

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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Friday PM, May 3, 1963

MACFADYEN SPEAKS ON "GOVERNMENT IN THE ARTS"

John H. MacFadyen, Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts will speak on "Government in the Arts" on Friday, May 3, at 10:00 A.M., before 500 art educators from the United States and Canada attending the Conference on Art Education sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. MacFadyen's address, one of the major talks of the 4-day Conference which opened April 30, will be given in the Georgian Ballroom "B" of the Americana Hotel, 52 Street and Seventh Ave.

Pointing out that it has been generally conceded that the arts are difficult to sustain on a pay-as-you-create, or pay-as-you-interpret, or pay-as-you-enjoy basis, Mr. MacFadyen will stress the growing need for patronage for both the creative and interpretive arts. While emphasizing the individual as the primary source of support, he will suggest that patronage be shared by new and relatively untapped sources: foundations, corporations, labor organizations, educational institutions, municipal, county, state and federal government.

"The total responsibility for patronage," he says, "cannot and must not be placed with government. We certainly have adequate proof, in this period of history, of the perils of such an approach."

He will recommend that the Federal Advisory Council on the Arts now being established by the President, be made up of representatives of all these "sources of patronage" plus the various Federal Departments concerned with implementing federal patronage - State, Defense, Interior, Commerce, Health, Education and Welfare - in order to provide intelligent guidance to public and private agencies.

Interpretors as well as artists need help, he says. "Support for/^{the}interpretation of contemporary creative work, in other words the performing or exhibiting of new work, is extremely hard to come by. The public has not been prepared to accept much of what is being done. It suffers from being exhibited under adverse conditions or being performed with inadequate rehearsal in appalling surroundings. A great conductor told me that 90 per cent of the new music being composed is destroyed by the first performance."

Mr. MacFadyen will stress the importance of the individual patrons, the \$1 to \$10 supporter of the arts, and the need for encouraging the growth of an educated audience. "...In the audience lies our primary and all-important source of patronage, the individual." Mr. MacFadyen will cite the activities of the New York State Council on the Arts as an example of the role the state government can play.

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Created as a temporary experimental commission by the New York State Legislation in 1960, the Council received an appropriation of \$450,000 in 1961 and has served 200 communities with touring art shows, concerts and plays. The Council, which works through existing organizations, is now engaged also in a survey of architecture to determine which building should be preserved for the future and is investigating the possibilities of regional opera companies.

Similar state councils, he said, have been established in California, Missouri, Michigan, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota and many other places.

The General Session on "Government in the Arts" will be attended by all 500 members of the Conference on Art Education, and will be chaired by Arthur R. Young, Director of Art Education, Philadelphia Museum College of Education and Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Mr. MacFadyen has been Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts for the past two years.

Complete text and additional information available from Marcia Rubinooff, Publicity Department, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.

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21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ART EDUCATION

April 30, May 1-4, 1963

Address: GOVERNMENT IN THE ARTS
John H. MacFadyen, Executive Director
New York State Council on the Arts

Friday, May 3, 1963
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Americana Hotel - Georgian Ballroom "B"

It is a little more than two years since I succeeded Laurance Roberts as Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts, which had been created by our Legislature during the 1960 session. I can look with objective wonder at this political miracle, and with admiration at Governor Rockefeller's persistence and the Legislature's intuitive response. I direct this ray of hope on anyone who has come to despair of our lawmaker's capacity to take action not politically motivated.

I came to the job from a career in architecture - I still consider myself a temporarily displaced professional architect - and I entered a field which had never received my serious consideration. My qualifications were hazy if not doubtful. I was clinging to what may be the delusion that I personally, as an architect, might be an artist, which put me among those in all the arts who likewise cling. I had made the painful adjustment to admitting that there might be others in the field equally blessed with talent, and I had a modest record of organizational ability, certainly the minimum facility demanded in my profession.

I entered an arena so choked with lions and martyrs that it was hard to tell from the cries of the crowd which they were cheering, and as a newcomer I faced the somewhat hostile appraisal of these lions and martyrs as they tried to decide to which category I had been relegated. Being a natural coward I tried my best to look like both and become neither and if possible to stay close enough to the edge so that in an emergency I could jump the barrier and become lost in the crowd again.

While waiting for this emergency, and I'm still waiting, I watched and listened to the growing cries and gradually one word grew stronger than the rest until at last it stood alone - and that word was government! This year, I would wager, there isn't a single meeting of any national organization committed to the arts that has not included on the agenda a panel, or a forum, or a speaker on Government in the Arts. Indeed it is a modern medical miracle that that tireless, thoughtful, gifted man, August Heckscher, hasn't irrevocably lost his voice.

