin with a particular human experience which I feel I wish to realize, and when that realization finds some compatible form, I begin to find a form which relates to that particular thing, and the title for me exists at the beginning and all through the piece, and it keeps me clearly on the road, I think believe, to the conclusion of the work. Now it may be when my work has finished, it doesn't have the clarity I wanted - in the same sense that the painting of a sunset may, to some, be tragedy or beauty. On the other hand, the only thing I am interested in resolving is that intent with which I begin because I feel in our time there is very little else with which to begin. To grope through a series of accidents is not the function of the artist. Now we have to force ourselves.

BAZIOTES: Mr. Lippold's question, as I understand it, is that he feels that the beginning has something about it that does not seem quite logical to artists of the past. I mean we apparently begin in a different way. Is that we mean Mr. Lippold?

LIPPOLD: Yes.

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BAZIOTES: I think the reason we begin in a different way is because we are very interested in self-expression and self-expression at this particular time has gotten to this particular point - a point where the artist feels much like a gambler. His question is not - am I going to paint a work of art. It is like a gambler. He does something on the canvas and takes a chance on the hope that something important will be revealed.

SMITH: I just want to vote ninety odd percent against Mr. Lippold's statement. I am in disagreement with him.

REINHARDT: I would like to ask a question about the exact involvement of a work of art. I understand very much what Ferber said - that a work of art does not stand by itself, and I think in recent times it has been evident to some extent. The work has been detached, aloof and abstract, and if there is love or grief of some kind, well I don't understand the love of anything except the love of painting itself. If there is a love of landscape I think that is all right, and if there is an agony, I don't know exactly what kind of agony it all is. I am sure the personal agony would not enter into the agony of painting. If this is an isolated phenomenon, I would like to get the people's response to that. If this is a professional attitude, I would like to know that from the artist. I would also like to know, for example, what kind of professional attitude we do take - whether we should or shouldn't belong to Equity, for example.

BARR: I would like to ask for two more votes about this - unless you object to this - I would say many people don't have a



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chance to speak at all. I would like a show of hands on this question: Is there anyone here who works for himself alone - that is, purely for his own satisfaction - for himself as the sole judge? Is the artist his own audience? Do you really want to convince others that if the world were plastically this way we would be living in a better world - in a world of more delight?

I think this question would have to be answered by an explanation. DE KOONING: I feel it isn't so much the act of being obliged to someone or to society, but rather one of convenience and conviction. And so I disagree with Mr. Lippold, and I think we should take the same position as the artist would it seems in the middle ages. Today we are on our own, and I think this question wasn't fair, and I think whatever happens every man works for himself, and he does it on the basis of convincing himself. I force my attitude upon this world, and I have this right - particularly in this country - and I think it is wonderful, and if it does not come over, it is all right, too, if it doesn't work out. I don't see any reason why we should go and look into past history and find a place or try to take a similar position, because there is no end to it.

BIALA: I just want to say this: I think this question can't be answered, and I was a wrong question to ask. I don't think a work of art is finished until it has found its audience.

MOTHERWELL: The question was: Who here would regard a work of art being completed if it has not and will not reach an audience? Don't limit it to has not.

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LASSOW: Only a year or so after I have done it, do I realize what I have done.

MOTHERWELL: Is the artist his own audience? Do you really want to convince others that if the world were plastically this way we would be living in a better world - in a world of more delight? I think <sup>the</sup> ~~any~~ question would have to be answered by an explanation either way. You can't just have a show of hands.

HARE: I think it is a very good question, but I think it is much more complicated, and I don't see how it is possible to phrase a question to be answered yes or no. Naturally you want to persuade the rest of society that your idea is better and is going to be a utopia. I feel as far as I am concerned to say you work without an audience can't be answered yes or no. I would work whether I had an audience or not.

