

**ART and CLASS,
Some Marxist Viewpoints: A Forum**
Artists Space April 9

The panelists did not all profess to be Marxists, but each addressed the question of being an artist, art worker, or cultural worker within a class system. The function of art and its translation from a visual object to a Marxist statement were treated from various political and artworld points of view. As with most forums of this kind, alternatives were debated; no course of action was ratified.

Patricia Hills [moderator] enumerated options for the artist in a class system: 1) Acquiesce (produce what will sell); 2) Ignore the situation (work in the studio untouched by the needs of the working class); 3) Fight (organize other artists, eliminate gallery middlemen, expand the art audience).

Kevin Whitfield said the class struggle will not succeed until we demolish the myth of superiority of the high priests and teachers who reign over all our cultural domains. The ideals of education are used to defend hurdles which block all but the most gifted, he said, while artists hustle without thought.

Kay Brown said that as a black woman, she is reluctant to respond to either Marxism or Feminism--white ideologies. For black women single motherhood and women as heads-of-households have been givens for years, she said, whereas for white women these are causes.

Alan Wallach discussed the ideological mystifications of art and class, and the social institution of art, in which the art experience is a social practice, fulfilling social needs.

May Stevens introduced herself as a theoretical Marxist by presenting her family background. Her politics could be inferred from accounts of her government-employed "sexist racist" pipefitter father, as well as quotes from Susan Sontag.

Lee Baxandall said that although the artist's vocation is voluntary, oppression is experienced from the first arrival of the work in the market, a market which changes the artist's labor into a commodity. He favors revision of the present U.S. Communist Party to advocate action within the American political system to dissolve the state.

Lucy Lippard considers herself first and foremost a Feminist, not a Marxist. She spoke of "idea art" as a function of social man, tied to both life and the environment. This "art for separation and a certain audience" reflects a social function, and has little contact with other audiences, she said, adding that street art dragged back into the gallery is no solution.

Amiri Baraka [the former Leroy Jones] advocated an art for the working masses which would raise the level of the peoples' consciousness. With quotes from Mao Tse Tung and other non-artist Marxists, Baraka offered no specific means of promulgating such non-gallery art, only a vague notion of more buttons and posters. Using the rhetoric of violence he proposed the seizure of power by revolution, with artists taking an active role, literally

fighting machine guns with machine guns. The violent wipe-out of the ruling class is necessary for change, he said--"Revolution first and foremost!"

Carl Andre presented an analysis of his own class position: both worker and petty capitalist interested in his own product, member of both bourgeoisie and working class; but Marxist nonetheless. He spoke of art, not as a form of communication, but as used to communicate; no particular art morally or politically correct, the power in art being the art, conveyed as it is meant.

Leon Golub said all Americans participate in the reward system of Imperialist power. All art reflects its social origins; the success of American art is related to the success of American society. He discussed art productivity as derived from surplus, which in turn becomes a commodity in the sale process, and speculated that much of the artist's familiar claim to freedom of action is bought at others' expense. The artist is "but a server, working in the cracks of the system." ■

-- Carol De Pasquale

**RIISING ASPIRATIONS:
The Future of Women in Art Education**

The two day pre-session of the National Art Education Association Women's Caucus, on the theme "Rising Aspirations" was held April 10 & 11 in St. Louis, co-ordinated By Judy Loeb.

Saturday AM: Jessie Lavano-Kerr of Indiana U. reviewed her survey, "A Profile of Art Educators in Higher Education: Male/Female Comparative Data." Dr. Elliot Eisner of Stanford's announced topic was "The Female Dilemma In Art Education Today," but he discussed instead his investigations of qualitative evaluation in the arts.

Saturday PM: Dr. Bette Acuff, Columbia U., screened a film on assertive training, then divided the workshop into pairs to act out professional situations using assertive techniques. Ruth Beatty and Tom Dodd of Ann Arbor Public Schools and SUNY worked with a group on creative problem solving, demonstrating the Alex Osborne process. "Female Clique," a visual happening by Renée Sandell of Ohio State at Newark, showed slides of modern woman's fragmentation.

"And Then the Beautiful Princess Rescued the Handsome Prince," a humorous look at sexual stereotyping, was presented in the evening by Beatty and Dodd.

Sunday AM: Dr. Angiola Churchill of NYU led a panel on "Building Professional Goals with Women Artists-Students." Dottie Manline of NYC spoke of the joys & problems of working in collaborative arts such as filmmaking. Barbara Kazanis of Southern Florida U. compared Eastern and Western philosophies of maleness & femaleness, viewing the male (rational) and female (intuitive) principles as complementary. Dr. Shirley Borella of Boston U. spoke about the preparation of students, male and female, for the problems faced by professional artists.

Dean Gordon Plummer of SUNY, Buf-

EDITORIAL (cont. from p. 1)

WAN's urgent plea to them that our grant was running out, that CCLM no longer was awarding these funds and that we couldn't apply elsewhere with NEA pending, they kept secret the "verdict" that WAN was not eligible until the moment of official announcement of all decisions--some seven weeks later than originally promised, and six months after our application was filed. Then they washed their hands of us.

What is the purpose of the National Endowment for the Arts?

WOMEN ARTISTS NEWSLETTER is a national publication--service, voice and outlet for artists on every level from student to recognized professional. NEA grants frequently cater to marginal or narrowly regional interests (whether or not a requisite number of "books" has been published). The mishandling of WAN's application and the indifference at NEA are inexcusable. Art and artists have been poorly served. ■

WAN QUOTES:

"It's not the appropriateness of feminist criticism which needs to be rethought, but its level -- its demands for intellectual simplicity...in the name of...solidarity. These demands have convinced many women that it is undemocratic to raise questions about the quality of feminist discourse..."

--Susan Sontag, NY Times, 2/8/76.

"Notes on Art, Sex and Politics."

falo, in "History of Women in Art Education" offered four postulates on the iniquitous status of women in art professions: (1) The American "frontier" concept of women as child-minders, cultural agents and practitioners of the decorative arts combined with the idea that advanced fine arts work is pernicious, especially for mixed classes of men and women. (2) The assumption that elementary education is relatively simple, cheaply and easily effected by persons of low aspiration, plus women's replacement of male draftees in wartime. (3) The influence of religion and its ministers through the control of art education and the cultivation of prudery. (4) The protective or paternalistic role of the art professoriat toward women students. Plummer also noted that the post-WW II climate offered increased opportunities to male veterans, but not to women.

Sunday PM: A working session was chaired by Dr. John Michael (Miami U. of Ohio) on research in progress. Dennis White of Georgia State U described a study of men and women doing Art Ed doctoral work, at present a 40/60 female to male ratio. Another working session by Dr. Sandra Packard of Miami U, Ohio, drafted the Position Statement which was unanimously approved by the caucus business meeting.

Publications: NAEA Women's Caucus Journal, The Report, subscription \$5, Margaret Hicks, NAEA Women's Caucus Treasurer, Art Dept. Navarro College, Corsicana, Texas. Art Education, Nov. '75 issue, and Studies in Art Education, Winter issue, articles on women in art and art ed., sexual stereotyping. Nat'l Art Ed. Assn, 1916 Association Dr. Reston VA.

--Judy Loeb

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