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Now - what is the force that has singled out government and indeed has so generally intensified the total cultural dialogue? Placing myself in President Kennedy's rocking chair I feel that in that position of indisputable power to choose, to demand the "command performance," I would certainly have the White House reeking of paint - both grease and oil - and ringing with the sounds of voice and music: who could resist this temptation? And I can hardly believe that a tv tour of the White House, however irresistible the hostess, would set off a national "renaissance" (I agree with Dr. Conant, that term is being emasculated). There is some merit to the suggestion that we are simply reaching the point where our larger and better educated population is demanding some of the logical benefits of that education, and it is certainly evident that enjoyment of the arts is reflecting a democratization experienced any number of years ago by political, economic, and other freedoms.

I would like to suggest that there are other more subtle and subconscious reasons. We are living in an era of data and documentation, where both are accumulating at an alarming rate. Machines are not only doing a major portion of our thinking, they are also doing our remembering for us. The problem of future generations will not be to find evidence of the records of our civilization, it will be to somehow interpret that civilization out of the mass of records we have left. We are further applying these techniques to the investigation and documentation of our past so that the final accumulated mountain of notated and filed knowledge is far beyond the comprehension of the simple human mind. No one has presumed to challenge this pretentious project, but I sense an uneasiness in the air, a sneaking suspicion that we may be overdoing it.

How, then, are we to compensate our descendants for this burden we are leaving them? To me, the answer is simple: we realize that we must also leave them the direct, honest record of our civilization through the only means of communication equipped to carry out this function, the arts.

For the purposes of this discussion, then, what are the arts? Broadly, our record is written in the creative arts, the act of writing, composing, or designing and executing works of literature, poetry, drama, music including opera and choral works, ballet and dance, painting, sculpture, the graphic arts including photography and the crafts, architecture, and finally for our time, films and television. This record is read, today and by future generations, through the interpretive arts, the act of interpreting the creative arts by individuals, groups or institutions through the designing, publishing, printing and collecting of books; the producing, directing and performing of drama; the performing of music and the producing, directing and performing of opera, choral works, etc.; the producing, directing and performing of ballet and dance; the selecting and exhibiting of the visual arts, crafts, and :

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historic memorabilia; the construction and conservation of architecture; and the producing, directing and performing of films and television. And when you consider the newness of this last art you have some indication of the potential for developing new expressions in the future.

Central to the healthy development of both the creative and the interpretive arts is the problem of simple economics. While man may not live by bread alone it is generally conceded that bread more or less comes first. It has also been generally conceded that the arts are difficult to sustain on a pay-as-you-create, or pay-as-you-interpret, or pay-as-you-enjoy basis. For this reason the tradition of patronage has emerged, both for the creative and the interpretive arts. In the past this patronage has come from the seats of power - from monarchs and the court, from dominant religious institutions, and from the financial aristocracy. But as our governments become more truly representative of our total population we are looking more to them to accept their share of the patronage responsibility.

Now the important word here, certainly in America, is "share." The total responsibility for patronage cannot and must not be placed with government, we certainly have adequate proof, in this period in history, of the perils of such an approach. For the moment, then, let's review all the potential sources of patronage and later we will attempt to suggest the responsibility of each. But before that, let us define exactly what we mean by patronage. Again, for purposes of this discussion, let us assume that patronage means all sources of income to the arts exclusive of tax relief, paid admissions and the value of time contributed by persons in any way connected with a specific arts program.

The primary and all-important source of patronage should remain the individual: only in this way will we maintain an independence of vitality. While the extent to which each individual may contribute becomes more limited it should certainly be expected that the total number of contributing individuals will increase. I wonder how many of us here today are accepting our share of this general obligation, the one to ten dollar patron? It is imperative that we avoid delegating this obligation to our governments. Secondly, we have developed, particularly in America, the foundation or trust as an essential source of patronage, although their potential for support of the arts has hardly been touched. Third, we have a growing source in corporate, business and commercial giving, again relatively untouched. Fourth, the phenomenon of our great labor unions and organizations provides us with a new and potentially important source of patronage. Fifth, although we tend to disregard them, our educational institutions, both public and private, are and will continue to be significant in the overall pattern. And with number six we finally arrive at the threshold of government support, our municipal governments. This is particularly important in more....

light of the national trend towards urbanization. Cities are expanding their boundaries to increase their revenues to pay for additional services demanded of them. Certainly the cultural services must play an important role in the urbanization trend. Seventh, we have county government. While county support is important in urban areas, it is even more significant regionally, where too often the counties are not accepting their share of the obligation to maintain the cultural organizations serving their region. Eighth, we have state government. New York State, in creating the Council on the Arts, has established a strong influence within the executive branch. But this is not enough. There are many other branches involved in potential support for the arts, including at least the Department of Public Works, the Department of Conservation, the Department of Education, the Department of Correction, and the Department of Commerce. Recently Legislation has been passed creating a new commission in New York State to coordinate the overlapping functions of these various departments. It is significant that the Council on the Arts is represented on this commission: the possibility for some sort of cultural coordination is promising.