ROSENBERG: I think roughly it was the need to paint, and you can't answer a question like that because we are dealing with intangibles, and we all have different reasons. But from my own point of view, the reason a work of art is created and we make a picture is because we all have something to do, and as we develop pictures have their natural conclusion. Now about titling, I did want to say something about titles. I had an experience which was recent. I was chosen for a show and I had two pictures taken by a place in Chicago in December. It so happened that one was shown. There was no title on it



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actually, but the picture was signed. However, I had failed to title it. Well the woman there said we would have to have a title on it. She said, "Rosenberg, where did this particular series come from? What is the title of it?" I said I was sorry but it was one of a series made in 1949. It's a nature piece, I said - that's a beautiful word. To go further, she said, "You can't call all your pictures 'Nature' ". So I said, "Let's call it 'Delineation From Nature No. 1' ". I suppose I'm lucky in a way. The real question is - why do we need to have a title? I think painting is a therapeutic thing. Titles are only necessary from a subjective point of view; but being a visual art we have to do something about it.

BARR: I would like to sound this: what I mean is nothing

BARR: Is the therapy for your alone, or for other people who look at it? It can find one other person in the world. But a

ROSENBERG: No, I'm not that vain. The point is that anybody could paint the picture I paint instead of being a truck driver.

I'm not an artist from the esthetic point of view. I'm just a practitioner with a manual point of thinking.

GRIPPE: I heard a discussion last year. I met this person in Provincetown - some writer who writes for the Associated Press. I think some of the people here know him. Now his idea - with which I don't agree - has been that almost all the modern artists work from a subjective approach, and that they are working for themselves. They are not working for a public or an

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audience. In this day and age many of the arts are working for themselves; to really express themselves. I would like to have some conversation on that. whole question. Paintings

ROSENBERG: How many people consider themselves craftsmen or professional? How much has the relationship to the social world?

BROOKS: I think the reason the question is ambiguous is because when we paint pictures we assume other people feel the way we do. We do it for a purpose, but very naturally we are doing it for both. certain community. You are already

BIALA: I would like to amend this: what I mean is nothing exists by itself. It only exists in relation to something else; when it can find one other person in the world. But a person can feel what you put into it, because it can't exist by itself. It already is an expression in itself. and wor-

BARR: It is perfectly conceivable, isn't it, that a work of art . . . . ?

POUSETTE-DART: Is prayer a creative act? I would say that it depends upon the prayer itself, but there is no other person necessarily involved. I agree God is everything, but he isn't a person. A painter can paint for the satisfaction of his soul, but he can mean it for everyone. trying to get at? That

I would like to know.

NEWMAN: I would like to go back to Mr. Lippold's question --



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are we involved in self-expression or in the world? It seems  
DE KOONING: There was the case of paintings which were  
found in France just lately. Were they works of art before  
we discovered them? This is the whole question. Paintings  
and such that are in dark rooms where nobody looks at them -  
are they works of art? Or is it for the beholder? The be-  
holder can be an artist, too.

MOTHERWELL: What he is really asking: is there anyone  
here who is content to paint only for himself?

DE KOONING: I think my question is relevant to that. You  
work for yourself in a certain community. You are already  
in the world. When I am making a painting, I am doing it  
without any obligation to the world. I am sure those people  
who say yes don't really mean to say yes that way.

STERNE: I want to first answer Mr. Lippold, who talked  
about the Renaissance. We are living in a puzzled and wor-  
ried world, and if we are to be compared to anything, it is  
to be to people who attempt some kind of . . . ? . . . . But  
certainly not of craft. Any artist is essentially a crafts-  
man, or else he would not have picked up this form of self-  
expression. If you picked up this thing you would do it to  
the best of your ability. You take it for granted. It  
shouldn't even be talked about. Why guides you, what are  
you trying to convey, and what are you trying to get at? That  
I would like to know.

NEWMAN: I would like to go back to Mr. Lippold's question --

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are we involved in self-expression or in the world? It seems you cannot be involved in the world if you are a craftsman. If you are involved in the world, you aren't an artist. By naming the type of a picture specifically this means involvement in society. The fault there is that you cannot be specific about your intention. We have very definite intentions that involve a desire to express ourselves because we are in the world. We are in the process of making the world, to a certain extent, in our own image. This removes us from the craft level, otherwise we are just workmen.

DE KOONING: This difficulty of titling or not titling a picture - we ought to have more faith in the world. If you really express within the world, those things eventually will turn out more or less pretty good. I know what Barney means but it is some kind of feeling that you want to make your place in the world. I would like to bring into this discussion, if possible, the artists as a being as a man, and not

NEWMAN: About specifying - if you specify your emotions - - whether they are agony or fear, etc. -- I believe it is bad manners to actually say I was feeling bad.

DE KOONING: I think there are two different sets of experiences or emotions. I feel certain parts you ought to leave up to the world.

BARBOT: A psychologist recently asked some employees what did they feel they lacked most of all in their lives in the



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NEWMAN: I think we start from a subject of attitude, which, in the process of our endeavor, becomes related to the world, and if somebody sees the picture and is moved, he will try to live a life which is prophetic (?) to the picture. It is all imagination.

FERBER: I want to add to what Barney has said, which is that it is impossible to escape an attitude towards the world. Titling pictures, on the other hand, does not mean that one is specifying that the picture means a particular thing. I can only repeat that the use of titles might parallel the creative stream of activity in which an artist indulges. A dozen titles represent the attitude in the world we live in. To try to purify our work so it is not related to anything but the picture or piece of sculpture which we have produced, I think, is an ---?--- act. I would like to bring into this discussion, if possible, the artists as a being as a man, and not as a practitioner or craftsman, because if we have any integrity at all it is as men and women and not as artists or painters.

POUBETTE-DART: Why does the modern artist feel the need to sign his work? I would be very interested to know.

BAZIOTES: A psychologist recently asked some employees what did they feel they lacked most of all in their lives in the

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thing is how could one maintain an identity which is an intro-  
 factories. They did not say more money or less hours, but they  
 said the boss never praises. An artist wouldn't be a human  
 being if he didn't feel that praise or attention. When we  
 make a work of art we must get our praise after it is finished.  
 Frankly, I think that we could go on with this for a couple of

POUSETTE-DART: In certain cultures none of the works were  
 signed.

BAZIOTES: If you were commissioned to do a picture of the  
 Madonna in the middle ages that was praise to begin with.  
 Most artists are optimists and no optimist dislikes praise.

GOTTSLIEB: I think the answer is that the artist whose work  
 really has something to say ~~is its~~ <sup>is its</sup> signature.  
 It is immediately apparent who the artist is.

DE KOONING: There is no such thing as being anonymous.

HARE: I think a man's work is sufficient signature. I agree  
 entirely with Bill and I go further with that. There is a  
 tendency to say, "Let's not sign our things." The only  
 reason why people don't want to sign their things is fear.  
 It is a search for mediocrity. Art has never been annony-  
 mous. It is just anonymous to us.

ROSENBERG: It is a beautiful question. The thing is that in  
 our society with manufacturers, etc. it is necessary to sign  
 something from the point of view of identity. But still the



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thing is how could one maintain an identity which is an introspective thing? Who wants to title a work? To sign a work? Who wants to put a number on it? The open air shows in the Village.

LEWIS: I don't feel we are actually arriving at any conclusion. Frankly, I think that we could go on with this for a couple of days and have the general idea that we came in with here before. I don't think it is a question of voicing our individual frustration. I think we are trying to arrive at something concrete, which I find - so far as the public is concerned - giving this thing to the public . . . . . When we left yesterday I felt elated about the fact that we were voicing our feelings, etc. and it was a wonderful thing, but today I have the feeling of misapprehension in this whole discussion. And, frankly, I don't see what we are arriving at.

MOTHERWELL: You mean the people are not really communicating today?

LEWIS: Yes. Another thing is we start painting through a terrific amount of frustration, and I think we don't do it for ourselves really. There is that desire to show someone. I want to ask a question of the public, and I don't think the galleries or museums adequately fill this function. Some of us belong to galleries - which is a fortunate thing - and some of us don't. But how are you going to get that to the public?