Finally, we have the federal government as an existing and potential source of patronage. For today we will ignore the various bills which have been introduced into congress and recognize, instead, that there now exist, in the federal government, important sources of patronage within at least the Departments of State, Defense, Interior, Commerce and Health, Education and Welfare. To the best of my knowledge there is currently no effort to coordinate the affect of these sources.

Let us go back now and look at the creative and interpretive arts to define the areas which are dependent on one or more of the sources of patronage I have mentioned. For the creative artist we have, of course, his education. This includes not only general education where creative ability must be detected and encouraged but later special education in the techniques of a particular creative art. Next, we have the creative artist at work and patronage is responsible for tentative evaluations of this work and economic assistance during the early creative period, as well as for providing as much opportunity as possible to bring this work before a public. Since at this point the responsibility generally shifts to the interpretive artist we should recognize the same educational needs as well as the need for support for interpretive organizations. Support for the interpretation of contemporary creative work, in other words the performing or exhibiting of new work, is extremely hard to come by. The public has not been prepared to accept much of what is being done. It suffers from being exhibited under adverse conditions or being performed with inadequate rehearsal in appalling surroundings. A great conductor told me that ninety per cent of the new music being composed is destroyed by the first performance.

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Further, in the performing arts, we have the problems of collaboration with the creative artist in matters of production, etc. All of this demands dedicated patronage.

While my definition of patronage excludes tax-relief this is an important factor to both the creative and interpretive artist which deserves serious study and revision. In the case of the former, the financial rewards for achievement usually come late in life after years of frugality, yet little or no recognition of this period of development is made by our tax structure. At the same time, the productive years of the interpretive artist are usually limited and again there is little recognition of this limitation. Essential to any program of coordinated patronage will be this study and revision.

Finally, given the creative and interpretive artist there remains another responsibility for patronage, the audience. This again involves education, preparing the child for the experience of the arts; support for programs which permit the audience to come in contact with great art in its various forms; support for the provision of proper facilities in which the audience may enjoy the arts. We should never overlook the fact that in the audience lies our primary and all-important source of patronage, the individual. I'm afraid our work in this vineyard too often tends to be condescending if not aloof. If the public be damned, we all be damned shortly thereafter.

We have now, then, defined the arts, outlined the areas of their economic insecurity, and suggested the sources of patronage. How can these factors be brought together for the enlightened consideration of an effective force?

Recently the White House announced that the President would appoint, in the near future, a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts. I believe this to be excellent plan in principal. But this announcement implied a committee made up of persons knowledgeable in and representative of the various arts. Without wishing to offend my many friends who could be thus described, I would like to propose that this is, once again putting the cart before the horse. While it would be ludicrous to suggest that art in America is anything but vigorous and inevitable, I am personally convinced that broad encouragement for the development of the arts must come from all the sources of patronage I have outlined. It is not difficult to get enlightened if somewhat narrow opinions on the economic problems of the arts or the prospects for their future. It is extremely difficult to bring these opinions to bear on any coordinated effort in their behalf.

I would suggest, therefore, that the Federal Advisory Council on the Arts be made up of important representatives from individual patronage, foundation giving,

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corporate, business and commercial giving, labor patronage, educational institutions, and municipal, county and state governments. The Council, in turn, would be guided by expert panels composed of persons professionally familiar with all phases of the development of each artistic discipline. The Council would be collectively responsible for establishing policy for broad patterns of patronage and individually responsible for coordinating the carrying out of this policy within the category they represent. Included on the Council should be representatives from the Federal Departments of State, Defense, Interior, Commerce and Health, Education and Welfare.

The advisory panels of the specific arts would suggest ways in which the creative artists could be encouraged, and the representatives of individual, foundation, and educational patronage as well as of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare with whom the prime responsibility for this encouragement rests, would attempt to guide the carrying out of these suggestions. The panels would suggest ways in which the interpretive arts could be encouraged and the representatives of individual, foundation, educational, labor, corporate, business and commercial, municipal and county government, certain departments of state government, and the Federal Departments of State, Defense, Interior and Commerce with whom the prime responsibility for this encouragement rests, would attempt to guide the carrying out of these suggestions. Similar efforts would be made on behalf of the audience by representatives of corporate, business and commercial and labor giving, municipal and county government, state government, and the Federal Departments of Defense, Commerce, Interior, and Health, Education and Welfare.