BARR: You are interested in the problem of how to get your paintings to the public?

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LEWIS: I still disagree. If there were such an Association of all other would there be a need to meet? If we have the showing their work in cafes or any places where they ate. At one time they were exhibiting in the open air shows in the Village. And there was the Federal Art Project. People no longer have this intimacy with the artists, so that the public does not know actually what is going on, or what is being done by the painter. They only learn through Life Magazine, or something like that and they are only getting half of the questions answered. I might add - looking back at David here - that I read an article written by him which was terrific. It was in the Magazine of Art, but I think the only people who read this are the people in universities, etc. who are interested, or unless you are an artist or going to school. Otherwise the public does not read this sort of thing.

BAZIOTES: I think it is amiss today to say that modern art isn't getting enough to the people today. What I do think the function of this thing was when I spoke to Mr. Motherwell was to get a cross-section of what the artists say. Now, for instance, Mr. De Kooning disagreed on something and Mr. G. said, "Wait a minute. You're getting personal." The point is that - that if in this group somebody said something it is personal. Now if I'm going to keep it impersonal then it destroys the idea of a cross-section. And the thing is what can we do to make the public more aware of it? That is not the point of it.



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LEWIS: I still disagree. If there were such an awareness of each other would there be a need to meet? If we knew the things so adequately, then our function here is a false one.

BAZIOTES: One of the things is what is behind modern art? I mean it isn't the first meeting of this sort that is being held. I've been going to them since 1942.

LEWIS: I think everyone here can bear me out in the fact that labor unions are a good example. I remember organizing on the water-front. I wasn't a longshoreman. Certainly people then didn't know the function of a union, or what was good about it, but gradually they were made aware of it. They saw a need for it. The same is true of our relationship with the people; in making it aware of what we are doing. You certainly are going to run into ignorance.

MOTHERWELL: I agree with you in one sense, and in another I don't. I disagree in the sense that you talk generally about the relation of the artist to society. It becomes quite significant and also involves artists other than the sort who are here. But I agree with you that from my point of view the whole purpose of this meeting is to talk to each other on purely human grounds. I think we have things to say to each other on the grounds that anyone else who talks about what we do are ordinarily inadequate and inaccurate. Well I really have no hopes here at all except that the stenographers represent a kind of net and we represent a sea of fish swimming around.

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Here, too, there will be a lot of useless swimming back and forth, and what I am trying to say that the fish that was most interesting would be the least expected. I wouldn't in the least suggest that what you are referring to isn't of enormous consequence.

*BAZIOTES: I would like to second Mr. Bazziotes' remarks. I*

HARE: I think it seems to me this is a very important point, and there is a great deal to be said about it. It is rather hard for me to think of all these things at once. Bill Bazziotes brought up the question of this being a gathering of artists and Motherwell mentioned this. But I think that is one point of view and I think it would be very wonderful if anything valuable came out. But the fact of the matter is we all see each other in the evening. And when we talk in groups of three or four things are much more fundamental. I can't see how a group this large can get down to anything of interest. Mr. Lewis brings up the question of painters showing in the open air and moving out of that and moving uptown to galleries, and that is a question that is extremely important. I don't think the public here isn't interested in art or has a contact with it. Sometimes a man of thirty, or less, becomes well known. He already is a member of the reaction. He can't help it. That is, assuming that selling does modify the nature of his work, but that is not what I was saying. But the fact that even if he did not modify it it is not such a good thing to find yourself at the top before you know where you are. I speak of

*I did not mean to be personal yesterday on that basis at all.*



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the top not of sales, but in a situation where we arrive without any reason. It isn't fitting for any artist to be in the position where he is there.

NEWMAN: I would like to second Mr. Baziotes' remarks. I think we should more or less stick to the agenda as I saw it. We were trying to talk about artistic things.

REINHARDT: It is exactly what the involvement is in relation to the other world. I think everybody should be asked to say something. Let's see what they have to say.

BARR: Apparently many people don't want to answer the question.

DE KOONING: I think somebody who is a <sup>professional</sup> professor of something never is a <sup>professional</sup> professor. I think we are craftsmen, and we really don't know exactly what we are ourselves, but now in the profession we have no position in the world - absolutely no position except that we just insist upon being around.

LEWIS: I just want to repeat that I raised this question not as a political question. The reason I raised it is that the title involved the public and that is my belief and it seems to me quite valid <sup>and</sup> that was the reason we raised the question of the onlooker.

GRIPP:E May I answer first Mr. B. on the personal question? I did not mean to be personal yesterday on that basis at all;

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but I do think it would be better if we were. I think we all feel that we want to discuss the problem. I would like to really discuss these problems.

MOTHERWELL: Mr. Barr mentioned something, which was the question of when you are making a work and the emotions that you are feeling - are they the same as they are in the work? If you are making a work in a moment of extreme anguish in your life, is the context one of anguish? You would think the answer would be "yes, it has to be anguish". Yet anguish - for my own part, I try to suppress it.

STERNE: First, I think emotion in a work of art is only a matter to work with. Second, I want to continue with what I told Mr. Lippold and Bill. We are just nothing. What we really can succeed at is to hang in a museum or as an investment. Mr. Lippold was talking about the period when people were ordered to make images of saints. It was part of life. Consequently they couldn't go without those (images?). Now we have machines to make rain. What we can do is something extremely unimportant. We are possessed by this sense of unimportance and futility.

LIPPOLD: I should like only to say that the job of the artist is only a job of a craftsman. In terms of responsibility towards society, I thought I made that clear, but apparently I did not. I was only trying to describe my method.

EREST: Before I answer that I would like to say I am rather



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happy with my position in society. In other words, I would  
 If we may learn from each other at all, it is in terms of  
 method for we may find there our interests over-lap. I  
 would be the last person to say that artists should concern  
 themselves only with the beautiful. I don't understand politi-  
 cal or economic relationships because I don't see truth or  
 falsity - I don't know what they are. It is the individual  
 himself in relation to other individuals who make a society.  
 It is then I feel that we can understand the behavior of  
 other groups of people. It may help other people who see  
 that work. So I would say the artist must be concerned with  
 three things: (1) He must be completely with the world of  
 reality when he chooses the world of business (??) (2) He  
 must be completely in possession of knowledge, and in control  
 of himself to know what he has experienced. (3) He must be  
 completely in love with the materials and crafts he uses. I  
 would insist that these three things for myself by in tact.

STERNE: I want to say that what you say is perfectly correct.  
 Every work of art today is a coordination of talent, feeling,  
 etc. But I was thinking of the aim which comes after -  
 consciously or not - what is the desire of the self-expression  
 of the artist? Can he become a vessel of some objective?  
 Can he, although he works with emotion, be the vessel of truth  
 or not? All great people did. What we attempt to do is to at-  
 tempt to achieve that state.

ERNST: Before I answer that I would like to say I am rather

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happy with my position in society. In other words, I would much rather be unattached to any part of society than to be commissioned to carve a picture of Mr. Truman, because I am not interested in a commission to that extent. I think what we are overlooking here - and I believed this for a long time - is the fact that we cannot draw from the present altogether our reaction. In other words, we cannot create out of past experience alone. I believe very sincerely that what distinguishes us from craftsmen and from people who are commissioned to record events or even record the past emotions is the fact - and this may sound strange - that I believe as artists we have an extra-sensory perception. Most certainly there is very little that an artist can create actually that does not exist in some form or another. He may create something that has not been definitely discovered in some field - science or emotion. I may be wrong but I feel very strongly about it. When he titles his pictures he does that perhaps just for himself.

TOMLIN: It seems to me before we examine our relation to the world we should examine our position in relation to each other. I understood that to be the point of this discussion and that is why we came together. I am sure there are a number of people who are interested in the matter of self-expression alone and there are others who are not.