Now it is true that this Federal Advisory Council would have no legal powers to enforce their recommendations. They would, however, be in a strategic position to solicit public opinion. Eventually the Council would be in a position to guide the appropriation of funds within the various federal departments in such a way as to make them most effective for the welfare of the arts. Most significantly, they would be in a strong position to suggest cooperative measures in a field where there is an irresponsible amount of ineffective duplication and to encourage the development of all sources of patronage along well-defined lines of responsibility and results. I don't need to tell you what this intelligent guidance would mean to corporate, business and commercial sources alone.

I have specifically assigned the arts themselves to an advisory role because the individual dedication of their representatives has created a competition for patronage that has left the sources so confused that they too frequently take the easy way out which is no patronage at all. All major givers are berated mercilessly by disappointed fund seekers and to me it is a miracle that there still exist men of

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sufficient courage to accept the responsibility for what they are told is an interminable series of disastrous errors. The dedication is admirable but its affect is fraught with danger. A Federal Council such as I have proposed would significantly act not only collectively but could exert an important influence on all potential contributors within each category represented. The administration of the Council could avoid becoming bureaucratic because they would have no direct programming responsibilities.

Let me particularize on the potential of this plan with regard to just one source, state government. It is, of course, the source I know best. The New York State Council on the Arts is still very much in the experimental stage: it is, in fact, a temporary commission. The Legislation specifically recognized that "the practice and enjoyment of the arts are of increasing importance and the general welfare of the people of the state will be promoted by giving further recognition to the arts as a vital aspect of our culture and heritage and as a valued means of expanding the scope of our educational programs." During the first year of its existence the Council conducted a number of surveys to point out the economic problems of our arts institutions, the lack of opportunity for most of our citizens to enjoy the best of the arts, and the need for a concerted effort to encourage the raising of standards. In January, 1961, the Council went to the Legislature with this report and some recommendations on how the situation could be improved, and we were given an appropriation of \$450,000 to carry out these recommendations. Since then our programs have gone into more than two hundred separate communities throughout the state. While it is the policy of the Council to remain experimental, certain patterns are beginning to emerge as guides to our planning. Through the Council's program of support for touring performances and exhibitions it has become possible for any community to have the finest art available, tailored to the special limitations of their facilities. This program began by making specific grants to selected organizations to tour with Council support. This year in the performing arts we are contracting with local sponsors to support individual dates selected from a long list of approved attractions. We altered our approach in the hope that we would be able to do more with the same amount of money and that we could offer a greater variety of attractions to fill specific needs.

Our exhibitions of the visual arts have been largely organized by the American Federation of Arts, but we have also contracted with specific museums to prepare exhibitions.

The Council has also recognized a responsibility to local arts programs. Most of these are, of course, amateur, and our contribution has been in the form of

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offering technical assistance directed towards the raising of standards of performance by these organizations. This program has been particularly effective in guiding smaller museums, galleries, and historical societies in areas of display, identification, cataloging, conservation, community relations, etc.

Under our educational program we are attempting to make the experience of the live performance or the original work of art available to our young people to supplement the academic instruction of the class room.

Under our special projects we have available a limited amount of money which is primarily devoted to improving the opportunity of the individual creative or interpretive artist. This program operates only through existing organizations with that objective.

We continue to make selected surveys and studies. We are working county by county, without county support incidentally, on an architecture worth saving project which will, we hope, stop the bull-dozers at the critical moment, and provide the state with an inventory of its significant architectural treasures. We are encouraging the development of an association of regional opera companies for their mutual improvement. We are studying the possibilities for encouragement of the dance.

Each of these programs is related to conditions within our state. At the same time, there are developing across the nation similar state councils or commissions with similar objectives; in California, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, Kentucky, and many others. It is logical that, as these programs develop, there should be an exchange of ideas among the states concerned. A representative of the state movement, appointed to the Federal Advisory Council, could be effective in stimulating this exchange and relating it to the potentialities of other sources of patronage and planning. Major industries with national networks of plants could be advised as to how their patronage could be effectively applied. Foundations could be alerted to emerging creative programs of special merit. Where justified, some form of federal support for the development of facilities could be guided. All this with the advice of the professional artists. New York has sought and received this guidance from over one hundred persons in the past two years.

It seems to me that the time for some action has arrived. Maybe the hue and cry has been raised to divert us from the pain of serious personal reappraisal. We are all great procrastinators, this was brought abruptly home to me the other day when my young son asked "daddy, is today tomorrow?" Maybe, finally, today is

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tomorrow. My purpose this morning has been to try to protect the integrity of that word that seems to now stand alone, "government," as the savior for the arts. Presumably in America we are the government; its responsibilities are our responsibilities, the effectiveness of its functions are in our hands. When we demand anything as vaguely defined as "Government in the Arts" let each of us search our consciences; are we pigs looking for a new trough, are we vultures looking for a new cadaver, or are we honest dreamers willing to accept the realities that can help our dreams come true?

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