HOFMANN: I think it is something constant in all arts. This



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constancy has been common in the past art for thousands of years, and I think this constancy is our aim to create, and this constancy is the fact of quality. It is much more difficult to say what is quality - but quality is something very definite. It is something that is communicative and what we all the time understand, and we will not be understood by the general public because the general public isn't up to us. If the general public can be educated to it, that is another question. I believe myself the public can. It is a natural gift and may exist in the beginning and develop, but some people have it without having any knowledge of painting. They have a feeling of quality. Art isn't dependent upon circumstances. It is created out of the necessity of the urge to create. But it must finally be quality. We can expect that our work is communicative and we will be accepted in a broader sense. I mean GOTTLIEB: this in no derogatory sense to anyone. I think the differences of opinion have been gone over to the point of nausea for the last few years. We know on what points we disagree and coming here for a couple of hours we are not going to convince each other about those particular points. I think at the same time we have sufficient ground for agreement to get together for some sort of purpose, if we could agree on what the purpose is. If we are willing to lay aside our ideological differences is there anything on which we can get together on which to try to resolve?

MOTHERWELL: Let me say something in reply which does not

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disagree with what you say. For example, I think it is possible to learn specific, concrete things from the people who are assembled here. The other day while I was talking with Mr. Lippold, whom I don't know very well, he mentioned the fact that he was to make a sculpture at the new Graduate School at Harvard. A graduate student is a (notorious-modest) (destructive-distinctive) agent, so that he cannot make a sculpture of the sort which he wishes; that he can use it as a trophy if he likes. I know if I go to Harvard and see what Lippold makes, the form will take on significance from the fact that I know all this. Yesterday, when we were talking, Brooks remarked there is a certain stage in working out a picture, and if he wants to work further on it he has to work from behind. In his exhibitions a great many of his pictures are made from behind - they come from the rear. I am curious as to why he says he must find himself at a certain moment from behind than in front. I see these examples. I think what you are saying implies something that this might potentially become an organization - a pressure group - to take position in relation to a particular public question, and I must say that I would be extremely opposed to a organization that would bring pressure on this or that, or to sign a manifesto to the New York Times of what should be done, etc.

NEWMAN: I would like to emphasize Mr. Motherwell's remarks: We have two problems. (1) The problem of existing as men as artists and (2) As grown men as artists.  
(coming)



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I think the problem of coming as artists and not as men is of value and a legitimate excuse for this enterprise.

BARR: There seems to be some feeling that this is a practical body rather than liberal. I don't think a summary of this afternoon's discussion could be particularly truthful. (Is?) do it in the notes of the stenographer. That's an appalling task. I don't even know who is to do it. I think that I would like to retire as moderator and let Mr. Lippold and Mr. Motherwell make a brief discussion on what we do want to talk about tomorrow. The theory has been that this is entirely a spontaneous discussion. There is no reason why the profession has been discussed otherwise. Do you want to discuss whether you want to do something practical or go ahead in the search of what we call truth?

HARE: When a large group gets together I don't see that anything personal can be brought out, so far as our own personalities and manner of work goes. I feel the only thing that can be accomplished in a large group is to work in the direction of an ideology. If there are any people in this room - half or more than half - who can truthfully say that they can go home tonight and that the discussion of our work has benefited them in any way at all, they are all for it. It doesn't benefit me. I am not against a meeting, but it is a waste of three hours. I can learn more from talking to Bill Baziotas, Sterne or anybody here in an hour than I can by spending three hours here.

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BARR: The point of this meeting, as I understand it, was to put something down which might serve as a basis for something which was to be printed. Your discussion, as you spoke of it, has not resulted in a direct answer. Perhaps out of yourself and out of the stimulus. Whether it is good or bad that is the intention.

GOTTLIEB: I think that aside from getting together to achieve something practical, if we want to arrive at some reality which is verbal, I think it is necessary to state the question so that it will bring the proper answer. I think if a question is phrased in a certain way, for example, as the chairman decided, we should thrash out what direction American art is going to be in in the next few years. Is it going to go in the direction of pure art or is it going to be impure? There has to be something specific, and anybody who doesn't want to take part in it doesn't have it.

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